

22S11 Philippians 2:1-4 Unity thru Humility

Hello everyone. Thank you for joining me today @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. I hope everyone is doing well. Today I want to continue our study of Philippians with Philippians 2:1-4.

Before we start, let us remember this short letter was most likely written by the Apostle Paul while he was in prison in Rome. Paul had first visited Philippi during his second missionary journey, and he has great affection for the church in Philippi. This letter is sometimes called “the Joy Epistle” because of thankful and joyful tone. But remember Paul is in prison in Rome, not very happy circumstances.

I’m reading from the New King James version (NKJV) today. But of course, you can use whatever translation you choose.

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

Let’s pray. Dear heavenly father, guide our discussion today such that your message is clear to each of us. As we read your word from Philippians, help us see why Paul is so thankful and joyful despite his situation. I pray that you help me stay out of the way so your hope and peace can be shared with us. I pray this in your name Lord Jesus. Amen.

So, before we start studying today. This section in many of our bibles has a heading. Of course, these headings are not part of the original letter Paul sent. But I do find these interesting. I like to see what the many translations say to round my understanding and prepare me for the text, Like this title “Unity thru Humility” (NKJV), or “Have the Attitude of Christ” (NLT) or “Being One in Christ” (KJV) or I like the what the NIV says, “Imitating Christ’s Humility”. Regardless of your translation title, Paul is going to tell us we need to be like Jesus.

So, let’s break these verses down a little more. Starting with Philippians 2:1-2 (NKJV) *¹Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, ²fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.* Remember Paul has just finished telling us we will suffer in Chapter 1. So, yes you are going to suffer in this life but the consolation is in Christ Jesus. In the Comfort of God’s love for us, in the fellowship we have with the Holy Spirit, in the affection and mercy God shows for us. Then Paul tells the Philippians his joy would be fulfilled if they have unity. Like-mindedness, the same love. This does not mean agreeing about everything but instead being focused on the

important things together. Don't get sidetracked by nonessential things. We might say it this way. Keep the main thing the main thing. Following Jesus.

Now see what Paul says next with *³Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.* (Philippians 2:3 NKJV). Again, I want to read this also from the King James Bible *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.* This is the New Living Translation *Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves.* Here it is from the Contemporary English Version *Don't be jealous or proud, but be humble and consider others more important than yourselves.*

Did that help you to hear them together, it sure helps me? Paul is telling us don't be selfish, jealous, proud but instead be humble or don't think you are better than other people. This goes against our human nature. We are selfish and proud. Most of us get jealous. This is how people act right. Well Paul is telling us to resist our nature and instead think of other people. In fact, think of them as more important than ourselves.

Paul continues with *⁴Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.* (Philippians 2:4 NKJV). Again, let me read the King James Bible *Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*

Or how about the New Living Translation *Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.*

Or I really like how the New American Standard Bible says it, *do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

I hope you can see the benefit of the multiple translations. Each has something to offer in helping us to understand what God wants us to hear from Paul's writing. Jesus told us to love others the way he loves them. So, we must be concerned about others. We don't just take care of our own self-interests but we have to equally consider what is best for others. Sometimes even if it is not in our own best interests. God's plan not ours.

Let's review.

- 1) What is our consolation? Paul told us we will face hard times and suffer. But Jesus is our consolation. His comforting love, the fellowship of the Spirit, His affections and mercy. Knowing God loves us and having the comfort of the Holy Spirit makes it easier to face the things the world is going to do to us.
- 2) Why be humble? We are followers of Jesus. He told us to be humble. To treat others with value. The first thing we must do is humble ourselves. This means don't be proud, or jealous or selfish but instead think of others as more important than ourselves.

- 3) How to be humble? We think of others. We don't only think of ourselves and what is best for us. That's selfish. As followers of Jesus, we have to think about what is best for everyone else, even if it's not best for us.

Let me leave you with this. Everyone is selfish by nature. Paul is acknowledging this is all of us. But Jesus is calling us to a better way of living. Life in the Kingdom of God, where people care about each other, that's "like minded". Where we do what is best for others. No one like the idea of suffering. But if you are going to suffer anyway, then why not for someone you love. Following Jesus comes at a cost no doubt, but it also comes with a lot of benefits. We have company in our suffering, other Christians, Jesus, etc. We have hope, peace, joy, assurance, etc. because of our relationship with Jesus. We know our side wins in the end. And our king is just and loving and trustworthy. At least for me, that sounds pretty good. I love and trust my Lord, Jesus.

Let's Pray. Heavenly Father thank you for this letter from Paul. Help us to read and meditate on this letter so we can hear the message you have for us. Help us to remember who you are Lord. You are our king, king of kings. You are our Lord, Lord over everyone. We can trust you, Lord. Help us to do what you ask and not worry about what others are doing. I pray this in your Name Lord Jesus. Amen

I hope you will join us for the rest of our study of Philipians. Please email me comments or feedback. Thank you for joining me today. Until next time @ the PUNLA Coffee Table. God bless.