

Philippians Ch 2 Vs 1-2

Christ like Qualities (A call to unity)

Now as we mentioned when we began the book of Philippians this church was very near to the heart of Paul the apostle, and if you recall I brought to your attention how that ordinarily when Paul would begin a letter he would begin it reminding the readers of His apostolic authority. But here in the book of Phil we don't see that, but rather more as one dear friend to another Paul writes to the Philippian Christians. and It would seem as though there were no major doctrinal errors to correct and that the church *was* for all intents and purposes flourishing, but there was at least one minor schism that we can gather from the course of this letter and that's that there was some degree of division in the church. Now as for how much division there was or to what degree of seriousness it had become I don't know but there was at least a significant amount of concern in Paul's heart and mind because having heard of the issue (Epaphroditus more than likely being the one to inform him) he felt it necessary to address. Which is basically the issue at hand as we begin to get into this morning's text though we won't be able to cover it in its totality. Because in Ch 1 after talking about himself, and his circumstances and how the things which had happened to him were actually turning out for the furtherance of the gospel, from the outside looking in on Paul the apostle's life things looked pretty grim but in reality the kingdom of God was being advanced.

Last week we learned of Paul's passion and his drive (his burden); his passion was Jesus Christ and Him crucified and his burden was lost mankind and because for him to live was Christ and to die was gain he could say and all out confidence that should the Lord will that he should live on in his flesh, that it *would* mean fruit from his labor. Paul was not content being a pew warmer or simply a Sunday morning church goer, there was a hurt, lost, and dying world out there that was in desperate need of Jesus Christ and Paul was available to the Lord anytime, anywhere, day or night, and when the Lord is using your life there will be fruit, because He has appointed you that you should bear fruit and that your fruit should remain and He said by this My Father is glorified, that you bear *much* fruit. and So in essence Paul has been sharing and them what's been going on in *his* life testifying and demonstrating to them what it means to lead a life that's set apart to Christ, revealing his conduct in Christ. and Then in vs 27 after speaking about the things going on in his life, he turns to them and the things going on in their lives.

In Vs 27-30 there are seemingly 2 main ideas (and many subtopics) but 2 main ideas and they are "conduct" and "conflict". and So after he spoke about his *conduct* and how whether by life or by death Christ would be glorified in *his* life, he begins to reason and them concerning *their* conduct and how it measures up (not to his, he only points to himself as an example) but to the glorifying of God. and He encourages them to let their conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, how, what are the elements that we can see in an individual that balance out the gospel? Well, as it pertains to their life in the body of Christ, Paul mentions 3 things here; that they are of 1 spirit, 1 mind, and striving together for the faith of the gospel, or in short they are unified.

So you begin to see how Paul is beginning to segue into the issue that he's going to address regarding their division, because if we're going to accurately reflect Christ to the world around us, apart from unity it can't be done. There's nothing to glorious about a body that has multiple joints out of socket or various members that are uncontrollably spastic or all doing random different things and out any control by the head, we would say there's something tragically wrong and that body, and yet I wonder how often we reflect the body of Christ in like manner to the world. Nobody getting along nothing moving forward apart from contentions (not here of course but in the body of Christ at large.) It's spasming out of control and isn't really subject to it's head (Jesus Christ) and yet we wonder why we're having such little effect on the world around us, how much is a person capable of getting done and out the cooperation of the members of their body? Think about it, and yet the members of Christ by and large don't cooperate and Christ, there's no unity in the body, and yet it's the most critical aspect of effective outreach and accomplishment when it comes to reflecting Him accurately to the world. Paul told the Ephesians the same thing, that to walk worthy of the calling in which they were called was to walk in humble unity and yet there was division in the church.

Paul is calling them here to resolve (and we'll see that in a moment) so conduct in vs 27 and in vs 30, conflict. Speaking in this context about suffering some form of persecution (read), Paul the apostle had suffered tremendously for the pioneering advancement of the gospel and Paul was saying that now the Philippians were to some degree entering into that suffering that conflict. and The mind boggling aspect of it of which we're not going to entertain today but I'll just re-throw it out there for you to consider is that their being able to suffer was "granted" to them (really as a gift) from God. In other words it's as though he's saying you're entering into the privilege and the gift of God called suffering for the advancement of the gospel.

