

UNITY

Scripture – Philippians 2:1-4

By: Pastor Earnest Thomas

I. Introduction

- A. Paul is writing the church at Philippi while in prison at Rome.
 - 1. He thanks and commends them for their support and partnership.
 - 2. This is a strong ministry minded church.
- B. However, Paul has a concern there are signs of strife in the church.
 - 1. There is not a lot of strife but some, so Paul addresses the problem before it gets out of control.
 - 2. Church squabbles are as old as when Jesus' disciples argued about whom would be first in the Kingdom.
- C. Even here at our Church the focus is not to get everyone working, but to get everyone working together in unity.

II. Harmony In Our Thinking (v 1,2)

- A. Paul begins his request for unity with a logical argument in verse 1.
 - 1. The word "if" is not a condition but an argument. The word is better translated into "since".
 - 2. Since the Philippians have consolation; comfort; fellowship; and mercy then complete Paul's joy with unity.
- B. Our unity is brought about by our harmony in thinking or being of one mind.
 - 1. It is an inward disposition that unites Believers.
 - 2. Unity is not brought about by –
Theology Worship Ministry Lifestyle
But what you and I think about Jesus.
- C. This "one mind" is Christ's mind and not that of some leader.
 - 1. Conflict in a Church is caused by a few with the rest of the congregation following along.
 - 2. But when we have the mind of Christ we can have different –
Gifts Ministry Methods Personalities Preferences
And still have harmony.

III. Humility Of One's Self (v 3)

- A. Paul had earlier warned in Chapter 1 that some preached because of selfish ambition and not sincerity.
- B. If you are doing something in the Church for selfish reasons such as *recognition* and *reward*, then please stop.
- C. I suspect most of the problems in Church are caused for selfish reasons.
 - 1. People leave church for selfish reasons and not doctrine.
 - They took my song
 - They sit in my seat
 - They did not vote my way
- D. Our self-centeredness causes strife, division, squabbles, and problems in the Church.

- E. Paul stated the way to unity is through humility of one's self.
1. Humility does not mean depreciating your ability.
 2. Humility means when it comes to honor don't push yourself forward.
 3. Always be aware of your shortcomings.

Story: Once in New England I had to drive some distance and on route I came to some traffic circles or rotaries. We do not have such in Texas, so I did not know who had the right of way. My solution was to close my eyes and speed thru the rotaries. Only God knows how many people I ran off the road that day because I was selfish with my driving. Such are many Christians today.

IV. Honor Among Servants (v 4)

- A. Christians should look out for one another.
1. Christianity is not a "me" thing but a "we" thing
- B. The Christian faith is the only place that made the word "others" is important.
1. Why did Christ die? Why do we preach? Why do we feed the hungry? The answer is "for others".
- C. It is our responsibility to look out for one another.
1. For example, a Roman soldier caught asleep at his watch was put to death because he had endangered all the other soldiers.
 2. Have you fallen asleep on your watch?

V. Conclusion

- A. Being this close to verse 5 and not using it is like being in Paris, France (Eiffel Tower); New York (Statue of Liberty); or Egypt (Pyramids).
- B. Greek philosophy stated that anyone who would yield to someone else is either a coward or a fool.
1. This world has a similar attitude.
- C. Don't imitate the mind of Christ but let the Holy Spirit impart the mind of Christ.
1. For example, Star Wars they used the old "Jehdi mind trick".
- D. Tell your neighbor "it's all in your mind"
- E. Since I have the mind of Christ certain things don't upset me:
- Singing my song
 - Sitting in my seat
 - Giving more than me
 - Not being recognized
 - Not being paid
 - Getting your blessing
 - Praying a better prayer
 - Preaching a better sermon
 - Teaching a better lesson

Example of a better mind: We had an old computer that would get locked up because of its limited memory. Later we purchased a new CPU (mind of a computer) and it never got locked up because it had adequate memory.