

Unity Through Humility

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[0:00] Philippians chapter 1, I'll begin reading in verse 27 and read through chapter 2 in verse 11. But that you will be saved, and that by God.

For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for Him. Since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have. If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, and being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.

[1:44] Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place, and gave Him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

How important is it that this church experiences unity between the brothers and sisters that comprise it? Whatever unity may be to us, it is very important to Jesus Christ.

We remember that our Lord in the night of His betrayal prayed to His Father in heaven in John chapter 17, and there we see what's on His heart just hours before His crucifixion, and it's there that He prays for the good of His disciples.

Father, protect them from the evil one. Father, sanctify them by Your truth. And Father, unify them. Make them one. May they be one, Father, just as You are in me and I am in You. May they be brought to complete unity. That was His prayer for them, so that no one can have his heart beating with the Lord Jesus Christ and be disinterested in the topic of unity in the church.

[3:12] Now, the Apostle Paul's heart is beating right alongside of the Lord Jesus in this passage. We see that he's very concerned, and his letters to the churches breathe this Christ-like concern for unity.

It's not just the Philippian letter, but it's all his letters to the churches, and this one's no different on that score. Now, the Philippian church was a wonderful church.

In many ways, the Apostle was able to lift them up as a model for other churches to emulate. Be like this church. And yet, they were not without their problems.

And unity is such a point that is hammered in this book that it surely indicates that this unity was probably already unraveling, that certain divisions were already present in the church, that frictions were existing.

Indeed, in chapter 4, he names two members that were not getting along with each other, and he commands them to be of one mind. Now, these problems that we're developing, Paul doesn't just overlook them as little things and say, well, you really can't expect much.

[4:29] We're all sinners. No church is perfect. So, what's the big deal? We don't get that spirit at all from the Apostle. Unity is too important to the life and ministry of the church to treat it lightly.

And at the end of chapter 1, we learned last week that this church was suffering persecution at the hands of the world, didn't we? How critical it is that they be united then, even while they're suffering. The church is to be a sort of a haven, a haven of rest in the midst of a hostile world. It's to be the one place that you can come to and love and be loved.

And that's important when the world is persecuting you. And so, Paul says in chapter 1 and verse 27 that he wants to find them standing firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel.

So, he brings up the subject of unity right there at the end of chapter 1. But now in chapter 2, Paul really gets down to business on this matter of unity in the church.

[5:43] And he makes a stirring appeal for unity, unsurpassed anywhere in our Bibles. Now, before we dive in, let me just say that no church in this world ever gets beyond the need of being exhorted to be unified.

Why is that? I mean, we've been blessed with a sweet unity at Grace Fellowship Church, but we're not beyond the need of this exhortation to unity.

Why? Because there exists in every one of us a principle, a living law that is called the flesh that would destroy the unity.

of the body of Christ. As long as the flesh is within us, we need exhortations to unity. However unified we may be, insofar as our flesh lives, unity dies.

So, we must be killing the flesh in order to maintain unity. So, until Christ returns, Philippians chapter 2 will be needed at Grace Fellowship Church.

[6:55] Now, in this treatment, the Apostle Paul will command unity. He will describe unity. He will identify what destroys it and what promotes it.

But above all, he means to motivate the Philippians, and you and I, to active unity in their midst.

Paul's not interested in just giving some paper or some accurate treatise on unity.

He wants to stir them up to unity in action. And to this end, he bases his appeal on three things.

Upon their own Christian experience, their own spiritual experience, upon their love for Christ, and lastly, upon the example of Christ.

We must wait next time for that as it takes up verses 5 to 11. But all these are powerful motives, you see, to move the Philippian saints to actual unity, to this flesh-killing work of recovering and maintaining the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace.

The more difficult any task, the more powerful the motives must be. If you have something hard to do, you need to be motivated to do it.

[8:13] And the harder that task is, the stronger the motivation you need to get it done. Well, by the looks of the motivations that Paul is piling up here, unity is no easy task.

