

Joy Through Humility
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Philippians 2:1-15

Imagine that the typical Christian church announced a seminar entitled: *“How to Have the Attitude of Jesus.”* Do you think many would sign up? Probably. How about this one: *“How to be Encouraged, Comforted, and Spirit-filled as a Christian.”* Likely there would be good attendance to that one too. What if the seminar title was: *“How to Stop Being Selfish – Put Others First.”* Would that hurt the turnout? Let’s get ridiculous but real. What if the seminar was: *“How to Argue and Win Every Time?”* [That’s actually a book by cowboy attorney Gerry Spence.] People would not show up in person, but they would likely watch online!

Chapter two Paul’s letter the Philippian church reads like a seminar on how the church should have both unity and joy through humility. He was likely beginning with this because there was some kind of unrest in the congregation. We know false teachers were a problem (3:2.) We also know two ladies were fighting (4:2.) Whatever the cause, Paul gave the prescription for any congregation suffering from “church trouble:” Have the same attitude as Jesus, an attitude of humility.

Here is the truth that should change us: To be like Christ, put others before yourself. Unity, humility, and love among God’s people leads to joy in His church.

Philippians 2:1–15 (ESV) — 1 So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, **2** complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. **3** Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. **4** Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. **5** Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, **6** who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7** but emptied himself, by taking the form of a

servant, being born in the likeness of men. **8** And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. **9** Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, **10** so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. **12** Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, **13** for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. **14** Do all things without grumbling or disputing, **15** that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,

- Verse one: Paul asks some questions in order to take the “temperature” of this church. Does this church have “any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate?”ⁱ
- If those things are in place we know this is a group of true Christ-followers.
- If those things are in place, *“here is how to make this pastor (Paul) happy.”*
- “Hold on, we’re supposed to live to please God not the preacher!” This wasn’t “preacher worship.” If they were Christ-like, Paul’s happiness would be a by-product. A church that pleases God will have a happy pastor!
- Verse two: The same mind, the same love, and being of “one accord and one mind.” These words describe UNITY among followers of Christ.
- Unity isn’t UNIFORMITY. We won’t see eye to eye on everything, but we should be likeminded on living, loving, and serving with the mind of Christ.
- *An old saying, “In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.”* (Augustine or Meldenius?) How might we apply that in the church? What makes something an “essential” vs a “non-essential?”

- A Bible believing congregation should be like-minded on the essentials.
- We may disagree on a non-essential (voting on building a building) but we must all agree to deal with it in a unified, loving, Christ-like manner.
- Illustration: My comment, “Everyone rowing in the same direction and not hitting each other with the paddles!” (Sadly, sounds like a lot of churches!)
- Verse 3 (In the HCSB:) ³ Do nothing out of rivalry or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves.ⁱⁱ
- “Rivalry” – I just can’t stand to see anyone else win an argument!
- “Conceit” – I’m important! I run this church! You’d better not cross me!
- Verse four (HCSB:) ⁴ Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.
- Note the wording, “not only for his own interests...but also...others.”
- Yes, we look out for our own interests but NOT ONLY our own interests.
- We don’t know who said it originally but you’ve likely heard the quote: *“Humility is not thinking less of yourself, it’s thinking of yourself less.”*ⁱⁱⁱ
- Paul said, the best and only real example of humility is Jesus.
- While on earth Jesus never stopped being God, but He never used His deity “for His own advantage.” (ie. His miracles vs. His crucifixion)

Philippians 2:7–8 (NLT) — 7 Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, **8** he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal’s death on a cross.

- With an amazing, self-sacrificing example like Jesus, why are people afraid of putting others ahead of ourselves? (Humility)
- We can’t compare ourselves to the Son of God but look at the outcome of Jesus’ self-sacrificing humility:

Philippians 2:9–11 (NLT) — 9 Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, **10** that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in

heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11** and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- What is the outcome for US if we live in humility? **James 4:10 (NLT) — 10** Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up in honor.
- We must be humble and trust God for the result.
- Paul gives some final instructions in verses 12-15.
- “*Work out your salvation*” is NOT work FOR our salvation but work for Christ in a way that DEMONSTRATES our salvation to others.
- We can do this because, “*it is God who works in you.*”
- “*Fear and trembling*” is doing everything knowing God is watching.
- Do everything “*without grumbling or disputing.*” (Have a good attitude!)
- The result: “*blameless...children of God*” who “shine” in this “crooked and twisted” generation.
- Any final thoughts on what Paul is teaching us about humility? Why is this so hard for many followers of Christ?

So, What’s the takeaway?

- To be like Christ, we must put others before ourselves.
- Unity, humility, and love among God’s people leads to joy in His church.
- Warren Wiersbe described Jesus’ example of humility in this outline:
 - He thinks of others, not Himself (Phil. 2:5-6) [Do we think this way?]
 - He serves (Phil. 2:7) – [Are we serving?]
 - He sacrifices (Phil. 2:8) – [Do we only serve if it doesn’t cost us?]
 - He glorifies God (Phil. 2:9-11) [Does everything we do glorify God?]
- Considering Paul’s final instructions in verses 12-15 we must:
- Live in such a way people will know Christ has transformed us.
- Ask God to work in us because we can’t be this humble on our own.
- Ask Him to help us do all things without grumbling and disputing.

- Ask ourselves, “*Does my conduct glorify God?*” That would solve a lot of problems when there is “trouble” within a congregation.
- Jesus (our example of living in humility) commanded us to **Matthew 5:16 (ESV) — 16** ...let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.
- This week let’s focus on having the same humble attitude as Jesus because humility leads to joy among God’s people and it attracts those who don’t know Christ to want to be a part of His family.

ⁱ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [*Holy Bible: New Living Translation*](#) (Php 2:1).

ⁱⁱ [*The Holy Bible: Holman Christian standard version*](#). (2009). (Php 2:3–4).

Nashville: Holman Bible Publishers.

ⁱⁱⁱ https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/rick_warren_395865