Prayer Study #470

PHILIPPIANS CHAPTER TWO

First Love Ministries, Perry, GA USA

Paul's Exhortation to Unity

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

Paul addresses here one of the great problems in the Church today-disunity. The causes of that disunity are listed in verses 3 and 4: selfish ambition that promotes self rather than the work of Christ; conceit or desire for personal prestige which results in people wanting to be admired and respected and to have one's personal counsel sought and which also promotes self rather than Jesus; and concentration on one's own interest or selfish desires, which in the end causes people to put others down instead of helping them.

Paul gives 5 suggestions for preventing disunity: 1) Recognizing that we are all in Christ; 2) Showing Christian love, which never seeks anything but good for others and which knows no bitterness; 3)Sharing the Holy Spirit; 4)Human compassion which the Creator gave us so that we could live in fellowship with each other; and 5) Wanting to make others happy, specifically Paul in this instance, since disunity would rob his joy.

Christ's Example of Humility

5. ***Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,***
6. ***Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,***
7. ***But made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant and coming in the likeness of men.***
8. ***And being found in appearance as a man. He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.***
9. ***Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,***
10. ***That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,***

11. *And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Many believe that this is the most important and most moving passage Paul ever wrote about Jesus. Barclay addresses this passage: "Paul is pleading with the Philippians to live in harmony, to lay aside their discords, to shed their personal ambitions and their pride and their desire for prominence and prestige, and to have in their hearts that humble, selfless desire to serve, which was the essence of the life of Christ. His final and unanswerable appeal is to point to the example of Jesus Christ."

What did Jesus do? He was God, unlimited by time and space, who took the form of man so that he could, by example, show us the way. Then he died for all those who would come to Him and invite Him in their hearts. He showed us the greatness of His humility and obedience, which led Him to the Cross. He has the Name that is above every name and the Name, which every knee in heaven, on earth, or in hell will bow to and every tongue will confess that He is Lord. Unfortunately, not everyone will confess Him as Savior, although everyone, even those in hell, will recognize Him as Lord.

Scofield writes: "Nothing in this passage teaches that the eternal Word (John 1:1) emptied Himself of either His divine nature or His attributes, but only of the outward and visible manifestation of the Godhead. God may change form, but He cannot cease to be God. At all times His divine attributes could be exercised according to His will."

Characteristics of the True Believer

12. *Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling;*

13. *For it is God who works in you both to will and to do His good pleasure.*

14. *Do all things without complaining and disputing,*

15. *That you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,*

16. *Holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.*

Paul makes it clear that obedience is toward God, not Paul. He wanted others to follow Christ and not himself. I am sure that he must have worried

that his potential death might dampen the enthusiasm of the Christian believers to whom he was writing.

Paul is not saying in verse 12 that we work and earn our salvation. Salvation is a free gift of God's grace to those who accept it. He does not say work *for* your salvation. He is saying that we who have been born again, who have obtained salvation, are to work it out to completion, that is to grow daily more like Jesus. The Phillips Translation puts it: "So then, my dearest friends, as you have always followed my advice - and that not only when I was present to give it - so now that I am far away be keener than ever to work out the salvation that God has given you with a proper sense of awe and responsibility." Gerald Steffy writes: "The Lord desires His people to live out what God has already worked within that life when that person trusted Christ." Roger Olsen comments: "The Greek word translated 'work' in verse 12 is one that means 'continue a task; carry it out to completion.' The Greek word translated 'work' in verse 13 is one that means 'provides the ability and means, the energy.'"

Finally, Barclay writes: "Christians must give continual evidence in their daily lives that they are indeed working out their own salvation; day by day, it must be more fully accomplished. The great tragedy of so many of us is that we are never really any further on. We continue to be victims of the same habits and slaves of the same temptations and guilty of the same failures. But the truly Christian life must be a continual progress, for it is a journey towards God."

The *fear and trembling* here comes from a sense of our own powerlessness to deal with live triumphantly. It is a fear that drives us to God instead of away from Him, and it includes a horror of grieving God the Holy Spirit because we love Him so much and want to do His will in all things.