And so he piles these things up, one upon another, to stir us to unity. So we begin with the motivations to unity.

And first he appeals to their own spiritual experience of the Christian life. Verses 1 through 4 are one glorified if-then statement. If this, then do this.

If this is true, then do this. And the four ifs are found in verse 1. And there's nothing iffy about them as we're going to see.

There's no doubt or uncertainty raised by these ifs. Paul could have, it could be translated since. It's just a part of the conditional sentence. If this is true, then this.

[9:13] If you are alive, then wave your hand. There's no question that you're alive. So therefore, do what I tell you. So if, if, if, if. And then the then will follow in verses 2 on through the passage.

The four ifs, then. They're all aspects of our Christian experience. And each are to stir us to unity.

First of all, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if you have any encouragement for being in Christ, and we would right away say, any encouragement.

This has got to be one of the greatest understatements anywhere. Any encouragement from being in Christ? Christ. Why, to be in Christ is to be united to Christ. And that means that his death is my death.

He died to sin. I'm dead to sin. His life is my life. There is therefore now no condemnation to who?

To those who are in Christ Jesus, we heard last Sunday night. In Christ. United to Christ. Oh, there are multitudes of encouragements from being united with Christ.

[10:31] Isn't it a wonderful thing to know that you're a branch Christian united to the vine of Jesus? What kind of encouragement do we draw from that? Well, we know that without him we can do nothing.

But united to him, I have power. I have supernatural power to do whatever he calls me to do. Every command in his word. I'm united to Christ. I'm encouraged then to keep his commandments because I know that I have the ability in Christ.

How vast the benefits divine which we in Christ possess. We are redeemed from sin and guilt and called to holiness. So if you know what I'm talking about, Paul says, then let it move you to unity with all the others around you who are also in Christ.

For we are all one in Christ Jesus. Secondly, if you have any comfort from his love. Any comfort from the love of Jesus?

Oh, the deep, deep love of Jesus, we just sang. It is a heaven of heavens to me. He has a tremendous comfort. My only comfort in life and death is to know that he loves me.

[11:42] Jesus loves me. He gave himself for me. Do I have any comfort from his love? Tons of it. Well, then, let that love silence your disputing with your brethren.

Let it compel you to no longer live for yourself but for Christ and for the unity of his people. Thirdly, if you have any fellowship with the Spirit, any encouragement, any comfort, and now any fellowship with the Spirit.

The word there for fellowship is our word, *koinonia*. If there's any participation in the Spirit, any communion and fellowship with him. Think, some of you were here on Wednesday nights for a couple months where we studied all the ministries that the Holy Spirit has in our hearts and lives. He teaches us. He quickens us. He revives us. He bears witness in our spirit that we are the children of God. He emboldens us. He sanctifies us.

He writes God's laws in our hearts. I mean, we had dozens of things that we could go on and on. If you have any participation in the Spirit, any fellowship in the Spirit, oh, we have all sorts of fellowship with the Spirit.

[12:57] I can't imagine life without His fellowship. There would be no spiritual life without His fellowship. Well, then, make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit. You see, don't destroy what He's created if you cherish the fellowship of the Spirit.

And lastly, if you have any tenderness and compassion, and have you ever experienced any tenderness in the way the Lord's dealt with you and your sin? Any lack of harshness in the way He's dealt with you?

Any compassion the way that the Lord looks upon you in your need and pities you and comes to you? Well, if so, then do the same for your brothers and sisters in Christ.

You see, sometimes Christians make glowing claims about their spiritual experience in the Christian life. And they can talk about, they are so holy, and they have arrived at such and such a state of holiness.

all the while, their relationships with others are in shambles. And Paul would put his finger on it here and say, oh no, if you have any real Christian experience at all, then see to it that you are united with the brothers and sisters in Christ.

[14:13] Each statement adds weight to his unity, or his appeal for unity. unity. So that's the first motivation. It's all growing out of our Christian experience. But secondly, he motivates us to, he motivates the Philippians on the basis of their love for the Apostle Paul himself.

