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THE CHRISTIAN MINDSET (IN THE CHURCH)
Philippians 2:1-11

Philippians 2:1 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

6 Who, being in very nature God,

did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

7 rather, he made himself nothing

by taking the very nature of a servant,

being made in human likeness.

8 And being found in appearance as a man,

he humbled himself

by becoming obedient to death—

even death on a cross!

9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place

and gave him the name that is above every name,

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,

in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,

to the glory of God the Father.

PRAY FOR BIRTHDAY CELEBRANTS

STORY: A Baptist was marooned, alone, on an uncharted island. He lived there for several years before a passing ship happened to see his fire one night and changed course to investigate. When some of the crew made their way by boat to the island, they found the man and three huts that he had built. They asked him, “What are these three huts?” He answered, “One is where I live, and one is where I go to church.” When they asked him about the third hut, he said, “Oh, that one, that’s where I **used** to go to church.”

Today, we’re going to talk about THE CHRISTIAN MINDSET (IN THE CHURCH)

Or How should we relate with each other in church?

We should always Strive for 1. UNITY, Treat each other with 2. HUMILITY and Serve one another 3. SACRIFICIALLY

Let us remember that these are interconnected based on how Paul wrote it.

What do I mean by this? PRAY FIRST

Yes, the church must strive for Unity but it can only happen if we treat each other with Humility and we can only treat each other with Humility if we serve one another Sacrificially just like our Lord Jesus Christ did.

By God's grace, this will be a 3-part series. I said 3-part series and not a 3-hour sermon 😊

Let's start with

I. Strive for UNITY

Before I expose the passage in Philippians Chapter 2, let me tell you the reason why UNITY IS IMPORTANT.

You know why Unity in the church is important? It's because it is the prayer of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Note : The things we pray for when we are alone with God are the ones that truly shows what's important to us.

EXAMPLES: We pray for a certain person we love or we know who is sick because that person is important to us. We pray that God will bless us because that's important to us.

SHOUTING PRAYER Illustration: I remember the story of a young boy who really wanted a bicycle. So his older brother advised him to pray about it. So the young boy went to his room, knelt down and started to shout at the top of his voice, "LORD JESUS PLEASE GIVE ME A BICYCLE!!!. So his older brother said, "You don't have to shout your prayers, God can hear you." The younger brother said, "Yes, I know that God can hear me BUT mom and dad are in the room, I also wanted to make sure that they can hear me too."

We will really know what's important to a Christian on what he prays for when he's alone with our Father.

The passage we'll read is what theologians call "The Holy of Holies" in the Bible. This was the time that our Lord Jesus Christ was intimate with the God the Father, the night before He will be given to suffer and die on the cross for our sins.

And look at one of the things that our Lord Jesus Christ asked from the Father. This means this is important to Him.

John 17: 20 "My prayer is not for them alone (talking about the disciples). I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, (talking about all future believers which include us) 21 that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— 23 I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Our Lord Jesus prayed for complete unity.

Why is unity important to our Lord Jesus Christ?

Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

It's because our unity affects our witness.

Quote from Ed Galiweski commenting on John 17

Quote: *"On the concept of unity- **"That's right – Jesus'[s] most pressing concern before leaving the earth was our unity.** He was looking ahead, to every generation of believer. And as he prayed, **he made it clear that our witness as his body in this fractured , messed-up, chaotic world would depend on our love for another."***

Now listen carefully : If unity affects our witness about our Lord Jesus Christ, this is the reason DIVISION IS THE DEVISE OF THE DEVIL.

There's a saying that I read: "The devil doesn't need to destroy the church, he just needs to divide it."

The reason why the devil needs to divide the church is because it destroys our witness about our Lord Jesus Christ.

God in fact, hates division in the church. Look at what the Word of God says in Proverbs.

*Proverbs 6: There are six things the Lord hates,
seven that are detestable to him:*

- 17 haughty eyes,
 a lying tongue,
 hands that shed innocent blood,*
- 18 a heart that devises wicked schemes,
 feet that are quick to rush into evil,*
- 19 a false witness who pours out lies
 and a person who stirs up conflict in the community.*

And what is the main tool that the devil uses to cause division in the church? PRIDE.

In order to prevent DISUNITY, we need to treat each other with HUMILITY and to have humility, we need to serve each other SACRIFICIALLY just like Christ.

You see how this is interconnected?

That's why Paul writes in Ephesians :

*Ephesians 4: 2 **Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. 3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.***

So how do we STRIVE FOR UNITY?

Philippians 2: 1 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

Key Word : Focus.

