

### **Sacrifice and Service**

"Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all." (Philippians 2:17 – "offered" – present, passive, indicative, first person, singular).

Paul saw himself as "poured out" as an offering (Greek *spendo*) on the "sacrifice and service" of these precious friends. This special word is used only one other time, when Paul was "ready to be offered" at his death (2 Timothy 4:6 – same as PH 2:17). What does it mean? Strong's #4689 σπένδω [*spendo* /spen-do/] "1 to pour out as a drink offering, make a libation. 2 in the NT to be offered as a libation. 3 fig. used of one whose blood is poured out in a violent death for the cause of God."

Paul's ministry among the Philippians resulted in the godly lifestyle of the church. They became sacrifices (Greek *thusia* – "a sacrifice, victim") much like the Lord Jesus "hath given himself for us" (Ephesians 5:2) and as we are all told to "present [our] bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is [our] reasonable service" (Romans 12:1).

The service that is commended of the Philippians is a public service undertaken at one's own expense (Greek *leitourgia* – Strong's #3008 λειτουργέω [*leitourgeo* /li-toorg-eh-o/] "1 to serve the state at one's own cost. 1A to assume an office which must be administered at one's own expense. 1B to discharge a public office at one's own cost. 1c to render public service to the state. 2 to do a service, perform a work. 2A of priests and Levites who were busied with the sacred rites in the tabernacle or the temple. 2B of Christians serving Christ,

whether by prayer, or by instructing others concerning the way of salvation, or in some other way. 2c of those who aid others with their resources, and relieve their poverty). Several men in the church at Antioch were noted for their ministry (Acts 13:2 uses the same word), and some in Macedonia and Achaia were also acknowledged for giving contributions to the saints at Jerusalem (Romans 15:26-27).

Paul's joy and rejoicing at the godly activity of the faithful saints at Philippi is the key to understanding the tone of the entire book. He had "poured out" himself, even being "shamefully entreated" during his ministry there (1 Thessalonians 2:2). Yet while writing this poignant letter back to the church, he gives joyful greetings to them at the certain knowledge that his ministry among them has resulted in their sacrifice and service.

Would God that all of us could see our offerings for the sake of others with the same passionate expectation. Often our Lord calls on us to give of ourselves in selfless ways so that others may learn from our example. Sometimes, we must even pour out our own souls (1 Thessalonians 2:8) for the sake of the gospel.

In Acts 16 we have the conversion of the Lydia and the Philippians jailor.