

Philippians 2

FOR TO ME
TO LIVE IS
CHRIST,

AND TO
DIE
IS GAIN.

PHILIPPIANS 1:21

Opening Questions

- Why is Christian unity important?
- Does the Christian church operate in unity today?
- How should Christians interact with other Christians?
- Is Jesus the same as God?
- What is the outcome of our expected obedience to the Lord?



Co-writer – Apostle Paul

- Born as Saul in Tarsus (on the southern coast of modern-day Turkey). Likely borne about the same time as Jesus.
- Schooled as a Pharisee under the Jerusalem religious famous Gamaliel.
- Became a traveling missionary and preacher for the early church; renamed Paul.
- Worked as an artisan who made tents – maybe subcomponents
- Was imprisoned multiple times by the Roman authorities for his religious agitation.
- Believed to have co-written 6 letters to the churches.
- Died sometime between AD 62–64; Paul, believed to be in Rome.



- **AD 33 Damascus – Direct conversion**
- **AD 33-36 Arabia – Receiving direct revelation from the Lord (Gal 1)**
- **3 missionary journeys to Asia minor**
- **AD ~55-60 Wrote Philippians on first imprisonment in Rome**
- **One of 4 Prison Epistles (Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians)**

27 Only **let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ**, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you **stand fast in one spirit**, with **one mind striving together** for the faith of the gospel, 28 and **not in any way terrified by your adversaries**, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God. 29 For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, 30 having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.

1 Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

V1: What is the "therefore" there for?

- This ties back to vs 1:27-30, which focused on external conflicts. For the church members conduct to be worthy of the gospel, they must operate in unity, dealing with internal conflicts

V1: Paul had hopes of continuing his joy in what ways?

- **Consolation in Christ** – Christ being the great consoler (Luke 2:25, 2 Cor 1:5, 2 Thess 1:5). "The Holy Spirit consoles, but Christ is the consolation." If I may use the figure, the Holy Spirit is the Physician, but Christ is the medicine." (Spurgeon)
- **Comfort of love** – *paraklesis* – helping, making brave and strong
- **Fellowship of the Spirit** – *konania* – sharing things in common with the Holy Spirit of God
- **Affection and Mercy** – God's deep affection and mercy toward us results in driving a common goal of unity with each other

V2: What was Paul's response to the Philippians concern for him?

- That they complete his joy through action

V2-4: How?

- **Be like-minded** – Think the same way (3:15, 3:16, 4:21, 1 Pet 3:8)
- **With the same love** – Loving each other equally, in the same ways Christ loves us
- **Of one-accord** – Same desires in unison
- **Of one mind** – Simultaneous thinking
- **Without selfish ambitions** – Without creating strife for personal gain
- **Lowliness of mind** – The opposite of Greek thinking at the time (only the strong and ruthless survived); humble. "The apostle knew that, to create concord, you need first to beget lowliness of mind. Men do not quarrel when their ambitions have come to an end." (Spurgeon)
- **Esteeming others better than self** – The outcome of thinking others better than ourselves produces an environment where no one is looked down upon

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

V6: What does it mean to be in the “being form” of God?

- Being is Greek word *huparchein* which means unchangeable. Jesus was always Who He is eternally
- Form is *morphe* – not outside appearance but His total essence and characteristics
- Thus, Paul and the Holy Spirit are saying Jesus was, is, and will always be God

V7: What does “not consider it robbery” mean?

- The word means to be grasped. Jesus didn't grasp or cling to His deity when He came to earth in the form of man

V7: Does that mean Jesus gave up His deity?

- No, Jesus did not “un-become” God. He temporarily emptied Himself of knowledge, ability, etc, but His nature and essence never changed. He was, and is, still God (John 5:18; 10:33, 38; 14:9; 20:28; Heb. 1:1–3)

V8: Why would He do that?

- Group discussion

V9: What does it mean to have a name above every name?

- This name is the name Kyrios (master, LORD) or Yahweh (assuming those are the vowels).
- It means Jesus has the character and person above all others
- **It is the clearest statement that Jesus is God or Yahweh**

V10-11: Who does every knee in heaven and earth bow for and confess the truth of?

- God (Jesus) [Isiah 45](#)

V11: What is the result of the “super-exaltation” (v9) of Jesus?

- The glorification of God the Father

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now 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 do for His good pleasure.

14 Do all things without complaining and disputing, 15 that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

17 Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. 18 For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.

V12: Why is the “therefore” there for?

- Paul connects the obedience Jesus showed, to the obedience expected of Christians

V12: What does it mean to work out your own salvation?

- This verb means to continually work to bring something to completion. This is not salvation by works, but the responsibility for obedience as a result of salvation, (Rom. 3:21–24; Eph. 2:8, 9)

V4-7: What does it mean to be in fear and trembling?

- Not a fear of hell or damnation, but a fear of displeasing our holy and righteous God

V13: Why are we to be continually doing this?

- Because God is working us and wants us to do what satisfies Him

V14: What are Paul's direct commands?

- Stop complaining or grumbling – Same words used of the Israelites during the exodus, resulting in their denial of entering the promise land. We are to trust God completely, not with angst due to our situations.
- Stop disputing – Arguing for no reason with each other, could be over minor differences
- Be blameless, harmless, without fault

V15: Why?

- We must (original Greek context) shine to the world as true followers of God, just as the sun, moon and stars shine in darkness

V16: What is the word of life?

- Holding fast – better translation “to present” – so that we can present the world the gospel of Christ (1 John 1:1)

V16-18: What was Paul's response to the Philippians love for him?

- That his efforts had not been wasted
- Again, that they not worry, or grumble, or complain. Instead that they rejoice

19 But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. 20 For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. 21 For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. 22 But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. 23 Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. 24 But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly.

25 Yet I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need; 26 since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. 27 For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. 28 Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful. 29 Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; 30 because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me.

V20: Why was Timothy Paul's only protege?

- Others seemed to be devoted to their own purposes

V24: Why tell the Philippians Paul was coming to them shortly?

- Could be so they understood the importance of coming to them himself as well, not just sending his "best man" Timothy

V27: What did Paul attribute to Epaphroditus' healing?

- Supernatural by God

V29: Why did the Philippians need to be instructed to accept and esteem Epaphroditus?

- Paul wanted them to know he was eagerly and completely useful, sacrificing himself nearly to the death.
- The people would know Epaphroditus didn't fail, but completely succeeded in his mission

Next Up

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The Christian's Riches

1 Corinthians/ 2: Isa 64/65 - Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered the heart of man, The things which God has prepared for those who love Him

John 3:16 - Life that will never end

John 4:14 - A spring of spiritual water that will never dry up

John 6: 37, 39 - A gift that will never be lost

Romans 8: 39 - a love from which he can never be separated

Romans 11: 29 - a calling that will never be revoked

2 Timothy 2: 19 - a foundation that will never be destroyed

1 Peter 1: 4- 5 - An inheritance that will never diminish

Isaiah 45 – Prediction of the Messiah

22 “Look to Me, and be saved,

All you ends of the earth!

For I am God, and there is no other.

23 I have sworn by Myself;

The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness,

And shall not return,

That **to Me every knee shall bow,**

Every tongue shall take an oath.

