

Philippians

Chapter 2

Let's open with prayer,

Our heavenly Father,

We come to study your word and we ask that you will open our hearts and minds to these important truths. We thank you for your word. We pray for understanding as we continue on in this next chapter. We pray in Jesus' name, Amen!

Okay, we're beginning with Philippians Chapter 2. Remember the doctrine of Christian fellowship that we studied. Every one of these principles and elements are part of Christian fellowship, and must be in order to be Christian fellowship.

As I pointed out when we were going through Ephesians, Paul said in that letter to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We are already in unity. Many people think that we are not united yet and that we have to work toward that direction. No!

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We are already united in Christ. The problem is all the human issues that interfere with that. That's the problem. We don't have to fight to make unity, we already have unity.

So why isn't that unity functioning? It's because we have issues that need to be addressed, and Paul is addressing those issues for us.

But in Philippians Chapter 2, the last chapter of the doctrine of Christian fellowship, in the first 11 verses he presents for us the principles of Christian fellowship.

Verses 5 through 11 is some of the most powerful verses dealing with and presenting the deity of Christ to the church.

C.O.

Philippians 2:1-11 The Principles of Fellowship
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First of all in Verse 1, the condition of fellowship:

The principles of fellowship are in the first 11 verses, but the first thing we want to study is the condition of fellowship.

1 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

Listen to this: If there be, and the word if in each one of these four phrases is what is called the first class condition assumed to be true.

It can be translated more accurately, since therefore there is consolation in Christ, and the word consolation means encouragement.

Since there is comfort of love,

This is the kind of comfort that is given to somebody who is grieving.

Since there is fellowship of the Spirit,

And since there are bowels, and this would be genuine affection, and mercies,

Since all of this already exists, he then gives us instructions. Again, since there is encouragement in Christ, since there is comfort of love, since there is fellowship of the Spirit, and since there is affections and mercies,

Then here's your instructions in fellowship in Verse 2:

2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

He says then fulfil my joy,

We know what joy means, satisfaction. Since these conditions already exist, then fulfil my satisfaction.

Here it is: That you be likeminded,

Literally, that you think the same thing. And that is our word Phroneo, or frame in the noun form. That you have the same frame of mind, same attitude in your approach towards life and the things of Christ.

Now that's the problem with fellowship. Everybody's frame of mind is different on how we approach the world, and how we approach the things of Christ.

It's not about education, or length of time of knowing the Lord, but frame of mind, attitude toward these various issues.

When we get to Chapter 4, we're going to find these two women, and Paul's going to tell them the same thing.

Euodias and Syntyche, two women that are Christian women working for the gospel, but they disagree about something. And so he says tell these

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women to think the same thing, literally have the same frame of mind. And he gives four commands for having the same frame of mind.

The first one is that you have to have your approach to everything be that you want what the Lord wants.

I mean, I have my opinion. But if it differs from your opinion, what really matters is what the Lord wants. With that attitude and frame of mind in approach to life, unity and fellowship is maintained.

So you be likeminded. Have the same frame of mind. Have the same attitude about life with one another.

He describes it as having the same love, being one soul together, again functioning like you are one person instead of many. And being of one mind, and again that's the word frame of mind.

That is kind of hard to imagine, all believers in a fellowship together, having the same attitude like they function together like one soul instead of many different fragments.

The motivation for fellowship in Verse 3:

3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind, and that's our word Tapeinophrosune which is the word humblemindedness.

It's the word frame of mind with the word humble with it.

But in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.

Well, that's a tough one! He's really starting to introduce to us the "nitty-gritty" of fellowship. It's having the attitude of choosing the low road. That is unheard of in Christianity in most places.

That is when you have two choices. You choose the way that is going to be less profitable in the physical world for you, and more profitable spiritually for somebody else. Keep that in mind about choosing the low road because we are going to have an illustration of it in Jesus Christ.

So in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than themselves.

The interaction in fellowship:

4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

So both yours and others.

And it is interesting that the word look is the word scope again. We are to be purposely looking, scoping out over the needs that other people have.

I am to take care of the responsibility of my own needs, issues, problems, burdens, but I must also look on the needs of others.

M.V.

Philippians 2:5

So then he gives the illustration of fellowship. We get the idea, low road, humble frame of mind, others first. You know, all the things that are opposite of the human culture that we are in.

