

Unity Through Humility

by Anton Bosch

The sermon emphasizes the need for biblical unity amongst believers, and how to achieve it by being like-minded, having the same love, and being of one accord, with the mind of Christ.

Duration: 47:07

Scripture: Isaiah 6:5, John 13:14-15, John 13:34-35, Romans 3:23, Romans 12:3, Philippians 2:2-5

Topics: "Church Unity", "Christian Humility"

Description

This sermon from Philippians chapter 2 emphasizes the crucial need for biblical unity within the church. It delves into the importance of having a Christ-like mindset, focusing on humility, valuing others above oneself, and looking out for the interests of others. The passage highlights the example of Jesus humbling Himself to the point of death on the cross, calling believers to emulate His selfless love and unity.

Transcript

Chapter 2. In our church in Sun Valley we're in the process of going through the book of Philippians. At the moment I teach verse by verse through the books of the Bible. In fact, we've covered most of the New Testament now, and we're in the end of chapter 3, I think, at the moment.

But this is a passage which really is very heavy on my heart. It's not just because it is something that we've done recently, but it is something which is really absolutely crucial for our churches, and that is the need for us to find a biblical version of unity. And so let's read from Philippians chapter 2 and verses 1 through 11.

Philippians 2 verse 1, 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, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in loneliness 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 bondservant and coming in the likeness of men. 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. And so Paul writes to the Philippians, which is one of the better churches that Paul writes to. Now that statement may wake you up a little.

Yes, these churches all had problems. They were not perfect churches. None of them were perfect churches.

They were just like our churches today. Some of them were worse, and others were better. The church in Corinth was really a huge problem in many, many ways to Paul.

The better ones between Philippians and the church in Philippi and the church in Ephesus, these were the two better churches. The Philippians were very close to Paul's heart, because they took the responsibility to help him and to support him financially. And so Paul had a great relationship with them, not just because of the financial support, but also there were very few problems in this church.

The way we figure out how many problems there were in these churches is obviously by reading the letters. And as we read the letters, we find in some of the churches Paul makes many corrections. And those corrections may be in doctrine, or they may be in behavior.

In the case of the Ephesians, he makes very few corrections. And in the case of the Philippians also, he doesn't make many corrections. But there is one problem.

And so Paul begins this section, and I'm really jumping into the middle of the verse here, because we have limited time. But verse 2 begins, and I'm going to deal with verses 2, 3, and 4 this evening if we get that far. Verse 2 begins then by saying, Fulfill my joy.

Fulfill my joy. In other words, I'm really happy about you. And you read that in chapter 1. I'm really rejoicing, and the word rejoice and joy is one of the key words in the book of Philippians.

You go through there, you'll find those words many, many times. So Paul says, I'm really happy about the church in Philippi. But he says, if you really want to fulfill my joy, if you really want to give me... I may have 80% or 90% or 95% joy, but my joy is not a hundred percent full.

So you can fulfill my joy by doing just one thing, and that is by being like-minded. And you'll see later on in the book, and we're not going to go there, that he names two particular sisters in the church who were at variance, who had some kind of disagreement amongst themselves. Now we're not dealing in this church with a full-blown division as you had in the church of Corinth.

There weren't sects as there was in Corinth, where there were some who said, well we're of Paul, and others said we're of Apollos, and we're of Peter, and we're just of no one. You didn't have that kind of thing. It wasn't segregated along economic lines as in Corinth, where there were the rich and the poor who were segregated within the church.

This church had a great sense of unity, but there were still some issues. In fact, every church has issues. And one of the things that every church has is some kind of friction between believers.

Now sometimes that becomes a huge problem, and sometimes it's just that. It's just a little bit of friction. And as iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend.

And so a friction is sometimes a good thing, because the purpose of that is to rub off the sharp edges of our own lives, and to bring us closer into the image of the Lord Jesus. And so while we don't enjoy the sources of that friction, it happens. But the kind of joy, or the kind of thing that Paul is looking for here, that would really fulfill his joy, is more than just the absence of friction, the absence of any kind of upset, or of difficulty, or of problems.

He is looking for a real sense of unity amongst the believers. Now there's a big difference between just the absence of animosity and real unity. Many churches may have the absence of animosity.