Verse 2, it begins the then part of the conditional statement. If you have this encouragement and comfort and fellowship and tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete.

It's kind of like, make my day. Fill up my joy cup. Now, the Philippians already gave Paul joy. He tells them that in chapter 1 and verses 3 to 5.

He says, I can't pray for you without rejoicing. I'm so happy for you. I'm so thankful for you. You rejoice me every time I pray for you.

But now, he says, there's still room in my joy cup. Now, fill it full. My joy is incomplete because your unity is incomplete.

[15:26] Now, he hasn't said that yet. Imagine the power of this appeal to the Philippian church. Epaphroditus has been sent by the Philippian church down to Rome because they heard Paul's in prison.

How you doing, Paul? Here's some money. Here's a gift. And then he later brings this epistle back, this letter back to the Philippian church. And so the church gathers, much like we're gathered here this morning.

They're all together and the letter from Paul is open. And they begin to read and they read through chapter 1 and they come to chapter 2. If you have any encouragement from being united to Christ, if you have any comfort from Jesus' love, if you have any fellowship with the Spirit, any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete.

And they must have been on tiptoe. This was their father in the faith. This is the one through whom they'd come to know Jesus Christ and all these benefits he's just spoken of. And they know that he's in prison and they pity him.

Their hearts run out to him as a son for a father in a difficult straight. And how can we make the apostle happy? What can we do? And then he says, be united.

[16 : 35] That's the whole thing that follows. Oneness. Be one in spirit and so on. Perhaps it surprised them. Maybe they were thinking something else, but that's what the apostle says would fill his cup with joy.

You want to know how to make your ministers joy complete? Be united. One in heart. One in purpose. Now this isn't the highest motivation to the Philippians to make the apostle Paul happy, but it is a motivation and Paul uses it.

He uses any motivation he can. So important is unity. The highest motivation will come next week as we come to chapters 5 or verses 5 and following the Lord Jesus Christ, our example.

So there's the motivation to unity. Now in verse 2 then, he comes to describe this unity. What does this unity look like? What does it consist of?

Well, he describes it in three phrases. The first phrase, by being like-minded. That's the unity Paul's envisioning. Being like-minded.

[17 : 45] Now that's foundational to unity. It means to think the same thing. To be of one mind. The same mind.

That's the unity that Paul wants for them. In chapter 4 and verse 2, he says, I plead with you, Odeia, and I plead with Syntyche to be of the same mind.

To agree with one another in the Lord. Now how is it possible to get two minds to think the same thing? Much less the whole church to think the same thing.

We say of someone he's got a mind of his own, don't we? Well, that's true of you. It's true of me. It's true of every one of us. We've all got a mind of our own. And think of all the things that have gone in to make your mind a mind of its own.

Your upbringing. Your education. Your training. So that you now think the way that you do about every... I mean, we can't even agree as to who should be the next president. What kind of car to drive.

[18 : 47] But Paul, you really mean that you want the whole church to think the same thing? How can this be? Brethren, the answer's on your lap.

It's the word of God. What is this? This is God's mind. This is God's thoughts. And we are to have one mind.

The same mind. Okay, whose mind will it be? Will it be pastor's mind? This pastor? That pastor? Will it be your mind? We've all got a mind of our own.

Whose mind shall it be? No, it shall be God's mind. The word of God, the mind of God, is the great unifying factor in the body of Christ.

It tells me what to think about God, about myself, about you, about the world I live in, about money, about sex, about everything under the sun, all that I need for life and godliness.

[19 : 52] I have God's mind on the matter right here. And so we come to God's word and we come to have our minds renewed.

We come to have God teach us how to think. We come to have God's mind to correct our minds and to bring us more in line with his mind.

And as I do that, you see, here am I and here are you. And we're poles apart. I've got my mind on things and you've got yours. Now how are we going to think the same thing?

Well, as I bring my mind under God's mind and bring my thoughts more and more into line with God's word and his thoughts, and as you do the same with your mind and submit to God's mind, what do we find?

