

New Hope Missionary Baptist Church – Southfield, Michigan
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#hope in the field

Bible Study Series: Philippians
Unified Hope: Loving Christ as we Love One Another

Imitating Christ's Humility - Philippians 2:1-11

Reflection Questions:

A. How do divisions affect the church's witness and its growth?

B. One of the seven things that God hates is anyone who sows discord among brethren. How can you serve as a peacemaker if you encounter such behavior in the church?

Key Terms:

- Attitude
- Believers
- Compassion
- Confession
- Death
- Deity
- Divisiveness
- Encouragement
- Example
- Equality
- Exaltation

- Factions
- Fellowship
- Fruit
- God
- Holy Spirit
- Humanity
- Humility
- Incarnation
- Jesus Christ
- Joy

- Love
- Name
- Obedience
- People
- Preincarnate
- Pride
- Self-Centeredness
- Serving
- Superiority
- Unity

Introduction

Verses 1-18 continue the thought from 1:27-28. Paul wanted unity in the Philippian church so they could carry on the ministry of the gospel; but such unity would only be possible by being united with Christ so that there would be harmonious relationships among the believers themselves.

Important Emphasis

Paul in his initial writings in Chapter 2 mentions a word that we need to take heed to and that is Encouragement. (Phil. 2:1) "if there is any encouragement in Christ". This is not just affirming words alone; no this is about the divine depth and power of these words which are backed by the power of Christ.

The word encouragement in the transliterated form is paraklesis which means comfort or to exhort. This is an action of emboldening another in belief or course of action. This is the intention of **Building someone up in Christ**.

Then Paul doubles down on encouragement in a different way he says

NASB Consolation of love
NRSV Consolation from love
NKJV Comfort of love

Consolation or the word comfort in its etymology means encouraging, pertaining to that which offers encouragement for alleviation. Paul is saying we encourage so that we can take something off of you.

There are two major purposes or functions of encouragement, To build someone up in Christ and to Take something (load) off of them. Matthew 11:28 Jesus came to do both of these and Paul is perpetuating the pattern at the church of Phillippe.

Lesson Outline

- I. Christ, the Encouragement of God (1-5)
- II. Christ, the Embodiment of God (6-8)
- III. Christ, the Exalted of God (9-11)

Exploring the Text

I. Christ, the Encouragement of God (1-5)

¹Therefore if there is any consolation [encouragement] in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, ² fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. ³ Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. ⁵ Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, ... (NKJV)

Paul asked four (4) rhetorical questions. These conditions already existed in the Philippian church:

Therefore, if there is---

1. Any consolation [encouragement] in Christ,
2. Any comfort of love,
3. Any fellowship of the Spirit,
4. Any affection and mercy,

fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

The word translated _____ is the same word when He [Jesus] spoke of the Holy Spirit as the Counselor or Comforter (**John 14:16**). Every believer has received encouragement, exhortation, and comfort from Christ. That common experience ought to **unite** the Philippians.

Fruitfulness in Fellowship in the Spirit – Paul is implying that those who are guided by the spirit engage in these actions of spirituality. This is what we should find ourselves doing in our fellowship in Christ!

Same Mind

Same Love

Same Spirit

Same Purpose

When a person believes in Jesus Christ as Savior, he or she receives the Holy Spirit. Each believer has personal _____ with the Holy Spirit in his or her

private life; all the believers are united by the same Spirit in times of fellowship. Because there is only one Spirit, there can be only one body (**Ephesians 4:4**). Factions or _____ have no place in the body of Christ. (See also **2 Corinthians 13:14**.)

The four (4) results of unity listed in 2:1, are here joined by four (4) goals for _____ in the church. The Philippians had given Paul great joy (1:4). Yet Paul was aware of a lack of unity in the Philippian church. For example, believers were demonstrating a false sense of spiritual _____ over others (2:3), and some were not working harmoniously with others (4:2). Paul knew that even the beginnings of _____ could cause major problems unless the “cracks” were repaired quickly.

The word _____ means harmonious. Living in harmony, this is a blending of one sound that comes from different voices. One's voice is not lost rather it gives way to a more powerful message!

The Holy Spirit should unite the believers into one body. As they stand firm in the Spirit, they overcome small differences and work forcefully toward one purpose—a common goal (3:14-15). The church's goal was to _____ the _____. A unified church is a formidable fortress against any enemy. The very unity of the Philippian church would ensure that it could stand against any _____ or false teaching that might come its way.

Members in the Philippian church were causing discord by their attitudes or actions. They desired recognition or distinction, not from pure motives, but merely from being _____ (see also 1:17). Those kind of people cannot work with others in the church in like-mindedness and love (2:2). When people are selfishly ambitious and trying only to make a good impression, they ruin a church's unity.

