

A Study in Philippians

Handout – Lesson Three – Chapter Two

I. Review of Lesson Two

This letter was sent by Paul and Timothy to Philippians while Paul was in prison in Rome.

The church at Philippi was very supportive of Paul.

In Chapter One Paul's wrote his prayer for the Philippian church. He said I have you in my mind. He was thankful when he thought of them. I have you in my heart. He loved them with the love of Christ. I have you in my prayer. He desired them to know Christ and mirror the example that he set.

Paul put Jesus first, others second and himself last.

II. Example of Jesus (2:1-11)

A. Unity of Believers (vs. 1-4)

In verse 1 Paul is encouraging the Philippian church to be unified based on their Christian experience. Of course, Jesus is the greatest incentive for unity in the church. If we are in Christ, we should be able to get along with one another. In Philippians 1, Paul spoke of the selfish ambition of some of the Roman believers and he was warning the church at Philippi to guard against this disunity.

What attitude of Christian behavior does Paul exhort the believers to walk in? (vs. 2-4)

v. 2 be of the same mind, maintain the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose

v. 3 do nothing through selfishness or conceit, with humility of mind regard one another as more important than oneself

v. 4 look out not only for your own interests but for interests of others

B. Mind and Attitude of Christ (vs. 5-11)

After Paul tells the Philippians the kind of attitude they should have he uses Jesus as the example of the One who demonstrated this attitude perfectly.

What was Christ's mind or attitude?

Vs. 6 Even though he was part of the Godhead and nothing could change that, He humbled himself to be an example for us. He did not think it was something He was too good for.

Vs. 7 He emptied Himself – He gave up the glory of divinity to become a man. He did not cease to be God but he laid aside His glory.

vs. 7 He took the form of a bondservant – someone who chooses to serve for a lifetime.

vs. 7 He was made in likeness of man. His life was completely subjected to the Father.

vs. 8 Humbled himself as a man and became obedient to death, death on a cross. He humbled himself first to become flesh then to become sin as He willingly went to the cross.

As a result of Christ's humbling Himself, what happened?

Vs. 9 God highly exalted Him, bestowed on Him the name above all other names

What power and authority is in the name of Jesus?

Vs. 10 every knee shall bow. Where? Those in heaven, those on earth and those under the earth.

Vs. 11 every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord

Jesus is the perfect example of true humility.

1 Peter 5:6 – “Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time.”

II. The Example of Paul (vs. 12-18)

In verses 12 and 13 Paul is telling the Philippian church to receive the total benefits of the gospel, not to be half-hearted but to receive all that is available to them. God's work is never half-hearted and it is always completely effective.

These verses give us a statement of the work of salvation.

1. Salvation is of God.
 - a. God works in us the desire to be saved. He awakens us.
 - b. The process is continued through God. Without Him, we cannot overcome sin and no virtue can come forth.
 - c. The end of the process is friendship with God, we are His and He is ours.
2. Salvation is of man – Paul tells Philippians to work out their salvation. Man must cooperate with God or nothing will happen. We have to receive the gift of salvation that is being offered to us. God does not withhold salvation; it is man who does not receive it.

Signs of salvation:

1. It is effective action – work out. (vs. 12) It is progressive and must be a continual daily event.
2. There is fear and trembling (vs. 12) Not the kind of fear that causes us to hide from God but rather to run to Him. We don't want to hurt Him and or grieve Him. That deep respect for God.
3. We will set our mind on heavenly things. (vs. 13) As we participate with God, He responds back to us.

Salvation is not the end, it is the entrance into His kingdom. We then can reign in this life by bringing His kingdom to the earth around us.

In verse 14 Paul tells the Philippians to do all things without grumbling or disputing and goes on in verses 15-16 to tell them what they will be and do as a result.

Vs. 15 They will be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse world. They will be without mixture. They will be lights in the world. Their example will be a demonstration of a path of life in a twisted world.

Vs. 16 They will be able to hold fast or securely to the word of life, They will be able to proclaim the gospel in clear and unmistakable terms.

Vs. 16 – Paul desires to experience the joy of knowing that all his efforts accomplished something for the sake of Christ and that they were not in vain. The greatest prize for him was that through him others had come to love and serve Jesus.

Vs. 17 – Paul used this example as a way to say that even if he were to die it was worth it for the sake of the furtherance of the gospel. A call to sacrifice represented to him a call to demonstrate his love for Christ.

Vs 18 – He wanted them to come to the same place for themselves and if he were to die to rejoice and share in his joy.

The humble mind requires sacrifice and service. This is not something we can do on our own. It comes through the power of the Spirit.

III. The Example of Timothy (vs.19-24)

Acts 16:1-2 “Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed, but his father was Greek. He was well spoken of by the brethren who were at Lystra and Inconium.”

We know that Timothy’s mother was Eunice, a Jewess. His grandmother was Lois. His father was Greek and Timothy was therefore trained in Greek ways. We don’t know what his conversion experience was but we know that Paul met him on his second missionary journey and knew he was one he could use in service of Jesus. Timothy had a good testimony of service at home first.

Paul called him his “son in the faith” (vs. 22) because he had won him to Christ.

When Paul could not go to send advice or encouragement or rebuke he would send Timothy.

In vs. 20 we see that Paul says that Timothy was of a kindred spirit with him and that he was a genuinely caring man.

Timothy did not have to be first. He was teachable and trustworthy. He was content to serve. He was not full of selfish ambition.

IV. The Example of Epaphroditus (vs. 25-30)

A. He was a balanced Christian.

Vs. 25

Brother – he knew the fellowship of the Gospel

Fellow worker – he desired to further the Gospel

Fellow soldier – he knew how to battle for the faith of the Gospel

He was a man who was balanced in his relationship to Christ.

The Philippians sent a gift to Paul through Epaphroditus. They wanted him to deliver the gift and to be of service to Paul. This was a great risk for Epaphroditus because Paul was in prison. He was willing to risk his own life in order to serve Paul.

B. He was a burdened Christian.

Vs. 26-27 While in Rome, Epaphroditus became ill and was near death. He knew that the Philippians had heard about it and was worried for them that they would be concerned for him. We know that God mercifully spared his life. We see that in the midst of his illness he was concerned for Paul and the church at Philippi.

C. He was a blessed Christian.

Vs. 28 -30 Paul goes on to say that Epaphroditus had been a great blessing to him and also to the Philippian church by allowing them through him to be partakers of Paul's ministry. Paul was encouraging them to honor him and to hold him in high regard.

Having the mind of Christ and following his example, is different from the natural way of man. Christ had a submissive mind and was exalted by God. Paul, Timothy and Epaphroditus had submissive minds and they were honored for their service and sacrifice. If we have submissive minds, the mind of Christ, we too can have victory in life.