

Epaphroditus

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 13 December 2017

Preacher: Rev Andrew Coghill

- [0 : 0 0] As some of you will know, we've been looking in previous Wednesdays at what we're calling key links. That is, individuals in the New Testament who act, as it were, as links between the, not the apostolic age, but the apostles themselves.
- And as it were, the next generation of Christians who, not being apostolic and not being those who may have seen Jesus himself in the flesh, are, as it were, the first and second wave of believers who are called upon to believe and to serve on the same basis as we are.
- Not having seen Christ in the flesh, not being themselves apostles, but still those who are called upon to render what service they can with what the Lord has given them.
- Above all, we're called upon to believe and in believing then to serve. And we looked a couple of occasions ago at Lydia in Philippi, back at Philippians again, of course, tonight, and how she was used of the Lord to make her home the base for arguably the first organized church in Europe.
- We looked last Wednesday at Manassas, who was the man of Cyprus, who was to be the host for Paul during his time. His last days as a free man in Jerusalem.
- [1 : 1 9] And now things have moved on, as it were, in the narrative. And Paul is a prisoner at Rome. And from Rome, he is writing to the Philippians, which, if we could say it reverently, I think it's fair to say was his favorite church amongst all the different churches to which he wrote.
- Certainly there is a warmth, there is an affection, there is a closeness because of their devoted love to him, which is never called in question.
- Other churches may struggle with false apostles and with charlatans who are seeking to sort of displace Paul or tell them that he's not a real apostle.
- They should listen to them instead. Philippi, there's no hint of that. With the Philippians, it seems as if they have always trusted and believed the gospel that Paul gave to them.
- It seems as if they have always been, we can use the phrase, red-hot supporters of Paul and his gospel and his ministry. There's no hint of sort of disaffection in that way amongst those in Philippi.
- [2 : 2 6] And from this favorite church, we have the next individual in the key links that we've been looking at, as some of you will have identified, and that is Epaphroditus.
- Epaphroditus was mentioned here at verse 25 by name, and yet the remainder of the chapter, the 25 onto verse 30, is all about him and the service that he has rendered to Paul under difficult circumstances.
- He's mentioned again, of course, in verse 18 of chapter 4. But that's it. Like Manasseh, like Lydia, the mentions of this key link servant of Jesus are very, very limited.
- There's only these two verses in which he's mentioned by name, verse 25 of chapter 2 and verse 18 of chapter 4. And yet, we learn quite a bit about him from just this half dozen verses that we have here.

To begin with, Paul, after saying about how he hopes to join the Philippines in due course, that he is set at liberty and he sees how things will go with him, and how he hopes to send Timothy, and he's got nobody like-minded who will naturally care for your state.

[3 : 37] But in the meantime, I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother and companion in labor and fellow soldier with your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

He longed after you all, was full of heaviness, and so on. Now, when he goes on to say, receive him, verse 29, receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness.

Hold such in reputation. Now, bear in mind that nothing with the Lord is lost. Nothing is ever for nothing. So, it must be considered, under inspiration of God's Holy Spirit, it must be considered by Paul, necessary to, as it were, write this to them, to encourage them to receive Epaphroditus with all gladness, to hold him in reputation, because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death.

Why would they not? Why wouldn't they be pleased to welcome back Epaphroditus, one of their own number, whom they had sent to Paul with their bounty, and that which was to support Paul?

The context almost certainly is that the Philippians, having known now that Paul was in prison, and had been in prison for some time, though they could not go themselves and minister to him and help him and support him while he was in prison, they sent a gift to support his needs.

[5 : 08] They gathered together a collection, they sent it by the hand of one who clearly they trusted, Epaphroditus, and one who was obviously also a brave man, because, you know, let's face it, if you're going to become, as it were, the personal servant, which is also, it's implied, what they sent him for, not just to bring the gift to say, well, there you are, that's a present from Philippi, I'm off back home again, but rather to stay in Rome, and to wait upon Paul to minister to his needs, to become almost his personal servant.

If you're going to do that for somebody who is themselves a prisoner, and somebody who is under suspicion, or on a charge, which is at the end of the day, a capital charge, you know, if Paul had been found guilty and convicted, he would have been executed. There's no question of that, he would have been executed.

