

Philippians Chapter 2

Philippians 2:1 "If [there be] therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,"

Consolation "Encouragement": From the Greek word that means "to come alongside and help, counsel, exhort, which our beloved Lord does for His own.

Consolation of love portrays the Lord coming close and whispering words of gentle cheer or tender counsel in a believer's ear.

Fellowship of the Spirit refers to the partnership, of common eternal life, provided by the indwelling Holy Spirit.

God has extended His deep affection and compassion to every believer and that reality should result in unity.

This verse is as if he is asking them if their experience with Christ was real or not. Do you trust in Christ? Is His love real to you?

Do you fellowship with Him in your Spirit? Do you really believe in the mercy of God? Were you really baptized in the Holy Spirit?

This verse forms the basis for Paul's appeal (in verse 2): "Fulfill ye my joy." His thinking is this: Since these five benefits or virtues ("consolation", "comfort of love", "fellowship of the Spirit", "bowels, and mercies"), exist in Christ. And since you are Christians, then exercise these virtues toward one another as you contend for the gospel and face opposition.

Philippians 2:2 "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, [being] of one accord, of one mind."

Fulfill ye my joy or ("Make my joy complete"). Paul rejoiced over the Philippians but his happiness was incomplete, owing to some disunity and lack of total harmony among them. The Greek equates what to Paul? It constitutes "complete joy" with the readers being likeminded.

This means "loving in harmony" with one another. That is, the Philippians can "fulfill" the writer's joy by living in harmony among themselves. But what does such harmonious living entail? Beginning (in verse 2), and continuing through (verse 4), six participles spell out and clearly define what it means to "live in harmony":

1. Having the same love toward one believer as shown toward another, without partiality;
2. Being of one accord; that is, they are to be united in spirit;
3. Of one mind; that is, the whole church is to have the same values and goals;
4. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, for selfish ambition or conceit;

5. Let each esteem others better than themselves; that is, each is to regard his fellow Christian as more important than himself; and
6. Look ... every man also on the things of others; that is, each is to be just as concerned for the needs and problems of his brother as he is for his own affairs.

Then Paul says, if you answered yes in the verses above, conduct your life like a Christian. Agree with your Christian brothers and sisters and make me very happy. Love each other and get along. Be of one mind in the things of God. Let there be unity in your spirits.

Philippians 2:3 "[Let] nothing [be done] through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."

Selfishness is a Greek word, which is sometimes rendered "Strife", because it refers to factionalism, rivalry, and partisanship that speaks of the pride that prompts people to push for their own way.

Empty glory or conceit refers to the pursuit of personal glory, which is the motivation for selfish ambition.

Lowliness of mind was a term of derision, with the idea of being low, shabby and humble.

Esteeming others more so than yourself is the basic definition of true humility.

Pride causes problems. It seems that a good bit of jealousy was going on, and Paul speaks against that. Paul is explaining to them that Christians consider the needs of others before themselves. Love your neighbor as yourself.

Strife and vainglory cause division in the church. Paul is saying, do not be stubborn and demand your own way. Think of the needs of others first.

Philippians 2:4 "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."

One of the main differences in Christian's attitude and the attitude of the world is that Christians are more thoughtful of others than the world. A Christian desires success for his Christian brothers and sisters, as well as his own success.

Philippians 2:5 "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:"

If we have taken on the mind of Christ, then our thoughts would be the same thoughts He would have about the same thing. He was unselfish and thoughtful of others. If we desire to be Christ like, then we will be unselfish and thoughtful of others.

Christ is the ultimate example of selfless humility.

Philippians 2:6 "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:"

Jesus was in the beginning with God, but His name, in heaven before he came to earth, was the Word of God. It was not robbery, because He was God the Word.

Paul affirms that Jesus eternally has been God. The usual Greek work for “existed” or “being” is not used here. Instead, Paul chose another term that stresses the essence of a person’s nature, his continuous state or condition.

Paul also could have chosen one of two Greek words for “form,” but he chose the one that specifically denotes the essential, unchanging character of something, what it is in and of itself. The fundamental doctrine of Christ’s deity has always encompassed these crucial characteristics.

“Equal with God”: The Greek word for “equality” defines things that are exactly the same in size, quantity, quality, character and number. In every sense, Jesus is equal to God and constantly claimed to be so during His earthly ministry.

1 John 5:7 "For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."

This next Scripture really settles it.