Listen to this:

5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

That's not the word brain. Again, that's the word frame in the verbal form.

Let the same frame of mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus. Let the same attitude be in you that was in Christ Jesus.

Here's what he means:

6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

Who, being in the form of God, and the word being means while existing in the form of God. That's who He is. He thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

He did not rob God by proclaiming Himself and presenting Himself as equal to God.

So Jesus is not part of who God is. He's God. That's to highlight His lowliness!

7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

But made himself of no reputation, literally, it is translated but He emptied Himself.

What, of being God? No!

Of coming here and taking on human flesh, He emptied Himself of the presentation of "I'm God, and I'm here and you should worship me!"

His approach to this earthly life in His first time coming here was He chose the low road. When He had a choice, He chose to sleep in the garden.

That is not very enticing for some people to say "Where does your pastor live." Well, he lives out in the park. "Where was he born?" In a cave.

All of the things associated with the Lord's path in His approach to this life was I don't want any glory from man. I don't want to be made a king from the earthly standpoint. I don't want to be treated for who I am. I want to be the servant of all.

God Himself taking the low road!

That's the illustration to us. This is what must happen for fellowship among believers to be strong and stay united. A person cannot think of themselves as more than who they are.

Someone might say "I put in several thousands of dollars into this church so I should have some say in what happens!" Oh really?

That was the Lord. And if you gave that much money, you were the steward for bringing God's money to do God's work. It doesn't make you anybody. It can be used to boost the ego and cause disunity with the unity that's already there!

He emptied Himself having taken upon Him the form of a servant, or slave, and having been made in the likeness of men:

8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

And being found in the fashion as a man, he humbled himself, having become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Now, you don't want to see your teacher or pastor out hanging with thieves on a cross. In fact, early Christianity has its problems, especially amongst the Jews, and Paul known as Saul of Tarsus was one of them.

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He became enraged that Jesus would be presented as the Messiah. He has no synagogue. He has no place to live. Well, He might be performing some miracles, but then he dies the death of a common criminal, and you're telling me that He's the Messiah!

But this same Paul, as a tentmaker coming into Rome, he found out what it's like to be on the other side.

Christianity in Rome was looked on first of all as part of the Jewish religion. And the Jews became so angry that they presented to Rome, and Rome changed their opinion and said that Christianity was a cult. The Jews didn't want any part of it.

And with that kind of atmosphere, Paul comes into Rome and they say "Well, who are you"? I'm a tentmaker. "A tentmaker? Isn't that nice!"

So here's Paul the tentmaker, and they say who are you? Well, I'm Paul and I'm a tentmaker. Oh yeah, what's the gospel message?

This Jesus who was born in a cave and had no place to live, fulfilled the prophecies of the Tanak, the Old Testament, he died on the cross like a common criminal, and I come to proclaim that He's the Messiah.

Oh yeah right, that would go over real good!

That's why Paul rejected it. But yet Paul, after being converted had to bring that same gospel message.

God emptied Himself. He came in the fullness of who God is, but He approached this earthly life like a slave.

For those who might be interested, notice at Verse 6. It begins with the word who. And there are three main verbs in this context. All the rest are participles.

While being in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God. That's point one.

But He made Himself of no reputation, or more literally emptied Himself. That's point two.

Having taken on the form of a servant, having been made in the likeness of men, explains what it means by Him emptying Himself.

Again a participle. And being found in fashion as a man, number three, He humbled Himself.

What does that mean?

Having become obedient unto death, and not just death, but the most shameful death that you could think of at that time, the death of the cross.

You see, he's illustrating in Christ. Look what God did to have fellowship with us. That's what the believer must do. And you can only do that through Christ.

The same Jesus that humbled Himself to come 2,000 years ago, actively lives in the lives of every believer, and He Himself lives out that same emptying and humbleness.

He doesn't give me the ability. He does it!

9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

Wherefore God has also highly exalted him,

You see, that was just here. But after His ascension, God exalted Him, and gave him a name which is above every name:

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K.V.

Philippians 2:10
Isaiah 45:23

M.V.

Philippians 2:10

10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

K.V.

Philippians 2:11
Isaiah 45:23

M.V.

Philippians 2:11

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

And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,

And again, that last phrase "Jesus Christ is Lord" in the Greek text, it's literally Lord Jesus Christ. It's not a statement. It's the expression of someone who has a personal relationship with Him.