And therefore, somebody who is associating with one who is so tainted in the eyes of the authorities, one who is making his business to be round and about the prison, or the house where Paul is a prisoner, becomes, as it were, identified as belonging to him, perhaps guilty of the same things that he, Paul, is guilty of, and runs a very real risk of being stopped, or caught, or questioned, or perhaps flung into prison with him.

There is no accounting for what might happen to somebody who chooses to associate themselves so closely with a prisoner who is under a serious charge.

And this would very much be the case in Rome, a city with which Epaphroditus probably would not be that familiar. You know, it's as if somebody was in the town of London, say, and somebody who'd never been to London made their way to London so that they could visit them, so they could bring them some material support, and try as best they could to be a help to them, to be a support to them.

[7 : 12] But, you know, London's a big place, Rome's a big place, capital of the known world at that time. All the problems and all the difficulties and all the dangers that a big, heaving city has with it.

But Epaphroditus is going, in a sense, into a lion's den. And he's doing it for another Paul on behalf of the church in Philippi. Why would they not want to receive him back?

Well, it has been suggested by some that going to serve Paul in this way, and then coming home again, might be looked on by some as a dereliction of duty.

It might be looked upon by some as though he had just quit. He was just a coward who'd run away from the trouble, from the danger. You know, we know what a dim view Paul himself took of John Mark in the Acts of the Apostles, when he left Paul and Barnabas, and he went back home to Jerusalem.

And Paul took such a dim view of that that he didn't want him back with him on a future journey. And he and Barnabas argued about it. So, you know, for some people might think, well, we don't want quitters, do we?

[8 : 21] We don't want somebody who was meant to be still at his post, and now he's come home. Paul is sending him home. Epaphroditus is not choosing to just give up and come home.

Paul is sending him home. I supposed it necessary to send to you, Epaphroditus. And then, receive him, therefore, in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such in reputation.

Recognize what he has done, what he's done for me, and how he has put his own life at risk, and how he has fallen sick, nearly unto death, and we'll come to the details of that in just a minute.

But we'll see how, in verse 25 here, Paul is boosting up the position, the reputation of Epaphroditus. My brother.

Now, he's not even talking, he'd refer to Timothy as his son in the Lord, but my brother. He puts himself on an even rank with him, and companion in labor.

[9 : 21] So, whatever I'm laboring for in the Lord, Epaphroditus is doing it too. He is, in that sense, Paul would say, my equal. Paul, and fellow soldier. This is a fight, this is a spiritual warfare.

And if I'm fighting it, Epaphroditus is fighting it right alongside me. But you were messenger. And he that ministered to mine once now. Now, the word messenger, to be sent with a message, or to be sent on an end, is the word in the Greek from which we get the term apostle.

An apostle is literally one who is sent. And that, in the original context, is all that it means. It means somebody being sent with a message. Jesus sent out his disciples with the message of the gospel.

And because they were sent out, they were apostles. But this word that is translated, your messenger, it is literally, in the Greek, it is the term apostle. Your apostle.

Now, we have this used elsewhere, of course, in 2 Corinthians chapter 8, verse 23. Whether any to inquire of Titus, he is my partner and fellow helper, concerning you, or our brethren to inquire of, they are the messengers, literally apostles, of the churches.

[10 : 39] Now, here, the English is translated it as messengers. When you get to Romans chapter 16, at verse 7, salute Andronicus and Junia, my kinsmen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles.

It's the same word, but there it's been translated as apostles, who also are in Christ before me. Now, in the Romans case, it's not quite clear whether it's just that the apostles in Jerusalem, they know about Andronicus and Junia.

They are of note amongst the apostles who are in Jerusalem. Or whether it means that they themselves are apostles, counted amongst the number of the proper apostles, capital A, as Barnabas was, even though he wasn't one of the twelve, as Paul was, although he wasn't one of the twelve.

Does it mean in that sense? Or, as some have suggested, the apostles of the churches, like in 2 Corinthians 8.23, the messengers, literally apostles, of the churches and the glory of Christ.

Whether a distinction was made between the apostles of the churches, the messengers, the couriers, if you like, that took the messengers backwards and forwards across the Roman Empire, quite a particular task, quite a skilled and a dangerous task, and one that would call forth certain qualities in people.