The word "granted" in vs 29 has it's roots in the word "charis," from which we get the word "grace" and this word that's been translated as "granted" or possibly "given" in your bible primarily signifies "to show favor or kindness" or, "to give freely, bestow," now let that mull you over for a little bit. So are you saying that there are actually times where suffering comes into our lives as a grace of God? Well, if I understand this right that's exactly what I'm saying. and For times sake we won't rehash but I would refer you to Rom 8:16-18, 2 Cor 12:9-10, 1 Peter 4:12, Rom 5:2-3, 2 Thess 1:4-5 and James 1:2-4 just to give you a few vs regarding the gift of suffering.

So speaking of conflict, Paul brings up next, 5 characteristics of Christ that once we're in Christ leave us and no reason why we're not walking in the reality of them. It's like if these things are yours in Christ, He's imparted them to you, then why aren't you walking in them, why aren't you functioning and in the capacity that Christ has called you to live in? Because there's discord, or division in your life, and yet every quality and/or characteristic of Christ will not facilitate discord or divisions among the brethren, only the flesh will do that.

Now again, we know that 2 can't walk together lest they be agreed and so even though 2 people may be believers, if something has taken place to cause there to be a division among them and one may desire fellowship but the other won't seek that restoration due to the fact that they may be too prideful, or convinced in their own minds that they're right in the matter or whatever.

Then there's still going to be a division and it may not be that both parties are blowing it, now often times it is that way, and it becomes a stand off of pride, neither person being able to forget that which is behind them for Christ's sake and so there you have it. But is that the Lord's desire, never, He desires unity in His body, and therefore every quality or characteristic of Christ will facilitate ultimately that end. So Paul has talked about conflict, and he's spoken about conduct and that's really (in my present opinion) the vs that he references back to when he begins ch 2. Because as you can see ch 2 begins and the word "therefore," which simply means, what is this vs there for, what is it in reference to? Which will always be something previously stated, so in light of what I just said, in regards (not so much to the conflict, but to the conduct and how we are to live "*worthy*" of the gospel). He now mentions 5 characteristics found in Christ that are to be a reality in our lives because if you're in Christ, He has equipped us and these things and the Holy Spirit wants us to function in these things and empower us and help us to do just that. Only our flesh will keep us from walking in the reality of these Christ like qualities and as we read through this you'll see them, they're 1 consolation, 2 comfort, 3 koinonia, 4, compassion, and 5 mercy.

Vs1-2

Now again as we just glance at vs 1 one of the 1st things we need to diffuse is the seeming openness to a possibility for a negative response. Because if you're not careful you can read it and think, "if there's any consolation in Christ" well does that mean it's open for debate? Maybe there is, maybe there's not, that's not at all where Paul is going and this. So don't think that this is conditional clause, he's more making a statement in presenting his case than a condition. and If you choose to see it as a conditional clause that's fine but you need to understand that the case that Paul is building is to leave you and me and out a condition, he's presenting proof positive type observation. So if the response that he's leading them to is based upon an affirmation of these conditions, then the response is imminent (are you tracking and me there) he's presenting facts more than questions. So at the very least he's presenting a series of rhetorical questions (and the answer obviously implied by the format of the question) but I believe that they'd be better understood by us concerning Paul's position to understand them as emphatic statements more than debatable questions.

Adam Clarke in his commentary on this vs states, “The ei = if, does not express any doubt here, but on the contrary is to be considered as a strong affirmation; as there *is* consolation in Christ, as there *is* comfort of love, etc.” So he’s not leaving room for speculation and it’s important that you know that, it’s much like when Satan was tempting Jesus and was saying “*If* You’re the Son of God” Well, there was never a question in Satan’s mind who he was speaking to, that word “if” could just as easily been translated “since” “Since You’re the Son of God”. Well, we’re seeing the same type thing here; this word “if” in Phil 2:1 could’ve just as easily been translated “since”. So that this vs *could* read, “Therefore, since there is consolation in Christ, and since there is comfort of love” and so on. and For us that would carry a much more accurate force of what’s being said here, and Paul is really just pouring out his heart, imploring these people to come together for Christ’s sake. Now lets begin to examine these qualities that he mentions here, 1st he says, if there is any consolation in Christ.

