

## **Incredibly Practical Theology, pt.1**

Phil. 2:1-5

9/6/26 @ CBC

### **INTRODUCTION –**                      who I am

What is the link between what I know and what I do?

How can I know the commands of God, but not obey them?

How can I convert reading the Bible into action?

I ask these Questions – it's hard to find a passage more studied, scrutinized, scoured over... and not applied  
Than this one here today

### **Incredibly Practical Theology, pt. 1**

- Practical Theology – Real World Actions, not studying Christ as a theory
  - Practical – as in, how we practice our Christianity
- Incredibly – bc the matters at hand are the most basic to Christianity
  
- Part 1 – bc the ONE thought Paul has here is too large for one morning's message
  - I'd be skipping over a universe of valuable revelation from Scripture
  - As our passage this morning serves as the launchpad for the Great Kenosis passage
  - "One of the greatest passages in all of Scripture"

### **Continuation from the previous chapter**

v.27, "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the Gospel."

In one word: Unity

Stand fast against outside opponents

Now: Pitfalls inside the church – our flesh!

Prepares them for Suffering from the outside – turns to potential division on the inside

### **PASSAGE -**                      **Philippians 2:1-5**

Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, 2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. 3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

### **PRAY**   **[OFF]**

## OUTLINE

All of the themes of Philippians converge in this passage: Humility, Unity, 'to Think'/Mindset

**Woven together** – one achieves the other

- Humility is performed 1<sup>st</sup> in the Mind – thinking
- Unity is achieved only on the basis of there being humility
- Proper thinking stems from that which unifies us

Language lesson

The Apostle Paul gives the blitz of terms

Great value in them – and I won't load the screen with them either (distract)

The definitions are brushstrokes, and then let me flip this around to show a full picture

Christian Motivation

Christian Methodology

Christian Mindset

### More Introduction                      answer my opening questions

Philippians has a Primary theme: To Think

Many overlook this function of Christianity

Most Ask: What do I do?      How should I act?      What should I say or not say?      Actions

But to grow in Christlikeness, we must first know Christ

Know about Christ:    Who is he?    What is he like?    What does HE think?

What motivated him to do what he did?

Knowing ABOUT Christ should always result in thinking Like Christ

3 words – very similar – help us to define them

Gnosis – Know – Direct experiential knowledge, "I know you", ability to teach something

Nous – Mind – Intuition, understanding, perception, conceptual understanding of a matter

Phroneo – Think – Application of practical reasoning, making choices, living it out

The word: Phroneo – "to think"

Key term in Paul's letter to the Philippians, and to us                      (4x in our passage this morning)

"Same mind"    "intent on one purpose"                      "humility of mind"                      "have this attitude"

The progression goes:

That which we KNOW (true, tested, factual, read in the Bible),

We understand in our MIND (figure it out, have understanding, mental 'eye' is enlightened)

Which produces our THINKing/thoughts (choices we make, moves knowledge to the forefront)

Which produces our actions (act, speak, set our eyes on, etc.)

This is the answer to my opening question:

What bridges the gap between reading the Bible and Obeying the Bible?

Why can I know the promises of God, but not be comforted by them?

- Not simply KNOW them, but I must THINK according to them
- They must be so front and center that I make my decisions accordingly
- Theology is not meant to be kept in the abstract (just information)
- It is to be applied – which is the function of the word Phroneo – to think
  - To apply what you know into actual process

**There are** few things that have a more practical impact on your daily walk than to think like Jesus.

v.5 “Have this attitude in you... Have this mind in you... which was also in Christ Jesus,”  
is the most telling description of your walk as a Christian

Start where Paul starts his thought

### **POINT #1 – Christian Motivation**

V. 1 “Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion,”

First-Class Conditional statement in the Greek

“If” is not speculative, as we might use it today

Speculative “if” would read as though it were an option – if, but maybe there’s another way...

2<sup>nd</sup> Class – as though, “If there is any encouragement in Christ... but there might not be”

Here: Condition of fact, or simple condition

“Since or Because”

How we are to understand this...

- Mood is Indicative... meaning we read this as true statements being asserted in if/then clause
- Translation: The ‘IF’s’ in v.1 are true, and v.2 the ‘then’ part are **commands, not suggestions...**
- **For Christians, unity is not a suggestion, but a command**

“Therefore, BECAUSE there is encouragement in Christ, BECAUSE there is consolation in love, BECAUSE there is fellowship of the Spirit, BECAUSE [of] affection and compassion...”

**[OFF]**

Paul affirmed they believed the Gospel and have participated in Christ already

1:6, “For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus...”

2:1 He is calling them to that which is true of them – anticipating affirmation

In essence: “This is true for those who are in Christ, and you’re in Christ, so this is true of you!”