We find that we are more and more thinking the same thing. That we are more and more of the same mind. And that's precisely what unity the apostle envisions.

[20 : 58] God's word, the unifying factor for the church. You know, some people don't like Bible doctrine being preached from the pulpit. They say doctrine divides. Well, to the contrary, it's the only hope that we have.

It's the only hope that any church has of thinking the same way, of having the same mind. It's if we each come and bow our minds to God's mind as it's revealed in the scriptures.

Having the same mind, being like-minded. That's the first description of this unity. Secondly, having the same love. Not just the same thoughts, but the same emotions.

Loving the same things, loving the same Christ, the same Father, the same Holy Spirit, the same scriptures, the same people of God, the same loving, the same things.

And that is impossible apart from the Spirit of God who comes and writes God's law upon our hearts, right upon our very affections so that we love things that we once hated and we love to do things that we once were bored with.

[22 : 12] Where does that come from? That comes from the Spirit, the Lord. And so we're to have one love. And the more the Spirit is working in me and the more the Spirit is working in you, the more and more we are loving the same things.

We are having the same love. And then he says in the last phrase, being one in Spirit and purpose. You've seen a sports team that's one in Spirit.

We as a church are to be one in Spirit and purpose. What's the purpose to be? Again, we come to God's Word. It's the glory of God in the advancement of the Gospel.

And the more this purpose replaces all of our own many self-glorifying purposes, the more unified we all will be at Grace Fellowship. So have the same mind, have the same love, have the same purpose.

That's the kind of unity Paul wants to see flourishing in the church. And can we not hear the voice of Jesus behind his ambassador? Make my joy complete.

[23 : 22] Have the same mind, same love, same purpose. Indeed, that's a delight to our Savior. Now, disunity is often blamed on personality problems.

Have you heard that? It's personality problems. Personality problems. I believe many times that's just a euphemism for lack of love. What are personality problems if you have the same mind, same love, and same purpose?

Paul next goes on to identify what destroys unity. If this unity is so precious, we better know what things kill it.

And he points to two unity killers. Things that cause division. And here Paul does more than just treat symptoms. He doesn't just say, well, you know, gossip destroys unity.

Yes, it does. But he goes deeper beneath the gossip to an attitude. He goes from the actions that would destroy unity. He gets right down to the heart, to the root of the matter, and touches on attitudes beneath divisive behavior.

[24 : 37] Look at the attitudes. He names two of them in verse 3. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Here's the twin taproot that feeds all sorts of behaviors of dissension and strife.

Indeed, if you could perform an autopsy on any church where unity has been destroyed, I believe you'll find one or both of these diseases present. Pride or self-seeking.

Usually both together. He mentions self-seeking first. Selfish ambition. That self-centeredness, that focus on self, where this is the attitude that says, it's all about me.

Putting yourself forward. Diotrophes. 3 John verse 9. Diotrophes. Who loves to be first. That's self-seeking.

He wants a position over others. He wants power over other people. He wants the praises of other people. He wants other people serving Him, doing for Him, praising Him.

[25 : 47] And this spirit of self-seeking leads to competing with each other. I wanted that position. I wanted this decision to be mine.

I wanted my way. Envyng each other's gifts and positions in the church. James 3.16 says that wherever you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.

All these disorderly, evil practices that destroy unity, where do they come from? They come from this selfish ambition that wants to seek myself climbing to the top.

It's all about getting, not about giving. The attitude that says, what's in it for me? Will it make me feel good? Will it make me look good? How will it affect me? I think of many teenagers that make demands upon their mother and you begin to wonder, have they ever thought about, mom's got a life of her own too.

Have they thought how their demands and desires affect mom and her day and what she would like to do and needs to do?

[26 : 53] But very often, teenagers can think no further than, this is what I have to have and what I want. And their horizon is so short-sighted, they can't see beyond themselves.

That's self-seeking. That's the attitude that Paul's talking about. It not only destroys unity in families, it destroys unity in churches because when we're preoccupied with ourselves, we're ignoring the needs of others around us.