John 1:1 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

When the Word of God came to the earth, He took on the form of flesh and dwelt among us as Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He was "Immanuel", God with us. He had the flesh of man so that He could be tempted and suffer as we do in the flesh.

The Spirit within the flesh was God the Word.

Philippians 2:7 "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:"

The NASE says He “emptied Himself. From the Greek word comes the theological word “kenosis”; i.e., the doctrine of Christ’s self emptying in His incarnation. This was a self renunciation, not an emptying Himself of deity nor an exchange of deity for humanity.

Jesus did, however, renounce or set aside His privileges in several areas:

1. Heavenly glory, while on earth He gave up the glory of a face to face relationship with God and the continuous outward display and personal enjoyment of that glory;
2. Independent authority, during His incarnation Christ completely submitted Himself to the will of His Father;
3. Divine prerogatives, He set aside the voluntary display of His divine attributes and submitted Himself to the Spirit’s direction;

4. Eternal richness, while on earth Christ was poor and owned very little; and
5. A favorable relationship with God. He felt the Father's wrath for human sin while on the cross.

Jesus left His title (Word of God), in heaven and took on the lowly flesh of man. He came to this earth in the form of man to rescue mankind from their sin. Since the problem was in the flesh of mankind, Jesus took on flesh. His flesh was in the likeness of man, so that He could defeat Satan as a man. In heaven, He was worshipped.

He left that to save His creation. He became a lowly servant to mankind. He had no reputation as Jesus on the earth. His glory was in heaven as the Word of God.

Christ became more than God in a human body, but He took on all the essential attributes of humanity, even to the extent that He identified with basic human needs and weaknesses. He became the God-Man: fully God and fully man.

Philippians 2:8 "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross."

Christ's humanity is described from the viewpoint of those who saw Him. Paul is implying that although He outwardly looked like a man, there was much more to Him (His deity), than many people recognized naturally.

After the humbling of incarnation, Jesus further humbled Himself in that He did not demand normal human rights, but subjected Himself to persecution and suffering at the hands of unbelievers.

Beyond even persecution, Jesus went to the lowest point or furthest extent in His humiliation in dying as a criminal, following God's plan for Him. Even further humiliation was His because Jesus' death was not by ordinary means, but was accomplished by crucifixion, the cruelest, most excruciating, most degrading form of death ever devised. The Jews hated this manner of execution.

He wanted to taste every aspect of the suffering on the cross for you and me. Him being fashioned as a man, He suffered pain as you and I would. Notice, in the Garden of Gethsemane, He said, my Spirit is willing, but my flesh is weak.

Matthew 26:41 "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed [is] willing, but the flesh [is] weak."

He humbled Himself and did the will of the Father. One must die for the sins of the people. This had to be to free mankind from sin. Notice also, that all of this was the will of Jesus, (humbled Himself).

Philippians 2:9 "Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:"

This in a sense, is speaking of God the Father exalting Him. Whether this name spoken of here is the unspeakable name in heaven, or not, we do not know. We do know that on the earth this name is Jesus which means Jehovah Savior.

He was exalted, because he had been humbled. He had been exalted ruler in heaven, before He came to earth. This just puts Him in the exalted position He had held in heaven from the beginning.

Christ's exaltation was fourfold. The early sermons of the apostles affirm His resurrection and coronation (His position at the right hand of God), and allude to His intercession for believers. He did not concern Christ's nature or eternal place within the Trinity, but His new identity as the God-Man meant God gave Him privileges He did not have prior to the Incarnation.

If He had not lived among men, He could not have identified with them as the interceding High Priest. Had He not died on the cross, He could not have been elevated from that lowest degree back to heaven as the substitute for sin.

Name: Christ's new name which further describes His essential nature and places Him above and beyond all comparison is "Lord". This name is the New Testament synonym for Old Testament descriptions of God as sovereign ruler. Both before and after the exaltation, Scripture affirms that this was Jesus' rightful title as the God-Man.

Philippians 2:10 "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;"

Jesus was the name bestowed at His birth, not His new name. The name for Jesus given in the fullest sense after His exaltation was "Lord".

The entire intelligent universe is called to worship Jesus Christ as Lord. This mandate includes the angels in heaven, the spirits of the redeemed, obedient believers on earth, the disobedient rebels on earth, demons and lost humanity in hell.