Establishing the launchpad for what lies ahead – motivation for obedience

This is emotional appeal

- We read *passion* in Paul's writing
- Not neat and tidy – dumping it all in the blender here

4X

4 Clauses 4 Motivations in a bit more detail

- Give definitions – too fast to put it on the screen & make it comprehensible

IF

There is any encouragement in Christ

- Encouragement – paraklesis – GK
- John 14:16, 26 – Jesus uses this term for the Holy Spirit
  - Advocate, Counselor, Helper, comes alongside to speak to
- “Because Christ is your advocate, your helper, is alongside you”

IF

There is any consolation in love

- Paramuthion – console... comfort...
- Because love has been effective in ministering to you
- i.e. you are not ‘unloved’

IF

There is any fellowship in the Spirit

- Koinonia – shared life, common life together
- Because we share this life together in the Spirit of God
- Because we all are in one faith

IF

any affection and compassion

- Splanxnon
- Guts, bowels
- Movement in your compassion for one another

IF

All of these things are true of

Because All of these things are true of you...

Brothers, sisters, this is our motivation

All of what you read here is true of us who are in Christ

What he has done for us

This is indicative, meaning this is truth, but in the tone of an APPEAL

Hear the passion

“Because you are in the Love of Christ... BECAUSE He is your life... BECAUSE you have compassion for one another... BECAUSE you love one another and have ministered to one another...

V.1 is the “IF” part of the clause

v.2 is the “THEN” part of the clause

V.2 “...[THEN] make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.”

Again, Paul commanding, but not in a demanding tone, but appealing to them

Not heavy-handed

“Because you are citizens of heaven... act like it by being of the same mind... united...”

v.2, “make my joy complete by...

4X

THEN “be of the same mind”

- Phroneo – having the inner perspective that corresponds to outward behavior
- Personal beliefs the same -- resulting in outward action being the same
- This is the task at hand – to think alike

THEN “maintaining the same love”

- Agape – love
- Love the same things, in the same way, selflessly giving oneself to, affectionate

THEN “united in spirit”

- “united in soul” – sym – soo – kos (sumpsuchos)
- Co-spirited, one in spirit, “Soul brother”
- One word in the language
- Where one ends and the other begins – not married, but one soul

THEN “intent on one purpose”

- Phroneo again
- “intent on having one mind”
- Not incidental, but a striving, trying to remain unified, rather than looking for ways to sep

[OFF]

These are to be the Christian’s motivations

“Therefore, because you have courage from Christ, because you are consoled by love, because you are in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, because you have affection and compassion for others... THEN make my joy complete by thinking the same way about matters, loving one another, being of one soul, and thinking with one purpose in mind.”

Quite the encouragement

- May overwhelm the Philippians - it is supposed to Paul’s intention to
- They are IN Christ
- They should be overwhelmed

Simply stated elsewhere – different word, same concept

**2 Cor.** 5:14-15, “For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.”

The weight of what is true should impress upon us the need to preserve that which Christ died for  
If Jesus Christ, of all people, pursued these things, all the way to his death...  
Shouldn't we?

So how do we? Paul gives us the path to do so...

## **POINT #2 – Christian Methodology**

As much as unity is the motivation

Humility is the methodology

**v.3-4** “Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.”

Gets ugly

Obvious Parallels:

**Selfishness** – lit. “working for hire”, selfish gain, only in it for what it benefits oneself

Empty conceit – Paul’s made up word – “a state of pride which is without basis or justification”

One who simply wants what they want, to the dismay of others

“Conceited” – pride for pride’s sake, arrogance without the substance, self-glory w no source

- Everyone can see through his arguments, posturing = nothing there of substance
- Bluster, wind, all smoke and no mirrors

**Parallel** with

v.4 “[do not merely] look out for your own personal interests”

- First one I am **NOT** going to define

- The selfish, vain person – seeks their own glory, and dismisses the care for others.

Contrast with

v.3 “But with humility of mind, regard one another as more important as yourselves...”

“look out for the interests of others”

Two words to define here:

**Humility** – def. – Phroneo base – humility of mind – compound word

- Tapeinos – low, cast down, Slaves were in this class, **because they relied upon their Lord**

- and not on themselves, for their provision, protection, care
- Roman/Philippian culture had no word for humility – foreign concept
- Modestia – Latin - emphasized awareness of one's social role rather than self-deprecation or lowliness.
  - To even be lowly was shameful, let alone AIM to think in such a way
- Phroneo – to think
- Humility = “In Scripture, this is an inside-out virtue produced by comparing oneself to the Lord rather than others. For the believer, this means living in complete dependence on the Lord with no reliance on self.” - Strong’s Concordance

“Regard one another as more important”

Regard, Esteem, consider – Gk – hegeomai – hegemony

- Consider them as coming first in priority, casts a heavy vote, Carries weight
- Often for chief, governor, highest esteemed, those who lead

Parallels: “Rather than thinking like a Master... think like a Slave.”

