

## Some longer passages from St Paul

### Readings

*The letter to the Philippians is especially useful in these days. St Paul was under house arrest, confined like ourselves. Epaphroditus brought him support from Philippi and then nearly died himself. Any one of these passages could give us courage in these days.*

But for now I have considered it necessary to send Epaphroditus to you. For he is my brother, coworker and fellow soldier, and your messenger and minister to me in my need. Indeed, he greatly missed all of you and was distressed because you heard that he had been ill. In fact he became so ill that he nearly died. But God showed mercy to him—and not to him only, but also to me—so that I would not have grief on top of grief. Therefore I am all the more eager to send him, so that when you see him again you can rejoice and I can be free from anxiety. So welcome him in the Lord with great joy, and honour people like him, since it was because of the work of Christ that he almost died. He risked his life so that he could make up for your inability to serve me. (Philippians 2:25-30)

Not that I have already attained this—that is, I have not already been perfected—but I strive to lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus also laid hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself to have attained this. Instead I am single-minded: Forgetting the things that are behind and reaching out for the things that are ahead, with this goal in mind, I strive toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Therefore let those of us who are “perfect” embrace this point of view. If you think otherwise, God will reveal to you the error of your ways. Nevertheless, let us live up to the standard that we have already attained. (Philippians 3:12-16)

Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is worthy of respect, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if something is excellent or praiseworthy, think about these things. And what you learned and received and heard and saw in me, do these things. And the God of peace will be with you. (Philippians 4:8-9)

I have great joy in the Lord because now at last you have again expressed your concern for me. (Now I know you were concerned before but had no opportunity to do anything.) I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content in any circumstance. I have experienced times of need and times of abundance. In any and every circumstance I have learned the secret of contentment, whether I go satisfied or hungry, have plenty or nothing. I am able to do all things through the one who strengthens me. Nevertheless, you did well to share with me in my trouble. (Philippians 4:10-14)