

Theme: If the Church is to be a beautiful community of unity and diversity, we must walk in humility, being willing to sacrifice our own rights in order to serve our brothers and sisters.

## I. Intro - The Danger of Disunity

- A. Great bands, teams, organizations - unity & diversity
- B. Often fall apart - they will no longer accept one another
- C. This happened with Church at Philippi - disunity
- D. Why did it happen? What is the way forward?

## II. The Trinity, Unity, and Diversity

- A. Once again the passage is built upon the Trinity  
If you have any encouragement from being united with **Christ**, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the **Spirit**, if any tenderness and compassion...  
<sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of **God the Father**. Philippians 2:1, 11
  - 1. Bookends section - Christ, Spirit, God the Father
  - 2. This grand appeal to unity is once again built upon the life, example, and experience of the Trinity
  - 3. Thus, we expect to see both unity and diversity
- B. This passage is about unity  
If you have any encouragement from being **united** with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any **fellowship with the Spirit**, if any tenderness and compassion, <sup>2</sup>then make my joy complete by being **like-minded**, having the same love, being **one in spirit and purpose**. Philippians 2:1–2
  - 1. The Philippians were experiencing disunity

- 2. Note all the terms of unity in experience and with one another
- 3. Paul is appealing to their common experience of being 'in Christ' and of 'fellowship with the Spirit'.

### C. The reality of diverse interests

Each of you should look not only to **your own interests**, but also to **the interests of others**. Philippians 2:4

- 1. Interests - affairs, things, not like hobbies
- 2. There is diversity because each of us has our own interests, desires, and way of looking at things
- 3. As we have seen in recent weeks, God has designed the world so that true beauty, health, and flourishing require both unity and diversity.

## III. Self-Interest, Humility, and the Example of Christ

- A. Our self-interest often becomes sinful  
Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:4
  - 1. Paul says we must not only look to our own interests, but also to the interests of others.
  - 2. I naturally look to my own interests, even at your expense. We ALL "look out for number 1"!  
I have no one else like him, who takes a genuine interest in your welfare. <sup>21</sup> **For everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.**  
<sup>22</sup>But you know that Timothy has proved himself, because as a son with his father he has served with me in the work of the gospel. Philippians 2:20–22
    - a. Note this uses the same language as v4
    - b. EVERYONE looks out for his own interests - even at the expense of the interest of Jesus Christ!

- c. Timothy was a VERY unusual exception to this
- d. A quick thought “I am not like this” should make me very suspicious.
- e. We all have the tendency to try and make ourselves the center of the universe.  
 “Since the Fall of man, we do not want to deny ourselves. Actually, we do everything we can, whether it is in a philosophic sense or a practical sense, to put ourselves at the center of the universe. This is where we naturally want to live.”  
 Francis Schaeffer, *True Spirituality* (page 217).
- f. This idolatrous tendency to my own self-interest, even at the expense of others or the cause of Christ, undermines any chance of the Church experiencing and walking in Trinitarian unity and diversity.

#### B. The antidote to poisonous self-interest: humility

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:3–4

- 1. Selfish ambition and vain conceit are ever-present dangers, poisons that can seep into our soul
- 2. These things often masquerade as a legitimate looking after my own needs but are really sinful attempts to sinfully prioritize my interests, wants, and desires above those of others.
- 3. This is why Paul says we need humility - placing others before myself.
- 4. Humility is not about a false notion of my lack of worth, but about taking the focus off of me and my desires, and prioritizing the needs, wants, and desires of others.

- 5. This is how Paul develops it in v4 - looking to the interests of others.
- 6. “Humility is not thinking less of yourself but, it’s thinking of yourself less.” - Rick Warren (not Lewis)
- 7. Do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man he will be what most people call ‘humble’ nowadays: he will not be a sort of greasy, smarmy person, who is always telling you that, of course, he is nobody. Probably all you will think about him is that he seemed a cheerful, intelligent chap who took a real interest in what you said to him. (CS Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)
- 8. Humility is the frame of mind that allows me to move beyond trying to keep myself, my desires, my perspective at the center and to truly listen to others so I may be able to serve them in love.

#### C. The example of humble servanthood - Jesus!

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, <sup>7</sup>but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross! Philippians 2:5–8

- 1. Appeal to humility followed by the example of Jesus
- 2. Jesus is God - and yet He humbled Himself!
- 3. When Jesus became human He humbled Himself even as a man to submit to death
- 4. Jesus did NOT give up His Deity - He gave up His prerogative to exercise His rights as God so that He might serve us!

5. As God, Jesus had every RIGHT not to humble Himself, not to live as a human, not to submit to death - but in humility He refused to exercise these RIGHTS, preferring to serve and save us.
6. If Jesus had exercised his RIGHTS, we would be hell-bound, without God and without hope.
7. Any “rights” we possess fall far short of the absolute rights of Jesus the Son of God. And any way we are asked to lay down our rights to serve others is FAR smaller than what Jesus did for us.
8. Paul is telling all believers this is how we are to live so that we might walk in the glorious unity and diversity of the Trinity in the Church.
9. But if I do this, who will watch out for my interests? God Himself - and He will reward this humble servanthood!  
Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:9–11
  - a. Jesus humbled Himself to serve us, and God the Father exalted Him for this!
  - b. Humble servanthood led to Jesus’ eternal exaltation!
  - c. Humble servanthood brought glory to God - and salvation to us!
  - d. Humble servanthood even will bring the enemies of God to bow before Him!

## IV. Applying the Word

### A. Humble servanthood in our fallen world

1. Since the fall we all want to be the center of the universe, and to have others serve us and our needs, wants, and whims.
2. Our modern culture certainly does not encourage humility or servanthood but reinforces our fallen nature to demand our own way!
3. So everything today quickly degrades into the wants, desires, beliefs, and rights of each person - and real discussion ceases.
4. Christians are NOT immune to this, and in my observation we far too often behave more like the world than Jesus.
5. If we are honest, all kinds of objections rise in our hearts as we hear this.
  - a. But what about my rights?
  - b. But who will look out for me then?
  - c. What if I really think they are wrong? I should stand up for what is right!
6. What if Jesus had asked the same questions and acted upon them?
  - a. He is God - He had ALL rights in the universe!
  - b. Emptied Himself of His rights and trusted the Father!
  - c. We were absolutely wrong - and He still served us!

### B. Am I walking in humble servanthood in BRCC?

1. Life in a local church REQUIRES humility and a willingness to serve one another

2. This is not about what the Bible commands - we hold on to the faith once for all delivered to us
3. But most items do not rise to this level - it is simply my preference that is at stake
4. We will disagree on many things - this is part of unity and diversity
5. Romans 14 - give up rights to serve weaker ones
6. Am I willing to consider the interests of others before my own?
7. Am I willing to serve my brothers and sisters, willing to give up my 'rights' to help them?
8. Am I willing to empty myself of my rights, humble myself, and put others first?
9. This does not answer every question - but without this attitude of Christ, we will not be able to build and maintain a beautiful community of unity and diversity

### C. Closing prayer

## The Beautiful Community - Humble Servanthood

Philippians 2:1-11

July 12, 2020

Prayer

Numbers 6:24-26

Teaching keywords: Church; Trinity; community; humility and pride; service; sanctification; Christology

The LORD bless you and keep you; 25 the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; 26 the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace. Numbers 6:24-26

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, <sup>2</sup>then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. <sup>4</sup>Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, <sup>7</sup>but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross! <sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:1–11