

Student Name

NT 637/737—Philippians: Spring 2023

Professor Shawn Craigmiles

Written Assignment #2

Date:

Please answer the following questions, remembering to properly cite any sources that you use.

1. Trace out (summarize) the logic of Paul’s argument in the portion of the body of the letter that we have covered thus far (1:27-2:30). In preparation for this assignment, please consult pages 98-100 of Schreiner’s *Interpreting the Pauline Epistles* to see what he says about propositions and their relationships to one another. [**At least** one and one-half (1½) pages, but maybe more, as needed.]
 - a. For this passage, identify Paul’s main propositions, section by section, and explain the relationship between the propositions that went before and those that follow? Which conjunctions are used, and what do they indicate about the relationships between the propositions? What is Paul asserting/claiming/arguing? What reasons and evidence does he use to support what he is saying?
 - b. English students need to pay attention to conceptual subordination of ideas, while Greek students will also consider the use of specific Greek coordinate and subordinate conjunctions. *This is the most difficult part of the assignment and requires careful observation. You are not expected to duplicate Schreiner’s method perfectly, but you should be familiar enough with it that you can attempt to unpack Paul’s message. Especially consult pages 122–124 of Schreiner’s book. I am not asking you to produce a chart like he has on page 123. I am asking you to discuss the flow of the argument and the conjunctions used like Schreiner does on pages 122 and 124. Please consult the sample documents that I provided on the E360 course page to see exactly what I am looking for in this assignment.*

“Paul is writing this letter in response to the gift he received through their emissary Epaphroditus. He took the opportunity to challenge the Philippians to remain faithful to the gospel in the face of opposition and he also addresses the issues of disunity, and false teaching that would threaten this church.”¹ In Philp.1:27-30 Paul encourages the believers to leave lives worthy of the gospel so

¹ Joseph H. Helleman, *Philippians, Exegetical Guide to the Greek NT* (B & H Publishing, 2015) p 4

that (ἵνα-action-result) or whether in his absence or presence, they will stand firm in one Spirit striving for the faith in the gospel. The proposition *which is*, (ὅστις, εἰμί) is an explanation of what will happen to them that opposes their unity and then he uses *but* (δέ -contrast) which contrasts destruction for unbelievers and salvation for believers. Paul in verses 29 and 30 uses the proposition *For* (ὅτι-idea or explanation) of why they would suffer persecution. Part of believing in Christ means that we will also suffer even as Paul suffered. Chapter 2 begins by using the word, *therefore if* (οὖν) a conditional inference that would result only if there united in Christ and the Spirit by having the same love, mind, and unity. That is what will make Paul's joy complete. In verses 3 and 4 he uses the word *but* (ἀλλά) to contrast selfishness and humility. In other words, don't just think about your interest but think about the interest of others. In verses, 27-30 Paul is talking about those who oppose them on the outside when it comes to the gospel but beginning in verse 2:1 the focus is on the church or body of believers. In 2:5-11 Paul gives the supreme example of humility (Jesus Christ). He tells them to have the same mindset as Christ. He uses the word *but* (ἀλλά) to contrast the kind of attitude one has toward authority and power when one has a servant attitude versus a selfish attitude. It is this spirit of servanthood that caused Jesus to die on the cross which has overflowed in the Philippians. Silva states: "Christ did not regard the advantage of his deity as grounds to avoid the incarnation; on the contrary, he was willing to take on human form. *And* (καί-progression) then he lowered himself in servanthood by obeying God to the point of an ignominious death." ² *Therefore* (οὖν-Inference) God has exalted him above every name that

² Moises Silva, "Philippians: Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament", (Baker 2005) p. 99

at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, and every tongue confess that Jesus is Lord. In verses 12-16 he uses the words *So, then* (ὥστε) or a result of Christ's humility work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Then he explains how *for* (ἀλλά-explanation) it's God in you who is willing and doing it. So, that (ἵνα-comparison) they will shine as lights in a crooked and perverse generation. So, that (εἰς-result) Paul's labor with the Philippians would not be in vain. But (ἀλλά-alternative) if that doesn't happen, I will rejoice and you should rejoice with me. Paul then in verses 19-24 switches from the supreme example of humility (Jesus Christ-2:5-11) to a human example of humility (Timothy). *For* ((ἀλλά-explanation) everyone looks out for their own interest *but* (δέ -positive/negative) Timothy has proved himself because he's like a son who has served with me therefore (οὖν-implication) I will send him soon. Paul in verses 25-30 gives another human example of humility. *But* (δέ-alternative) I will send Epaphroditus who is a brother, co-worker, and the person who brought your gift to me. *For* (ἀλλά-explanation) he longer for you and were in distress *because* (ground) you heard he was ill and almost died. *But* (ἀλλά-negative/positive) God had mercy on him. *Therefore* (οὖν-implication) I' am eager to send him so (result) welcome him with joy and honor because (ὅτι -ground) he was willing to sacrifice his life for you like Christ sacrificed he's life for us.