[11 : 56] Or whether it is simply that although that is what the term literally meant, by this stage in the Christian era, the term had become specialised, it had become applicable in reality, only to those of a certain rank.

In other words, those who have known Christ himself, or the immediate circle outside of that, including the likes of Barnabas and Paul, and so on. Now, if this is the case, then we can take, Paul is using this in verse 25, your messenger, he's either saying your own apostle, because you sent it, your messenger, or, as may well be the case in the original, as he's striving to build up Epaphroditus' reputation, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellow soldier, but you are literally apostle, and he that ministered to my wants.

I would suggest to you that probably in the original context, the likelihood is that Paul is giving him the title, the status, he's an apostle, if I'm an apostle, he is at my level, because everything in this verse is implying, in the context, Paul's seeking to put Epaphroditus on his own level.

He is seeking to boost up his reputation, so that when he goes back, he's not going back with his tail between his legs, he's not going back as some kind of quitter or failure, he's going back with someone with this glowing testimonial from their favourite apostle, the founder of their church, and he is the one Paul describes in these terms.

So I would suggest to you that I think a legitimate understanding of this term messenger, in verse 25, is literally just, that you are apostle, that he's using it in this term, my brother, and companion and neighbour, and fellow soldier, that you are messenger, in other words, you are apostle, he is boosting up Epaphroditus, and he that ministered to my wants.

[14 : 03] Now here's another term, the term that is translated as ministered means, served me, which is what ministered means. Again, the Greek word that is used here is a very particular term.

It's a term which was used of, not so much a servant as such, but in the original context, according to some commentators, particularly in the secular Greek world, you would, in order to be, the word is *letourgon*, *letourgon*, and it means, one who was of such means, and substance, that, for example, if there was a ship, that needed to be kitted out, fully equipped, for the service of the navy, or, if there was a public work, that needed to be done, you know, a bridge to be built, or, or perhaps a regiment, to be raised for the army, or, or, or to, to feed the, a whole section of the people, a citizen who would choose to do this, of his own bounty, to make this, you know, magnificent contribution, from his own resources, to the public good, from his own resources, to the public good, one who would empty himself, give of himself, give of his bounty, give of his own resources, to be a benefactor, a, a, a, a generous benefactor, and a public servant, in that way, to use his own personal resources, to do that, which was for the public good, a benefactor, which usually, only the rich, and the great, in a Roman city, or a Greek city, were in a position to do, but this is the word, that Paul uses here, he that ministered to my wants, that served me, in the sense of this, public spirited servant, he uses the word, to describe such, a rich benefactor, as though,

Epaphroditus himself, from all that he had, he bestowed, all this, with such, self-sacrificing, generosity, he gave it all, for Paul, and for the Lord's cause, that's the sense, you see, we do struggle, to understand, in the English, what is conveyed, in the original language here, that ministered to my wants, you just think, okay, well he served him, he helped him, he ran errands for himself, no, he emptied himself, he gave everything, that he had to give, just like one of these, public benefactors, these rich men, who would give everything, into, into a public work, or a public benefit, and he that, ministered to my wants, so in this verse 25, he has heaped, praise, and not adulation, but certainly, reputable compliments, upon the head, of the Paphroditus here, he is giving him, a glowing testimonial, as he sends him home, for he longed, after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that he had heard, that he had been sick, now Philippi, is in excess, of 600 miles, from Rome, as the crow flies, now obviously, you can't travel, as the crow flies, in those days, it is a long, and tortuous journey, from Philippi, first of all, to the Adriatic coast, and then when you cross, the restretch of water, you get another long, tortuous journey, all the way up to Rome, so you're looking at, best part of 700 miles, of a journey, both by land, and by sea, now this news, of Epaphroditus, falling sick, has got to go, from Rome, back to Philippi, 600, 700 miles, and then the fact, that they know, that he is sick, has to come back, again to Rome, so this is a huge, elapse of time, a huge amount, of travelling, for this message, to go, first from Rome, back to Philippi, and then again, back from Philippi, to Rome, because he had heard, he knew, because you had heard, that he had been sick, and for him, to hear that you had heard, it's going to go, both ways, the message, is going to go, both ways, so this indicates, something, how ill, he must have been, he was ill, for a long time, and it was all, matter of speculation, as to, you know, what might have, stricken him down, whether it was a fever, whether it was plague, or whatever, some of the, particular illnesses, with which Rome, was especially afflicted, with so many people, living in such, close confinement, and no sanitation, and no medical care, and so on, but at any rate, he longed after, he was full of heaviness, because that he had heard, that he had been sick, now, when it says, for indeed, he was sick, nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have, so much, and so on, we might think, okay, well,