Even after everything is over, people are going to say Lord Jesus Christ. But for some it will be for destruction because they rejected Him in this earthly life.

And this is all going to be done to the glory of God the Father.

C.O.

Philippians 2:12-13
The Process of Fellowship

M.V.

Philippians 2:12

The expression of praise, he says:

12 Wherefore, my beloved, as ye 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.

Wherefore, my beloved, as you always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but also in my absence,

So he praises them. He says you don't obey just when I'm there, but when I'm not there you obey. Here's what I want you to do. Here's the command, the salvation process.

And notice the literal translation: Be continually working out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

It's a process. Now wait a minute now. I thought that we didn't have to work for our salvation? Now you can't separate this from the next verse.

M.V.

Philippians 2:13

13 For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

For it is God which works in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.

The word "works in you" is the word energizing. For it is God who is continually energizing in you both to will, and to energize of His good pleasure whatever He thinks best!

It's His energy, whenever He wants to energize my spirit for His Spirit to work in me. It's all according to His good pleasure. It doesn't have anything to do with my good pleasure. I'm just a vessel.

So be continually involved in having your salvation worked out because it's God who is working it out.

C.O.

**Philippians 2:14-16
The Purpose for Fellowship**

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First of all, the contamination in Verse 14:

14 Do all things without murmurings and disputings:

Wow! We could probably spend an entire study just on that one.

That's what contaminates Christian fellowship, murmurings, which is complainings, and disputings.

It's because of the representation, he says:

15 That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world;

That you may be blameless and harmless, be the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom you shine as lights in the world;

16 Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

By holding forth the word of life;

God has given to us, entrusted in us, the word of life. And God's Spirit, the spiritual light shines through the believers to bring the word of life to the world.

He is saying don't allow anything to distract from that. No complaints. No disputings. If you have differences, fine. Share them together. Learn together. Find out. Maybe one of you is right. Maybe neither one of you is right.

But be of the same mind, have the same attitude. It's what the Lord wants because I don't want to interfere with His work.

So the celebration, Paul says that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain.

C.O.

Philippians 2:17-18
The Procedure for Fellowship

17 Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy, and rejoice with you all.

18 For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me.

Remember all those words mean satisfaction. And look what he's saying. If I offer myself as a sacrifice on behalf of the service of your faith, I am satisfied!

And we think it's an inconvenience if we have to sacrifice for others.

C.O.

Philippians 2:19-30
The Proof of Character

The proof of character in fellowship: two people. The introduction of Timothy in Verses 19 to 24, he says:

19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state.

That doesn't mean California or Texas. He's talking about their condition.

20 For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state.

For I have no man likeminded,

This word mind is the word Pseuche. I have no man who is likeminded, who follows along with the same understanding and teaching that I do.

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In fact, we will see later on in the book that he will say follow after those as you have us as a pattern. And if they follow any other teaching, dismiss them.

Nobody is likeminded who will naturally care for your condition.

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

For everybody seeks their own and not the things which are of Jesus Christ. He says Timothy is the only one I've got who is likeminded.

Does that sound familiar? He says everybody's too busy with their own things to be involved with the things of Christ.

22 But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel.

But ye know the proof of him,

And again, this is the word approval after testing.

I like this. In all of Paul's presentations, whenever he used someone for ministry, they had to be approved. They had to have passed the test of being faithful and sacrificial.

And he says that you know the proof of him that, as a son with the father, he has served with me in the gospel.

23 Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

Him therefore I hope to send presently, as soon as I shall see how it will go with me.

He says I'm waiting to see how this imprisonment is going to hold out and how long it's going to be. I'll send Timothy but I might come with him if I've got some freedom.

That's what he says in Verse 24:

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

But then he introduces Epaphroditus to them.

Now they already know Epaphroditus. It is supposed that he's their pastor. But he's introducing things about Epaphroditus.

25 Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labour, and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants.

He says yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus,

And there are six things about Epaphroditus. He says my brother. He is Paul's brother in the Lord.

And companion in labour, I like this one: and fellowsoldier, but your messenger, and the one who ministered to my wants. And this is the word needs in the Greek.

Epaphroditus brought him the love offering. Epaphroditus stayed with Paul and ministered to Paul through all of his hardships.

26 For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick.

He says for he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, and that's the word for grief. Because you have heard that he had been sick.