In other words, no one's really fighting. Nobody's refusing to greet anyone. You know, things are reasonably calm, but at the same time we're all doing our own individual thing.

Each one comes from his own home, comes to church, does the church thing, and then goes away. And it's really just me, and I, and myself, and my little family. And of course this is an increasing problem today, because we have what we call what the psychologists call cocooning, which means that the world has really become a very unpleasant place around us.

There's so much crime, and violence, and all sorts of stuff going on, and on the political arena things are really unpleasant. And so what we are doing is that we're retracting into our homes more and more. And we tend to go out when we have to go out, but we tend to set up our theaters at home.

We have our internet, we have our entertainment, and our whole world becomes just me and my little family. And that translates to the church. And so we come to church, and we find the same thing.

I don't trust strangers. Stranger danger. And so I come to church, and I may just greet somebody, and then, but I really want to get out of here as quickly as I can, so I can get back home.

And it was a joy to me to see the fellowship amongst the folk this evening before the service began, and that's of course a good thing. So Paul is saying, I want real fellowship amongst the believers. And so he says, fulfill my joy by doing a few things.

The first is by being like-minded, by being like-minded in verse 2. And you can see that there are three things in verse 2 that he, there's four things, sorry, in verse 2 that he encourages them to do. Being like-minded, number one. Number two, having the same love.

Three, being of one accord. And four, being of one mind. Now here when he speaks about being like-minded, the Greek word there is literally of one soul.

One soul. In the book of James, he speaks about a double-minded man, and a double-minded man, he says, is unstable in all his ways. There, the word there is two-souled.

So according to James, we can have two souls. Now that doesn't mean literally we have two souls, but we have two minds. We have two ways of feeling and thinking.

But remember the soul is where my emotions are at. The soul is really where the real me is. And so he is saying, here Paul is saying, don't be two-souled.

In other words, having one soul, one heart for the world, one heart for the Lord. But here Paul is saying, no, what we need to do is the church needs to have one soul. One soul.

In other words, we all feel the same. We all have the same values. We have the same goals and the same ambitions.

The same things make us happy, and the same things make us all sad. And when one member suffers, doesn't Paul speak about that to the Corinthians? We all suffer. When one member rejoices, we all rejoice.

And so Paul is saying, I want you to be one-minded, to have the same soul, to feel the same. And then he says that we may have the same love. Now the word same love there is a little bit obscure, a little bit difficult.

What does he mean, having the same love? Well, literally he is saying that we have the same love for everyone else. In other words, I don't love some more than I love others. Wow.

I haven't been to a church yet where there aren't some people who love some people more than others. We say, well, we love everybody, but we don't love everyone equally. Some people are just easier to love than others, aren't they? Some people like me are not easy to love.

But Paul is saying, I want you to have the same love for everyone, for those who come into our church and who are unlovely and unacceptable and maybe really reprehensible, that you would love them as much as you love those who are just so warm and loving and acceptable, that we love everyone equally. Now I think that there is an area that each one of us can work on, because our natural inclination is just to love those people who are easy to love, and those people who respond to our love, those people who reciprocate, who love us in return. But here he's not talking about human love.

He's talking about divine love, agape love, the love of God, that when we were yet filthy, when we were in our sin, when we were His enemies, He loved us and gave Himself for us. And so that you may have the same love for one another, that you be of one accord. We find that word a number of times in the New Testament, but the first time that it really stands out is on the day of Pentecost.

It says that they were of one accord. They were in agreement. We use that word, the musicians will tell you, they use that word all the time.

They speak about accord, not a chord, but a chord. Now if you're going to make good music, everyone has to play in the same chord. Isn't that true? You can't have one playing in this chord and another one in that.

That is discord. But when we're all playing in the same key, then we are in accordance with one another. There's accord and there is good music.

And so he's saying we need to play the music on the same page, and we need to be in the same key. And then he goes to the fourth one and he says that you are of one mind. Now he's just said that, that you be like-minded.

Now he says of one mind. And here's where we have the limitations and the restrictions of our translation, because they're really two different Greek words. The first one is dealing with a soul, when he says that you may be like-minded, that we may have the same soul, one soul.

Here he's talking about the way that we think with our mind. So firstly he says that we feel the same. Now he says that we think the same.