And if everyone in the church is only thinking about themselves, how can unity survive? So Paul says, do nothing out of this self-seeking attitude.

Don't let it influence anything that you do. Don't let it influence any conversation you have. Any decision you make, whatever you do, do nothing out of self-seeking, selfish ambition.

Now the other unity killer is pride. Vain conceit. Vain means empty because there's nothing there. The old saying is that the emptier the mind, the louder the boast.

[28:01] It's a vain boasting. It's high-mindedness is another way this word can be translated. Pride is a disease of the mind.

It leaves you thinking more highly of yourself than you ought to. It leaves a man thinking he's something when he's nothing. Those are the words of Paul in Romans 12, 3 and Galatians 6, 3. Pride then is an over-inflated view of one's own importance, of his own gifts, his abilities. And so pride is here identified as the second unity killer in the church.

It's the Pharisee and he seeks the most important seats. Why? Because he thinks he deserves the most important seats. I'm better than the run-of-the-mill, so that seat should be mine.

And in so doing, in choosing that most important seat, he's alienating himself and looking down upon his brethren. Pride will lead you to think you're always right and never wrong.

[29:11] How's that for building unity in the church? Pride makes you a better talker than a better listener because you really think that what you have to say is more valuable and important than what they have to contribute.

Pride thinks that some tasks of service are beneath you. I'm not his slave. Who does he think I am? Think what happens when everyone wants to be served and no one's humble enough to do the servant task to one another.

Where pride lives, unity dies. And the proud are easily offended. That's a good way to identify our pride.

Criticism is a good barometer on our pride. How you receive criticism quickly reveals your true thoughts about yourself. Why are the proud so touchy and offended so easily?

Because they think of themselves and their abilities up here. And if in talking with someone they realize that that person says no, he's down here, they're offended because they've got such a high view of themselves.

[30:22] whereas someone with a low view of themselves is not offended to have others to have the same view of them as he does. Pride is a unity killer so Paul says do nothing out of pride.

Paul's not a negative preacher in the sense of just listing the negatives. do nothing out of self seeking attitude do nothing out of pride.

He gives the positives not this but that so we come secondly in the fourth place he identifies what promotes unity. He's told us what destroys unity now let me tell you what promotes unity.

Verse 3b but here's the contrast not self seeking in pride but in humility consider others better than yourselves.

There's the first prerequisite for unity humility. It answers for the pride that destroys unity and what is humility?

[31:33] It is lowliness of mind. Instead of high mindedness it's lowliness of mind. do you know that your view of yourself affects your perspective on others?

When I have a high view of myself I naturally think of others as being beneath me. Right? Here I am well I'm looking down then aren't I?

And I'm seeing other people from the throne everyone looks like a peon. So if I've got myself up there then I'll have you down here. The Pharisee's high view of his own righteousness in Luke 18 led him to despise others.

I fast twice a week I give a tithe of all I'm not like that man and he's looking down his nose. Why? Because he's up here in his own estimation of his own self righteousness and it causes us to despise others as beneath us.

It's only humble minds that will consider others better than themselves. That's what he tells us here. In humility consider others as better than yourself.

[32:48] Well you must have a low view a humble view of yourself if you're going to consider others better than yourself. Think about one of these two or three year olds running around in the foyer after church.

Their eyeballs are down here about 24 inches. Have you thought about what you guys look like from down here? You look way up there.

You surpass them. You're way above them. And it's the same way spiritually. If you have a humble view of yourself how do you see other people?

You see other people. You say oh they're much better than me. In humility considering others better than yourself.

Deserving to be honored above yourself. Honor one another above yourselves. Romans 12 and verse 10. So what makes it hard and difficult to consider others better than me?

[33:50] My pride and my high view of myself. Now the answer is not to try to be humble. The answer is not to act humble. There's nothing more plastic, more phony, more yucky than pretended humility.

