

July 22, 2001

Philippians 2:1-3

Matthew 6:33 *But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.*

In this chapter, Paul continues explaining the duties of the followers of Christ. The primary message of this chapter is humility and that they should be united together in a common goal.

There are some very basic messages in the New Testament for God's people. They include humility, love for God and for one for another and **like-mindedness**, being of one accord and having a common goal.

Romans 12:16 *Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.*

1 Corinthians 1:10 ¶ *Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing (that is, have common doctrine), and that there be no divisions among you (no party making); but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind (a common general goal) and in the same judgment (same basic opinions of things we hold important).*

2 Corinthians 13:11 ¶ *Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.*

1 Peter 3:8 ¶ *Finally, be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous:*

These passages **do NOT exclude** differing opinions, for no two people will agree with each other in everything, not even husbands and wives. But the Scripture does forbid an argumentative attitude over points of disagreement.

These passages **do call for** God's people to be in **agreement concerning their basic goals**. They do call for His people to go in the same general direction.

Philippians 2 tells us what that common goal is to be.

Notice that common goal is NOT a common attachment to a person particularly a pastor, to a building (I go there because my grandmother played the piano there), to an organization (I have been a Southern Baptist all my life), a common attachment to the other people, nor a common attachment to a music program.

Paul opens chapter 2 by saying: IF YOU HAVE ANY CHRISTIANITY AT ALL, IF YOU LOVE CHRIST AT ALL, IF YOU HAVE ANY OF GOD'S MERCY AT ALL, IF YOU HAVE ANY LOVE FOR ME AT ALL, then you will work together for **the common goal of the glory of God**.

One of the primary messages of the gospel is that we love one another. That love is seen by **not only** how we speak to one another and how we act towards one another, but it is seen in having a **common goal**. Paul clearly defines that thing God's people are to have in common that is, to **expand the reach** of the kingdom of God on earth.

We unite together to gain spiritual strength from God's word and from our association with others of like mind. The purpose of that spiritual strength is to equipt us to expand the Christian influence to our neighbours.

Christ was ask, WHO IS MY NEIGHBOUR?

The law of love for each other and for God is the law of the Kingdom of God on earth.

The law of love for each other and for God is the lesson of His school.

Obedience to the law of love for each other and for God is the uniform that identifies us as a member of His family.

ILLUSTRATION:

I still have a couple old Navy uniforms. It is easy to identify someone by the outward uniform they wear the UPS uniform was very popular a few years ago.

Our Christian uniform that is to be easily identified is to be our common love and concern one for another, and our common desire to advance the kingdom of God on earth.

One of the primary marks of being His people is being **like-minded**. We are identified as His people by having the same love and by being in one accord or of one mind having the same goal.

Christian love means that we do not each go our own way, trying to do his own thing.

Christian love involves our uniting together with the common goal of glorifying God and promoting the gospel of Christ.

Christian love means that we do all we can to support one another in each one's endeavor to do what they can for the Lord Jesus Christ.

We saw in 2 Corinthians 13:11 ¶ *Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.*

Christian love means to be **like-minded**. We have the same beliefs and we are affected by the same things. We are agreeable. We are **like-minded** in our desire to see the Christian influence expanded in every area possible.

Christian love means to **have the same love** for the people of God as the Lord had.

Christian love means having the same love for the Lord, for His word and for His gospel.

Our support for one another is evidence of our Christian sincerity.

If there be any consolation in Christ... That is, if we have been comforted by Christ or supported by Christ, then we are to give the same thing to others.

If you have been comforted

If you have found any fellowship

If you have received any bowels or compassion

If you have received any mercy in Christ.

Paul then pleads with the people at Philippi that if they have received anything from Christ, then **fill up his joy**, or **make his joy complete**, or **fill up his cup of joy**.

1:7, Paul is writing from Rome in about A.D. 62, where he was a prisoner. Both in 1:27 and in 2:2, Paul tells them that his hope for joy is not that he might be released from prison, but his joy comes from hearing that these people stand in one spirit, having the same mind and love for the gospel of Christ.