That we think the same. Now this of course is the stuff that CULTS is made out of. And I just happen to be preparing for the course that I'm teaching in Zimbabwe, which happens to be in apologetics, and I happen to be writing on CULTS this afternoon as I'm preparing the notes.

And of course that's how CULTS work. They all think the same. But how do they get to think the same? Well everybody gets brainwashed, and everybody gets pushed into a mold, and you have to think how? My way.

If I'm the leader, then you must think my way. Now that would be a wonderful church if I could get a church one day where everybody thinks like I do. I would just love that.

And if you think the way I think, well we won't have any problems. But the problem is I'm pretty sure you think the same thing. You say, well if you just think my way, then we'll be fine.

And isn't that the basis of trouble in most marriages? Just do it my way. Just see it my way. Just think the way I think.

But that's not what Paul has in mind. Paul is not building a cult, he's building a church. So what kind of mind must I have? What kind of thinking must I have if we're going to have unity in the church? Not the pastor's mind, not the elder's mind, not the democratic mind of the congregation.

Does the text tell us what mind we need to have? The mind of Christ. The mind of Christ. That is the difference between a cult and a church.

A cult, everybody has to think the way the leaders think. A church, everyone has to think the way Christ thinks. We need His mind.

And every one of us needs to bring our feelings and our thinking, our heart and our mind, in line with the Lord Jesus Christ. And you'll see down in verse 5, it's not on the screen, but in verse 5 you'll see he says, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. So we need Jesus' mind.

So what is Jesus' mind when it comes to the issue of relationships and unity? And Paul's going to deal with that. And so he says then in verse 3, let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit. Now because I haven't taught you many times, I need to teach you some basics of theology before I can move on.

And there's this very complicated word here, and my church knows exactly when we get to these words. Very complicated word. Nothing.

Nothing. It means nothing. Well it doesn't mean nothing.

It means nothing. Not a single thing. Nothing in the church can and should be done on the basis of either of two things, selfish ambition or conceit.

In other words, Paul is saying if those things, and I'm going to explain those to you in a moment, but if those things are the basis or the motivation for you doing something, he says rather do nothing. Now we want everyone to be involved. We want everyone to find their place and their ministry in the body of Christ.

But unfortunately, much of what happens in most churches is on the basis of either of those two things. Let me deal with the first one first, selfish ambition. It's not translated selfish ambition in every translation.

Some translations like the King James use the word strife. Bibles like the ESV, English Standard Version, uses the word selfishness. But the word selfish ambition really is probably the best translation of this particular verse.

It is a verse that is rooted in politics. It is rooted in the idea of my way. I want to do things my way.

But not just do I want them my way, but I want to advance myself at the expense of everyone else. Doesn't that sound like politics these days? Or always? It's always been that way. It's just become a little bit more blatant today.

But I'll do whatever I have to do. I'll step on whoever I have to step on. I will break whatever rules and principles I have as long as I can get ahead, as long as I can achieve my goals and my purposes.

And of course what we do is we sanctify that, and we say, well, it's all for the kingdom of God. I'm doing this for the church. So it doesn't matter how many bodies I leave behind as long as I achieve this great goal of building the church, or whatever it is that I'm trying to do.

But Paul says do nothing out of selfish ambition. Selfish ambition is the greatest cause of division in churches, and between churches, and between pastors and theologians. And folks, here's a truth that many people don't grasp and don't understand.

Division does not come over doctrinal differences. Division comes over attitudes. It doesn't matter how big our doctrinal differences are, if our attitudes are right, we will work our way through those difficulties, and we will come to some kind of agreement, even if that agreement is to agree to disagree.

But we will maintain the unity if our attitude is right. But if my attitude is wrong, it just takes one of the two parties to have a wrong attitude, and the smallest little thing becomes the basis of division. Maybe a doctrinal issue, maybe he didn't greet me, could be any of a thousand little petty things.

It's all about my attitude. And folks, if my attitude is that of selfish ambition, of promoting myself, trying to get ahead in the body of Christ, trying to find my niche, trying to be something, Paul says don't do it, because your motive is wrong. And then the next thing that he deals with is conceit.

Now he uses these two things in the same context. So he says, do nothing out of selfish ambition, do nothing out of conceit. Conceit is not hard to understand.

It's pride. It's feeling that I'm something, and so if I'm going to do something because I think I'm somewhat, Paul says don't do it. Now here's the thing.