Focus on Christ's mission

Focus on Christ's love

Focus on Loving One Another

Focus on Christ's mission:

Therefore

Reminder that Bible interpretation is all about context, context, context. And if you see the word, "therefore", it means "there is something before"

What is "something before" the passage we are studying?

Quick background : If you read Chapter 1 of Philippians,

Paul was saying that the CENTRAL thing that runs in his life is THE GOSPEL OF JESUS CHRIST.

- **It gives him joy when we partner in the gospel**

*3 I thank my God every time I remember you. 4 In all my prayers for all of you, I **always pray with joy** 5 **because of your partnership in the gospel** from the first day until now,*

- **He rejoices even in the midst of persecution or trial just as long as the gospel is preached.**

14 And because of my chains, most of the brothers and sisters have become confident in the Lord and dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear.

15 It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill.

*16 The latter do so out of love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. **18 But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice.***

You notice this? He doesn't care what the motives are in preaching the Gospel JUST AS LONG AS IT IS PREACHED.

- **The gospel is his purpose while here on earth.**

21 For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labor for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know!

NOW In the eyes of Paul, nothing should hinder our sharing of the Gospel...that's why he wrote :

*Philippians 1: 27 Whatever happens, **conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel** 28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved—and that by God. 29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for him, 30 since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have.*

What he is saying? BE ONE OR UNITED IN SHARING THE GOSPEL.

That's the first secret of UNITY IN THE CHURCH

1. **Focus on Christ's commission** – which is to SHARE THE GOSPEL.

Two soldiers Illustration: There were two soldiers in the trenches and they began to fight, doing fisticuffs with each other. Then suddenly, somebody grabbed both of their collars. It was the general of the army. The general then pointed to the enemy line and said, "Comrades, the enemy is over there."

Application : Brothers and sisters, there are still lots of souls that are still captive by the devil. Our mission is to save them by sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Remember this, Disunity or division in the church destroys our witness, derails our focus and delays the fulfillment of the mission.

Let's focus on Christ's commission. Yes, fellowship is good, it encourages our unity but let us make sure that we don't lose focus on our mission – that is the first secret of unity.

2. **Focus on God's love.**

Philippians 2 : 1 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,

Remember, the context the "therefore" is about Chapter 1 which is all about the Gospel of Christ.

Now because of the Gospel, we now know that we are *united with Christ*

That's why he said, *if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ*

Etymology : encouragement "paraklesis" to call beside you...God is on your side.

Doesn't it give us encouragement to know that God is on our side always and will never leave us nor forsake us.

Whatever is happening in your life or within the church, just remember that WE are with the Lord...FOCUS ON THAT.

Romans 8: 31 What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? 32 He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? 33 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. 34 Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died—more than that, who was raised to life—is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. 35 Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? 36 As it is written:

*“For your sake we face death all day long;
we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.”*

37 No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. 38 For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, 39 neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Remember focus that God is on your side.

Now a word of warning

Illustration : I remember this story about Abraham Lincoln being visited by an adviser at the height of the Civil War and said he was grateful that God was on the side of the Union.

Here’s what Lincoln replied,

“Sir, my concern is not whether God is on our side; **my greatest concern is to be on God’s side**, for God is always right.”

Application : Yes, God is on our side but in our decision-making, **in our way of thinking, are we on God’s side?** Are we doing the right thing according to His Word? Are we acting out of love? Are we doing it for His glory?

, if any comfort from his love

Etymology : paramythia “comfort” para (to go by their side) mythia (to address someone or persuade someone)

It usually has to do with loving words... Isn’t that what happens when you needed help the most and **someone said an encouraging word to you, it gives comfort**

The love of God gives comfort to us...HOW?

That even the times we were unloveable or God’s enemies, or rebelling against God, **GOD STILL LOVES US AND SENT HIS SON TO US – REMEMBER THAT’S THE CONTEXT, THE GOSPEL AND THAT’S THE GOSPEL...LET’S FOCUS ON THAT.**

Quote : “Jesus Christ knows the worst about you. Nonetheless, He is the one who loves you the most.” – A.W. Tozer

if any common sharing in the Spirit

Etymology : common sharing, fellowship “koinonia” sharing of lives

We have to remember that if the Holy Spirit is not in us... then we are not saved.

Romans 8 : 9 You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.

Now remember again, the context is all about the Gospel

If we truly believe that it is through Jesus Christ died for our sins and was raised from the dead, then we are saved, **the HOLY SPIRIT ENTERS US. And HE’S NOT PASSIVE...HE IS HAVING FELLOWSHIP WITH US.**

How does He share His life with us (have fellowship with us?)