Rather the answer is to remember what we are. That's it. You want to be humble? Then just remember what you are. Augustine said it. Your entire humility is to know yourself.

And apart from that our humility will just be pretend. So I need to know myself. What am I? What are you Christian? Well just for starters you are dependent and you are sinful.

You are absolutely dependent upon Christ. Apart from me you can do nothing. And we need to remember that. Who am I? Well I am a branch. And apart from Christ I am just a dead old branch and I can't do anything.

I can't bear fruit. I am absolutely dependent on Christ. If anything good is to come forth from this life.

1 Corinthians 4.7 Who makes you different from anyone else?

[34:59] Isn't that often what causes us to be proud and have high views? Because we see that we are not like this sinner. And Paul says who makes you different from anyone else?

And what do you have that you haven't received? And if you have received it then why are you boasting as if you had not? You are driving along the road and you see someone over there that is blind and they are stumbling around and maybe you kids are tempted to laugh at them because they look silly.

who made you to differ from another? Who gave you seeing eyes? Or you look across the seats in the sanctuary and you see somebody else who is struggling with a sin that you are not struggling with and you are tempted to despise them and think less of them than yourself?

Who made you to differ from them? And what do you have in the way of spirituality that you have not received? And if you have received 100% of it from God why do you boast?

You see remembering how dependent we are for everything in the Christian life would immediately humble us and keep us from this unity killing pride but then also sinful.

[36:18] You are not only dependent you are sinful. You need to repent of your best works. Is it not one of the most humbling things for us Christians to realize that we still sin against our Father in Heaven who has done so much for us?

Giving his own son for us? Is it not something humbling to us that we still sin against Jesus who laid down his life for us? It's only as we become blind to our own sin that pride can survive.

Knowing the truth about ourselves creates humility. So you see again the importance of this book. How are we ever going to think the same thing at Grace Fellowship?

Well we need the same mind right here. How are we ever going to know ourselves? How are we ever going to know our sin? It's not here. God's law, God's word reveals sin to us.

Again the importance of the scriptures to our unity. And humility always starts before God. Alone before God. We see what we are before God. You can never know yourself without knowing God.

[37:26] Because you never really know yourself until you see yourself before this God. And so it starts in the privacy of your own knowing yourself before God.

And when you are humbled and walk humbly before God, well you'll walk humbly before your brothers and sisters as well. Because knowing what I am before God will bring me low and I'll look over at you and I'll say wow, she's higher than me.

She's more worthy of honor than me. And I'll consider you better than myself. Paul's own view of himself went downward as he grew older. We meet him in 1 Corinthians 15 9, I'm the least of all the apostles.

Okay, but the apostles are a big group, I mean a high up group, aren't they? Okay, but he's the least of all the apostles. A little later we meet him in Ephesians 3, 5, I'm the least of all the saints. And then later at the end of his life, 1 Timothy 1, 15, I'm the chief of sinners. Least of the apostles, least of saints, the biggest sinner.

[38:42] We need to be growing downward. If the unity of the church would be growing upward. George Whitefield was a Calvinist. John Wesley was an Arminian. They had different theological views, not unimportant views.

We believe that Whitefield was right and biblical. But you know his superior wisdom and knowledge did not puff him up. It was a day of controversy and much heat over the matter.

And in such a spirit someone once asked George Whitefield, do you think you'll see John Wesley in heaven? Someday. And he says, no, I don't think I will.

I think he'll be so close to Jesus that the radiant glory from Christ will blind me from seeing John Wesley. He esteemed him better than himself.

Even one that he felt was wrong in some of his theological views. That's what humility will do. In humility, considering others better than yourself, honoring others above yourself.

[39:51] And only humility can do this sincerely. What's the opposite? Pride gets nitpicky with each other. Pride has this sensorious spirit, this quick rush to judgment, a critical spirit to look down our noses at others rather than to look up our noses at them.

We look down at them. That's pride. Now it shouldn't be hard for us to consider others better than ourselves. Think about this with me. Maybe you're saying, you know what, there's that person or this person.