You see, they got worried back there. Epaphroditus is over in Rome. He got sick. He probably died by now.

27 For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow.

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You can imagine Paul. A group sending their pastor 700 miles with a love offering and their pastor gets sick and dies. Great! The grief you feel for that congregation, the grief you feel for the people.

So Paul says not only did He have mercy on Epaphroditus but He had mercy on me too. By him recovering, it's just another part of grief that I didn't have to carry.

28 I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

I sent him therefore the more carefully, and the word careful is diligent, top priority. That when you see him again, you may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful.

The command:

29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation:

Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; And that's the word joy.

And hold such people in reputation: That's the word honor.

People like Epaphroditus traveled. There's no glory in it. He traveled a total of 1,400 miles just to bring a love offering and minister to Paul and come back. And hold such in honor.

30 Because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.

He says you couldn't be here. The word service is the word Latrea which is the word used for the official service of the priest. And he used that as showing that Epaphroditus being there wasn't just friends, he was like a

priest ministering to me. He was like a minister ministering to me, representing the believers back in Philippi.

He did not regard his life in order to stay there and minister to Paul.

You kind of get the sense don't you, when you take this book with a couple of chapters together, and it's all about sacrifice. It's all about not regarding your own life, not your own things.

It's about having an attitude or approach to life that basically says I'm not going to go for the bait. I'm not going to spend the rest of my life trying to make life better for me when so many around me are hurting so badly.

People often ask "What would Jesus do?"

I personally don't like that statement. That's like saying that He's not here, so think about what He would do and then you copy what you think He would do.

That's very impersonal. Let Christ do what He wants to do. You don't copy what you think He would do.

I shared this before, but I will share it again. You might remember the "What would Jesus do" bracelets, or bumper stickers. But I learned what the entire phrase was. It wasn't just what would Jesus do.

It was "What would Jesus do if He were here?"

That tipped it for me. Whoever wrote that doesn't understand because He is here!

So I don't like to ask those kinds of questions. But at the same time I look at the life of Jesus, I don't ask anybody else the question, but as I reread the life of Jesus in the gospels, I ask the question "Would I do that voluntarily if I had a choice?"

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Between what I have now, and the Lord coming up and saying "Come and follow me," like the disciples, they get up and they leave their business. They leave their homes. They leave their families.

Could I do that? I mean, I kind of like to follow Jesus, but in the comforts of my American lifestyle!

That's known as taking Jesus wherever you go, rather than following Him!

I'm not all for everybody giving everything up. But you have to understand that Paul is talking about the attitude. Let this attitude, this frame of mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus. Have the same approach to life that Jesus did.

"Now He is God. And what did He do to better Himself with the world?"

He didn't!

Have the same attitude, the same frame of mind. Because anything more than that, then all of a sudden our unity, our fellowship become disjointed, no longer functioning together because somebody or some people are going to say "Wait a minute, I don't like that and so I'm going to change it."

They might be right, who knows? But that's not the point. The point is that we take everything into consideration and we seek the Lord.

And it's okay to disagree, as long as you agree that you want what the Lord wants.

Churches have split because people can't agree on things. And sometimes the things they disagree on have nothing to do with what the bible teaches.

You're in church for fellowship. It's what we're here for. It's who we are. And the message of the bible is that we're not here for us. We're here for Christ.

And the only way that Christ can minister in us and to us and through us is if we are surrendered. We deny ourselves. We move out of the way and say Lord, let your will be done. Use me. Go ahead!

Let's close with prayer,

Our heavenly Father,

Thank you for this wonderful book. There's just so many principles that Paul shares and commands us to do in the realm of fellowship that the church never ever studies.

We don't seek you to find out what the answers are because we are afraid to find out that our problems are that we're just so full of ourselves, that we might have to surrender and sacrifice, and deny ourselves.

But we pray that even as it is appointed for those of your people to believe, but also to suffer for the sake of Christ. We pray that by your Spirit you would work these things out in us, that we would be a blessing to others, rather than a problem.

We pray that people would see Christ in us, and that our philosophy in life would be that we want Christ to be magnified in our body, whether it's through life or through death.

And that the only reason to live and to be here is to live is for Christ, and to die is gain. We know these things have to be worked out, but help us

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**to understand our purpose and your glory. We pray in Jesus' name,
Amen!**