

The Mind of Christ - Philippians

by Anton Bosch

The sermon emphasizes the importance of unity in the church, achieved through having the same mind, love, and being of one accord, all rooted in Jesus' mind and love.

Duration: 42:46

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Philippians 2:1-11, Philippians 4:2

Topics: "Mind of Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker addresses the issue of disunity in the church of Philippi. He refers to a disagreement between two individuals, Yudia and Sintakey, which has caused disharmony in the church. The speaker emphasizes the importance of having the same mind in the Lord and encourages the church to be like-minded and of one mind. He explains that serving oneself instead of Christ and the church leads to wrong motives and actions. The speaker also highlights that these principles of unity can only be applied by those who are born again and have a transformed mindset.

Transcript

The book of Philippians, chapter 2. Philippians, chapter 2. We've been going through the Bible book by book. We're coming to these short, easy books to read. Those who've been sticking with us, especially in the adult Bible class, have an easy time.

No longer 66 chapters in Isaiah that you have to read in one week. It's just four short chapters. And we gave an introduction to the book of Philippians this morning, and part of the problem, one of the things that Paul writes to the Philippians about is the fact that there seemed to be some disunity in that church.

And you'll see in chapter 4, he makes reference to two people in chapter 4, verse 2. I implore Judea and I implore Syntyche to be of the same mind in the Lord. And so there was some disagreement between these two people, and that obviously spilt over to the rest of the church. And so there was some disharmony in the church.

And one of the things that Paul addresses to this church, and by no means a problem church, but there was this little bit of roughness and easiness in the church. And he writes to them a very well-known passage, a passage we know, I'm sure, well, and I want to focus on the first part of that passage. And I'm going to read from chapter 2, verses 1 through 11.

Philippians chapter 2, verses 1 through 11. Therefore, if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than himself.

Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bond-servant and coming in the likeness of man. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Therefore God also has highly exalted him and given him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. So, he begins by saying in verse 2, Fulfill my joy by being like-minded.

In modern English he's simply saying, Make me happy, make me happy by being like-minded. And I think that there is nothing that disturbs, certainly me as a father, although there is nothing more that disturbs me more is when my children are in disagreement, when my daughters are arguing about something. It really upsets me very deeply.

There is nothing that upsets a pastor more than when there is disagreement in the church, and when there is disunity. This is, and unless you've been in that situation where you've been a parent, it'd be very hard for you to understand how it really touches one's heart, when there is disunity in the home. And Paul is saying, make me happy, fulfill my joy.

Now, he's not saying that he doesn't have joy. Of course he has joy, and one of the themes in this book is the theme of joy, and the word joy appears 16 times in this book. And so, he has joy because of who he is in Christ, he has joy because of what the Lord has done for him, and because of his salvation, and because of the Lord's goodness.

But at the same time, there is this one thing that is spoiling the picture, that is spoiling his true happiness, and that is the fact that there is disunity in the church. Disunity happens, and I'm not addressing any particular situation in this church, but because disunity happens, it happens frequently, because we are people, and one of the things that people do is they disagree, because we are different, we come from different backgrounds, we have different cultures, we speak different languages, we have different goals, we have different theologies, we have all sorts of differences, that when we come together in close fellowship in a church, sometimes and oftentimes causes a little bit of friction. Sometimes that friction gets more than just a little bit of friction, and can eventually end up in a split in the church.

And that is very, very serious, and remember Paul addresses this in the church of Corinth, where there was envy, division, and strife, and the church was about to split over some of these issues. Now, before we get there, we need to resolve the problems. And so he gives us some formulas, some recipes, some of the things we need to do in order to maintain unity in the church.

And this does not only work in the church, it works wherever. It'll work in the home, it'll work in your business, it'll work at school, it works in any environment if we can only apply these things. The only problem is that the only people who can apply these things really are those who are born again.

These are not natural laws that you can apply if you're unsaved, because the unsaved mind is not able to do these things that he is suggesting that we do. And the first thing that he says we need to do is we need to have the same mind. We need to have the same mind.

And in fact, he says it twice and two different, and I'm not going to split it into two. But in verse 2 he says, Fulfill my joy by being like-minded. And then at the end of verse 2 he says, Be of one mind.

So, first he says we should be like-minded, then he says we should be of one mind. Those are two different, two degrees really of being one-minded. He says first we need to be like-minded.

In other words, we need to think the same way. That's of course the immediate answer to any kind of disagreement. If we can think the same way, we wouldn't have a disagreement.

