

Philippians 2

v2

“be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one harmonious mind and intention.”

- This unity can seem to be so far away and unattainable.
- We look around at so much fleshly teaching, false doctrine, so much pride and division... How can there possibly be any unity?!
- We have all been baptised into Jesus' death and it is His newness of life that we are living in. It is His life that will unite His people, His mind, His heart, His service... Be likeminded with each other as each is like minded with Jesus.

v3

“Let nothing be done through strife, contention or vainglory and conceit/arrogance;”

- NOTHING!
- Let nothing at all be done that would cause friction or division. Let nothing be done that will cause there to be a hindrance to love, unity and fellowship.
- May we be careful to recognise the flesh in ourselves that would take pride or joy in seeing others fail, in doing better than others, in comparing ourselves. Let us be so aware of anything that would lift us up rather than lift up the name and testimony of Jesus.

“in the true spirit of humility let each regard the others as better than and superior to himself [thinking more highly of others than of yourselves].”

- This makes everything so simple. Not easy, but simple. Let me remember that Jesus washed His disciple's feet. Let me remember how much I have been forgiven. Let me be walking in The Spirit of Christ which is the Love of God. May I be “the servant of Jesus Christ”.
- Learning to prefer others is certainly a lesson that takes a lifetime to learn but we should be earnest and urgent in our desire to practice. It is for Jesus' sake, for His testimony and glory. For His sake, to do His will and service and to represent Him faithfully, I want to be obedient in this.

v4

“Let each of you esteem and look upon and be concerned for not [merely] his own interests, but also each for the interests of others.”

- This addition of this sentence counteracts the flesh that might want to hide away from opportunities to serve or prefer others. The believer that may want to live in isolation in the mountain never coming down to see others who he may have to elevate above himself.
- This verse makes it clear that we are to be watchful and attentive of others. Looking for opportunity to serve them and lift them up.
- *1 John 3:17 But if anyone has this world's goods (resources for sustaining life) and sees his brother and fellow believer in need, yet closes his heart of compassion against him, how can the love of God live and remain in him?*
- *Matthew 25:44-45 Then they also [in their turn] will answer, Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You? [45] And He will reply to them, Solemnly I declare to you, in so far as you failed to do it for the least [in the estimation of men] of these, you failed to do it for Me.*

v5-8

“Let this same attitude and purpose and [humble] mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus:”

- Not “put” but “let”! Let HIS LIFE live through you. Remove any obstacle. Put off the old man, mortify your flesh, put on The Lord Jesus Christ and let His mind/heart be in you and through you!
- Let Jesus be in and flow through the branch!

“But stripped Himself [of all privileges and rightful dignity], so as to assume the guise of a servant (slave),”

- These verses are read far too quickly. We really ought to spend some time considering all that Jesus gave for us. Consider all that He gave up for us!
- He left Heaven. The place of perfection, holiness, unity with His Father; A place with no sin, no pain, no darkness, tears or suffering... He freely gave up all the glory, splendour, safety and eternity of Heaven because He so loved us!!
- *He left the splendour of heaven, Knowing His destiny, Was the lonely hill of Golgotha, There to lay down His life for me*
- *Ephesians 2:4 But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us,*
- *John 3:16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

“He abased and humbled Himself [still further] and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross!”

- Give it much thought. Don't glance over these verses with a purely academic understanding. Let your heart perceive a little of the work that our Lord has done.
- Becoming a man was humbling enough. That is, itself, an incredible lowliness, that He would come and identify with us and our experiences. That instead of wiping out this sordid, wasteful, sinful creation He humbled Himself and became like one of us.
- We were fit to be destroyed but He came to live among us and die for us! Understand that the temptation to give up, to be outraged or broken... He was tempted in a very real way to feel these things.
- *Hebrews 4:15 For we do not have a High Priest Who is unable to understand and sympathize and have a shared feeling with our weaknesses and infirmities and liability to the assaults of temptation, but One Who has been tempted in every respect as we are, yet without sinning.*
- Oh, give it time to sink in. Meditate on His word and consider all that He has done and praise Him all the more!! Praise Him, Praise Him Praise Him!!

v9-11

“Therefore [because He stooped so low] God has highly exalted Him and has freely bestowed on Him the name that is above every name,”

- There can be no self-glory before The Father. He hates it! All His wrath is kindled against it!
- *James 4:10 Humble yourselves [feeling very insignificant] in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you [He will lift you up and make your lives significant].*
- *1 Peter 5:5-8 ...Clothe (apron) yourselves, all of you, with humility [as the garb of a servant, so that its covering cannot possibly be stripped from you, with freedom from pride and arrogance] toward one another. For God sets Himself against the proud (the insolent, the overbearing, the disdainful, the presumptuous, the boastful)-[and He opposes, frustrates, and defeats them], but gives grace (favour, blessing) to the humble. [6] Therefore humble yourselves [demote, lower yourselves in your own estimation] under the mighty hand of God, that in due time He may exalt you,*
- Jesus really did stoop so very low. Oh, we have even a glimpse of the revelation of what Jesus did for us. That we might love and praise Him more.