He tells them that his **cup of joy** will overflow if he hears that they are of the same mind, of one accord.

Fulfill ye my joy... It is a minister's joy to see people like-minded and living in love one for another. It shows that his ministry has been effectual.

V. 3, *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory.*

Paul tells us here that rather than uniting the people in love one for another and around the common goal of glorifying God, *strife and vainglory* brings division and contention.

There is no greater enemy to Christian love than pride and **passion** strong emotions that take control of us over the word of God. People get their feelings hurt, so they strike out or withdraw.

Strife involves the desire to put ourselves forward. It involves either my way or no way. It says like it or lump it.

Strife is doing things that we know will conflict with our brethren.

Strife is doing things out of rivalry, ambition or anger.

Strife is doing something in order to show others that we can do it better than someone else can do that project.

I will show everyone that I can do better than he can.

Strife as a **secret motive to outdo someone else**. Because our heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, our sinful motives can even be hidden from ourselves.

Philippians 3:15 *Let us therefore, as many as be perfect, be thus minded: and if in any thing ye be otherwise minded, God shall reveal even this unto you.*

Never one time did our Saviour act with such a motive, yet how many times do we act with such motives?

ILLUSTRATION:

I remember working for the land developer in Carmel. The owner of the development love horse racing with the **trotter buggies**. So he hired one of the buggy drivers to operate a dozer for him. The man could not cut a grade if his life depended on it, but the owner kept him on anyway.

I remember the pride I had in holding a grade that could be compared with the other man. In fact, there was no comparison as you would look back over the grade. Mine was very smooth while his looked like you were looking across corduroy cloth.

Though I never said anything, I wanted everyone to see that I could do a better job than could the other man. My motive was **STRIFE** and **VAIN-GLORY**.

VAIN-GLORY is doing things for a showy outward display of ourselves, or conceit or boastfulness.

In Maryland, I ended up working under a man who had been hired especially to take charge of the bus and visitation ministry. But he knew nothing about buses, about running a bus repair facility, nor about working on the buses. He knew nothing about building a bus route, nor about working with the parents. Yet he was paid to do that job, and he is the one who received the credit for the work I did.

I must confess that my motive while I was under him was, more often than not, to show I could do a better job than he could **STRIFE** and **VAIN-GLORY**.

And I must admit that even at my late age, **strife** and **vain-glory** still raise their ugly heads, and they must be confronted every day.

Both **strife** and **vainglory** are destructive of Christian love. They stir up unchristian emotions. I did not have Christian emotions toward that man in Maryland.

Christ came to slay all feelings of ill-will. Therefore, let us avoid all spirits of opposition. Christ came to humble us, and therefore let there not be among us a spirit of pride.

We are given the answer for **strife or vain-glory** **Lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.**

We must esteem others in lowliness of mind better than ourselves. That includes being strongly against our own faults. That includes overlooking the faults of others. We are to be quick in seeing our own faults and weaknesses, but quick to overlook those defects in others.

We should admire the good that is in others over what might be in ourselves. We know our secret motives behind the good that might show through our lives, while we must assume that the good in others is motivated properly.

V. 4, we should show an interest in the affairs of others. Not as busy-bodies in other men's matters, but in Christian love and sympathy. A selfish spirit is destructive to Christian love. We should rejoice in the prosperity of others as truly as if that prosperity were our own. We must love our neighbor as ourselves.

I have a very good friend who is quite prosperous both in a spiritual and a material sense. I must admit that it is difficult to rejoice over his prosperity with the same amount of joy I would have if I had the same amount of prosperity. Yet him and I have a common goal, though we do not agree at every point.

In chapter 1, Paul rejoiced in the prosperity of others though he was in prison. And he rejoiced that the people were united together and working for the common cause of Christ.

What is our goal today?

Is it the common goal to advance the kingdom of God, or is it strife and vain glory?