Why do we disagree? Because we don't think the same. Because my mind and your mind are different, and we have different ideas about things. And so we need to be like-minded.

We need to think the same way. But then we need to go beyond that, he says, not just think the same way, but we need to have the same mind. In other words, we need to share the same mindset.

Not just think in the same way, but we need to have exactly so that... And you say, well, is that possible that we can have the same mind? Well, remember Jesus prayed, and he says, I pray, Father, that they may be one even as we are one. And Jesus has the same mindset as the Father. Jesus doesn't just think like the Father.

What Jesus thinks is what the Father thinks. And what the Father says is what Jesus says. That's how much they are one.

And Jesus says, I want for the church to be one to that degree, that they have the same mind. Not that they have different minds that somehow are able to work together and find some kind of synergy. No, he says, I actually want them to have the same mind.

Now, the problem is, and of course if we can just get this like-mindedness, we won't have disagreements. But how do we get that like-mindedness? How do we become like-minded? And of course, each one of us will say, well, if you just see it my way, we won't have a problem. And so, whose minds should we have? Well, if you think my way, we'll all agree.

If everybody thinks my way, we'll be fine. But the problem is that everybody in the congregation says, well, if you just see it my way, we won't have a problem. So, we have 20 people, 30 people, I don't know, each one saying, well, just see it my way.

And we'll get on famously. We won't have a problem. We won't have an issue.

So, whose mind do we have? Where are we going to find that one mind? Whose mind is it going to be? Is it the mind of the leader? Is it the mind of this one or that one? And of course, the answer is easy. The answer is, you don't need my mind. I don't have much of one anyway.

We don't need your mind. We need Jesus' mind. And that's why the next part of this passage, he says in verse 5, let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus.

So, the mind we need is Jesus' mind, not my mind, not Bourbon Community Church's mind, not a Republican mind or a Democrat mind. We need the mind of Jesus. And if I can have and find the mind of Jesus, and you can find and have the mind of Jesus in your life, we won't have any disagreements.

Because we'll think exactly the same. We'll have the same values. We'll have the same attitudes.

And we say, but we can never do that. That can never happen. And yet, Paul says, do this.

Now, remember something that I shared with you before, and we need to remind ourselves, that God is not unfair. God is not unreasonable. He doesn't tell us to do things that we cannot do.

You don't find any commandment that says that you have to be able to jump over this building if you want to get saved. Because He knows we can't do it. It's impossible.

Nobody, except Superman, can jump over the building. God doesn't tell you to do things that you can't do. So, if He tells us to do something, it must be achievable.

It must be within the realm of possibility. And even if I may not be able to do it for myself, He is able to equip me to do that. And so, whatever commands He gives us must be achievable.

And so, let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus. So, we need to be like-minded. And I'm going to come back to that issue of the mind of Christ in a while.

But the second thing in verse 2 He says we need to have is we need to have the same love. We need to have the same love. Now, that's just as hard as having the same mind.

Having the same love. In other words, we must love the same thing. The problem is when I love myself and you love yourself, that's going to be hard for us to find unity because we don't share the same love.

We don't love the same thing. But if we can find the same love, if we can come to a point where we love the same thing, we're going to find unity. And I'm sure you've heard all the ads for, is it Harmony.com? Is that what it is? eHarmony, sorry, eHarmony.com. And what do they profess to do? What do they say they do? Well, they say they have a questionnaire and you complete the questionnaire and they feed it into the computer and the questionnaire says, I like to go to the beach on Saturdays and I like this kind of music and I don't know what the questions are.

I've never done the thing. And then they'll match it up with somebody else who likes the same things. And so if we can find two people who share the same things, then it has to be a match and they'll get married and they'll live happily ever after.

Well, I suppose there's some truth in it. I don't know, but the fact is that if we share the same purposes, the same goals, love the same things, the chances are that we should be able to get along. And so we have things in common with many people out there in the world and you have friends that you share certain things in common with and you get along as long as you focus on the things that you have in common with them.

It may be the job. You may be working for the same company and so you have a devotion, a commitment, a loyalty to the company. They have a loyalty to the company and so you get along because you're working for the same company, working towards the same goals and ends of the company.

You may be a Dodgers fan and so you go to the Dodgers stadium and you get along famously with however many 50,000 other people who all love the same thing and all hate the same thing. Anybody who is not a Dodger on the field, we don't like. And so we all get on famously because we love the same thing.