Paul's an apostle, why didn't he just, heal him, you know, that's what he'd done, in the past, Acts 28, verses 8 and 9, came to pass, that the father of Publius, this is when the mother, lay sick of a fever, and a bloody flux, to whom Paul entered in, and prayed, and laid his hands on him, and healed him, so when this was done, others also, which had diseases, in the island came, and were healed, Acts 19, verses 11 and 12, God wrought special miracles, by the hands of Paul, so that from his body, were brought unto the sick, handkerchiefs, or aprons, and the diseases, departed from them, and the evil spirits, went out of them, why doesn't he just do it, for Epaphroditus, if he can do it, for Publius, his father, if he can do it, for other people, who didn't even touch him, but just took aprons, or handkerchiefs, or whatever, from him touching his body, why didn't he do it before, why didn't he do it again now, well, two things I would suggest to you, one, is of course, that if Epaphroditus, has fallen sick, he hasn't fallen sick, in Paul's cell, or in his house, if he's no longer, in a position, to come and minister, to Paul, he must have fallen sick, at his lodgings, or at least, has become, so severely sick, at his lodgings, whenever he is staying, that he can't actually, get the pain, you see that speculation, and maybe Paul, could have, you know, touched a handkerchief, against himself, and taken it to Epaphroditus, why doesn't he heal him that way, why didn't he just pray for him, at a distance, and heal him that way, well I think, there's a clue, in what we read there, in Acts 19,

Acts 19, for example, at verse 11, and 12, God, wrought, special miracles, by the hands of Paul, except from his body, were brought, under the sick handkerchief, and so on, special miracles, it's not like, turning off, and on a tap, it is something, which, Robert didn't say, right, that's you an apostle now, now you have the power, to heal people, from sicknesses, to cast out devils, and so on, Jesus conferred, that power, on his own, apostles, when he sent them out, but even there, although perhaps, they should have had, the power to do it, under all circumstances, when Jesus came down, from the Mount, of Transfiguration, remember, there they were, arguing with the scribes, and fantasies, about a boy, who was lunatic, or epilepsy, or even possessed, however you describe it, and that they could not, cast out the demon, they could not, heal him, whether through their, lack of faith, or insufficiently, spiritually prepared, they couldn't do it, so even, even the ability, the power, that God conferred, on his apostles, at particular times, was not something, that was their, ongoing privilege, and prerogative, the fact, that they were able, to do it, under some circumstances, does not mean, did not mean, that they could do it, anywhere, and at all times, only when the Lord, gave them, the particular power, and ability, which he would do, under particular circumstances, not unlike, if you think back, to the times, of revivals, that in the past, that historically documented, you would often find, if you read into it, read the histories of them, you'll find, that the Lord, used a particular servant, whether a particular missionary, or a particular, lay preacher, or a particular minister, or whatever the case, might have been, whether it was, a special conveniences, or whether it was, a special evangelistic, outreach, or whether it was, just that people, were gathered, for prayer, that's when the spirit, fell on them, now if the Lord, used a particular, individual, as the sort of trigger, as the focus, for such, a particular revival, in a particular place, at a particular time, you would find, that it did not follow, that wherever, that individual, then went, and wherever, he may then, subsequently, set up a music, or that revival, automatically followed, everywhere he went, it wouldn't, and sometimes, it has been remarked upon, by those, who documented these things, how the Lord, might use a particular person, and yet all their years, of ministry beforehand, had shown, very little fruit, and maybe they went, somewhere else after that, to a different congregation, a different parish, or whatever, and nothing special, happened there, it was for a set place, and a set time, that the Lord, unlocked, as it were, the windows of heaven, and poured down, such blessings,