This now is speaking of His creation, whether in heaven, earth, or under the earth. Creator God deserves all praise. We should praise Him that we are recreated in Him at our new birth. We do know that all prayers made to the Father must be spoken in the name of Jesus to receive entrance to the throne of God.

We do know that He has given believers on the earth the power of attorney to use the name of Jesus. We do know that miracles occur in the name of Jesus. There is great power in the name of Jesus. Look with me, at some of the other names this Jesus is called by.

Isaiah 9:6 "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

My own belief is that the name (Jesus), encompasses all these names.

Philippians 2:11 "And [that] every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

The word for "confess" means "to acknowledge", "affirm" or "agree", which is what everyone will eventually do in response to Christ's lordship. Willingly and blessedly or unwillingly and painfully.

"Jesus Christ is Lord" means that we recognize Him as our Savior (Jesus), we recognize Him as Messiah, the Anointed One (Christ), and that we have turned our will over to His will and call Him Lord. Every tongue means all that have the gift of speech. It also, means everyone who has the breath of life.

"Lord" primarily refers to the right to rule, and in the New Testament it denotes mastery over or ownership of people and property. When applied to Jesus, it certainly implies His deity, but it mainly refers to sovereign authority.

For every tongue to confess would bring glory to the Father.

John 1:14 "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

The glory of Jesus was the glory of His Father in Him. When we glorify Jesus, we are also glorifying the Father. Even earthly fathers are glorified in their sons.

Philippians 2:12 "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling."

"Obeyed" is their faithful response to the divine commands Paul had taught them.

"Work out your own salvation": The Greek word rendered "work out" means "to continually work to bring something to fulfillment or completion." It cannot refer to salvation by works, but it does refer to the believer's responsibility for active pursuit of obedience in the process of sanctification.

"Fear and trembling", is the attitude with which Christians are to pursue their sanctification. It involves a healthy fear of offending God and a righteous awe and respect for Him.

God has no grandchildren, only children. Salvation in Jesus is a very personal thing. Each person has to receive Jesus for himself. Paul is explaining to them that they are responsible to God for themselves. Do you act more Christ like around your preacher than you do when you are alone?

Go back and ask God into your heart, if your answer was yes. Your preacher can only save himself. You are responsible for your own soul. He can tell you about Jesus and help you find Him, but you must accept Him for yourself.

You must decide what you are going to do with Jesus. You have heard about Jesus, now it is up to you whether you accept Him and Life, or reject Him and go to hell.

Philippians 2:13 "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of [his] good pleasure."

Although the believer is responsible to work out his own salvation (verse 12), the Lord actually produces the good works and spiritual fruit in the lives of believers. This is accomplished because He works through us by His indwelling Spirit.

God energizes both the believer's desires and his actions. The Greek word for "will", indicates that He is not focusing on mere desires or whimsical emotions but on the studied intent to fulfill a planned purpose. God's power makes His church willing to live godly lives.

"Good pleasure" means that God wants Christians to do what satisfies Him.

God dwells in the heart of the believer. When He has taken up residence in you, then your heart directs your actions. You do the will of God even when you are alone, because Christ in you is the hope of glory.

Ephesians 1:18 "The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,"

Colossians 1:27 "To whom God would make known what [is] the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory."

Philippians Chapter 2 Questions

1. What is this as if Paul is saying?
2. What could they do that would make Paul happy?
3. Let nothing be done through _____ or _____.
4. What do Christians consider before their own needs?
5. What is verse 4 saying to us?
6. What kind of mind should a Christian have?
7. What was Jesus' name in heaven, before He came to the earth?
8. What does "Immanuel" mean?
9. Why did He take on the flesh of man?

10. Verse 7 says, He took upon Him the form of a _____.
11. What was His title in heaven?
12. How was Jesus in the likeness of man?
13. Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient unto _____.
14. What is the full meaning of Jesus?
15. How do we know that all of this was the will of Jesus, too?
16. At the name of Jesus _____ knee shall bow.
17. Prayers to the Father must be asked in _____ name.
18. What has Jesus given the Christian power of attorney to do?
19. What are some of the names He is called by in Isaiah 9:6?
20. What is every tongue to confess?
21. Who will that glorify?
22. What does the name Jesus Christ Lord tell us about our relationship to Him?
23. God has no _____, only children.
24. _____ has to receive Jesus for himself.
25. Who is responsible for your soul?