"That in (at) the name of Jesus every knee should (must) bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, And every tongue [frankly and openly] confess and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

- There is only one name! There is no other!
- This statement is presenting Jesus as an option as though He was one of many that we can bow to. This states that every knee MUST bow to only Jesus!! For He alone is Lord, He alone has earned that right and that position. He alone is the mediator to The Father.
- No other name is to be bowed to! No other name is to be called upon. No other name is to be confessed to and acknowledged as Lord!
- There is no other name that can hear, that can compare, that can intercede on our behalf.

v12

"...work out (cultivate, carry out to the goal, and fully complete) your own salvation with reverence and awe and trembling (self-distrust, with serious caution, tenderness of conscience, watchfulness against temptation, timidly shrinking from whatever might offend God and discredit the name of Christ).

- What do we know of fear and trembling in maintaining our walk with The Lord? We are apt to take everything for granted and presume that because we made a decision one time that God is obligated to bless us. May we never take Almighty God so lightly!!
- We are instructed here to have a mighty reverence regarding the saving of our souls. It is not merely a one-time transaction, but it is the beginning/entrance of a life that needs to be worked out!
- We are instructed to give great care, much time, thought and attention to nurturing and developing this life.
- Let us be careful of becoming complacent and comfortable with our relationship to The Creator and our Redeemer, our Heavenly Father. May we fear, reverence and love Him always.

v13

"[Not in your own strength] for it is God Who is all the while effectually at work in you [energizing and creating in you the power and desire], both to will and to work for His good pleasure and satisfaction and delight."

- Oh, Hallelujah and praise The Lord that He has not left us to do this on our own. We would fail quickly and be doubly damned!!
- His loving kindnesses and tender mercies are beyond our measure and His compassions they fail not! Oh, thank you Lord that you are our life source, our sustainer, our provider and our strength! You are our life!!
- *Colossians 1:27 ...which is Christ in you, the hope of glory:*
- *2 Peter 1:3 According as His divine power has given to us all things that pertain unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who has called us to glory and virtue:*
- We need only let His life live through us. His life will LIVE! His light SHINES!! May we learn to get our flesh/self out of the way.

v14-15

"Do all things without grumbling and fault finding and complaining [against God] and questioning and doubting [among yourselves], [15] That you may show yourselves to be blameless and guileless, innocent and uncontaminated, children of God without blemish (faultless, unrebutable) ... seen as bright lights (stars or beacons shining out clearly) in the [dark] world"

- We cannot accomplish this by living in the flesh. Can we remember one day or one week where we went without complaining or grumbling about something? Our flesh loves to complain, loves to grumble against any effort or inconvenience. But consider how this looks and sounds to those around us. This conversation and attitude does not demonstrate victory, peace and joy in Jesus. We look and sound just like the hopeless world. We look and sound just like them because it is the same flesh that is being allowed to demonstrate itself.
- As we die to self and allow Jesus Christ's life to live through us, we will find that naturally our attitude and conduct is different. As we die to self and take up our cross, we will find that His life takes over and begins to live through us. It won't be a striving, a self-effort in the flesh... It will be HIS LIFE and HIS LIGHT living and shining through us! This then is HIS testimony, and He will be glorified in our lives!

v16

"Holding out [to it] and offering [to all men] the Word of Life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run, neither laboured in vain."

- There is the instruction to hold on carefully to The Word of Life. That is Christ and His Word. We care to know it, love it and cling to it. God spoke all creation into being and God spoke His Word. Let us remember the Life-giving power of His word as we read it.
- Paul's rejoicing was not in setting up a church congregation. He wasn't rejoicing that he had simply found people who would listen to him. This is made all the clearer in the next verse.
- Paul's rejoicing and proof of being productive was in a people who truly were clinging to Jesus Christ and were good stewards with what had been given to them. They were the good servants trading with their minas and making profit for The Master. Paul wasn't counting "decisions" He was looking for disciples, those who would have Christ and share Him!

v17-18

"Even if [my lifeblood] must be poured out as a libation on the sacrificial offering of your faith [to God], still I am joyful [to do it]"

- More important to Paul than his own life were the people whom God loved and came for. Sharing the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ and seeing that Jesus received the reward of His suffering was a more precious to Paul than himself.
- Paul truly loves Jesus. He truly loves the people that Jesus loves. Paul is practicing what he is preaching. He is preferring them above himself. The Philippians are far more precious to Him and their abiding in Jesus is a far greater prize than his own freedom or even life.
- Can we say we feel like this about anyone? And understand that this is not some special characteristic from Paul. This is the life of Christ in a believer, and we ought to demonstrate the same life quite naturally as we die to ourselves and let The Lord Jesus live through us.

v19-23

"For I have no one like him [no one of so kindred a spirit] who will be so naturally/genuinely interested in your welfare and devoted to your interests."

