

Philippians 5 - Likeminded

1. False unity and likemindedness

As we move into chapter 2 of Philippians we can really begin to see the call for unity in the book.

Phil 2:1-2 If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

2Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

We are going to look at the call for being likeminded as it is described here later on. Whenever we speak of unity, we have to make sure not to confuse it with other similar concepts. When we speak of unity, it does not mean simply union. Remember that you can have union without unity. Russia, England, and the United States were all united in World War II, but there was no unity of spirit beyond defeating a common enemy. Even at that there was political intrigue and maneuvering behind the scenes.

When we go to study the Revelation, one of the major elements of the agenda of the Antichrist will be to establish a false unity. By a false unity we understand that he will establish an *appearance* of unity. What he will force on the world will be a *uniformity*, *not* a unity. The true faith that Israel will take up preaching again will be a threat to the Antichrist. This is very much what we experience as God and faith are cleverly sidelined and replaced by responsibility to the government in His place.

The method that is used today is consistent with the agenda of the Antichrist. By declaring that something is dangerous you create the cause for eliminating it. There must be great care that you distinguish between a difference of ideas, bad ideas, dangerous ideas, and dangerous people. Truly dangerous ideas are a little more obvious. When it comes to a difference between ideas and bad

ideas, debate will help to settle on a solution, even though it will be imperfect. The problem comes when these issues are mixed and conflated. Then a leap in reasoning is made that different ideas are bad, that anything bad is dangerous, and that people who have such bad and dangerous ideas should be eliminated. It is *this* that the Antichrist will strive for in the Tribulation.

Rev 13:7-17 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

8And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

...

17And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth and them which dwell therein to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

13And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men,

14And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by *the means of* those miracles which he had power to do in the sight of the beast; saying to them that dwell on the earth, that they should make an image to the beast, which had the wound by a sword, and did live.

15And he had power to give life unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both speak, and cause that as many as would not worship the image of the beast should be killed.

16And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads:

17And that no man might buy or

sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

Eliminating those with merely different ideas that are demonstrably not dangerous does not create *unity*, instead it forces *conformity*.

2. The example of Christ's humility for likemindedness

Although the example of Christ is given *after* the challenge to be likeminded to *support* the need for being likeminded in the previous verses, it is most appropriate for us to look at His example *first*. Christ's example of humility is both the foundation that underlies our unity and it is the goal for us to strive to achieve.

Phil 2:5-8 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

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

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

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

This portion of Scripture has been dubbed the *kenosis* passage because it is the most sublime statement about the nature of Christ in the Trinity. The word *kenosis* denotes an *emptying*. It comes from the reference to how He *made* himself *of no reputation*. "Being in the form of God," refers to the nature of the Lord Jesus in His incarnation when He became flesh. It does not just refer to mere outward appearance but, more importantly, it includes the very inward being. In referring to His nature before He became man, the verse plainly says that He existed as God. It is also worth noting that the word "being" is in the present tense. This means that His being

in essence fully God is continuing even when He took the essence of man. Even though He had the same *form* as the rest of the Godhead, He did not consider it robbery, or something to seize and hold onto. The second part, "thought it not robbery to be equal with God," deals primarily with the attitude that the Lord had when He came in the flesh.

Some modern translations of vs. 7 state that Christ "emptied Himself." And some have erroneously thought that this refers to Christ stripping Himself of His nature as God. But this is far from what the passage is teaching us. While the word "emptied" is also an accurate translation, the KJV captures the actual thought being presented here. The word actually means to divest oneself of self-interests and dignity and become of "no reputation." We can better understand "thought it not robbery" as "not considering holding onto His divine attributes for His own advantage." This means Christ willingly set aside the full use of His powers (divine attributes) and selflessly surrendered His self-interests and dignity as God. Being fully God and fully man while on earth, He had total access to His divine attributes.

