

Philippians 2:1-11 | 8/28/16

- Spiritual unity through Christ. | Philippians 2:1
 - Paul understood the importance of Christian unity.
 - That it is important for Christians to share the same mind, to seek the same goals and to work together for the great purposes of God.
 - Unity is vital because it allows Christians to become stronger together, instead of us all going our own directions and doing our own things.
 - Christians working together share the same goals in sharing the Gospel with the lost world, strengthening our fellow Christians to bring them to maturity and to show the love of God.
 - In these verses Paul shows us what Christ has done within us because of His Holy Spirit.
 - Because of what He had done this will provide the ability for Christians to have unity.
 - Paul's "if" clauses showing the unity we have with Christ and other believers.
 - Paul opens this section of Scripture with four "if" clauses. These statements are not something that Paul is questioning, but we can equally see the word "since" being used.
 - These "if" statements are all very much true, they are truths of Christ.
 - Paul was using a Greek convention in making these statements, if this was done in English today we might see these in the form of questions that all have the answer of "yes".
 - Is there any encouragement in Christ? - YES
 - Is there any consolation (comfort) of love? – YES
 - Is there any fellowship with the Spirit? – YES
 - Is there any affection and compassion (mercy)? – YES
 - Paul's point he was wanting us to understand is that all of these statements are true of Christ and that they will actually bring unity among the Christians.
 - **Because all Christians share in these from Christ, we are all bonded together spiritually.**
 - Christian unity is ONLY possible because of Christ and the same Spirit that we all share.
 - There is encouragement in Christ
 - Christ lives within us through the Holy Spirit. He provides us encouragement and seeks to strengthen us in our Christian walk and when we are going through a difficult time.
 - This encouragement is felt by all Christians. We all receive the same encouragement from Christ through the Spirit.
 - There is consolation (to be consoled) or comfort from love
 - Christ reminds us of His presence through the love that He shows us.
 - Christ's always shows his love for us, not only just encouragement but He shows us true love.
 - **Christ is always with us and He provides us great comfort through His everlasting love.**
 - This love is felt by all Christians. We all receive the same love from Christ and it is this unique and special love that bonds us together.
 - It is not a "worldly" love.
 - There is fellowship with the Spirit
 - All Christians share in a spiritual fellowship with one another, we all have eternal life through Christ.
 - With us having this same Spirit we also have common interests.

- We are all burdened for the salvation of others.
 - We desire to obey Christ and to serve others.
 - There is affection and mercy
 - God shows all Christians great compassion and mercy.
 - This does affect us all and causes us to have the spiritual unity.
- **If the same Holy Spirit is showing all Christians encouragement, love, compassion, fellowship and mercy how does this bring about spiritual unity?**
- Paul's plea for the unity of the believers | Philippians 2:2
 - Paul knowing these statements are all true, desired for the Christians to then be of the same mind and to have the same love. He desired for the Christians to be unified.
 - Paul's joy was tied to the unity of the believers.
 - Since all Christians experience the same encouragement, love, fellowship and mercy from Christ we should all be like minded and treat one another as Christ has treated us
 - This is the same desire that Peter had.
 - 1 Peter 3:8
 - "Now finally, all of you should be like-minded and sympathetic, should love believers, and be compassionate and humble,"
 - It interesting that both Paul and Peter felt the same way about the unity of the Christians.
 - They both saw its significance and how important it is that we all come together for a common purpose.
 - By doing these things we will glorify God.
 - Romans 15:5-6
 - "Now may the God who gives endurance and encouragement allow you to live in harmony with one another, according to the command of Christ Jesus, so that you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ with a united mind and voice."
 - This obedience brings glory to God when we are united with the same mind and voice.
 - **God desires for us to glorify Him with a united mind and voice.**
- **Why do you think unity is so important? What are the benefits?**
- Christian humility that brings unity | Philippians 2:3-4
 - We know that unity can be hard even among Christians.
 - That even in our church there are times where we are just not very unified.
 - People have different opinions and sometimes there is division even among our brethren.
 - Paul here however, gives us the key that will bring unity amongst the Christians.
 - This key to unity is simply humility
 - Paul implores the Christian to show humility and to consider others more important than ourselves.
 - **It is the selfless act of being humble that Paul implores us to use, which is the key to the unity that Christ has called us to.**
 - Paul's request for humility is something that goes against our natural tendencies.
 - These teachings are quite foreign to those in the world, in fact it goes directly against our selfish natures.
 - **We naturally want to look to be inward focused, to have our interests first.**
 - But that is not what Christ taught, Jesus gave us the perfect example of what true humility looks like and it certainly was not self-focused.