- What a powerful and very beautiful testimony to have. A testimony just like Paul's.
- Let this be clear evidence to us that Paul was not a special man but that He served a powerful and mighty God. That the Gospel of Jesus Christ works in every believer who will truly believe and yield their lives to His service.
- Timothy has received The Gospel and He has received the same Spirit of God. He has the same life living within him and he is learning to let The Lord have His perfect work in Him.

"For the others all seek [to advance] their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ (the Messiah)."

- Isn't it true when we look around us or even at ourselves. So many are living for their own comfort and gain. They are advancing their own flesh by providing for their own self interests. Giving just enough to feel good and serving just enough to not be an inconvenience. As long as they/we can have our own time and our own lives we will do just enough... We are preferring ourselves above others.

"how as a son with his father he has toiled with me zealously in [serving and helping to advance] the good news (the Gospel)."

- Psalm 68:5 A father of the fatherless... is God in His holy habitation. [6] God places the solitary in families and gives the desolate a home

- 1 Peter 5:2-5 Tend (nurture, guard, guide, and fold) the flock of God that is [your responsibility], not by coercion or constraint, but willingly; not dishonourably motivated by the advantages and profits [belonging to the office], but eagerly and cheerfully; [3] Not domineering [as arrogant, dictatorial, and overbearing persons] over those in your charge, but being examples (patterns and models of Christian living) to the flock (the congregation). [4] And [then] when the Chief Shepherd is revealed, you will win the conqueror's crown of glory. [5] Likewise, you who are younger and of lesser rank, be subject to the elders (the ministers and spiritual guides of the church)-[giving them due respect and yielding to their counsel]. Clothe (apron) yourselves, all of you, with humility [as the garb of a servant, so that its covering cannot possibly be stripped from you, with freedom from pride and arrogance] toward one another. For God sets Himself against the proud (the insolent, the overbearing, the disdainful, the presumptuous, the boastful)-[and He opposes, frustrates, and defeats them], but gives grace (favour, blessing) to the humble.

- Timothy is often held up on a pedestal as a young hero. Some look to their own "Timothy" and are quick to promote them and pass on to them responsibility as they are young, keen, full of energy, understanding of the young world in their dress and taste...

- But consider the teaching and tutorage that Timothy went through and was subject to. Timothy sat and learned at the feet of the apostle. He watched Paul's life and his dealings with God and man. Timothy learned to be subject and to serve and he saw also how to be in authority. Timothy was subject to Paul and his teaching. Timothy never brought some new doctrine or new revelation, but he taught The Gospel of Jesus Christ that had been passed down to him.

- Timothy's testimony is truly a beautiful, Godly one and it is lovely to read of him. But let us remember that it is beautiful because of His submission and subjection to The Lord and to Paul. Timothy's testimony is beautiful because of his humility to serve the same Gospel, not because he made a "cooler" name for himself. Young people MUST be subject to their elders and masters. They MUST learn the ways of their leaders and the "old" Gospel message! They MUST learn the patience, faithfulness, compassion, experience and leadership of their elders... This takes much practical time. The "church of tomorrow" is all the church of today!! We are a body, and the body must move forward in unity and as a single, functioning unit. Each one has its divine appointment and purpose!

v25-30

"my brother and companion in labour and my fellow soldier, as well as [having come as] your special messenger (apostle) and minister to my need."

- Epaphroditus has a different role to Timothy. He is described differently but with no less encouragement.

- He is a brother in the family of God. He is a labourer in the Gospel. He is a soldier, fighting in prayer. He is a minister/messenger of comfort and encouragement to Paul.

- When we consider who Paul is and how intimately he knows God we can understand that these descriptions are not mere platitudes. Epaphroditus is a Godly man and a vessel unto honour in His Father's service.

"He certainly was ill [too], near to death. But God had compassion on him, and not only on him but also on me, lest I should have sorrow [over him] coming upon sorrow."

"For it was through working for Christ that he came so near death, risking his [very] life to complete the deficiencies in your service to me [which distance prevented you yourselves from rendering]."

- His heart preferred others. He gave his health, the last of his strength to strengthen, work for, encourage and comfort Paul. He preferred the work of The Gospel over his own convenience and comfort. He prioritised serving over self.

- He is a man who loves The Lord, given to His glory. These things cannot be done by or said of a man who is living in the flesh.

"Welcome him [home] then in the Lord with all joy, and honour and highly appreciate men like him,"

- These servants can be so often overlooked. No title, no great name... But they are precious and mighty servants in humility, faithfulness and love.

- We must remember that Paul was not a great man but he was a servant to a great God and fulfilled His role/purpose. Epaphroditus also was not a great man but was servant to a great God and equally fulfilled His role/purpose. One is not greater or better than the other. They both ministered to and needed the other. It is easy to think much of Paul because of his role and to overlook such a simple but powerful testimony. Let us not make that mistake and to glory in Jesus testimony in each other.