Now folks, when it comes to the church, you're saying that we need to have the same love. We need to be loving the same thing. And clearly that same thing cannot be me.

And clearly that same thing cannot even be the church. That same thing needs to be Jesus. He needs to be the common denominator.

He needs to be the focus that we're all revolving around. And if I really love Jesus and you really love Him, we will have unity. We will not have disagreements.

The problem comes when my love for Jesus is small and my love for myself is big. That's when we have problems. And so the first thing I need is we need the same mind.

We need the mind of Jesus. We need the same love. We need to love the Lord Jesus.

And then he says, being of one accord. And you remember, this is a word that appears many, many times in the book of Acts. A very important word.

And you remember, they were all with one accord on the day of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit fell upon them. And then over and over it speaks in the book of Acts about the fact that they were of one accord. And of course, the word one accord is really a musical term.

When we sing together, somehow in the mornings it doesn't go too badly. We sing quite well most of the time, I think, for the fact that we don't have any professional musicians. But somehow in the evenings it doesn't always go that well.

And one of the reasons is that we sing in different keys in the evenings. Some people sing in a key which is just so low that you can't get there. And some of us are trying to sing in a slightly higher key.

And so it doesn't sound too good sometimes, quite frankly. Why? Because we're not in the same key. We may be trying to sing the same tune but it's not the same key.

And so it's not according. It's not harmonizing. It's not blending.

It's not working together. And so when that doesn't happen, you have what they call discord. You have harmony and you have discord.

Now, harmony doesn't mean that everybody is singing exactly the same note. We don't all have to sing the same note to be in harmony. And I'm sure that you're familiar with forms of singing in different voices.

And America is famous for barbershop quartets where you have four men, mainly, but sometimes women. In fact, when we had the Magnolia Park Festival, we had some women who sang in harmony. And each one sings slightly differently to the other one.

They're all not singing the same notes. They're not all singing exactly the same. There's a difference.

But that difference is in harmony. It's working together. And the Bible is not wanting us to be clones of one another.

He's not saying we all have to be exactly like this in order to... It allows for differences. We are different. We come from different backgrounds.

We have different skills. We have different strengths. We have different weaknesses.

We have different cultures. We have different gifts. But when we work together and we blend those together in a godly way, it becomes harmonious and we become a one accord.

So this is not bland. Sometimes we say, well, unity means bland. Unity means that we all have to forget about our own unique abilities and our own uniqueness and our own differences.

And we all have to become exactly the same. And we all become little clones, little soldiers. And that's what they try and do in the military.

In the military, they try and get rid of your own individual personality. And we all have to become exactly the same. And when the sergeant says jump, everybody jumps at the same time, exactly the same way, exactly the same height.

Now, that's not what God is wanting. He's allowing for our differences. But those differences need to blend together.

And it blends together when we're all on the same page, to use a modern expression, when we're all on the same page. But when I'm singing on page three and you're singing on page four, well, it's just no way we can harmonize. There's no way we can be in one accord.

And so being in one accord is a wonderful thing where we're able to blend our differences, but we're able to put them together in such a way that we're not working contrary to one another. We're not discordant in our voice, but we are complementing one another and my strengths make up for your weaknesses and your weaknesses make up for my strengths. And so we're able to be in one accord and we're able to work together in a wonderful way.

And so, he says then, be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind. Now, he explains what this one mind looks like. What attitude should I have if I have one mind? And verse three says, first of all, let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit.

That's where it begins. Always the negative and then you have the positive. So he says, don't do anything out of selfish ambition.

The old King James uses the word strife, which is not a good translation. In fact, it used to be a good translation. Strife used to mean differently to what it means today.

Today, strife always means division, argument. But when the King James translation was translated, the word strife was more in line with striving after. Strife, striving.

And when we strive after things, it means that we're ambitious. So you can see that the meaning of the word has changed a little bit. And so, selfish ambition is a better translation of that word.

Now, he says, let's not do anything out of selfish ambition. Now, it's interesting because it's in the same book that Paul says, he says, I'm happy for anybody who preaches the gospel. I'm happy for anyone who preaches the gospel.

And it doesn't matter what their motive may be, as long as they're preaching Jesus. He says, I'm happy for that. But now he says, no.

In the church, we should not be doing anything. Now, what does nothing include? What does nothing include? Nothing. Nothing includes nothing.

You can't have anything in nothing. Nothing means absolutely nothing. So nothing includes not even good things.