- Selfishness is the opposite of humility and it prevents unity.
 - The quickest way to break down any sort of unity that a group of Christians might have is to let selfishness take root in our hearts.
 - When all we care about is ourselves unity does not have a chance.
- So what does “humility” mean?
 - Humility by definition-
 - Is to be humble, to have a modest or low view of one’s own importance.
 - Paul’s definition-
 - Consider others to be more important than yourself, to look out for the interest of others.
 - Jesus Christ’s definition-
 - Matthew 7:12
 - “Therefore, whatever you want others to do for you, do also the same for them—this is the Law and the Prophets”
 - Golden rule
 - Humility is love
 - Scripture also tells us that when we are showing true humility and looking out for the interest of others, that this is also showing love.
 - Galatians 5:13
 - “For you were called to be free, brothers; only don’t use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but serve one another through love. For the entire law is fulfilled in one statement: Love your neighbor as yourself.”
 - **How do you see the command of Jesus to do unto others what you want them to do to you? How does this look practically?**
 - **Does acting on this command of Jesus bring unity? How?**
 - We all desire to be cared for, shown mercy, praised, commended and to be shown love.
 - These things that we desire from others for ourselves is what we should do unto others without expecting it in return. This is showing true humility.
 - This is the humility that is shown to us in Christ’s example.
- Jesus Christ made the ultimate act of selfless humility and love. | Philippians 2:5-11
 - There is not greater example of humility and love for others than the example given to us by Jesus Christ.
 - Romans 5:8
 - “But God proves His own love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us!”
 - In these verses Paul gives us the ultimate and perfect example of what humility looks like through the actions of Jesus Christ.
 - ***Read Philippians 2:5-11***
 - Jesus set aside the benefits of His deity and assumed the form of a slave for us.
 - Jesus did not have to come to the cross and die for our sins.
 - This was not something that He had to do because we deserve the punishment and condemnation that we should receive.
 - **Jesus being God certainly would never have to experience human pain and suffering.**
 - But He came in the likeness of men, took on human flesh with all of its weaknesses and submitted himself.

- He took on the form of a lowly servant, not the form of an earthly king.
 - Luke 9:58
 - “Jesus told him, “Foxes have dens, and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay His head,”
 - Jesus came to serve others, not to be served.
 - Matthew 20:28
 - “Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life—a ransom for many.”
- Jesus humbled Himself in obedience
 - Jesus chose to humble Himself instead of using His divine power to assert Himself.
 - He obediently went to the cross and suffered.
- Jesus looked out for the interest of others.
 - Jesus showed His perfect act of humility by looking out for the interest of others.
 - Jesus saw the depravity of man, that we on our own were not capable of saving ourselves. That we are all destined to receive the punishment that we rightly deserve.
 - But Christ set aside the benefits that came with His deity and looked out for the lowly sinners.
 - He humbly sacrificed Himself for us.
- This is the example that Christ has given us, to show the same selfless humility that He has shown us.
 - If Jesus Christ (being God) could be humble for others, then why can’t we?
 - Christ has called the Christians to also show this same humility in our character.
 - **If we compare Christ’s perfect humility to our own, how do they compare?**
 - **If Christians were to consistently show more humility as did Christ, how would that affect the world we live in today?**
- Humility was demonstrated and taught by Christ because this is the only way to have true unity.
 - The opposite of being humble is to be selfish and to uplift oneself.
 - It is very hard to have unity when everyone simply cares for themselves. If ourselves is our focus, we have no room to love or care for others.
 - Unity is immediately broken down.
 - But if we show humility and put others before ourselves then we will have great unity, because everyone will look out for others.
 - We can never have unity if we are selfish and focused only on ourselves, this is why Scripture teaches us to be humble, so that we can have great unity.
 - 1 Peter 5:5-6
 - “In the same way, you younger men, be subject to the elders. And all of you clothe yourselves with humility towards one another, because God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that He may exalt you at the proper time,”