



CAPITOL COMMISSION™

Keep the Peace

Tuesday, 27 January 2015

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CAPITOL BIBLE STUDY

153rd General Assembly

- **TUESDAY @ 7:30 AM** in 403 CAP
- **TUESDAY @ 12 NOON** in 123 CAP

Capitol Commission Bible Studies are held Tuesday mornings at 7:30am and again at 12 Noon. The weekly Bible study is nonpartisan and non-denominational. The study for the 2015 General Assembly is the book of Philippians.

I pray that this study will be edifying to you. I am here to serve you and to be a resource for prayer and counsel. Please accept my study in the Word of God, as an evidence of my desire to be serving you. – Dr. Ron J. Bigalke, Georgia State Minister, Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission Bible Studies

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Philippians 2:1-11 – “Keep the Peace”

F. B. Meyer (1847-1929), who was an evangelist and pastor, once remarked, “Earthly thrones are generally built with steps up to them; the remarkable thing about the thrones of the eternal kingdom is that the steps are all down to them. We must descend if we would reign, stoop if we would rise. . . .” He further explained, “I used to think that God had put his best gifts on a high shelf for us to reach up to them. I now find that the best are on the lowest shelves, on the level of the nursery floor, that the babes may get them” (as quoted by Sherwood Wirt and Kersten Beckstrom, *Topical Encyclopedia of Living Quotations* [Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1982] 102).

Humility is essential if one is to have wholesome relationships with other people. We must strive for humility if we are to interconnect with multiple personalities. Love makes humility easier, and indeed necessitates that where one is manifest, so is the other.

Ephesians 4:3 – [Be] diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

While he was exiled on the island (“the cursed rock”) of St. Helena in the South Atlantic, the French military and political leader, Napoleon, had time to contemplate the significance of his accomplishments. Count Montholon served as general during the Napoleonic wars and chose to be exiled with Napoleon following the ex-Emperor’s second abdication. Napoleon called Montholon to his side and asked him, “Can you tell me who Jesus Christ was?” Montholon declined to answer, thus Napoleon said:

Well, then, I will tell you. Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I myself have founded great empires; but upon what did these creations of our genius depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His empire upon love, and to this very day millions would die for Him. I think I understand something of human nature; and I tell you, all these were men, and I am a man; none else is like Him; Jesus Christ was more than man. . . . Christ alone has succeeded in so raising the mind of man towards the Unseen, that it becomes insensible to the barriers of time and space. . . .

Wonderful! In defiance of time and space, the soul of man, with all its powers and faculties, becomes an annexation to the empire of Christ. All who sincerely believe in Him, experience that remarkable supernatural love towards Him. This phenomenon is unaccountable; it is altogether beyond the scope of man’s creative powers. Time, the great destroyer, is powerless to extinguish this sacred flame; time can neither exhaust its strength nor put a limit to its range. This is it which strikes me most; I have often thought of it. This is it which proves to me quite convincingly the Divinity of Jesus Christ [Henry Parry Liddon, *The Divinity of Our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, new ed. (New York: Scribner, Welford, and Co., 1868) 147-48].

The dynamics of both humility and love are the message of Philippians 2. Scripture teaches us that whenever people love with humility and selflessness, especially within the context of stressed relationships, these virtues promote joy and unity. Philippians 2 emphasizes the actions and attitudes that will “keep the peace” in our relationships with one another (cf. Eph 4:1-3).

LIVING WITH JOY

Philippians 2 begins a new section with the theme being “rejoicing in others.” The saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi needed encouragement to have unity, humility, and perseverance. The church at Philippi was composed of people from dissimilar backgrounds. The believers at Philippi were exhorted to be confident (1:25-26), stand “firm in one spirit” (1:27-28), and be willing to endure suffering for the sake of the Lord (1:29-30). Throughout the remainder of this epistle, the church would be exhorted to remain united.

JOY IN ONE’S OWN LIFE AND THE LIFE OF OTHERS IS THE CONSEQUENCE WHEN BIBLICAL INJUNCTIONS ARE OBEYED.

The plea for unity is evident in Philippians 2:1-4 wherein believers are instructed to be “of the same mind” and “intent on one purpose.” The threefold cause for disunity is identified in the next two verses: (1) “selfishness;” (2) “empty conceit;” and, (3) “personal interests.” The remedy against disunity is provided in verses 3a-4. Joy in one’s own life and the life of others is the consequence when biblical injunctions are obeyed. Such obedience not only affects relationships with others, but also with God. Humility is the reality of being dependent upon God. Nevertheless, this perspective is not an intellectual ability but a mental attitude, as evident in the example of Christ Jesus (2:1-11).

Capitol Commission Bible Studies

Tuesday (27 January) @ 7:30am – 8:00am, 403 CAP

Tuesday (27 January) @ 12 Noon – 12:45pm, 123 CAP

lunch provided from sponsorship by Congressman Buddy Carter



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Capitol Commission Georgia

Keep the Peace

Living in unity with others – in an attitude of humility and an action of perseverance – is accomplished “in the Lord with all joy” (2:12-30).