[23 : 39] I would suggest to you, that that is perhaps, the case, with the apostolic healings, and the miraculous works, they are for, a particular time, they are not, the prerogative, of the individual, they are the gift of God, to further his kingdom, I think obviously, when Paul talks about, his own thorn in the flesh, he besought the Lord, fights, that that would leave him, why couldn't he just, put his hand on himself, and heal himself, because he doesn't have, that kind of power, all the time, God gave it to him, at particular times, for particular purposes, so Epaphroditus, was sick, nigh unto death, but God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have, sorrow upon sorrow, I sent him therefore, the more carefully, with the greater care, that when you see him again, ye may rejoice, that I may be, the less sorrowful, now what do we understand, by this sorrow, upon sorrow, well it could mean, and it pauses, simply meaning, one sorrow after another, first of all, his own imprisonment, which is a sorrow to him, because it's, confining, and constricting him, in the work he wants to do, and then if, if Epaphroditus, was to die, that would be, another sorrow upon it, but then it says, verse 28, that I may be, the less sorrowful, now this is the only, hint that we have, in what is otherwise, a very joyful, and praiseful letter, of personal sorrow, we may be inclined, to think, oh it was alright, for Paul in prison, it was a don, oh look how, look how full of joy, and look how full of exuberance, his letters are, and yes he's got problems, in some churches, he has to deal with, you know, he in Philippians, it's all just roses, it's all just, easy going, and he's having such a lovely time, no he isn't, and I think there's a clue, that we might recognize, in chapter 3, at verse 1, finally, my brethren, to write the same, rejoice in the Lord, to write the same things to you, to me indeed, is not grievous, but to you it is safe, and again chapter 4, verse 4, rejoice in the Lord, all the way, and again I say rejoice,

Paul's rejoicing in prison, is not, hey isn't it brilliant, I'm in prison, isn't it great, I'm bound with this chain, and I've got this soldier, guarding me the whole time, yeah, this is what I've always wanted, all my life, no it isn't, nobody likes being in prison, nobody likes being confined, particularly, such a free spirit, as Paul, who knows, who knows, that he has a mission, to the world, he wants to be out there, going to all corners, of the empire, he wants to be taking, the good news, of Jesus Christ, and here he is, stuck in Rome, for two years, and more, unable to go out, now of course, Paul's, disadvantage, is our blessing, because it's why, he was in prison, he wrote most of his letters, and if he'd been able, to go out, and about himself, he probably wouldn't have, written half of these letters, but still, here he has written, and here he is confined, and we have just a glimpse, that for him, this incarceration, is not, a bundle of laughs, that is not, a bed of roses, it is a sorrowful, grievous, burden, that he has to bear, his joy, is not in his imprisonment, or in his conditions, or in the problems, that he faces, or in the sickness, of his friends, his joy, is in the Lord, and whatever, may be the outward conditions, he is always able, to rejoice in the Lord, what he thinks, in chapter three, at the beginning, is going to be, winding down, and bringing the letter, to an end, finally my brethren, rejoice in the Lord, this is what he's saying, then he goes on, to give him lots of advice, and then he goes on, again in chapter four, rejoice in the Lord, and again I say rejoice, it is not in the things, of this world, that any believer, has to rejoice, there's always going to be, conflict, battles, spiritual warfare, so many disappointments, so many setbacks, so much to be, discouraged about, our joy, is not in this world, we may have things, to be encouraged about, from time to time, but our joy, is in the Lord, and Paul here, you just get a glimpse, the mask slips, if we can say that, revelantly for a moment, and we get a little hint, of just how sorrowful, how heavy hearted he is, being in prison, and being confined, and being kept, in this way, that I may be, the less sorrowful,

God had mercy on him, and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrowful, sorrowful, I said, therefore, the more careful, that when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, that I may be, the less sorrowful, and then we have this, that we looked at, at the beginning, receive him therefore, in the Lord, with all gladness, hold such a reputation, because for the work of Christ, he was nigh unto death, and this lets us know, just how serious, the illness was, he was at death's door, and it says, for the work of Christ, he was at death's door, and this implies, that whatever it was, that he was afflicted with, this illness, had come upon him, as a result, of the work he was doing, as a result, of his service, his faithfulness, it had come upon him, because, and in the course, of his duties, of his obedience, of his faithfulness, if he'd been less faithful, maybe he wouldn't have been exposed, to this particular illness, but it was for the work of Christ, that he was afflicted, he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, now, again, we lose a certain amount, of translation, the sense of, not regarding his life, is in the sense of, being reckless, with his life, it's the sense of, the gambler, it's a gambling term, he was gambling, with his life, like those, like those who, who state everything, on just the throw of a dice, now, it's not the throw of a dice, obviously, it's the Lord's providence, but he was gambling, everything, he was taking huge risks, with his own safety, with his own health, with his own welfare, he was gambling, with his life, there's a sense, in which, the Greek word, it's used, it came to be a term, that was used, of particularly, sections of the church, say in times of plague, or in times of natural disaster, when a couple of centuries, later on, in one of the cities, of the Roman Empire, plague,