During the times that you are afraid, or you do not know what to do. He GIVES US COURAGE. OR TO LOVE SOMEONE WHO IS UNLOVEABLE OR BE PATIENT...

2 Timothy 1:7 For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

During the times we need guidance, He’s there.

Ephesians 1:17 I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better.

James 1: 5 If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you.

NOW LISTEN CAREFULLY here’s the kicker and this is why the Holy Spirit wrote this : This is nice.

if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.

Etymology : likeminded (also same in KJV) “phroneo” – direct your thoughts...or focus...on this..

On what?

Listen carefully : BECAUSE OF THE GOSPEL

- BECAUSE OF THE GOSPEL We have been *united with Christ*, LET’S FOCUS ON BEING UNITED WITH ONE ANOTHER.
- BECAUSE OF THE GOSPEL We have been comforted *from his love*, LET’S FOCUS ON COMFORTING ONE ANOTHER WITH THE SAME LOVE ... *having the same love*

What kind of love? EVEN THOUGH WE WERE UNLOVEABLE STILL CHRIST LOVES AND DIED FOR US!

Romans 5:8 But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

We should do the same.

- BECAUSE OF THE GOSPEL We have fellowship in the Spirit *if any common sharing in the Spirit*, LET US FOCUS ON BEING *being one in spirit*

And then this : *any tenderness and compassion*

Etymology : “tenderness” splanghton (bowels in KJV), that’s the seat of emotions or passions...

In short, we should passionately show love for one another.

“compassion” “oiktirmos” (mercies in KJV) mercy, a heart to forgive.

Biblical Illustration: Tenderness and Compassion was demonstrated and given by our Lord when He was nailed on the cross and the first recorded words in the Bible were *Luke 23:34 “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.”*

Isn’t that what other parts of the Bible show:

1 Peter 4:8: “Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins”.

Ephesians 4:32: “Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you”.

- BECAUSE OF THE GOSPEL we have experienced *tenderness and compassion* THEN LET’S FOCUS ON having *one mind* which means SHOWING TENDERNESS AND COMPASSION with one another.

Striving for unity again means :

- Focus on Christ’s mission
- Focus on God’s love

And that’s the third

3. Focus on Loving One another.

Now here’s a guideline when it comes to church unity.

Here’s a quote that originated from German Lutheran theologian in the 1600s named Rupertus Meldenius

Quote : In the essentials, unity. In the non-essentials, liberty. In everything else, charity.

Example of essentials: Our statement of faith : Jesus is God. Jesus is the ONLY way to be saved. We must be united in that. In this church, we need to be one in that.

Example of non-essentials: the melody of the music (remember, it's the lyrics that counts); the type of clothes people wear (just as long as its decent). If you came from work wearing scrubs or from the mechanic shop and you're dirty...you are most welcome in church. Or if you feel good wearing nice clothes...you are most welcome.

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER : Uniformity is different from unity. We strive for unity, not uniformity.

Illustration: There was young punk rock kid in the 80s who entered church for the first time. He was wearing heavily gelled hair, spiked collars and bracelets and with all the chains. When he entered the church, he did not sit on the pews. He sat on the floor. So an old saint from the back and approached the kid. He held the kid on the shoulder because he needed help in order for him to sit and squat on the floor together with the kid. Both of them were listening to the pastor's sermon while sitted on the floor.

In everything else, whether dealing with essentials and non-essentials, we deal with it with CHARITY, love and not condemnation.

Remember this : UNITY doesn't start with the collective..it starts with the individual. IT STARTS WITH YOU.

CONCLUSION :

I love the lyrics of this song created in 1969. I used to hear this on the radio, I'll show you the end part of the lyrics and you will recognize this.

*... If I'm laden at all
I'm laden with sadness
That everyone's heart
Isn't filled with the gladness
Of love for one another
... It's a long, long road
From which there is no return
While we're on the way to there
Why not share?
... And the load
Doesn't weigh me down at all
**He ain't heavy, he's my brother
... He's my brother
He ain't heavy, he's my brother
He ain't heavy, he's my brother***

Remember, our unity is the result of our Lord Jesus Christ dying on the cross for us.

What do I mean by that? It's because of the Gospel – Jesus paying for our sins with His death- that we are saved and when we believe that, we become a child of God according to

John 1:12 Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—

This means, we have one Father in heaven and all of us are brothers and sisters in Christ.

And that's what we'll remember today in

BREAKING OF THE BREAD

S.G.D.