2. Choose a key word from this section to study within the context of Paul's writings. Key Tools: The commentaries required for the course, an analytical concordance, Greek-based dictionary

such as Louw & Nida, a Greek lexicon, such as BDAG, journal articles, etc. *If you are having trouble accessing these resources in Logos, Accordance, Bibleworks, etc., please let me know. Please do not resort to public domain online resources such as Strong's, Thayer's, etc. I will be happy to help you find more recent resources. I want you to have the benefit of using a modern Bible dictionary, lexicon, etc., for this word study. [At least 1/2 page, but may be more, as needed].*

The key word I like to use is emptied (ἐκένωσεν). This is a very interesting word. So, what does it actually mean? The word emptied or void is used only five times in the New Testament. When it says Christ emptied himself does it mean he emptied himself of his glory, his independent exercise of authority, his prerogatives or attributes of deity, or being equal with God? Hawthorne and Martin make a good point. “Christ’s kenosis is found in a hymn using mythopoetic idioms. The full impact of its meaning, therefore, is found not in the part but in the whole. It’s impossible to explain such a mystery because he is both divine and human at the same time and he was obedient to God.”³ Whereas Hellerman states that: “That Christ emptied himself of something is a false assumption to begin with as the modifiers demonstrate emptied (ἐκένωσεν) is intended metaphorically to signify a lowering of rank by means of the incarnation.”⁴

³ Gerald F. Hawthorne and Ralph P. Martin, “Philippians Word Biblical Commentary” (Thomas Nelson 2004) p. 121

⁴ Joseph H. Hellerman, p. 114

3. Articulate five (5) strategic questions raised from this biblical passage that you consider worth investigating further, and give your reasons why you chose these questions (e.g., the theological implications of the answer will affect the kind of disposition one has toward suffering) [**At least 1/2 page, but may be more, as needed**].

Question 1 Why is it so important for the Philippians to be faithful when it comes to preaching the gospel?

Why? Because preaching the gospel is a command and we're promised by our Lord that he will be with us (Matt. 28:18-20). The gospel is the saving message of the world. Paul told the believers in Rome, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek."

Question 2 Why is the unity of the body of Christ so important to the church?

Why? Because the church is the agent that God is using in the world today. So, a body of believers that are grumbling, complaining or arguing will not be successful in advancing the gospel.

Question 3 Why does Paul use the 'Christ Hymn' in this passage of scripture?

Why? Because Christ is the supreme example of what it means to be a servant. This church was struggling with status and honor issues and it kept them from serving one another. The biblical message is "all men shall know you are my disciples if you have love for one another" (John 13:35).

Question 4 What does it mean "to work out your salvation with fear and trembling?"

Why? First, it doesn't mean I could ever do anything to earn my salvation. Now after reading our books this semester, I'm more inclined to say that the context is referring to this church as a whole and not individually. Naturally speaking as I was growing up I knew my earthly father loved me but there was a certain amount of fear and honor that I had for my father. The Bible says our heavenly Father loves us but at the same time, Hebrews tells us that God disciplines wayward children. Paul didn't say only to work out our salvation with fear and trembling but he also says it is God that gives us the will and the power to do what he requires.

Question 5 Why is it so important to learn that the Christian journey is not to be traveled

individually?

Why? Because we cannot make it by ourselves. We need people. The occasion of this letter was for the gospel, unity, and false teaching. When Paul talked about Timothy and Epaphroditus he used terms like son, brother, co-worker, and fellow soldier because they loved one another. Timothy and Epaphroditus were willing to look at the needs of the Philippians and not just their welfare. Epaphroditus could have died serving the needs of the Philippians' believers. May we be willing to give our lives for the gospel if we must.

2. Draw out the significance for today of one of Paul's theological positions. [Use as much space as you see fit for this].

- a. What are the practical or ethical implications of Paul's position for your particular faith communities?
- b. What steps would you take to help your faith community become spiritually formed in this area?

1. Make no mistake the church today still faces the challenges of unity. Economic, social, and racial barriers still separate the church. It's unfortunate that Sunday morning is still the most segregated hour in America. The chasm is even wider as we pick and choose sides based on our political views. For some abortion and a conservative Supreme court are critical issues for many. However, racial discrimination and social justice issues aren't sinful but rather something we should just get over. Jesus Christ is still our supreme example, and his attitude and servant spirit should be every Christian's way of life.

2. The first step I would take is to model or to be the example I want others to be. You can never give people what you don't have. If we want people to become spiritually formed in this area, they must see it in us. First, the reason why this church was transformed is they had the transformer in them. We have to remind people what they already possess. Christ in us the hope of glory (Col. 1:27). Again, this attitude of caring for other needs rather than our own needs was modeled by Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus. The church needs people like Epaphroditus who are willing to die for the cause of Christ if need be.