- “Rather than living by your own code of conduct... set your personal desires aside.”

There is no way to achieve humility or unity if we all prioritize ourselves first [OFF]

- You would hear it clearly if I read this in the Reverse:
- “Do what you want, even if it’s selfish and conceited, thinking of yourself as the Master and others as your slaves. Look out for your own interests and put others last.”
  - That’s the way of the world

Caveat: “regard one another as more important”

What this passage does NOT SAY

Not: Just act like people are better than you

Not: Think you are worthless

Not: Ignore your own legitimate needs

Not: Pretend that bad ideas are good ideas

Not: Let other people take advantage of you (Commentary)

Sensitive area for some – want to protect oneself from harm

- Pastoral Counsel – if this is the temptation for you... cut others off/out... get counsel from

**POINT #3 - Christian Mindset**

What this passage DOES say

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus”

Phroneo – again – this is how Jesus thought

NOT what Jesus knew, but what He thought

Yes: Have this posture... this attitude... this outlook on the situation...

**READ 2:5-11**

The centerpiece of the letter to the Philippians **[OFF]**

Centerpiece of Christology

The Great Kenosis passage – to empty

- We would have to ask, if the picture Paul gives is Jesus, laying aside his position in heaven
- Jesus, “made himself nothing... taking on the schema of a slave...
- Obedient all the way to the point of death
- Never abandoned the plan to reconcile YOU WITH GOD
- This is the image... this is the picture...
- WE are the reflection...
- This form of Jesus is the form that the Holy Spirit is molding you into
- Join him in this effort

Look at all Christ had to give up for the sake of Unity

Look at the Self-Restraint of Christ – for me and for you

How should you respond?

Looking out for your own personal interests?

B/S – Set your eyes on Christ

Highlight the Concept here:

**To Paul, unity was always found through self-restraint/denial**

- Unity is not through shared experiences, affiliations, political parties, culture, heritage, gender
- Comes through “being of the same mind, same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose (v.2).”
  - Unity is through self-denial, looking out for others

**Romans** 14:15

**Romans** 15:1-3

1 **Corinthians** 9:12, 19

**Philemon** 8-9 **Galatians** 5:13-15

**[OFF]**

The existence of a right does NOT necessitate the exercise of a right

There a greater law than personal freedom.

Love. Grace. Unity. **Humility – is not meant to remain a concept/ came written in human form**

**Which laid down His life for you**

- For what purpose will you walk away?

Paul is getting into our business

Exposing motivations of the heart – Manner of our conduct

- To then be confronted with a text that speaks to the basic of human sin: Pride
- Pride is the root of all sin
- What is the remedy for Pride?
  - o **Augustine**: “The three most important of Christian virtues are first, humility; second, humility; third, humility.”
  - o Andrew Murray: Humility is “the root of every virtue,” and the distinguishing marker of Christ’s life.

**[OFF]**

Christ means something to you

He has comforted you, corrected you, consoled you, shown compassion ...

With the aim for you to be unified with His church

These words are true about you

Therefore, you are to strive for unity with the church and her members

Do not separate yourself from a congregation that has been Christ’s hands and feet to you

Restrain personal ambitions for the sake of unity

“If you believe yourself to be mature – you have the obligation (Rom. 15:1)  
to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please oneself.”

### **Practical Steps to Grow in Humility**

- Conviction is easy – just read the book!
  - Lead you out? **Prov 18:1**
1. **Pray** – Speak to God; make yourself known to God
  2. Read- Listen to God; Him making himself known to you
  3. Remain – abide in Christ, remain in the church
  4. Seek Feedback (certainly not least important)
    - a. The MORE selfishness, vain conceit, and pride are present
    - b. The LESS likely you are to know it
    - c. EVERYONE else knows it before you do (promise you that!)
    - d. Ask those who know you – “on a scale of 1 to 10, how selfish am I?”
      - i. “How do I tend to respond when I’m not getting my own way?”

And I’m not talking about someone else

If you find any conviction... it is not because there is a camera in your house

But because I have a mirror in my own home

You need nothing new said to you – you KNOW

Now, as you go, be determined to THINK like Jesus

“**In essentials**, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity”

## **PRAY**

### **Final Charge**

B/S, We have the Word of God, the Mind of Christ  
Let's renew our daily commitment to let the knowing transform our thinking  
And mature us in humility

## **SPOTIFY TAGLINE**

The path between knowing and obeying is by *thinking* like Christ.