We say, but I'm doing the right thing. But if you're doing it out of selfish ambition or conceit, even if you're doing the right thing, Paul says, don't do it. You see, we're so concerned about making sure that, well, I'm not doing anything wrong.

I'm doing all the right things. But if you're doing the right things for the wrong reasons, Paul says, don't do it. And the wrong reason, here in this context, has to do with selfish ambition and conceit.

These are two opposites, two sides of the same coin. Selfish ambition is when I want to promote myself. And so we know that many people will do many good things.

Just as long as somebody says, you're a good guy. As long as somebody will give me a medal or some kind of award or some kind of recognition, I'll do all sorts of things. And he says, if that's what's going to drive you, if that's what's going to motivate you, don't do it.

Why? Because I'm not serving Christ. I'm not serving the church. I'm really serving myself.

And so I'm going to do the things that will promote me, that will make me look good, that will make people say, he's a wonderful Christian. And the moment I begin to do things for that reason, not only am I doing them for the wrong reason, but I will be doing the wrong things at the wrong time. Because everything I'm doing is to focus on me.

And I should be focusing on Jesus. I should be focusing on the church, on others. And of course, this is the mindset in the world.

And as I said, these principles work in the world, the only problem is that the world cannot apply them. Because as far as the world is concerned, it's about me, I and myself. After three years, I'm still trying to come to terms with traffic and driving in L.A. And one of the things I find hard to deal with is that when you get to a four-way stop, what do you call it? The four-way stop? One of the things I find hard to deal with is when I come to a four-way stop and I get there first.

You know what happens, I get to leave last. Why? Selfish ambition. It doesn't matter if I got there last, I want to leave first.

Why? Because I'm more important than you. Because I drive a big SUV. You see, this is the problem with the world.

The world doesn't have the ability to say, even if I got here first, I'll pull off second. But the world is about selfish ambition. And we bring that into the church.

And we say, what can I get out of this deal? And when we do things for those reasons, everything we do is tainted. Everything we do is affected. All of our relationships are affected.

It becomes very hard for us to make friends with people. Because it's all about me. And what I can get out of the relationship, and what I can say, and what I can tell, and it's me and I. And you can't build a friendship, and you can't build fellowship on that basis.

Friendship and fellowship has to be built on the basis of me looking out, and that's the point he comes to. For other people. And if you have two people who want to be friends, and everything is one-sided, I'm sure you've had relationships like that.

The other person always wants to talk about themselves. It's always about their issues. It's always about their needs.

It's always about what they want. And sometimes you can, when you listen to people's conversations when they talk on their cell phones in public places. Of course, it's their own fault that you listen to their conversation.

I have no problem listening to their conversation because they're talking for me to listen. But when you listen to the conversation, you can hear the person on the other side really has nothing to say. It's all about what this person is saying.

Now, that's not a conversation. That's not fellowship. That's not a relationship.

And one of the problems that's wrong, one of the things that, and it's not wrong, but one of the problems we have with this kind of preaching is it's one way. I'm telling you what I believe the Lord is saying. But it's not, this is not fellowship.

This is preaching. This is not building a relationship. But if we're going to build a relationship, I need to listen to what you have to say as much as you need to listen to what I have to say.

But when we do things out of selfish ambition, always wanting to be something more, something better. Ellen and I know somebody very well who it doesn't matter what you have seen or what you have experienced, this person has always seen or known better and bigger. Always wanting to be just that step ahead of everybody else.

And look, we bring that into the church. And when we do, and I think we've come, praise God, we've come a long way in this church. And so I'm not addressing any specific situation, but we still have these problems in our own, every one of us has this, because that's just the way we are.

And it's not because, it's just because we're human. And so selfish ambition, always wanting to be one step ahead, always wanting to be first, always wanting to be more important, always wanting to be heard, always wanting to be seen. It says don't do things for that reason.

But then the other side of the coin, let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit. Now, the person who operates from a platform of selfish ambition is the wannabe. Always trying to, feeling inferior, and feeling the need to prove themselves.

Feeling the need to show that I'm just as good as you or better than you are. Selfish ambition. Ambition has to do with reaching out, grasping after.

But conceit is a little bit different. What is conceit? It's pride. And the person who is conceited is not trying to reach out and be something.

They think they're something. Can you see the difference? The one person who's trying to be something, ambitiously striving after approval, the other person thinks they are something. And so they're conceited.

So the one person pulls away from the stop sign when it's not their turn because they're trying to prove a point. Just pushing themselves. The other person pulls away first when it's not their turn.

