

Week 4 - Unity in Christ: Humbled to be Exalted (2:1-11)

A. Unity in the Church (v. 1-4)

1. The Motives (The “ifs” of v. 1)
 - a. Encouragement in Christ
 1. Our Union with Christ motivates us to pursue unity
 - b. Comfort from love (Love of God through Christ)
 1. His love for us brings us great comfort and is continually given to us (Romans 5:5). We love him and others in return.
 - c. Fellowship in the Spirit
 1. The Spirit is our Seal and our Guarantor of our inheritance and is the source of our spiritual power and fruit (Ephesians 1:13-14; Acts 1:8; 1 Cor. 12:4-11)
2. The Benefit to the Shepherd (v. 2)
 - a. “Make my joy Complete”
 1. Through Spiritual Unity we provide joy and encouragement to those who lead us and demonstrate love, honor, and respect for their faithful work. Which we are commanded to do. (1 Thess 5:12-13; Hebrews 13:17)
3. The Evidence (v. 2b)
 - a. Being of the Same Mind
 1. The believer is called to actively strive to achieve a common understanding and genuine agreement.
 2. We can have this same mind through the Word of God (1 Cor. 2:16) and do so when we walk according to the Spirit (Romans 8:4-5)
 - b. Having the Same Love
 1. We are called to love equally - this is the Agape kind of love that is not a love of affection or attraction but is a love of the will.
 2. Such Love manifests itself through actions of benevolence and kindness one to another. (1 John 3:14)
 - c. Being in Full Accord
 1. This speaks of being united one to another. We live in harmony with other believers and have a unity of purpose as we pursue the LORD with all our heart, mind and strength.
4. The Work (v. 3-4)
 - a. Negative: Do nothing out of Rivalry or Conceit
 1. *eritheia* (greek word that means selfishness) - it is the self interest that regards oneself before and above any other. *kenodoxia* (greek word meaning vainglory) - it is a highly exaggerated self-view.
 - a. Rivalry is about pursuing selfish goals and conceit refers to pursuing personal glory.
 2. Such Selfishness and self view produces a host of problems in our lives and our churches and can destroy the Spiritual unity. (1 Cor. 1:10-13; Gal 5:19-20; James 3:16)
 - b. Positive: Have Humility and Count others more significant than yourself.
 1. The opposite of Selfish Ambition and is a mark of a true believer who could not count others as more significant than self in their flesh and pre-conversion state.
 2. We must look out for others and their interests and try to promote the growth and development of every believer.

3. An understanding of our own hearts and sinfulness cannot lead to boasting and should lead to humility (1 Cor 15:9; Eph. 3:8; 1 Tim 1:15)
5. The EXAMPLE - Our Motivation (v. 5-11)
 - a. Jesus Example
 1. Stage 1 - Christ's Glory from eternity past as GOD the Son
 2. Stage 2 - Christ's Incarnation (humility)
 - a. He Humbled Himself
 - i. He made himself nothing
 - ii. He made himself a servant
 - iii. He made himself a man
 - iv. He humbled himself to death on a cross
 - b. He did not set aside his Deity at any point but rather he laid aside the glories and riches of heaven and added humanity to his deity so he was Fully God and Fully Man.
 - c. His motives for his incarnation was His concern for the elect and His love for the Father.
 - d. How large was the gap between the throne and the cross? What great love is displayed in the Incarnation? What awe comes as we consider such great Humility and Love displayed in this Work of CHRIST!
 3. Stage 3 - Christ's Exaltation
 - a. After completing his Work of Redemption by dying on the cross, resurrecting from the grave, and ascending to the Father in heaven (Acts 1:1-11) He is now Reigning as King and is exalted at the right hand of the Father.
 - b. He Has the name above every name (LORD)
 - c. Every knee shall bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord of All.

B. In Class Work:

1. Together - Read the section from this week (Philippians 1:1-2:11). Focus on the particular section of discussion (2:1-11) and discuss together.

C. Questions to Consider

1. The gospel is very precisely stated in the Scriptures. In the light of this section, how would you deal with a person who says that the gospel is so ambiguous that it is impossible to discuss it?
2. What practical steps could you, or your church leaders, take to cultivate the spirit of greater unity in your church?
3. How does Christ's example as given in Philippians 2 motivate us to humbly serve others and devote ourselves to the work of the Gospel?

D. For Further Study / Homework

1. HOMEWORK: Read Philippians 1:1-2:30 this week with a focus on 2:12-30 for next week's study. Read Daily. Write down, highlight, or note questions, comments, or things you notice in the text throughout the week to discuss next Sunday.
2. Paul was fond of using military imagery for the Christian life. Read Ephesians 6:10-20. How does he describe the Christian's enemies? What are the pieces of armour that he identifies?
3. With the phrase 'even the death of the cross' (2:8), Paul indicates the special nature of Jesus' crucifixion. What made the death of Jesus special? Read Galatians 3:13; Romans 5:6-8;

Hebrews 9:28; 1 Peter 2:24. Read Psalm 22 and Isaiah 53 for detailed prophecies of the cross of Christ. What do the prophecies teach about the nature of Christ's death?

4. Read Paul's words in 1 Corinthians 15:24-28 for more about the final and universal subjection to Christ. What is the last enemy to be destroyed? Read Revelation 5. What will the redeemed of all ages sing as they gather around the throne?