Theology is not meant to be left in the mind, but should always manifest in the heart, the hands, and the feet.

## **NOTES & OUTLINE**

There are few things that have a more practical impact on your daily walk than to \_\_\_\_\_.

### **Christian Motivations**

For Christians, \_\_\_\_\_ is not a suggestion, but a command.

### **Christian Methodology**

### **Christian Mindset**

To Paul, unity was always found through self-\_\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_\_.

"The three most important of Christian virtues are first, \_\_\_\_\_; second, \_\_\_\_\_; third, \_\_\_\_\_."

Where do the Scriptures set our eyes? On Christ!

READ : Phil. 2:5-11

A good rule of thumb is when we see that it is not wrong to do something, but we get the attitude of, "well, I'm going to do it anyways" and that "it" means break fellowship, disunify or otherwise separate from a faithful congregation.

And let's be honest, the world, the flesh and the devil, our three enemies, all want this.

1. The devil wants it because he came to kill and destroy. He is a roaring lion. The mode of operation for a lion is to find the ones on the edge of the herd, cull them out by themselves so they lack the protection of the many, and then attack.

\* 1 Peter 5:8, "Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring **lion**, seeking someone to devour."

2. The world. The world LOVES to separate. Cancel one another.

3. The flesh. What does the flesh use to separate from the group? Selfish ambition. Whether it is to fight sin on your own and be a hero, to pursue the world with self indulgence, or to disunify bc "well, I have the freedom to do so, and whether it's good or not, I'm free to do it."

Have you not seen these temptations in your own heart? I have. Restrain myself, bear with the weak, when I could just as easily leave them behind?

B/S, churches across America are being chopped into tiny pieces by lesser matters such as:

- Personal desires not being met
- Interpersonal conflict
- Changes in style
- That the church took a stance on an issue
- That the church did NOT take a stance on an issue

Consider that this mantra has survived so many years because of its counsel to the church:

"In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, Charity"

**\*\*United in spirit\*\*** Main point

Unity is a defensive plan

To know how your enemy is planning his attack on you, is valuable information

- The goal is to cull you out to be alone
- When you are picked off, you may not be like an animal on the safari, eaten by a lion
- But alone, your mind is defenseless

And an offensive plan

When we are unified, we have a single goal and single mind

- Even football teams have this focus – how much more the church?!
- Single goal – win the game
- NOT: padding stats, winning MVP, getting a highlight video for college recruiting, not making a play that will go viral on the internet

Unity is the church's defense strategy – defend against the enemy

Unity is the church's offensive strategy – to prevail against the gates of hell

We do not need Satan to disunify us. It can happen through our flesh

Did Jesus come to unify or divide?  
Expose sin, and that causes division.  
Imitate me as I imitate Him

Do i have the right? According to what law? The Law of the land? Or the law of love?  
The law of love sets you free, only if you use that freedom to love.

Everyone's life is as important to them as yours is to you. Thinking less of someone results in thinking their opinions do not matter as much, their life is less valued, etc. When we look down on people bc of \_\_, we are not going to have any regard for their life, heart, soul, care. They are a means to an end.

Arrogance is to think, "I know better than you, therefore I am more valuable to the world than you."

Of course, we don't know we are being selfishly ambitious and we need another to tell us.

How might we seek to find unity? We may very well just say, "act like adults." But Paul plants them firmly in that which is beyond this one situation... beyond just problems... and into SEEKING that which is good. Not "cut it out," which would be negative only. But positive. Pursue unity. When would that end?

It may be a wrestling at first

But then this attitude begins to really take root and it becomes habit – to think like Jesus Christ

With this attitude, B/S, you are free

- The world may say that you're free when you have no responsibility
- Christ said we are free when we know Him and his mind
- \*\*Jn.
- And if we want to know the mind of Christ... We have it... 1 Cor. 2:16
- And that mind came, focused on restoring what?
- Eph. 2:13-15
- B/S – the former life, outside of Christ – provided sufficient time for us to be selfish
- The Spirit of God is in you putting an end to that.

What should scare me is when I'm ready to dismiss all of v.1-2 so that I can "do what I believe to be right"

When I'm thinking that the most expedient thing to do is be of a different mind

When I'm ready to dismiss the: encouragement in Christ, the consolation of love, the fellowship of the Spirit, the affection and compassion,

- Unity in the church is so valuable
- If you see me or anyone looking only to their own interests – remind them of Christ

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We do not need Satan to disunify us. It can happen through our flesh

It requires the greatest of passages as motivation for the greatest of sinners.

You were purchased... you were bought by a slave... and you are the slave to a servant