

SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians

Philippians 2:1-4 – “Paul’s Plea for Unity”

Philippians 2:1-4, *“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”*

What are the thieves that rob you of your joy?

If you’re like most of us, circumstances would be on the top of the list.

Paul dealt with this in chapter one [The Single Mind (vs. 21)]

Another joy stealer is people!

Chapter 2 – Joy in spite of people.

The key is the “submissive mind” (vs. 3).

How to have Joy - JOY = Jesus, Others, You

Notice Paul’s plea – “fill my cup of joy”

Paul does two things in this text:

1. He gives us “The Incentive” or ground for unity (vs. 1)
2. He gives us “The Directive” or graces for unity (vs. 2-4)

I. The Incentive for Unity (vs. 1)

Philippians 2:1, *“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,*

There are three key words in this verse:

1. “Therefore” – in chapter one Paul had appealed to the Philippians (vs. 27) to *“...stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;”*

Notice the contrast with our text:

Philippians 2:1-4, *“If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.”*

2. “If” and “any” – Grammatically, they are four conditional clauses that assume the reality of the clauses that assume the reality of the statement.

They do not express uncertainty. Paul rather means, “in view of the fact”.

Paul gives us a four fold incentive or ground for Christian unity. These four things are true of all Christians.

1. Consolation – encouragement

In Christ – Jesus prayed in John 17:21-22, *“That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us: that the world may believe that thou hast sent me. And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one”*.

The root meaning of the word is that of coming alongside of someone to give assistance by encouragement.

Examples:

The man Barnabas – son of consolation

Saul & John Mark

2. Comfort - *comfort of [His] love*

O what comfort is ours knowing God loves us.

Ephesians 2:4-5, *“But God, who is rich in mercy, for his great love wherewith he loved us, Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;)”*

Romans 5:5, *“...the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost which is given unto us.”*

It's one of the believer's birth marks.

1 John 4:7, "*Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God.*"

Jesus said in John 13:35, "*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*"

Jesus gave us a new [renewed] commandment in John 13:34, "*A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.*"

It's God's love flowing through you.

What kind of love is it?

3. Communion - *fellowship of the Spirit*

Koinonia – partnership

How all believer's share in the Holy Spirit:

- He convicts you of sin
- He regenerates you – born again
- He baptizes you into the one Body of Christ

1 Corinthians 12:13, "*For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit.*"

- He indwells you
- He seals you

Ephesians 1:13, "*In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,*"

- He leads you into truth
- He comforts you – key
- He fills you

Ephesians 5:18, "*And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;*"

- He produces the fruit in and through you

Galatians 5:22, "*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,*"

Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, self-control.

4. Compassion – *bowels and mercies* (K.J.V)

Literally, tender mercy and compassion

1 John 3:16-18 [N.I.V] " *This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for one another. If any one of you has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in you? Dear children, let us not love with words or tongue but with actions and in truth.*"

Think of how merciful and compassionate God has shown you – shouldn't you do the same toward others?

Illustration – Jesus parable of the unmerciful servant (Matthew 18:21-35) & The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

How does the matter of Christian unity stand with you?

Are there divisions that ought not to exist?

Is there unforgiveness in your heart?

II. The Directive for Unity (vs. 2-4)

Philippians 2:2-4, " *Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.*"

Paul's directive is 'threefold', it's only one directive or command – *be likeminded* – yet three graces, very closely related can be distinguished.

1. Oneness (vs. 2)

a) *that ye be likeminded*, or literally, keep on thinking the same thing.

It's not uniformity, it's unity

What are we to think the same about?

1. the glorification of God (1:20)
2. the evangelization of the lost (1:27)
3. the unification of the church (4:8)

b) *having the same love,*

* Love for God

* Love your neighbor as yourself

* Love the brethren

c) *being of one accord, Literally "joint souls"*

Application – we are one in Christ

Ephesians 4:4-6, " There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism, One God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

d) *of one mind. Literally "thinking constantly, the one thing"*

It's oneness of purpose

Notice the mind, its having the attitude like that of Jesus (vs. 5)

Illustration: having clocks that strike at the same moment.

2. Lowliness (vs. 3)

Oneness cannot be achieved without lowliness, or humility.

Two causes of disunity:

1. Strife – its self-ambition

* It's a competitive spirit

* 2 Timothy 2:24, "*... the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient,*"

2. Vainglory or empty conceit

Illustrations:

Preachers (Philippians 1:15-16)

The Disciples (Luke 22)

Who's the greatest?

James & John send their mom to speak with Jesus

A Balloon

The Pharisees

Diotrephes - 3 John 9, "...*Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them...*"

The two attitudes needed for unity:

1. Humility – *lowliness of mind*

How we view ourselves

What is humility (like Jesus)

2. *esteem other better than themselves.*

"regard one another as more important than himself (N.A.S.B.)"

3. Helpfulness (vs. 4)

The word 'look' – we get our word 'scope' from it

Paul says:

1. Don't merely, or only, look out for your own personal interests.

What's in it for me? (in the church)

It's part of our fallen human nature

The emptiness of selfishness

2. *but every man also on the things of others*

Illustrations:

Paul – Philippians 2:17

Timothy – Philippians 2:20

Epaphroditus – Philippians 2:30

Jesus – Philippians 2:5-11

Only Jesus can save us from our empty self-centered life.

Luke 17:33, "*Whosoever shall seek to save his life shall lose it; and whosoever shall lose his life shall preserve it.*"