What he has done here is that he has bracketed the two extremes and everything in between two extremes. You see, the difference between those two words is the man or the person with selfish ambition is the wannabe. They're looking and they're saying, I want to get there.

I have some kind of ambition. And we say, well, it's a spiritual ambition for godly goals. No, it is selfish.

And I'm trying to reach out, and so what I'm doing is I'm doing it on the basis that I'm to become something. I'm trying to prove a point. I'm trying to establish myself or my church or my ministry.

Conceit says I am somewhere. I'm already there. So I'm looking down on everyone else, and I'm saying, I can do this.

I should do it because I am who I am, because I'm God's gift to this church. So you see the two angles. The one is reaching up, the other one is looking down.

Paul says that's not the basis on which we do anything. But here's how and why we do things. In lowliness of mind, let each esteem others better than himself.

Lowliness of mind. The Greek word for lowliness of mind here is a very interesting word. It did not really exist in Greek culture.

The only way in which that word was used in Greek culture was in a very negative way, saying that someone was mean. And so one of the Greek historians, Jewish historians, Josephus, writes about a certain governor who was mean and did not give the praetorium a certain gift that was promised to them. Same word.

Lowliness of mind. You see, because in Greek culture, the idea of humility was very, very negative. It was a bad thing to be humble, because you were really making yourself to be nothing, when in fact you really are pretty good.

And so this word was never used in this way in Greek culture. It was the church that began to use it in the sense, in a positive sense, where we're saying lowliness of mind, humility is a good thing. Now the problem is that our modern culture still has a problem with that idea.

You must love yourself, you must value yourself, you must understand that you have gifts, you have something. And Paul says, no lowliness of mind. And that's not such a bad, that's not such a hard thing.

If I look at that in isolation, what I mean in isolation, if I look at that outside of the context of the church. So I look at God and I say, well God's great, powerful, wonderful, wise, all-wise, and I'm really nothing. So I have a pretty low self-esteem when it comes to God.

And there's that word, self-esteem. I don't have the time to deal with that this evening, but don't believe what psychologists tell you about self-esteem. None of us need more self-esteem.

Paul is saying we need less self-esteem. What we need is to esteem others greater. And so when I look at my relationship, when I look at God, I say, well yeah, I'm not that great.

But when I come to the church, I feel pretty good about myself, because I thank you God that I'm not like this sinner over here. I fast twice a week, I give tithes of everything. You remember that story Jesus told? We do exactly the same thing.

Yeah, Lord, I know I'm not that great, but Lord, I'm better than sister so-and-so who can't control her temper. I'm better than brother so-and-so who does this or that. I actually come to church on a Wednesday night, so I'm pretty good.

But Paul deals with this in his letter to the Corinthians, and he says those who compare themselves by themselves, and he's speaking about comparing myself and saying, where am I relative to the rest of the congregation? He says they're not wise. Why? Because you're not the standard by which I'm to be measured. I'm not the standard by which you're to be measured.

There is one standard, Jesus Christ. You see, and there's the very basis of pride, which is often the cause of problems in the church. The pride comes because I look at everyone else, and I think I'm pretty good.

But the problem is that that is not where I ought to be looking. That is not the basis. That is not the standard.

And you see Paul doing exactly the same here. He is saying, your standard is Jesus. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who was in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but humbled himself even to the death of the cross.

That's your standard, Paul is saying. So if you think you're pretty humble, check again against Jesus, because that is the one against whom we are to be compared. Remember, even with dealing with unbelievers, we use that standard, because we quote from Romans 3.23, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

Don't we use that verse? But what does it mean? What is the glory of God? Jesus. Colossians says He is the express image and the glory of God. And so when Romans says that we come short of the glory of God, it's simply saying we come short of being like Jesus.

And so as we compare ourselves amongst ourselves, we may have the basis for pride. And Paul is saying, no, in loneliness of mind. And that loneliness of mind only comes when I've seen Jesus, and seen myself in that mirror next to the image of Jesus.

You remember Isaiah, one of the greatest prophets, in fact, the prince of prophets in the Old Testament. And Isaiah preaches for the first five chapters, and he pronounces woes on everybody around him, and he's absolutely right. Woe to the government, woe to the princes, woe to the land barons, woe to these and those and the others, woe to the drunkards.