While _____ and conceit can ruin unity, genuine humility can build it. Being _____ involves having a true perspective about ourselves in relation to God (see **Romans 12:3**), which in turn gives us a correct perspective on our relationships with others. Being humble does not mean that we should put ourselves down. Instead, humility is a healthy respect for who God is, and then a healthy respect for ourselves because of what God did on our behalf.

Understanding the Text (2:1-5)

1. What four qualities mark unity with Christ? (2:1)

2. How can Christians show their unity in Christ in practical ways? (2:2)

3. What did Paul say about self-centeredness? (2:3-4)

4. What did Paul encourage believers to have? (2:5)

II. Christ, the Embodiment of God (2:6-8)

⁶...who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

In verse 2:6 Paul describes the status of Christ as he existed before the creation of the world—that is, his _____ state. Jesus Christ was God. Everything God is, Christ is; the equality is in essential characteristics and divine attributes. But Jesus did not demand and cling to his rights as God but set them aside for a time in order to become human.

When Christ was born, God became a man. Jesus was not part man and part God; he was completely human and completely divine. Christ is the perfect expression of God in human form. As a man, Jesus was subject to place, time, and other human limitations. What made Jesus' _____ unique was his freedom from sin. He did not give up his eternal power when he became human, but he did set

aside his glory and his rights. In his full humanity, we can see everything about God's character that can be conveyed in human terms.

Christ voluntarily gave of himself, making himself nothing. The _____ was the act of the preexistent Son of God voluntarily assuming a human body and human nature. He did not give up his _____ to become human. Yet upon his birth as a human being, he took the humble position of a slave. What appeared on earth was not a prince in a palace, or a royal king, or a wealthy and scholarly teacher; instead, Jesus' entire life was devoted to serving others (**Isaiah 53:2**; **Mark 10:45**). Jesus' glory and divinity were veiled by his humanity and mortality.

When Jesus took on a human form, he then humbled himself to accomplish that task for which he had come—to die for sinful humanity in order that they might have eternal life. He died a criminal's death, but he was not a criminal. He took on that humiliation so that we might be saved. He died by the worst possible torture— _____ by _____.

Death on a cross was the form of capital punishment that Romans used for notorious criminals. It was excruciatingly painful and humiliating. Prisoners were nailed or tied to a cross and left to die. Death might not come for several days, and it usually came by suffocation when the weight of the weakened body made breathing more and more difficult. Jesus died as one who was cursed (**Galatians 3:13**).

Understanding the Text (2:6-8)

5. What did Christ set aside when He became a man? (2:6-8)

6. How did Jesus limit Himself? (2:6-8)

7. How was Christ fully God and fully man at the same time? (2:6-8)

8. How is Christ the best example of humility and unselfishness for us? (2:6-8)

III. Christ, The Exaltment of God (2:9-11)

⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Because Christ willingly set aside his glory to totally obey the Father's will, God raised him up to the heights of heaven. God did not leave Christ in the grave but raised him from the dead, brought him back up to heaven, and _____ him (see **Acts 2:33**; **Ephesians 1:20-22**; **Hebrews 1:3**). God gave Jesus all authority (**Matthew 28:18**; **John 5:27**) and made him the Lord of both the dead and the living (**Romans 14:9**).

That Jesus' _____ is above every other name refers not to Jesus' title, but instead to his name that signifies his person. In the Bible, names often reveal a person's character. Jesus' dignity and honor are above all others. Because Jesus did not cling to his _____ with God (2:6) but willingly obeyed God in order to carry out the plan of salvation, God honored that obedience by giving Jesus this name above all names.

In keeping with Jesus' _____ and power, one day every knee will bow before him. In heaven refers to the angels; on earth means all humanity; under the earth refers to the underworld—possibly to unsaved people who have died or to demons. Those who love Jesus will bow in adoration and worship; those who refused to acknowledge him will bow in submission and fear (see also **Ephesians 4:9-10**; **Revelation 5:13**). This will take place at Jesus' second coming when the forces of evil will be completely defeated and God will form a new heaven and a new earth (**Revelation 19:20-21**; **21:1**).

Every tongue will confess the basic truth of Christianity: Jesus Christ is Lord. This does not mean that eventually everyone will be saved. Every tongue in heaven, on earth, and under the earth will recognize Jesus as Lord, either because of belief or

because of mere acknowledgment of the undisputable fact. No tongue will be silent; no knee will remain unbowed. All of creation will recognize Jesus Christ as Lord.

Understanding the Text (2:9-11)

9. How did God exalt Jesus? (2:9)

10. How did Christ win sovereignty over all people and over everything? (2:10)

11. What confession will every person make? (2:11)

Life Application

12. What practical steps can you take this week to demonstrate humility in your relationships?

13. For the sake of unity in Christ, what petty squabbles should you clear up right away? How?

Resources: Adult LessonMaker Questions and Life Application New Testament Commentary