

Week 4 - PHILIPPIANS 2:1-11

Unity through Humility

CHAPTER 2: Paul explains the basis for unity and illustrates this basis with Christ's example. He then clarifies the believers' responsibility and further illustrates with his own example and that of two of his fellow workers, Timothy and Epaphroditus. (Thomas Constable, 2013)

vv 1-2 **Four-Peer Foundation for Unity in the Church**

Paul utilizes a first class condition in Greek to form his persuasive argument for unity – assuming the truth in his argument.

1. Encouraged [*gk. paraklesis*] by Christ
2. Comforting gift of love – Paul's for them
3. Fellowship with the Holy Spirit
4. Affection, compassion, or sympathy for each other
5. *Regard for Paul's joy*

vv 2-5 **Four-pronged appeal for Radical Selflessness**

to do nothing [*gk. medome*] from selfish ambition or conceit.

1. Maintain love for one another
2. Maintain unity in spirit and purpose (Being of the same mind, *gk. psyche*)
3. View other people as more important than themselves
 - a. *"This is the linchpin that guarantees the success of the Christian community."* (G. F. Hawthorne, 1983)
4. Consider the interests and affairs of one another, not just their own

"One must be careful not to push this clause beyond Paul's own intent, which is not concerned with whether one ever 'looks out for oneself' – the 'also' in the final line assumes that one will do that under any circumstances – but with the basic orientation of one's life..." (G. Fee, 1995)

vv 6-8 **Example of the Preeminent Christ**

Philippians 2:6-11 is among the most concise Christological passages in the New Testament. Others include the prologue of John, Colossians 1:15-20, and Jesus' I AM statements. In the Old Testament, significant passages include Isaiah 9, and 53.

Pre-incarnate nature
Being ^(present tense) in the form of God, [*gk. morphe – outward appearance accurately revealed inward nature*] as opposed to [*gk. schema – outward appearance that changes as a result of time and circumstance*]

The Lord's continuing existence with the full nature of God. His deity is not something Jesus Christ gave up or laid aside. "Equality with God is not that which he desired which was not his, but precisely that which was always his." (Fee)

Emptied Himself
[*gk. kenosis*] – Perhaps the most precious and painful theological idea. "Contrast Adam, who considered equality with God something to be seized. Adam tried to become like God by grasping, but Christ, who was God, became man by releasing." (Constable)

Philippians 1:19-30 English Standard Version (ESV)

Christ's Example of Humility

2 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he

humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