LIVING IN UNITY

(*Phil 2:1-4*) Philippians 2 begins with an exhortation to Christian unity upon the basis of four aspects, which are visualized in the following table. As a consequence of these four aspects (2:1), the believer is to be “of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in Spirit, intent on one purpose” (2:2). Christian unity should be an evident characteristic of all true believers because Jesus taught it and prayed for it (cf. John 13:35; 17:21). The spiritual unity that all believers possess should be visible.

Any support in Christ	Any consolation of love	Any fellowship of the Spirit	Any affection and compassion
Be of the same mind	Be maintaining the same love	Be united in Spirit	Be intent on one purpose

Nevertheless, there are persistent obstacles that threaten this unity. Conduct that is pleasing to God begins with the Creator as the priority of life, then others, and self last (cf. Matt 6:33; Rom 12:10; 15:1-2; Gal 6:2; cf. Isa 14:12-14; Ezek 28:15-17; Eph 6:12). As opposed to exalting himself, which was his divine prerogative, Jesus gave himself for others (2 Cor 5:21; 1 Tim 2:5-6; Tit 2:14). Opposition to the will of God inevitably results in dire experiences for self and others; therefore, the chief good of the creation is communion with God.

UNITY	DISUNITY
“of the same mind” “intent on one purpose”	“selfishness” “empty conceit” “personal interests”
REMEDY: <i>but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others</i>	

LIVING IN HUMILITY

(*Phil 2:5-11*) Unity among believers is a mental attitude. Several illustrations exhibit this perspective in chapter 2. The humiliation of Christ Jesus is the first and most important illustration. Jesus humbled himself and surrendered the use of his personal attributes and power. He “existed in the form of God” (2:6). The Greek word, *ὑπαρχῶν*, translated “existed” is a present tense participle, which indicates that existence “in the form of God” is the continuance of an antecedent form into the present. The form is a prior mode of being, which is consistent with the concept of eternal existence (as opposed to existence for a limited duration of time or a certain time period). According to the Bible, this mode was prior to Jesus “taking the form

of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men” (2:7) (i.e. the incarnation did not interrupt the sustained mode of his being).

PRIDE IS THE EASIER CHOICE, BUT IT WILL ALWAYS BE HARMFUL TO SELF AND OTHERS.

The meaning of “form” (*morphē*) is the inner nature and essential attributes. “Form” (*morphē*) is used interchangeably with “glory” (*doxa*) and “image” (*eikōn*) in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (Septuagint, or LXX). Therefore, “form of God” certainly means that Jesus is God of very God, the second Person of the Trinity (Triunity). Confirmation of Jesus’ deity is found in Philippians 2:7, wherein it is stated that He took “the form of a bond-servant,” which means that He was truly a servant. The Lord Jesus took the form of a servant (while never emptying Himself of his divinity) to become true humanity (2:5-8). Jesus emptied (*ekenōsen*) himself of the prerogatives and powers that were His eternally by virtue of his divine attributes; rather than exalting Himself, which was his divine prerogative, Jesus “humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (2:8).

Jesus humbled and denied himself for the sake of others. God, therefore, has “highly exalted Him” (2:9-11; cf. Matt 23:12). Certainly, it is not natural to live in humility, and to give of oneself in the manner exemplified by Jesus. Pride is the easier choice, but it will always be harmful to self and others. How does one not think solely of self?

If anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step. The first step is to realise that one is proud. And a biggish step, too. At least, nothing whatever can be done about it. If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed [C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*, rev. ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1952) 114].

Of course, living in such a manner is only possible by the sovereign work of God (cf. 2:12-13). One must be humble “under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time” (1 Pet 5:6). The believer may then experience the truth of Philippians 4:13 which states, “I can do all things through Him who strengthens me.” Living in such a manner is not only possible, but also an act of obedience to the living God and Savior.

Thank you for allowing Capitol Commission the honor to provide Bible studies to you. If you have any questions, please talk with us, or contact by email or phone.

About Capitol Commission

Capitol Commission state ministers teach ongoing verse-by-verse Bible studies for the entire Capitol community, and also meet personally with many government leaders (and their staff) to proclaim God’s grace, to encourage our leaders, pray with them, and provide biblical counsel. Capitol Commission is a charitable and religious nonprofit corporation under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Capitol Commission is supported by the generous gifts of businesses, churches, and individuals. Capitol Commission is not state-funded; rather, those with a heart for the Capitol community fund it.

Please join us in this ministry!

Bible study luncheon sponsored by:
Congressman Buddy Carter
U.S. House, Georgia District 1

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**NEXT CAPITOL COMMISSION BIBLE STUDIES:
TUESDAY, 3 FEBRUARY @ 7:30AM in 403 CAP
and again (with lunch) @ 12 Noon in 123 CAP**