Now, the 1st thing we need to notice here is where it is that these qualities that we’re looking at are found, they’re in Christ. Which means if you’re not in Christ you can’t comprehend these things, much less have them be a reality in your life, because these are what we might consider as some of the benefits of being *in* Christ. Nor can I offer these things (in the reality of all they encompass) apart from Christ; I have nothing to offer you of any spiritual or eternal value that’s not *in* Christ. But the 1st thing Paul mentions is “consolation”, now, if we want to view this, as a conditional clause we ask the question, is there consolation in Christ? Or if we want to just look at it in an more direct way, the answer is the same. Emphatically yes, as a matter of fact the bible refers to Jesus Christ as the Consolation of Israel, that’s one of His names (not one that you hear of to often is it.) Luke 2:25 “*And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, (in reference to the Messiah) and the Holy Spirit was upon him.*” In 2 Thess 2:16-17 we read, “*Now may our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and our God and Father, who has loved us and given us everlasting consolation and good hope by grace, comfort your hearts and establish you in every good word and work.*” 2 Cor 1:5, “*For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds (listen) through Christ*” and 2 Cor 1:7, “*our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.*”

Is there consolation in Christ? The fact of the matter is, there is no consolation (that is lasting or eternally significant consolation) apart from Christ. Maybe your bible has translated that word there as “encouragement” that’s ok there’s just as many scriptures that testify to the encouragement that we receive in Christ, that He gives us by His Holy Spirit. John 14:26-27 2 Cor 2:14, 1 Cor 14:3 and 31 and So Jesus Christ is our consolation, He is our “encouragement” and I want you to consider as we go through these things that these very things that Paul brings up, by their very nature are those qualities that promote or are conducive to unity, and alleviate conflict or discord. How many people spread discord through consolation and encouragement? You see, these are healing attributes; next he brings up “comfort of love.”

Now if there were ever a no brainer when it comes to the qualities of Christ, here is, is there comfort of love in Christ? There's not a believer anywhere on the face of this planet both now and who has ever lived or ever will live that will not experience the comfort of love in Christ.

Every Christian knows what it is to have Jesus give them the comfort of love, how many of us came to Christ when we were at the end of ourselves? We were totally empty and felt as though we were virtually unloved, oh there may've been those in our lives that would *seek* to comfort us by ensuring us of their love for us, but it just didn't hold any weight in the deep recesses of our hearts because we were so empty. But when Jesus, by His Holy Spirit whispered in your heart, "I don't care where you've been and I don't care what you've done, I love you." Comfort swept in like a flood, and we opened our hearts and received Jesus and have never been the same. He comforts us through His Agape' love 2 Cor 1:3-4 says, "*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.*" The comfort of love and the word comfort in the NT carries and it more than the idea of soothing sympathy, it the idea is that of strengthening and helping and making strong, and surely we can say that it's the love of God through the power of the Holy Spirit that strengthens us, that helps us and makes us strong.

Again we mentioned it last week but the bible tells us that we're to owe no one anything except to love one another. We're not to owe them the things that promote strife and division, you don't owe anyone the favor of getting their name in the gossip circle, and it doesn't matter what they may or may not have done, you don't owe them back biting, if they've offended you, you don't owe them something of equal pain so as to get even. The only thing the bible gives us the liberty and really the command to owe anyone is love, and the comfort of love promotes unity. Fellowship by its very definition diffuses divisiveness. It's the Greek word "Koinonia" it speaks of an intimate union as the result of a common bond, in this case that which you have in common in Christ and the bond is the Holy Spirit and the bond that the Holy Spirit uses to tie us together (the scriptures declare) is peace. But in this case it's not so much speaking of fellowship and one another; remember we're speaking about those attributes that are Christ like.

We're speaking of intimate union and fellowship of the Spirit. and Again there's not a believer who's ever walked the topside of this earth who hasn't experienced the fellowship of the Spirit. Because apart from the fellowship of the Spirit you aren't saved, Rom 8:9 says very plainly, "*if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*" As a matter of fact one of the main themes that kind of thread through Rom 8 is the fellowship of the Spirit.

So we read there, *“But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors--not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.” The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs--heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”* Rom 8:9-17

It’s a beautiful passage that emphasizes, or expounds of the fellowship or communion of the Spirit. 2 Cor 13:14 *“The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.”*¹ more 1 John 3:24 *“Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. And by this we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.”* How does one abide in Christ? You do what He tells you to, you obey His word, that’s why Jesus said, if you abide in Me and My word abides in you, you shall ask what you desire and it shall be done for you. But how does He abide in us, or fellowship and us, by the Spirit whom He has given us.

