

“The Life we Live” (cont’d)
Philippians 2:1-11

Intro:

Last week, we dealt with the primary thesis of Philippians, that we as Christians are to live lives, all of our lives, in a way that brings honor and worth to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. If you remember last week, I talked about how Paul has a consistent view of Christian living that is holistic, that is, Christ permeates every area of our entire life! He isn’t just our God on Sunday, or when we are in company with other believers. Jesus is the Lord of our entire life; our thoughts, our actions, our beliefs, our attitudes, when we are alone, when we are in public, when we are angry, when we are elated!

I also want to re-iterate that this is the goal of our ministry, that we see **holistic commitment** to the Gospel of Jesus, to the Kingdom of God that Jesus preached! We can’t be the happening place with a lot of people! While that’s fine and fun, **we need to be committed to serving Jesus and his Kingdom in every area of our lives!** How do we commit to Christ in areas where we struggle? Where is Jesus present in us? Where is Jesus NOT present in us? Remember that this life is not only communal, it’s personal!

So, Paul is taking us a few steps deeper in this discussion by helping us see realistically how we must strive to grow in Jesus as a community, looking to Jesus as our ultimate example for living and for faith.

TEXT: Philippians 2:1-11 - 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 rivalry 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 made himself nothing, 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.

***”So” is a word that indicates this train of thought comes right out of the previous thought. “SO,” following chapter 1, and Paul’s desire that we live holistically committed to Jesus, he is taking that love of God further to be love for others (which is a reminder of the greatest commandment – Love God, Love People).

- I. Embrace Christians in Community: V. 1-4**
 - a. Be of the same mind (discipleship, journey together)**
 - b. Have the same love (for each other, for Jesus – covenant love)**

- c. Be in full accord (committed to each other in mission, in purpose, etc)
- d. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit (remember Paul's struggle with those preaching Christ from rivalry – it would be best to join in fellowship rather than compete against each other!)
- e. In Humility, count others more significant than yourself (golden rule)
- f. Look to the interests of others (selflessness, servant-hood)
 - i. This is the tradition of Jesus' teachings: whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. The greatest among us is a servant...

Honestly, this type of community is possible, but happens when effort is put in by multiple parties. This is also a primary reason for us to pursue fellowship within the framework of small groups! Whether you're connected to 2 or 20 people, the kind of Christian Community is possible when we make efforts to connect with others.

If you remember last week, I talked about the implication of "Personal Responsibility" that Paul gives us ('you' understood as the subject). Well the same is true here. Paul is encouraging us to be proactive in resembling this community, in emulating these characteristics and qualities – mutual submission, love for others, commitment to each other in mission and purpose, etc.

This is the desire of this ministry, and of this church. I believe that much of this type of community can exist within us, and particularly as it's fostered in our small group communities. (Thomas Biro – looking for good leaders at all levels)

II. Jesus Christ is our Example for Living: V. 5-8

- a. We are encouraged to take on the mindset of Jesus! Wow!
 - i. Not Jesus the Lord, King/Conqueror, but Jesus the Servant, the obedient, the Humble one.
- b. Jesus was a servant
 - i. He didn't come to conquer, but to serve.
 - ii. The greatest leader ever, king of all, God of creation, served! (The greatest among us is a servant)
 - iii. This is a struggle for us who are called to lead, we relegate service to others.
- c. Jesus was humble
 - i. Some say, he depleted himself of his divinity. Not sure if I quite get my head around some of the implications there, but that he chose to live in his humanity rather than his divinity while here, that makes more sense.
 - ii. He was the epitome of humility – Not just an "air" about him, one of quietness or an apparent "shyness." He had a heart position of humility, of putting others before himself.
- d. Jesus was obedient – completely – for him, it cost him his life!
 - i. Obedience is better than sacrifice (1 Sam 15)
 - 1. This is referring to the reality that when we disobey, our tendency is to "cover up" or "payback" for our mistakes with some type of penance. In the OT, that penance was a sacrifice of some sort. But the real heart

- of God is that we obey him, not try to please him or get his forgiveness by some type of sacrifice, or penance.
2. As we “take on the mind of Jesus,” we take on a heart and mind that is committed to obeying God, and obeying in all areas of our lives (again, reflecting back on last week)

III. Jesus Christ is the Absolute Authority: V. 9-11

- a. He was then (for Paul, the Churches)
- b. He is now (for you, me, the Churches)
- c. He will be forever (eschatological)
 - i. This whole section just re-affirms Paul’s heart, that Jesus is to be the center of our lives! Jesus Christ needs to permeate every area of our lives, not just the public times, or when other church people are watching. (Caylin – “Bong Hits for Jesus”)
 - ii. The mind of Christ, with humility and obedience, should govern our lives. It is the motivator for our livelihood, our relationships, our values, our politics, where we spend our energies, where we spend our money, when and how we worship and with whom...
 - iii. Ultimately, Christ is Lord, not just at a distance, but again, is Lord over the whole church and over each of us individually.

Conclusion:

This passage of Scripture is again, so dense in content, but so rich for our every day lives. Since we’ve started this series in Philippians, I have had a couple people tell me how Philippians is one of their favorite books in Scripture. For me, this is a book that challenges me in every area of my life. It keeps the heart of the Gospel in front of me, and reminds me that my life is not my own, but that my life is about Jesus and about his Kingdom and his mission.

It’s tough to remember that all the time, but Philippians will take you back there very quickly!

(Candace – if she’s not here)

Optional

I was recently in a conversation with a young adult that talked with me about her frustration with religion, and how religion is a primary cause for her lack of faith in the Gospel. But so many of us, even in the church, have the same struggle! We can’t experience authentic fellowship with Jesus because our heart and mind is too clouded with the religion. We have a relationship with the church, but don’t really know Jesus Christ! We act out of a commitment to some list of guidelines that will keep us in the list of “good people.” Maybe our highest concern is about being a good person instead of having fellowship with Jesus!

Jesus confronted this type of person throughout his ministry, and I believe he continues to confront us with the same issue. It was the religious people, those who were regulars in attendance, who knew the lingo and how to put on the right face, those were

the people that he challenged with, “You honor me with your lips, but your hearts are far from me.”

Beyond committing to a community as described above, before having the mind of Jesus, first we need to acknowledge the authority and precedent of who Jesus is, and commit to him!

As we close in prayer, I want to challenge you to re-affirm your commitment to Jesus, not just to the church, but to Him. A commitment that says, I want the life and mission of Jesus to permeate every area of my life, and I want holiness to be a part of me.

Etc.....