Not because they're trying to prove a point, simply because they think it's their right. I am better than everybody else. I know more.

I have more. And folks, this is just as dangerous. There are those who are striving, who want to be something in the church, who want to be recognized.

But just as dangerous are those in the church who think they're something when they're not. Who think that they're God's greatest gift to the church when in fact they may be something slightly different. And you remember Paul writes to the Romans in chapter 12, and he says, Let no man think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but let every man think soberly.

In other words, let's not say I am nothing and I have nothing because God has made us something. God has gifted us and placed us in this church and given each one of us an ability of some kind or the other. Some gift.

Let me not say I have nothing because then you're saying God really made a mess. God doesn't make a mess. But at the same time, let me not think that I'm something that God has not made me to be.

Let me not think more highly of myself than I should think. Let me not operate from a platform of conceit. And it's so easy to do that.

I remember one of those experiences that sticks in your mind. I had a conversation with a man in our house in South Africa quite a few years ago, and a mutual friend had brought him to me because he felt that maybe I could help this man because he had some problem in his doctrine. And you know, we discussed these things for several hours, and it was getting late, and we came to a point where he says, he says, you know, I really feel sorry for you.

He says, I used to think like you do. Now, from what basis was he operating? One of conceit. I have the answers.

And folks, none of us have the answers. And it's very hard to discuss any kind of theology or anything from the Bible with somebody who's conceited, somebody who thinks that they really have all the answers. Now, I'm not saying that we should be wishy-washy about what we believe.

I know what I believe. But I also know that I have a good potential of being wrong. I don't want you to feel insecure and say, well, you know, this preacher doesn't know where he's going.

I know where I'm going. I know what I believe. But I'm also ready to listen to what anybody else has to say in case I made a mistake.

Paul did the same thing. He says, I was preaching for many years. But he says, just in case.

I went to Jerusalem to check my doctrine with the other apostles. And he says, praise God, what I discovered was what they're preaching is exactly what I'm preaching. So there needs to be a willingness

for us to say, I could be wrong.

Let's not operate from a platform of conceit. Let's never interact with one another from a platform of saying, I'm better than you are. You know what? I've been in this church much longer than you've been.

I've been saved longer than you. I know more about the Bible than you do. I'm older than you are.

I'm more handsome than you are. I'm whatever. But when those thoughts come into our minds, it breaks the basis of fellowship.

Because fellowship and a relationship can only be built on a one-to-one basis, on an equal basis. But when we're trying to build a relationship when I think I'm up here and I think you're down here, we cannot really build a healthy relationship that way. And in marriage, we often have that same problem.

Husbands think that they are God's gift to the world. And they think that the women are nothing. And they wonder why they can't find common ground.

We can only be one, we can only have the same mind when we are willing to not do anything through selfish ambition and or conceit. But in lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than himself. Now that's tough.

It's one thing to say, well, we're all equal. Just some of us are more equal than others, of course. It's one thing to say, well, we're all the same.

It's another thing to say, you know what? You are more important than me. You're more important than me. Let each one esteem others better than themselves.

Now we say, but Lord, you know, how can that person be better than me? Look at their lives. Look at what they've achieved. Look at what they know.

Look at how they serve you. Look at whatever. They can't be better.

But Paul says, let each esteem, in other words, value others better than themselves. Now that's a tough one. And the problem here is that because what we do, and Paul warns about this in Corinthians also, and he says that we measure ourselves by one another.

When we measure ourselves by one another, when I say, well, you know, here's Joe Soap, and here's me. You know, in comparison to him, I know more. I do more.

I serve God longer. Whatever it is. And I feel that I have some reason to be superior to him.

And when we measure ourselves by one another, that's when we have problems in our relating to one another because we end up feeling superior. And when I feel superior to somebody else, we don't have the basis for a relationship. But when I can see others as more important than me.

Now let's just be practical. When you see somebody else as more important than you, what do you do for that person when you meet that person? You simply make that person feel good. When you think you're more important than somebody else, what happens when you meet that person? You make that person feel bad.

I know all about that. I grew up in a very, very poor, always feeling that my clothes were never like anybody else's. I know what it feels like to always come to meet somebody else and never feel that you're really up to snuff, you're really a measurer.

And sometimes just by our attitudes, we meet people, we interact with other Christians, and you know, always it makes that other person feel inferior because we feel that we're a little bit cut above everybody else. But you know, when we measure ourselves by the standard that God has set, and of course that standard is Jesus. And when I look at Jesus and I look at myself, I have to say, I really don't make the grade.