Six times he pronounces woes in those five chapters against all of the evil and the wickedness that was going on amongst the people of Israel. And I think Isaiah felt pretty good about himself, because he indeed was not like all of them. He was indeed a man of God.

And then you know what happened in chapter 6. He says, I saw the Lord, and when I saw Him, what was Isaiah's response? Woe is me. It's no longer everyone else who's so bad. When he sees the Lord, he says, woe is me.

I am undone. I am a man of unclean lips. And it's then that God touches him, and it's then that God can really begin to use him.

You see, brokenness is not such a bad thing. In fact, it's the only basis on which God can use anyone. And so if you have a problem with pride, you've obviously never seen yourself the way you really are.

And I'm not saying this to condemn you, but folk, when I look into my own heart, and I see the evil and the wickedness of my own heart, I have no basis to condemn anyone else. I have no basis to feel proud or to feel good except in the cross of Calvary, except in what Jesus has done and in what He continues to do as He transforms me into His own image. And even then, it's not what I have done, it's what He is doing as He's changing me, as He's transforming me, as He is making me more like Himself.

You see, the real difficulty comes in the next part of that verse. In loneliness of mind, let each esteem value others better than himself. Now that's where it gets really hard.

That's where the tire meets the road. Really, Lord, that other person, I must esteem them better than me? That person that has such a bad attitude, who does this, who sins, and the list goes on. I must esteem them better.

And folk, here's the problem. Paul is not saying here, just think of it that way. Just play some kind of mind game and think of them as being better than you.

The word he's using here literally means understand that they are better than you. And you say, well, that's impossible. How can the worst person in this congregation, how can the worst person in this congregation be better than me if I've seen myself the way I really am? And folk, I'm absolutely serious about that.

Sometimes in my work, any pastor deals sometimes with the most terrible situations, terrible sins. And I listen to the vileness of what goes on in people's hearts and minds, and I don't come out of those sessions feeling good about myself. I just come out more humbled and say, Lord, I'm no better than them.

It's just your grace. There by the grace of God go I. We use that, but we don't really mean it. We never understand that.

But when we have come face to face with Him and His holiness and who He really is, and as I've seen myself in that mirror in the light of His word, it doesn't take much to understand that the worst sinner in the church--and I'm not talking about unbelievers, but believers who sin--are no worse than I am. And so what Paul is talking about here is not mind games, is not saying, well, you know, let me find the good points in somebody else. That's worldly psychology.

He's talking about me finding out who I really am. And when I find that position, when I find out who I really am, then it's easy to value others higher. Not to put myself on a pedestal, not to put myself up there somewhere, but to humble myself.

Loneliness of mind, let each extend others better than himself. And when I do that, the practical outworking is in the next verse. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

You see, why am I selfish? Why is it that I want my rights? Why is it that I want everything for me and for myself? Because I think I'm entitled. That's the basis. And so I'm going to take from everyone else what I can.

I'm going to take the love, I'm going to take the grace, I'm going to take the compassion, I'm going to take the support and the encouragement. I'm going to get from everyone else whatever I can, because I'm entitled to it. And as we know, you know, every church has its givers and its takers.

Some people just take, take, take, take all the time, spiritually, emotionally, financially. And yet others are givers. You see, how do I become a giver? How do I become someone who's looking out for everyone else and not for myself first, when I have come to understand the value of everyone else? When I've come to understand that that person that I look down on, that person that I despise, has real value.

You say, well, what value does that person have? They were valuable enough for Jesus to die for them on that cross of Calvary. You see, the disciples had the same problem that Paul is addressing here. The disciples were constantly looking at one another, trying to figure out who was more important.

And folks, that's a very human thing. We all do that. Whenever you go to a gathering of people who don't know each other, and you're an observer, and that's what I am, I like to observe and learn, you can see people working the room.

And what they're trying to do is they're trying to establish the pecking order. This is a very base animal kind of instinct. Any of you have had puppies? You have a litter of puppies, the very first thing that begins to happen is they begin to sort out the pecking order.

Even though they're all born at the same time, one's more important, one's bigger, one's more powerful than the other. And the world entrenches that kind of thinking. We bring that kind of thinking into the church.

