



SERIES: Philippians (May / June) “Finding Joy in the Journey”

SPEAKER: NAT CRAWFORD

Saturday, May 29, 2021

Scripture: Philippians 2:25-27

TITLE: Traits of a Christian

What words describe a Christian? We’ve talked about servanthood. We’ve talked about being slaves of Christ. We’ve talked about being blameless. Paul uses a lot of words to describe what a Christian is. And Paul has some more descriptions as he describes another dear friend in Philippians 2. Here’s how Paul describes this Christian, beginning in verse 25:

I have thought it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus my brother and fellow worker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to my need, ²⁶ for he has been longing for you all and has been distressed because you heard that he was ill. ²⁷ Indeed he was ill, near to death. But God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. (Phil. 2:25-27, ESV)

Paul describes Epaphroditus as his brother, fellow worker, fellow soldier, messenger, and minister. Let’s look at each one, because they are important elements of our faith today.

Paul says that Epaphroditus is **family**. He was His **brother**. I’m always excited to talk with you here on goTandem or in the Back to the Bible app. I love getting to know my spiritual family. And for some of you, this family is a Godsend, because you’ve been rejected by your own family. So everyone who is in Christ is now a family member that we’ll spend eternity with.

Paul says Epaphroditus is his **fellow worker**. Not only are they brothers, (both in spiritual and friendship terms), but they are a fellow worker. This is a Pauline term. They are together striving to see the Gospel spread. They are teammates and partners in making disciples, who make disciples.

Epaphroditus is a **fellow soldier**. We forget or deny the real spiritual battle that is raging on around us. It’s real. It’s dangerous. Paul fought his hardest battles on His knees in prayer. Whenever something bad happens, I want to make a phone call or try to fix it. My son reminds me, “Dad, you need to pray first.” He’s right. It’s never just an event. It’s a spiritual battle. So let’s battle as a unit, ready with our faith, prayer, and Word of God.

Paul calls Epaphroditus a **messenger**. This is what our mission in life is: to be messengers of the Gospel. This is the great privilege of being a Christian. We become messengers for God with His Word. It’s not up to us to make them receive it. We’re just responsible for the delivery.

And last, Paul says Epaphroditus is a **minister**. It’s the picture of a special servant—someone who was willing to meet the needs of someone else at their own expense. A true servant was this minister's reputation.

Quite the descriptions of this Christian – so, here’s my challenge for you today: which description fits you best? Family member, fellow worker, soldier, messenger, or minister? Share it in the comments below, and why.

And then identify one of those you want to grow in, and do one thing to make that a reality. What is one way you can be a worker, a soldier, a minister, and so on?

It’s my prayer we embrace all these descriptions, because each is important to God, and essential for the church and world today.