

## Philippians 2:1-4 → Life Together – Unity in the Church

Good morning RCM. So good to be with you this morning, as we worship King Jesus today. This week in our churchwide reading plan, we worked through the book of Philippians and the start of the book of Hebrews. I encourage all of you, for those online and those here with us in the room, I encourage you to stay with this reading plan. If you've gotten behind, or never even started it, start this week with it.

For today, we are building on this theme that I shared from last week called Life Together, and specifically today the theme of Unity in the Church, under the heading of Life together. If you have a Bible or device with you, I invite you to go ahead and turn, swipe or scroll, to Philippians 2, and we'll look together at 2:1-4

Some may remember that the book of Philippians is where we started as a church. When we started meeting together on Sundays in Victoria's dining room, we worked through verse by verse in the book of Philippians. And some incredible themes that run through the book:

- The Gospel Foundations of the church
- Joy in Christ
- Unity in the church

These themes that run throughout the book. Specifically the text for today though, deals with unity. When I was studying and writing this week, I made a short-ish list of things that people will unite around – **People unite around a lot of things:**

- Sports team (as fans)
- Sports team (as players)
  - Specifically when I pick teams I know players/parents to avoid
- Home town
- Common Interests
- Common Life stages
- Common Physical Traits
  - Only 2% of the world's population have red hair
- Politics
- What kind of car you drive
  - Driving the Jeep for about 8 days

Most of it's superficial, and only running so deep as the source of the unity – and will change when life stage changes, or the team gets drubbed by 31 points in its season opener, or when you sell the Jeep.

**Unity matters in virtually every area of life.** It may matter at varying levels, but it matters. At your workplace, in your kids' activities – we have a handful of musicians in the room – you have to be together, in your family and in your church. It matters, at varying levels, in every area of life.

But, the church, as a family, as we explore this Life Together, our unity has to be found in the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and His Mission & Purpose in the world – because the Gospel is unchanging and Jesus' Mission & Purpose in the world is the priority of all followers of Jesus and is the foundation of every Biblical church.

In Philippians 2:1-4 Paul writes to the church at Philippi about being unified – not in a manufactured type of way – but in a way centered in the Gospel and Jesus' Mission & Purpose in the World:

## READ Philippians 2:1-4

If, then, there is any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, <sup>2</sup> make my joy complete by thinking the same way, having the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility consider others as more important than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Everyone should look not to his own interests, but rather to the interests of others.

## PRAY.

So, we're going to look at these 4 verses, and I've split them up here – as the (1) Foundation of our Unity, the (2) Practical Goal of Unity and the (3) Display of our unity. So the Foundation, the Goal and the Display.

### I. Foundation V1-2A

- If then...Or Therefore, Since...
  - Pointing us back to what he's already written – through the lens of 1:27 (in my opinion)...
    - 1:27 – Just one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ
    - Said another way – Do everything unto the Lord (from last week)
    - Said even another way – Live your life to bring glory, honor, praise, and worship to Jesus
- And the foundation that Paul's bringing to us – our foundation of Unity in the church, Since there is
  - Encouragement in Christ – Same Greek word that Paul uses for encouragement is helper/counselor – the word Jesus used for the Holy Spirit
    - Ultimately the encouragement we have in Christ is the power of the Holy Spirit in you and in me! As Jesus comes alongside of us to encourage/help/counsel/lead us in a way of life and faith that is worthy of the Gospel THROUGH THE SPIRIT!
    - And the great joy and encouragement of the Christian, is that AT BELIEF, AT THE MOMENT OF CONVERSION, God the Father gives you God the Holy Ghost. It's not some reservation for super Christianity 5003, not like college or graduate school. It's like Christianity 101.
  - Consolation of Love
    - Think about the comforting love of a mother (sorry dads). But you know the comfort that only a mother can provide. Like when my kids are hurt or upset, they go to Victoria. When they need money or help with their math homework or need to laugh, they go to me.
    - In a far greater way, the consoling and comforting love of God as HIS children, through faith in Jesus, through Belief in Jesus, helps to establish this foundation for unity in the church
  - Fellowship with the Spirit
    - We have totally missed the power of the word fellowship. It's not just a time for food and whatever. Yeah it's important to eat together. That's why our small groups are designed around a meal.
    - When you think through the word fellowship – I want you to think more like a partnership.
      - Philippians 1:5 – Paul thanked the church for their partnership in the Gospel
      - Same word

- But as we see a partnership/fellowship with the Spirit – we have to be certain we’re clear on who the controlling partner is. It’s not you, it’s not me, it’s not your kids – it’s the Spirit of God.
  - Affection & Mercy
    - The affection God has shown us, the mercy we have experienced through faith in Jesus
- These 4 things are the foundations of our unity as a people of God. **We have to get this right** – just like in a house – none of us want to buy a house with a foundation issue – being united together, unity as a church, is always going to depend of having the right foundation.

Which leads us to the Practical Goal – how this Unified/United Life Together is to express itself

## II. Practical Goal V2

- Thinking the same way
  - Now, this certainly **doesn’t mean we’re all to be robots**
  - Nor does it mean we stop thinking!
  - What it does mean is there’s an underlying view or maybe this lens through which we view the world. And it’s the Scriptures.
    - Think back through some of the opening points of unity. See, a Hurricanes fan, is always going to tell you that the 2001-2002 Hurricanes football team is the greatest college football team ever assembled.
    - Because we’re of the same mind at least when it comes to college football
    - A Jeep owner – same thing. At least until they sell the Jeep and realize how much better their back feels in a Honda.
    - In both of these scenarios, there’s this **common understanding that drives their thinking** on a certain topic.
  - In the church, be of one mind, or like minded – we unite around the Word of God. And we allow it to direct how we think, and act and work.
- Having the same Love
  - We’ve spoken at length on what love is and what love isn’t. Here Paul’s using a love of the will to direct us to the love that unites us.
  - The same things we saw several weeks ago in 1 Corinthians 13, and then last week in Colossians 3, of the unifying power of love. This willful choice to compassionately care for others.
  - Not an emotional reaction, but an act of the will.
- United in spirit (not the Holy Spirit here – but our will and soul – literally one-souled) and Intent on One Purpose → not a stretch to see these two going together. And the repetitiveness underlines the importance.
  - Driven by a purpose to share and show Jesus to others in our city. United around this **one great goal of making disciples as we share and show Jesus.**
  - One Will, One Purpose...
  - When we are united like this, there’s no room for selfishness, bitterness, envy,
  - Instead we see a selfless harmony
  - We rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Your pain affects me, your joy affects me.
  - We are united together in our thinking and our purpose – of declaring the greatness of King Jesus to every man, woman and child as we have the opportunity.

So we have the foundation of our unity – who we are in Jesus, God’s child, forgiven, declared righteous – and we have the goal of our unity, how we grow together – we see in the next verse, this what I’m calling, and Undeniable Result.

### III. The Undeniable Result – Selflessness

#### Re-Read V3-4

- Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit → literally **stealing glory** from God here. All eyes on me kind of thing.
- But in humility...consider others.
  - Humility not thinking less of yourself – we can fall into this trap of thinking arrogance is bad, so I have to be self deprecating. That’s dishonest at best (everyone’s good at something...), and just as bad at worst because it keeps the focus on you.
  - The real key to Gospel-centered humility is **self forgetfulness**.
- And I think the only way we’ll ever live this out is if we have been radically transformed by the grace of God in Jesus. And we allow that grace to KEEP transforming us. Day by day we are being changed and made more like Jesus. So we can forget ourselves, focus our hearts, minds, and hands on a Jesus centered compassion for others.
- **Everyone should look out not only...**
  - Paul’s not saying ignore your needs. You and I though, we don’t need to be taught to tend to our own needs. We’re going to look out for ourselves. We come out of the womb selfish and grow up into self-centered people until and unless the Gospel reorients everything about us.

**CONCLUSION...**