

Philippians #3

Phil 2:1-11

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Serving and suffering are themes from the first chapter and these will be expounded in Chapter 2. Daniel M gave me a book that is thought to be songs sung in the early church. scholars think that the early church sang Phil 2:6-11; we also sing this at the Village!

Let's look at the first 5 verses of this passage:

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,

We are going to sit in this verse for a while because it sets up the rest of the passage with its If-Then statement. This almost feels like a list...but actually it's a progression that connects in a cool way. We are going to look at the Greek words to help us understand this progression:

1. **if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ**
PARAKLESIS is a summons for the purpose of helping someone. It's being called to be cared for. Jesus wants to call you to care for you. We draw near to Jesus for this reason.
2. **if any comfort from his love**
PARAMYTHION Since this word for love is *agape*, this word means to be dressed for the purpose of soothing. There is a spoken word that soothes the person being comforted. It gives a picture of Jesus drawing us in to care for us and then speaking soothing words of comfort over us.
3. **if any common sharing in the Spirit**
KOINONIA This is a popular word among today's churches: this word means fellowship. But it's more than hanging out: it's common sharing, sharing everything you have with another person. It's communion with the blood of Christ, sharing in his sacrifice. So we are drawn in, spoken over, and then shared with.
4. **if any tenderness and compassion**
SPLAGCHNON This word is the reason we are going over this list: It translates as "tenderness." It really means bowels. Once I heard comedian Mark Lowry talk about open heart surgery. The heart means love; do you love me with your heart-pumping muscles? Likewise, the seed of emotion is the bowels. In particular, it's the tender emotions, those that go out from you to another person: kindness, compassion, mercy..these all rest in the bowel. It could also mean the tender mercy of Christ. If you have Christ's kindness, mercy, and compassion...

So in summary, Jesus **cares** for us, **soothes** us with words, **shares** with us, and **pours out tender emotions** to us. Imagine a small child that is hurt and the parent does all of these things to the child to care for him. It's a beautiful list of our relationship with Christ! As you suffer for Christ, then in your suffering Jesus does these things for you. This is all in the context of our relationship with Christ.

IF/THEN is a linguistic tool that demonstrates a level of comfort to us. The THEN part follows:

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

This means live in the same direction. In our home, the kids have a bin of magnet tiles and they dump it out and there's stuff everywhere and it's super fun. Then comes the time to pick up the tiles: even my 1-year-old knows what I want her to do but *she wants to do something else*. My 3yo also knows and usually *begins picking them up but he ends up wanting to play with them*. The 7yo knows and has the spirit to do what I'm asking. This is what Paul is offering us: be at one heart together and go in the same direction.

3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,

This is a good verse for us: do not politick for yourself or lift yourself up for the purpose of dividing loyalties. Vain conceit is empty pride, empty and baseless self-esteem where you lift yourself up to look better and grander than another.

4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

These four verses lay out a picture of caring for one another: caring and serving one another in the context of not looking at ourselves as better (which is the opposite of being self-focused).

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

We have a song about this: Let this mind me in you which is also in Christ. As we enter into verse 6, I have wrestled with this trying to figure out **what translation** our song was made from. Emily held out her Bible when we first wrote this song but recently we figured out that there are about 4 translations.

(vs 6-9 are from the song we sing...)

6 Who though existing in the form of God, did not consider his equality with God something to cling to

Would Jesus have clung to his divinity? Did he not want to let it go? Actually, the idea is that it is something that would be robbed for personal use. He didn't consider his divinity to be used for himself, to his own advantage. He didn't want to Lord it over anyone (hold onto it).

7 But emptied himself and took the form of a slave, and became like you and me.

Christ could have come to earth with grandeur and power but instead came as a lowly baby and lived as a servant. When the disciples argue who is the greatest and Jesus then washes their feet, he takes on the role of a servant or slave.

8 So recognized in appearance as a human he humbled himself, and became obedient to death. Yets, death on a cross!

This was the most horrible death: we often see a crucifix with Jesus wearing a loin cloth. NO, he was naked, bleeding, mocked, insulted. It was humiliating and yet Jesus walked into it willingly. He humbled himself but he doesn't stay there:

9 God, therefore, has lifted him on high, has given him the name which surpasses every name 10 so that in the name of Jesus every knee should bow: of those in heaven, of those on earth and of those under the earth. 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. He is Lord, to the glory of God theFather!

This song akes us from God's divinity to his humility to his servanthood to his death and humiliation and then his resurrection and glory. This is a beautiful hymn that leads us into who Christ is and what we are called to.

The invitation this week:

Meditate on verse 1

Self

Others

Self assessment

Mind

Spirit

Heart

What would it look like for the people around you to know this truth about what Jesus can offer them?

In your mind, do you know what you are called to? Are you willing to do it (like picking up the toys)? Is your heart willing to step into self-sacrificing service to another person? To listen to their story?

As you eat lunch, look around and see those who need what you have to offer?