I think it was Carthage, and all the pagans, of course, were just throwing out their den, and fleeing the city, and the Christian bishop, he organised, his congregation together, and no doubt, they would have to volunteer, who was going to do it, but they set themselves, to tend, and to nurse the sick, and to bury the dead, and of course, they were exposing themselves, to infection, of course, they'd be exposing themselves, to great danger, but this was part of, the word that's used, to translate here, it was almost like, there were those, within the church, who took it upon themselves, to put themselves, in danger, in order to serve others, in order to serve those, who were seriously, seriously infected, with highly contagious diseases, to serve those, who were death's order, to bury the dead, for those, who had died, of highly infectious diseases, and so on, those who took it, upon themselves, to put themselves, at risk, to gamble, with their lives, and that became, almost a term, within the church, of a century or so, later on, because for the work, of Christ, he was nighed to death, not regarding his life, gambling with his life, to supply your lack, of service toward me, now he's not saying, to the Philippians, oh why weren't you here, why weren't you here, to support me, he knew they couldn't be, and he says in chapter 4, verse 18,

I have all, and abound, I am full, having received, of Epaphroditus, the things, which were sent, from you, an odour, of a sweet smell, a sacrifice, acceptable, well pleasing, to God, and he knows, that it has cost, them to send us, and that's why, the very next verse is, but my God, shall supply, all you need, according to his riches, and glory, in Christ Jesus, so Epaphroditus, is one, who has not only, hazarded, his life, and his safety, in making, this dangerous journey, he has put himself, at risk, in associating, with a prisoner, Paul, and he has clearly, exposed himself, to danger, and to disease, and has been, almost snatched away, into death, because of his, faithfulness, his obedience, his risk taking, his hard work, in the service, of Christ, that is what, Epaphroditus, has done, and Paul, gives him, in verse 25, as we see, this glowing testimonial, which is, it's all, that Epaphroditus gets, it's, he's worthy of it, but it's all, that he gets, because he hasn't, mentioned, anyone else, just this letter, just these, brief, few verses, and yet, here we have, this example, of one who, but for this mention, would have remained, nameless, and unknown to us, known to God, but unknown to us, you see, there are those, who changed the world, the likes of Paul, it's fair to say, the Apostle Paul, changed the world, under God, the likes of Martin Luther, changed the world, others, down the course, of Christian history, have changed the world,

[33 : 30] Epaphroditus, didn't change the world, Manasseh, didn't change the world, Lydia, didn't change the world, but they were used, of God, to help, and serve, and work with, those who did, to be, a cog in the machine, to be an instrument, in the Lord's hand, a paintbrush, in the hand, of the artist, they were used, of God, these ordinary, humble, individual souls, key links, between the world, changing apostles, and the ordinary, believers, who by, their faithfulness, overspread, the entire, Roman Empire, to the extent, that eventually, even the pagan, empress, had to give up, the persecution, because the, Christians, were multiplying, faster than the, Roman emperors, could execute them, it was as simple, as that, now, that, multiplication, is happening, now, today, in other parts, of the world, where it isn't being, publicly acknowledged, but in the likes, of India, in the likes, of Afghanistan, in the likes, of Iran, the numbers, of believers, are multiplying, and beginning, to overspread, these countries, still small numbers, at the moment, but the growth, of the ordinary, believers, in the Roman Empire, became, exponential, and that, changed, the world, the ordinary, individuals, like those, whose names, we won't know, the side of eternity, and like those, who linked them, with the apostles, key links, like Epaphroditus, whose faithfulness, and should strive, to follow.

All right.