

Philippians 2:1-11

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Harambee Church

Fellowship of Joy – Unity in the Gospel - Philippians 2:1-11

Sermon Text

Philippians 2:1 - 11 (English Standard Version):

2:1 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.

Introduction

"...Paul. He, when among you, accurately and steadfastly taught the word of truth in the presence of those who were then alive. And when absent from you, he wrote you a letter which, if you carefully study, you will find to be the means of building you up in that faith which has been given you" (Polycarp to the Philippians)

For the past several weeks now we have been listening to Paul's letter to the Philippians and learning about this great fellowship in the gospel that we all have the opportunity to participate in. The advancement of the gospel is happening all across the world, but not without the price of suffering for those who are in the battle. As suffering comes, members of the Philippian church were tempted to become selfish and focus on their own safety and needs. Paul exhorts them to unity by looking at the example of Jesus, who went straight to the cross for victory.

Body

1. Why is Paul concerned about unity?

- He is speaking against those who preach out of envy and rivalry:
 - *"The former proclaim Christ out of rivalry, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment" (Phil 1:17)*
- Suffering is endured in unity:
 - *"I may hear you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened in anything by your opponents" (Phil 1:28)*
 - *"But recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to reproach and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on those in prison, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew you yourselves had a better possession and an abiding one" (Hebrews 10:32-34)*
- Chapter 4 reveals a significant conflict that Paul is aiming to reconcile through this letter

2. Gospel blessings (vs 1):

- “Encouragement in Christ”
- “Comfort from love”
- “Participation in the Spirit”
- “Affection and sympathy”

3. Gospel unity (vs 2):

- **Same mind, love, full accord & one mind**
- **Why is this unity SO important:**
 - “May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.” (Rom 15:5-6)

4. Humility as the means for unity (vs 3-4):

Humility is the means through which unity is found in Christ. Paul describes humility in three ways:

- “Do nothing in rivalry or conceit”
 - Don't be like those brothers who “preach Christ from envy and rivalry...the former proclaim Christ out of rivalry, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment” (1:15, 17)
 - There are those who preach Christ for fame and to be known
- “...but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”
 - “Having a realistic view of who you really are, take the lead in going out of your way to raise others up and push them forward ahead of you”
- “Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

5. Humility requires:

- A community of believers to know and love
- A realistic view of who you really are
 - “For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself” Galatians 6:3
- Looking to and pointing others to Jesus

6. Jesus leads us into humility (vss. 6-8):

- “did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped” (vs. 6)
- “made himself nothing” (vs. 7)
 - Jesus counted himself amongst the poor and the outcast
- “taking the form of a servant” (vs. 7)
 - Jesus came to serve
 - The Son of Man had no place to rest his head
- “obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (vs. 8)
 - He chose to love a traitor for three years
 - He chose to die with enemies spitting in his face
 - He chose to die even with ability to stop it

7. Jesus leads us into unity and ultimately God’s glory (vss. 9-11):

- One day Jesus will unite all creation under his name
 - “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father”
- Jesus accomplished what Satan and Adam could not
- Jesus first came as a humble servant, but He will return as a mighty King
 - Revelation 19:11-21