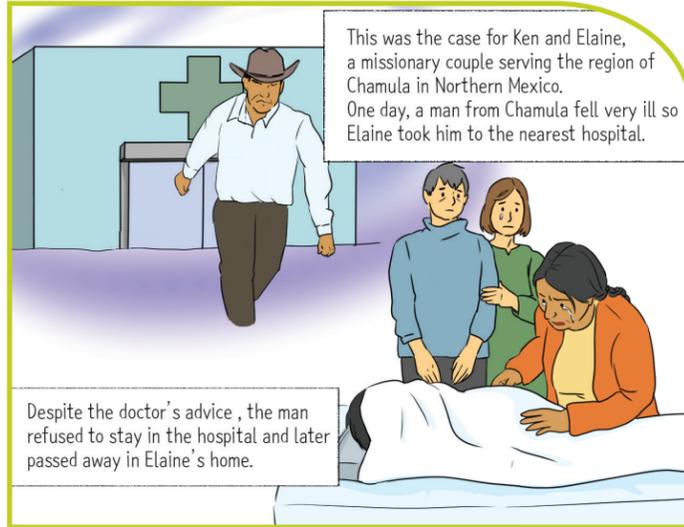
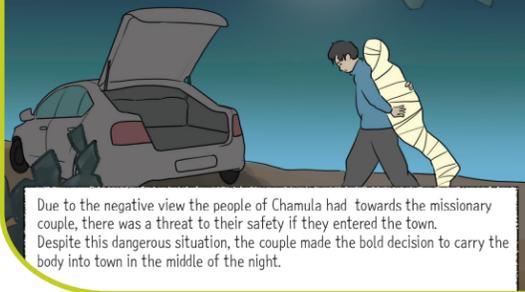


Being Joyful Together

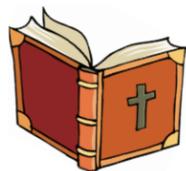
The relationship between Apostle Paul and the Church, as described in Philippians, exemplifies the Christian's way of life. While worldly people may want to be recognized for their good deeds, Christians do not expect any compensation nor recognition from it.



Once the man passed away, his wife became a widow and she had to plan a funeral in the town. However, she could not carry her husband's body.



Several days later, the widow came to see the couple to say 'Cola bal.' In Chamula tradition, when one is indebted to another, they must repay it in full. Therefore, the widow never said 'thank you for not asking me to repay my debt.' Through the actions of the missionary couple, the widow was able to learn about the grace of God that requires no repayment of the debt.



Let's read the Bible

Rom 11:25-36
15:14-25
Phil 1:12-21

We consider together

Dear Lord, as you have loved us with no conditions, let us help and love others without expecting them to pay us back.



In Philippians the word "together" comes out twenty times, and the word "joy" comes out seventeen times. Both of these words are in Philippians chapter 2:17-18, the most important part in Philippians.

"But I will rejoice even if I lose my life, pouring it out like a liquid offering to God, just like your faithful service is an offering to God. And I want all of you to **share that joy**. Yes, you should rejoice, and I will **share your joy**." (NLT)

Paul and the church in Philippi said many more good things about each other than themselves. Paul thought of the church's offerings as most valuable in his purpose of telling others about Jesus, and the church of Philippi considered Paul's ministry the most important and precious as well. They always told each other how thankful they were to work together. They did not want any prize or praise for their work. It is so beautiful to see God's people work like this!

Ken and Elaine Jacobs were working with the Mexican Chamula tribe for a long time. But one day, they heard something surprising from a widow. This was "thank you" in Chamula: "col aval". This was surprising because in the Chamula culture they almost never used this phrase. It means that the person who helped told the person who was helped that they did not need to pay anything back, and that the person who was helped is thankful.

Why did this widow thank the missionaries with the word "col a val"? Because this happened. When the widow's husband was very sick, she asked Elaine for help. The village magician did not know how to heal the

man. Elaine took him to the hospital, and the doctor told the husband to stay in the hospital. But he did not listen to the doctor's advice, left the hospital, and died at the Jacobs' house.

The widow needed to move her husband's body back to the village for his funeral. But the Chamula people did not like the missionaries or any other Chamula people who helped them, so it was hard for Elaine and Ken to help this widow. If the village people found out, then the widow, Elaine, and Ken would all be in danger. But Elaine persuaded Ken to help. Ken placed the husband's body in his trunk and covered it with a worn, white cloth. And when it was 12 AM, he secretly moved the body back to the village. He risked his life to help.

The widow washed the white cloth that had covered her husband's body and gave the missionaries back a clean cloth. And that was when Elaine and Ken Jacobs heard the word "cola val".

Before Christianity came into the hearts of the Chamula people, nobody acknowledged the helper and the helped. Elaine gave love in a way where she didn't expect to get anything in return, and gave her love and skills and time, and the widow was able to know a little bit about who Jesus was.

They sowed the seed of faith with a joyful heart, and finally the Chamula people said, "Jesus has freed us from our sins, and now I understand that we do not need to pay him back for his free gift of eternal life." (pp. 46-55, These Words Changed Everything, by David Aeilts)

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rbbb@wycliffe.ca 416-888-2262

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