

**THE KEY TO UNITY**  
**Philippians 2:1-11**  
**4/21/13**

**John 13:35** "By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another."

Unfortunately, most of the NT epistles deal with conflicts between Christians in the various churches.

Pride, envy, strife, selfish-ambition

Some Christians act a lot like scorpions.

Scorpions eat insects, but they will also kill and devour one another. One experimenter placed a hundred scorpions into a large glass container. After a few days only fourteen remained. The rest had been killed and eaten by the others.

The experimenter then put a pregnant female in a glass vessel and observed her as she devoured her young as fast as they were born. One escaped by taking refuge its mother's back. This young scorpion found revenge by killing its own mother.

Our passage this morning continues explaining to us that a life worthy of the gospel promotes unity among Christians. Cf 1:27

**1. A worthy life promotes unity among Christians. 2:1-2**

**a. We have a four-fold incentive to promote unity. v. 1**

Four first class conditional clauses (since or because)

*We should stand firm in one spirit, with one mind because:*

- We have all found encouragement in Christ.

*We have found forgiveness and hope*

- We have all found comfort and consolation in Christ's love.

♦ Rom 8:28, Phil 4:6-7, Heb 13:5

- We have all experienced fellowship with the Holy Spirit.

*The Holy Spirit indwells us, empowers us, intercedes for us, fills us, gifts us, and bears fruit through us.*

- We have all experienced the affection and compassion of Christ.

*Because we have all experienced these things in Christ, we should walk in unity with one another.*

**b. We have a four-fold directive to promote unity. 2:2**

- Be of the same mind.

*This does not mean that we all must have the same opinions on everything.*

*It means that we should work together in a spirit of cooperation.*

*Cf 4:2 same word are translated "live in harmony"*

- Maintain the same love.

God wants us to manifest the same unselfish love for one another that we have received from Christ.

- **Be united in Spirit.**

When each of us is in tune with the Holy Spirit, we are in tune with one another.

- **Be intent on one purpose.**

1:18, 20 to exalt Christ whether by life or death

1:27 . . . with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.

## 2. Unity requires unselfish humility. 2:3-4

### a. Two sins that destroy unity v. 3a

- **Selfishness destroys unity.**

Selfish ambition leads to conflict and rivalry

There will never be unity when my primary concern is getting my way.

Pride and selfishness lead to conflict in our homes, at work, and in churches.

There will never be unity when everyone is focusing on his own desires, his interests, and his rights.

- **Empty conceit destroys unity.**

This word refers to the pursuit of meaningless personal glory. (vain or empty glory)

### b. Two Virtues That Promote Unity vv. 3b-4

- **Humility promotes unity.**

Humble people regard others as more important than themselves.

They put the interests of others ahead of their own.

**Romans 12:16** Be of the same mind toward one another; do not be haughty in mind, but associate with the lowly. Do not be wise in your own estimation.

- **Unselfish love promotes unity. v. 4**

It sacrificially looks out for the interests of others.

**Romans 12:10** Be devoted to one another in brotherly love; give preference to one another in honor

Unselfishness puts the desires and well-being of others ahead of self.

## 3. Christ Is Our Example Of Humility And Unselfish Love . 2:5-11

### a. Christ did not cling to His divine privileges. vv. 5-6

He was not looking out for his own rights and personal interests.

He was willing to humble himself and sacrificially give up all He had for us.

v. 6a He existed in the form of God.

**Form** here refers to Jesus' inner nature, not an eternal shape.

The Bible teaches that Jesus has been and will always be God (John 1:1-4; Colossians 1:16-18; Hebrews 1:1-3, 8)

As God, Jesus had no beginning and will have no end.

Yet the humanity of Jesus began in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

v. 6b He did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.

He didn't jealousy protect His position and privileges.

Though Jesus didn't cease to be God, He was willing to temporarily set aside the rights, privileges, and honors of deity.

**b. Christ chose to temporarily lay aside the independent use of His divine powers and privileges. v. 7a**

**Emptied-** does not mean that He surrendered His deity

The "emptying" consisted of his taking on the limitation of becoming human.

This doesn't mean that He gave up being God.

Jesus is like a king who had the finest clothes, chefs, doctors, and army who for a time, takes on the appearance and lifestyle of a beggar. In so doing the king chooses not to take advantage of all the resources he had as king.

- He temporarily veiled His heavenly glory. John 17:4-5

John 17:5 . . . "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.

- He temporarily gave up the independent use of His power and glory. John 5:30

**John 5:30** "I can do nothing on My own initiative. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is just, because I do not seek My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

- He temporarily laid aside the independent use of His omniscience. Mt 24:36

Matthew 24:36 "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone.

- He submitted Himself to the will of God the Father. John 6:38

**John 6:38** "For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.

- He temporarily gave up His heavenly riches. 2 Corinthians 8:9

2 Corinthians 8:9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

Jesus didn't empty Himself of His deity. He limited the independent use of His divine powers and privileges.

*King Edward the Eighth gave up the British throne for Wallace Simpson, the woman he loved.*

Edward didn't give up his royal blood line (he was still a Windsor). But he gave up the power and privileges of the throne.

In the same way Christ didn't give up His divine nature, but the power and privileges of deity.

**b. Christ humbly and unselfishly took on the form of a servant. v. 7b cf Mark 10:45**

**c. Christ was humbly and unselfishly made in the likeness of man. v. 7c**

The Bible teaches that Jesus is 100% God, yet 100% man.

God- John 8:23-24

Man- 1 John 4:2; 2 John 7-11

**d. Christ humbly and unselfishly became obedient to the point of dying on the cross. 2:8**

Jesus trusted God the Father even to the point of obediently suffering and dying on a shameful cross.

He put your interests and mine ahead of His own.

**1 Peter 2:24** and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.

**4. God the Father has now highly exalted Christ. 2:9-11**

*Bestowed upon Him the name which is above every name*

*So that every knee will bow before Him*

*bow*- a sign of humble submission to His Lordship

*in heaven*- holy angels and the spirits of people who have gone on to heaven.

*on earth*- the living

*under the earth*- people who have died without Christ and the fallen angels who are currently bound.

*So that every tongue will confess Jesus as Lord*

Every tongue

Confess Jesus as Lord

To the glory of God the Father

**5. Truths For Living**

**a. The key to unity is unselfish humility.**

- Most conflict in marriages, families, churches, and on the job are a result of pride and selfishness.

♦ Humility and unselfish love bring peace.

**b. Do unto others as Christ has done unto you.**

- Be of the *same mind* toward others that Christ has toward you. v. 2a
- Maintain the *same unselfish love* for others that Christ has demonstrated toward you. v. 2b-4
- Demonstrate the *same humility* toward others that Christ demonstrated in saving us. vv. 3, 5
- Grant the *same forgiveness* to others that He has granted to you.

**Ephesians 4:32** Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you.

- Show the *same unselfish sacrificial generosity* to others that He has shown to you.

1 John 3:11,16-18; 4:7-11, 20-21

- c. **Only those who bow their knees and confess with their tongues that Jesus Christ is Lord now will be in heaven. Romans 10:9-10; 1 John 5:11-13**

**Romans 10:9-10** that if you confess with your mouth Jesus *as* Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; <sup>10</sup> for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation.