

"SPIRITUAL UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST"

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4

INTRO: The Book of Philippians has a lot to say about **JOY THAT STEMS FROM THE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST IN OUR LIVES**. But one thing that robs Christians of **JOY** is **DISUNITY**! Today we are going to learn how to **MAINTAIN BIBLICAL UNITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST**.

WARNING: One of the **GREATEST DANGERS** facing the Body of Christ is **DISUNITY**. **DISUNITY** will disrupt, weaken and destroy a Church through disharmony, conflict and division and should be avoided at all costs!

OBSERVATIONS ON DISUNITY:

- 1) **DISUNITY** in the Church deeply **GRIEVES** the Lord.
- 2) **DISUNITY** in the Church is one of **SATAN'S** major Objectives.
- 3) **DISUNITY** in the Church is an **INDICATION** of Spiritual Weakness.
- 4) **DISUNITY** in the Church **PREVENTS** the advancement of the Gospel.

OBSERVATIONS ON UNITY:

- 1) **UNITY** in the Church is the **KEY** to effectiveness in the Church.
- 2) **UNITY** in the Church was a **PART** of Christ's prayer for the Church
-John 17:20-23
- 3) **UNITY** in the Church is **TWO-FOLD**
-Positional Unity - 1 Corinthians 12:13,14
-Practical Unity - Ephesians 4:3-6
- 4) **UNITY** in the Church is a **MAJOR THEME** of Paul's Epistles
-Romans 15:5-7; 1 Corinthians 1:10; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Galatians 5:26;
Ephesians 4:1-6; Colossians 3:12-15; 1 Thessalonians 4:9,10

WILLIAM BARCLAY ON UNITY AS TAUGHT IN PHILIPPIANS:

*"The one danger which threatened the Philippians Church was that of **DISUNITY**. There is a sense in which that is the danger of every healthy church. It is when people are **REALLY** in earnest, when their beliefs really matter to them, that they are apt to get up against each other. The greater their enthusiasm, the greater the danger that they may collide. It is against that danger Paul is safeguarding his friends at Philippi."*

SIGNS OF DISUNITY:

- | | |
|------------------|------------------------|
| 1) Unforgiveness | 6) Bitterness |
| 2) Jealousy | 7) Refusing Fellowship |
| 3) Racism | 8) Gossiping |
| 4) Anger | 9) Judgmental Spirit |
| 5) Selfishness | 10) Improper Attitudes |

OBSERVATION:

Philippians 2:1-4 is the most concise and practical teaching about unity in all of the **NEW TESTAMENT**.

I. THE MOTIVES FOR SPIRITUAL UNITY - VSS. 1,2a

THE MOTIVE FOR MAINTAINING SPIRITUAL UNITY IS GOD'S WORK ON OUR BEHALF.

NOTE: The word "IF" in verse 1 is a first-class conditional clause in the Greek which can be interpreted as "SINCE." It is a **MATTER OF FACT**. What God has done for us is a matter of fact that motivates us to maintain unity!

A. Motive One: "**CONSOLATION IN CHRIST**"

THE POINT: The Encouragement of the work of Christ extended to us in salvation motivates us to desire to maintain unity.

B. Motive Two: "**COMFORT OF LOVE**"

THE POINT: The Love Christ extended to us in salvation motivates us to desire to maintain unity.

C. Motive Three: "**COMMUNION WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT**"

THE POINT: The Fellowship we have with the Holy Spirit motivates us to desire to maintain unity.

D. Motive Four: "**COMPASSION OF CHRIST**" (Bowels and Mercies)

THE POINT: The Compassion of Christ extended to us in salvation motivates us to desire to maintain unity.

THE APPLICATION: ALL GOD HAS GIVEN US IN SALVATION SHOULD MOTIVATE US TO MAINTAIN UNITY IN THE CHURCH.

II. THE MARKS OF SPIRITUAL UNITY - VS. 2b

THE MARKS OF SPIRITUAL UNITY ARE FOUR-FOLD.

A. Mark One: "BEING LIKE-MINDED"

THE POINT: To think the same thing biblically (26 times in the N.T.)

B. Mark Two: "HAVING THE SAME LOVE"

THE POINT: To Love others equally as Christ loved us.

C. Mark Three: "BEING OF ONE ACCORD"

THE POINT: To be of "one soul" with others. (Self-less attitude)

D. Mark Four: "BEING OF ONE MIND"

THE POINT: To be intent on one purpose - To Exalt God.

THE APPLICATION: WHEN WE APPRECIATE WHAT WE HAVE IN SALVATION AND RESPECT WHAT GOD HAS DONE FOR US, WE WILL ENDEAVOR TO DEVELOP THESE MARKS OF UNITY IN OUR LIVES.

III. THE MEANS OF SPIRITUAL UNITY - VSS. 3,4

THE MEANS OF SPIRITUAL UNITY IS BASED UPON OUR SELF-LESS CARE FOR OTHERS.

A. Self-less-ness in Considering self as INSIGNIFICANT and others to be MORE EXCELLENT than we are. Vs. 3

B. Self-less-ness in Considering the INTERESTS of others to be GREATER than our interests. - Vs. 4

THE APPLICATION: WHEN WE PLACE OTHERS BEFORE OURSELVES AS CHRIST PLACED US BEFORE HIMSELF, SPIRITUAL UNITY WILL PREVAIL.