When I look at what Jesus knows and what I know, when I look at Jesus' faithfulness and my faithfulness, when I look at Jesus' holiness and my holiness, when I look at whatever aspect of Jesus, when I look at His love and my love, I have to say, oh, it's me, I'm undone. I don't make the grade. And you know, it's only when I've seen myself the way I really am, the way God sees me, when I see myself in that way, I have to say, you know, others are better than me.

Others are better than me. Because nobody can be as bad as I am. But when we have not come to terms with our own weakness and our own sinfulness, this is impossible to come to a point, it is impossible to come to a point of being able to say, others are better than me.

But remember Paul. Paul had, in fact, in this book, in the same book of Philippians, he gives his pedigree and he says, I have things to boast about. I have a background.

I was born of the tribe of Benjamin. I kept the law. I was a Pharisee.

In every respect, I was the elite of the elite. But you know, he says in another place, he says, I'm the chiefest of sinners. I'm the worst sinner there is.

Now, this is hard for us to come to terms with because we say, but, you know, I shouldn't be down on myself. You see, but Paul understood it wasn't about what he had achieved. It was what Jesus had done in his life.

And he understood that what he was and who he was was because of what Jesus had done in his life. Not because of what he had done. And so he says, what reason have I got to boast? Because if I didn't do it, if he did it, I have no reason to boast.

But you see, when we think we've achieved things and we've done things and, you know, I'm so holy because I made myself so holy. That's when our attitude becomes, but when I understand, you know, everything I have is the grace of God. Whatever little holiness I have, He gave it to me.

Whatever degree of faithfulness I have, He's done it for me. Whatever I know about the Word, He's done it for me. Everything I have, He gave it to me.

I'm the cheapest of sinners. I'm the worst of the worst. And when I understand that, I'm able to say, everybody else is better than I am.

And when we're able to meet one another on that mind, on that basis, that just opens the way for fellowship. When I'm not trying to pontificate and prove myself and be superior and show how wonderful I am, but I actually want to hear what you have to say. I actually want to hear your point of view.

When we're able to do that, you know, that's very hard for us. In fact, I was in a conversation with some people yesterday and I went home and I felt very bad because I interrupted a brother twice because I thought what I had to say was more important than what he had to say. God needs to help us.

That we hear what other people have to say. That we care about what other people... Not just say, well, I'll go through the motions. But actually want to hear what somebody else has to say.

Let me hear their heart. Let me hear their cry. Let me understand their desires.

And I'm sure you know that the people that have made the biggest impression maybe on you in your life, the people who have really... that you have the greatest admiration for maybe, are the people who actually made you feel important. Because sometimes we're so busy making ourselves feel important. And in order to make myself feel important, I'm making everybody else feel bad.

And we wonder why the relationship doesn't work. God give us grace that we may be like Jesus. Even though He was God.

And that's the conclusion of that chapter. And I haven't even scratched the surface of this passage. Even though He was God, He humbled Himself to the death of the cross.

He didn't come as a king. He didn't come as a priest. He came as a man.

He didn't come as a free man. He came as a slave. And He died.

And He didn't die the death of a noble man. He died the death of a criminal on the cross. And Paul is saying, if Jesus was prepared to bring Himself down from the glory that He had in heaven to the death of the cross, if He was prepared to come down all that way, surely we can take one little step down and esteem others better than ourselves.

Father, as we look at Your Word, these are difficult things for us to come to terms with. Because Lord, these things affect the very nature and the core of who we are and our carnal, fleshly desire in nature to prove ourselves as superior to everyone else. But Lord, help us to have the mind of Jesus, the willingness of Jesus just to empty ourselves, to become one another's servants, to wash one another's feet, to hear one another's heart, to make others' concerns our concerns, and to love one another the way You loved us.

Lord, we thank You for the degree and the way that You brought us in this church to the point where we are today. And yet, Lord, we understand there's still a long way for us to go to become the kind of people that You really want for us to be. And so help us, Lord, just to not put ourselves forward, but, Lord, to promote others and to become servants of one another that we might be able to fulfill Your joy.

Because, Lord, as much as Paul's heart was grieved by the lack of unity in that church, if Paul's heart was grieved, Lord, Your heart as the Father of all is grieved even more. And so, Lord, help us to make You happy by having the same mind and the same love. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Part us with Your blessing. Go with us, Lord, and help by Your Spirit that we may be reminded and that we may remember You.

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