

BE LIKE JESUS
Philippians 2:1-11

(Read Philippians 2:1-11)

Intro: ABC is a healthy church, the Philippian Church was a healthy church. A healthy church doesn't rest on its laurels or let its guard down.

We covered Philippians 1 over the past three Sundays and Paul's affection for the church there is very obvious. He smiles every time he thinks of them – and promises that God's good work in them would be taken to completion. He encourages them with the very fact that obedient Christ Followers literally cannot lose – in fact, to live is Jesus Christ and to die is gain. Last week we looked at Paul's words as he admonishes them to live a life worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is how a healthy church that makes Paul smile lives up to its reputation.

But Paul's not done. He knows his congregation in Philippi – he'd lived among them, he knew them intimately, and he knew that even a healthy church had some warts. But as we saw here as I read these first eleven verses, he's got some teaching that shows that those warts were very treatable.

He begins by showing that . . .

Even healthy churches must guard against disunity

- William Barclay makes this great point right off the bat, "*The one danger which threatened the Philippian church was that of disunity. There is a sense in which that is the danger of every healthy church. It is when people are really in earnest and their beliefs really matter to them, that they are apt to get up against each other. The greater their enthusiasm, the greater the danger that they may collide. It is against that danger Paul wishes to safeguard his friends.*"
- Archibald Hunter commented that every church has difficult people, but the truth is that Paul isn't necessarily thinking about people who seemingly have the spiritual gift of stirring the pot, as much just needing to be reminded to forget about themselves and being humble like Jesus. What is pleasing to God is unity and the cure for it is selfLESSness. So, if there is any encouragement in Christ, **AND THERE IS**, then we have a responsibility to **have the same mind as Jesus**.
- Having the same mind as Jesus means love, affection, and sympathy for one another and being of one mind and heart. That's tough work – but it's doable. If it weren't Paul wouldn't suggest it.
- This means that there is not selfish ambition or conceit. The church is no place for dog eat dog. In fact Paul is telling us to put others first. You see, selfishness and conceit are the prime enemies of fellowship and unity. We need to fight against them and when they happen, overcome them. Here's how:
 - By counting others better than ourselves, seeing the strength and gifts of others, and remembering and realizing our own weaknesses, failures and limitations.
 - We should make a habit of thinking and speaking of the interests of others and not just our own. We should not be so wrapped up in ourselves.
 - Humility in Paul's culture was unacceptable and NOT to be a lifestyle – so the fact that he was calling for humility was truly countercultural. In many, many ways, it's still that way and our call to humility is still countercultural. But you know what? As we do that, for one another, you for me and me for you – **EVERYONE IS BUILT UP IN THE BODY!**
- Unity helps us be like Jesus. Which is good since . . .

A Christ Follower must look like CHRIST!

- Paul tells his friends to follow the supreme example – JESUS! We are to have the very mind of Christ. And this is what Jesus did
- Jesus was God – he didn't have to stake a claim to it – HE. IS. GOD. But he didn't hold on to that. He came to humanity. In fact – he, God, came to humanity AS A BABY! Born to a carpenter's wife, his first bed a feed trough for livestock. His very essence was God, but he became man. He didn't have to. But he did. He relinquished the privileges of being God because it was necessary for the plan of salvation to unfold. Jesus was God. That never changed. But he didn't hang on to that to prevent himself from being the ultimate sacrifice for all of humanity. So, in Paul's words, he emptied himself.

- Barclay says, *“If humility, obedience, and self-renunciation were the supreme characteristics of the life of Jesus, they must also be the hall-marks of the Christian. Selfishness, self-seeking and self-display destroy our likeness to Christ and our fellowship with each other. But the self-renunciation of Jesus Christ brought him the greater glory. It made certain that someday, soon or late, every living creature in all the universe, in heaven, in earth and even in hell, would worship him. It is to be carefully noted whence that worship comes. It comes from love. Jesus won the hearts of men, not by blasting them with power, but by showing them a love they could not resist. At the sight of this person who laid his glory by for men and loved them to the extent of dying for them on a cross, men's hearts are melted and their resistance is broken down.”*
- Yep – every knee will bow and every tongue confess this . . .

The first and easiest and truest creed is JESUS IS LORD!

- Many are tempted to use verses 9 through 11, that point out that every living creature will bow down and confess that Jesus is Lord, and believe that that is the main point. And it’s true – it is a huge point.
- But the main point is: if this is the truth (all these things that Jesus did for humanity) then we need to be unified as his body. It’s not as much about how every creature and human being, even those who don’t want to, will bow down to Jesus. You see the life we have in Christ Jesus needs to shape our attitudes in the fellowship that we have with others. And so we need to have our minds fully aware of the pattern that we have in Jesus Christ. **We need to be like Jesus.**
- We need to own that simple proclamation – JESUS IS LORD! We need to live it out– we need to take the pattern of Jesus and allow it to take over who we are so that we help the world to know and own for themselves that **JESUS IS LORD**. That way there will be many more creatures who will bow the knee and their tongue confess that Jesus is Lord with anticipation of the glory of God.

Conclusion: At ABC there is encouragement in Christ; there is comfort from love, there is participation in the Spirit and affection and sympathy. So let’s continue in the same mind and hold one another higher than ourselves. That made Paul’s joy complete, and it makes the Lord smile on us. Let’s be like Jesus. Jesus is Lord! Amen.