It is possible to go only so far with trying to understand the length, breadth, and depth of the humanity and deity of Christ. We use the word *hypostatic* union which refers to the underlying nature of Christ as an inseverable union (cannot be divided) of the divinity and humanity of Christ. The hypostatic union is a theological *declaration* of the perfect blend of the human and the divine. We know *that* Christ emptied Himself, but about the best explanation for that is that Jesus retained all of His divine power and character but did not access it during His time on earth. He only did what the Father revealed to Him in His humanity and then acted by the power of the Holy Spirit which was given to Him without measure. If you find that a little unsatisfactory then you are not alone. When we speculate beyond that, we can get into some theological trouble very quickly. By way of illustration, it reminds me of a problem that atheists

propose, thinking themselves quite clever. The question they present is, "Can God create a rock so big that He cannot lift it?" The idea is that if God cannot create such a rock then He is not all powerful. If He can, and then can't lift it, then He is not all powerful. The real problem is that their question is nonsense. As God's infinite power to create runs parallel to the thing created, an infinitely heavy rock, the question becomes, "Will parallel lines ever meet in infinity?" Parallel means equidistant and therefor never intersecting. This also ignores the fact that God *transcends* His creation. He exists not just *inside* His creation but also *apart from* His creation. By definition the thing created can never be bigger than God Who is outside of creation. It is like asking if God can create a square circle. The definition of God's domain and the definition of His creation are not in the same category. To ask how Christ can be omniscient and limit His knowledge falls into just such categorical problems.

The real issue is that Christ, Who is worthy of the highest praise, stooped to the lowest humility. There are numerous effects of this. Although He is God almighty, He can understand our human pain. Although He is infinitely righteous, He bore the infinite sinfulness of man. The book of Hebrews expresses numerous such blessings for us.

What He has done for us in His humility becomes the foundation for our unity. To the degree that we can overcome self, we can live in unity with others. Sinful man in his natural state seeks to consume for self, seek attention for self, lives for the survival of self, all without *ultimate* regard to what it costs others. In sinful self-centeredness, man resists God's plan insisting that he, the sinner, can become good enough for God to have to accept him. In the moment someone humbles themselves before God and accepts the fact that he can never achieve such righteousness he is ready to receive what God has done for him in *His* humility. In *His* humility, He submitted Himself to the death on the cross to pay for us in our sinfulness.

Once a person has received that salvation, he is ready to aspire to live in the example of Christ's humility. It is that mentality that makes it possible for there to be *true* unity. There will be unity when we are united in spirit over the most important purpose of life. Even though Christ was humbled to take our sin and judgment, restoring our relationship with God, the ultimate result will be His glory.

Phil 2:9-11 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

10That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of *things* in heaven, and *things* in earth, and *things* under the earth;

11And *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

There are those who think they can afford to just brush off any consideration of God. They are so self deluded that they don't know that they should be trembling in fear because they *will* bend their knee before God and finally confess that Christ is Lord, but it will be as they are abandoned to their final judgment in Hell! How much better it would be if people could only come to humble themselves and surrender their heart to Christ now while they can still be saved.

3. True unity and likemindedness

We have the example of God Himself humbling Himself to share His glory with us. Jesus, being God, formed the perfect union with man. Those who unite with Him in faith can *now* live in unity with each other.

Phil 2:1-5 If *there be* therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

2Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one

mind.

3Let nothing *be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

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

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

Paul started off with the word *if*, which is used in a logical sense of an *assumption*. Because of this, it carries the idea of *since* we have consolation in Christ, comfort of love, fellowship of the Spirit, bowels and mercies, we *should therefore* fulfill his joy. The new nature that comes from being born again enables us to be likeminded. When we have the new nature that comes from being born again, we have the presence of Christ's mind and heart in our spirit. Without this we are doomed to live in strife and vain glory, clutching and grabbing at all that we can seize in our own self interest. With the mind of Christ, we can be humbled, esteeming others *better* than we esteem *ourselves*. *That* is the essence of love. We can be *likeminded* with a common intention, of one accord with one soul, and of one mind, or spirit. When we have the love of Christ in us, we don't just act in mere union. When we have the love of Christ in us, we won't just be forced to conform. When we desire the same thing, we are free to act in unity, one with another.

The devil would be honored if we lived in conformity to the world's philosophy and lifestyle. As Christians we need to cherish the unity of the faith and heart we have in serving Christ. We have the joy of serving, praying, and worshiping together. As we examine ourselves, is there something that puts you at odds with a brother or sister? It is hard to be in unity while keeping our distance from each other. Is our contact with each other only from 11:00 to 12:00?

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