And nowhere is it illustrated more than when the disciples come to the upper room. Remember, just before they come to the upper room, the night before Jesus was crucified, the night before He was betrayed, the mother of two of the young men came to Jesus. And remember her question, when you come into your kingdom, I want one of my sons to sit on the right and one on the left.

And so as they come into the upper room, the other disciples are upset with these two. Why are they upset with the two sons of Zebedee? Because one wanted to sit on the right and the other at the left, because they're so carnal. Right? No.

They were not upset with the two sons because they were carnal. They were upset because they wanted those jobs. You say, well, it's not in the Bible.

It is in the Bible. Because the next thing that needed to happen is somebody had to wash the feet. And washing the feet was going to determine what? Who was at the bottom of the pile? Who was the least? Because that's who did the job.

And you know the story. No one was prepared to take the job. Why? Because each esteemed himself better than the other.

And what is Paul saying? No, esteem others better than you. So if they were Christ-like, if they had understood what Paul is teaching now, and of course this is a long time after, but if they'd understood that, what would they have been doing? They would have been fighting over who was actually going to wash the feet. Every one of them would have wanted to do it.

I don't often see brothers in the local church fighting about who's going to wash, clean the toilet, who's going to take out the trash. We'll fight over other jobs that have some glitz and glamour and glory to it. Everybody wants to be a preacher.

Nobody wants to wash the feet. Why? Because I'm more important. I'm more important.

And you remember, and that's exactly the context that Paul is illustrating here, using as evidence, and he is saying, who in the end washed the feet? Jesus did. Was he lower than any of them? Of course not. He was their master.

He was their rabbi, their teacher. But not only was that, but he was God incarnate, the eternal word, the one who spoke the worlds into being. And yet he humbles himself and he kneels in front of each one of those disciples, and he washes their dirty feet.

He washes Peter's feet. Peter, who within a few hours would say, I don't know the man. He washes Judas' feet.

Because Judas was there when that happened, and he washed their feet. Judas had in his pocket at that time, at that moment, he had the money that had been paid for Jesus. And as Jesus kneels before Judas, he could have reached out and touched the price that had been paid for him.

And obviously as Jesus washes his feet, I can just imagine the appeal in the eyes of Jesus to Judas, don't do it, man. Don't go there. This is Jesus' final appeal to Judas.

But he washes his feet nonetheless. And yet I think I'm too good to clean the toilets, to do the job that nobody else wants in the church. Let each look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Isn't that the essence of the cross? He didn't come to seek his own will. He didn't come to establish his greatness and his glory, which he had. But he humbles himself to the death of the cross.

For what purpose? To save you and me. Just for us, not for him. Don't be fooled by the false teaching that says that he needed us.

He didn't need us. As we say in South Africa, he needed me as much as I need a hole in my heart. He doesn't need us.

He never needed us. He was complete and fulfilled within himself, within the Trinity. But he saved us because we needed saving.

That's the only reason. And Paul is saying, can we get a little bit of Jesus' mind? That relationship that's strained right now, who's going to say I'm sorry? I know, but he was wrong. What am I saying? I'm better than him.

Know that each esteemed the other better than himself. Look, if we have the mind of Christ, and if there are relationships that are broken here this evening, we should be running to one another, looking for that grace and for that forgiveness. Not sitting on our high horse and saying, I'm right, he's wrong.

Not thinking of myself more highly than I ought, but understanding my weakness and understanding that irrespective of what I think of the other person, that person was bought with a terrible price, the same price that bought me the blood of Jesus at the cross of Calvary. Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in loneliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

Let each of you look out not only for his own interest, but also for the interests of others. Father, we pray that you'd help us. Lord, it's so hard to do what we know we ought to do.

We pray, Lord, that you'd help each one of us to see ourselves the way we really are, and Lord, to value others with the same value that you have put on them, and we're willing to die for them. So, Lord, help us, we pray. I pray, Lord, for any relationship in this congregation here, Lord, those who are here this evening, or those who are not here, but Lord, any relationship that is strained or that has difficulties, and Lord, any relationship that is broken, pray, Lord, that you'd help us, that we may restore those relationships even before we go to bed tonight.

Help us, Lord, to reach out even if we feel that we're the aggrieved party, Lord, that to reach out to that person tonight if they're here, and Lord, to determine to make that phone call as we get home. That you may be glorified, because by this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. We ask this in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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