Next we see “affection” or “compassion”, and even just earlier in Ch 1 Paul said, *“For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the affection of Jesus Christ.”* James 5:11 tells us, *“that the Lord is very compassionate and merciful.”* Ps 86:15 says, *“But You, O Lord, are a God full of compassion, and gracious, Longsuffering and abundant in mercy and truth.”* Often times compassion and mercy or affection and mercy are linked together, they’re cousins so to speak, closely related to one another. Ps 145:8 *“The LORD is gracious and full of compassion, Slow to anger and great in mercy.”*

Matt 9:36 We read there concerning Jesus, *“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd.”* Matt 15:32 *“Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, “I have compassion on the multitude.”*

The gospels are literally saturated and references of Jesus being moved and compassion for people, is there affection in Christ? If there wasn’t we wouldn’t be here today, you don’t die for a people that you don’t have an affection and compassion for, you see, this is a rock solid, airtight case that Paul is making. and Finally “mercy” and we pretty much covered this and affection but real quick, and we could talk about plenty here, this would be a great spring board to speak to you of the reality of what the Mercy Seat was all about concerning the ark of the covenant.

But suffice it to say that Jesus Christ is our mercy seat, He is where we meet God and receive atonement for our sin, Jesus is so rich in mercy that He is our Mercy Seat, we receive no mercy apart from Jesus. and Again time fails us speak of the mercies of God, the bible says that His mercies are new every morning, I don't care where you're at right now, you can receive the mercy of God this morning new and fresh. Confess your sin to God, repent of it, and He will be faithful and just to forgive you and cleanse you through His mercy. Ps 103:8 *"The LORD is merciful and gracious, Slow to anger, and abounding in mercy."* Vs 11 *"For as the heavens are high above the earth, So great is His mercy toward those who fear Him;"* Vs 17 *"But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting On those who fear Him."* and Finally, 1 Peter 1:3 *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead."*

Over 280 vs in the bible that deal and the mercy of God, actually the entire bible is a love story that showcases the love and grace and mercy of God demonstrated to man through His Son Jesus Christ and So Paul says here, since these things are such an emphatic reality, if these are the very attributes that in Christ are coursing through your veins, then demonstrate that, be doers of the word, live in the actuality of it.

Vs2

Paul says fulfill my joy, this is a Pastor's heart, John said, *"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth."* When there are schisms and divisions in the body it's a grievous thing, there's no joy in that. and Paul is saying hey, you guys are breaking my heart by allowing the flesh to get in there and overrule the consolation, and the comfort and the koinonia, and the compassion and mercy of Christ toward one another.

Because I take joy in your right relationships and Christ and and one another, later on in ch 4 he says, you are my joy and my crown. So fulfill my joy, add that which is lacking due to the division among you by being likeminded, having the same heart and mind that Paul did in the situation, that the Lord has in the situation. Not clones of one another, but all agreeing to humble themselves and submit to the authority of the scriptures and the desire of God for our lives. Having the same love, which right now they didn't, there was some carnality there, and he's saying hey, operate and relate to one another through the love of God, be of the same love, God's love to one another, God's love is giving, strife and divisions comes through selfishness and pride.

He says be of one accord and of one mind. Basically this is an 8 (or 9 depending on how you look at it) but it's an 8 or 9 fold plea for unity, he's saying the same thing over and over. So many times Pastor's get chastised for repeating themselves, hey the Holy Spirit repeated Himself over and over, why? Because we need it, Paul said for me to speak the same things to you isn't tedious it's safe.

Peter said, *“I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease.”* 2 Peter 1:12-15

You see we may here the same things over and over and we may know them up here (in our minds) but what’s going on down here (in our hearts)? What are we doing and the knowledge that we have, is it real in our lives, are you walking in it, sure we’re getting into the word, but is the word getting into us, and changing us and impacting our lives towards godliness. and As long as we live in this tent, we need consistent reminders of God’s desires and will for our lives lest we begin to drift astray in the weakness of our flesh. Paul says, get along by the grace of God, allow these qualities of Christ to facilitate unity in your midst.

Maybe these things aren’t real to you, because you don’t know Jesus Christ You’ve never experience the consolation of Christ, the comfort of His love, the sweet communion of the Holy Spirit and the compassion and mercy of God. and Today God is calling out to you, 2000yrs ago on a hill called Calvary, Jesus Christ hung on a cross, and bled and died for you, and through the means of the cross He is offering you that consolation today. He wants to comfort your heart, bring you into fellowship and Him and have compassion and mercy on your soul. He was delivered up to death for your offense, for my offense and He was raised from the dead for your justification. So that if you’ll only believe on Him, you’ll be justified before the Father and enter in to age abiding, everlasting, and eternal life. If God is calling out to you this morning, today is your day, open your heart and believe on Jesus Christ