We love Jesus because He first loved us. We come to Jesus because the Holy Spirit draws us. We have a free will that can accept or reject Jesus, but we must recognize the fact that God is drawing us and filling us with the desire to do His will.

Complaining show a lack of gratitude for what He has done for us and a lack of trust for what He is doing now and will do in the future. Disputing is a sign of lack of unity.

Blameless and harmless, children of God denotes a child-like faith and purity of the heart. We must walk in purity and as lights in a dark world that is very perverse and evil. We must know and cling to the *word of life,* which is the Word of God. When we do, we are really clinging to Jesus, the Word made flesh (John 1:14).

Paul 's greatest prize in life was to know that, through him, others had come to know and to love and to serve Jesus Christ. He hoped the Philippines would walk out the walk of faith and remain faithful so that he could rejoice in knowing that he had not labored in vain.

Paul's Example of Humility as a Poured out Drink Offering

_ *17.Yes, and I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith. I am glad and rejoice with you all.*

18.*For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.*

Numbers 15:1-10 tells us that some animal sacrifices were accompanied by a cup of wine being poured out over the sacrifice. Paul is saying here that the faith of the Philippines is such a sacrifice and his life and labor for the Gospel is a drink offering to complete their sacrifice. Both their faith and his self-giving sacrifice of himself for the sake of the Gospel were reasons to rejoice.

Timothy's Humble Service to Paul

19.But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state.

20.For I have no one like-minded who will sincerely care for your state.

21.For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.

22.But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father, he served with me in the gospel.

23.Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me.

24.But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.

Timothy, or Timotheus, is one of the great men of the New Testament. He was the son of Eunice, a Christian Jewess, and a Greek father. Although it is

thought that his father was dead before Paul first visited his home (Acts 16:1). Paul considered Timothy his son in the faith (1st Corinthians 4:17; 1st Timothy 1:2; 2nd Timothy 1:2), and he served Paul as a son serves a father. He had unique gifts, especially evangelism (Romans 16:12), and he was teachable and enjoyed Paul's constant instruction (2nd Timothy 2:3 & 3:14). There was probably no man in the New Testament who was as close to Paul as Timothy.

Epaphroditus's Example of Humble Service

25. Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need,
26. Since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick.
27. For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.
28. Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again
you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful.
29. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem;
30. Because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

In these verses Paul talks of Epaphroditus, the servant-hearted, trusted messenger between Paul and the churches. He was a very kind man who was sent from the Philippians, when they heard of Paul's Roman imprisonment, to serve Paul and to bring Paul financial help. Paul calls him a brother, denoting their spiritual relationship to each other and telling us that Epaphroditus was a fellow believer. He was a companion in labor for the cause of the Gospel. He was a fellow soldier in the Lord's army, and he was a messenger who brought tidings from the Philippines to Paul and later from Paul to the Philippines.

Epaphroditus became sick while in service to Paul but was miraculously spared. Paul rejoices in his recovery since his loss would have given Paul much sorrow, and Paul sends him back home to Philippi because Epaphroditus was homesick and wanted to show everyone that he really had recovered from his illness.

As We Worship You
Don Moen

Verse 1
As we worship You, let all the world come and see
How the mercy we've received from You can set us free.
As we worship You, let all this joy that fills our hearts
Bring a hunger and a hope to those who've strayed so far.

Verse 2
As we worship You let all the nations hear our song
The song of Jesus and His blood that proved His love for all
As we worship You, may all the lost and broken come
May they hear Your still small voice call out their names each one

Verse 3
As we worship You let all the world come and see
How the mercy we've received from You can set them free
As we worship You let all this joy that fills our hearts
Bring a hunger and a hope to those who strayed so far

CHORUS
As we bow in adoration and stand in reverent awe

Show Your majesty and glory, let Your anointing fall
As we declare Your Name, Lord Jesus, as the only Name who saves
May the power of Your salvation fill each heart we pray.