I have a hard time really thinking honestly of him as being above me, thinking of her as being above me. It should be easy, folks. Why?

Because when I look at myself, what do I see? Well, I see my outward sins. I see what you see. All my failures, my external failures.

But I also see something you don't see. I see my secret sins. I see my heart sins. I see my sins of motive.

[40:59] I see my sins of thought. proud thoughts that you don't know the half of that exist in me.

I see lust in me that you never see, perhaps. I see greed in me that you never identify. I see malice and bitterness and revenge in me and thoughts of revenge that you don't recognize are in me.

So I see all of that when I look at me. And then when I look out at you, what do I see? Well, I see your outward sins.

And that's it. I can't read your heart. I don't see your secret sins. I don't see your sins of motive. I'm not to impugn wrong motives on you. I'm rather to put the highest construction possible on your outward actions.

So when I look within and see what I have here, and then look out and see you, it should not be hard for me to think more highly of you than me. You say, oh, but there's this fellow over here, he's struggling with this sin, and I'm not.

[42:15] Where would I be if I had the same upbringing and opportunities and all the rest and temptations that he has? If Christ hadn't shielded me from that situation, would I be any different?

turn it around, if he had all the advantages that you've had, John, growing up, would he not far outshine you who has squandered so many of your privileges?

And so as we look out and see others, oh, we see so less of sin than what we see in ourselves. A low view of self, a humble view of self, enables us then to esteem others better than ourselves.

And that's the attitude for unity. So instead of pride, humility, instead of self-seeking, unselfishness is the second attitude that promotes unity.

Unselfish concern for others. Verse 4, each of you should look not only on your own interests, but also on the interests of others.

[43:25] Now looking out for number one is something we're all very adept at. We do it quite easily. We say to ourselves, don't we?

You've had a hard day at work. Have a seat here. Can I get you something? Maybe you're hungry. Would you like something to eat?

Oh, not that? You'd rather have this? Okay, have this instead of that. Can I get you something to drink with that? What would you like it to be? Are you comfortable there?

Would you like to kick up your feet? Would you like a newspaper? Are you tired? Would you like a pillow? Would you like to sleep? Are you hot? Would you like the AC turned on? Are you cold? Would you like a blanket? We're talking to ourselves constantly like that. We're looking after our own interests. We do it without thinking we're so good at this. Can you imagine how unity would grow if that's how we treated one another?

[44 : 27] Not considering your own interests, but considering the interests of others. do to others what you would do to yourself.

Love your neighbor as you love yourself. Don't look out only for your own interests, but also for the interests of others. To be on the lookout for others' interests. In the same way that we're always on the lookout for our interests.

When we're preoccupied with our interests, we're forgetful of theirs. what we're being called to is to be so preoccupied with theirs that ours mean nothing to us in comparison.

We consider theirs as more important than ours. When we come next week to our Lord Jesus, we'll see that's exactly the way he acted toward us.

Now, if we were doing that, disunity would not have a chance to grow. Happy the church where each finds joy in serving others. where the only competition is to try to outdo each other in service, in esteeming one another better than ourselves.

[45 : 37] Think now about the humble Christian who serves others, who goes out of their way to serve you, perhaps, or to serve others. I want you to get a face.

I want you to get a name. Someone who's humble and who goes out of their way to concern themselves with your interest. Don't you just hate them?

No, you love them. And doesn't unity thrive because of them? May their tribe increase. May there be more and more of them who the very thought of them draws our heart out to them.

That's the way it should be in the body of Christ as we're humble and we're looking to serve each other's needs even above our own. The attitude that destroys unity, these attitudes of pride and self-centeredness, they're deeply rooted in our hearts.

If you think after listening to a message, well, then I'm just going to not be proud and not be selfish. You're in for a ride, aren't you? Getting rid of those attitudes is kind of like getting the mafia out of Russia.

[46 : 52] As soon as you go after them, you come to realize they're everywhere. They got their hands in everything. And so does pride and self-centeredness. It's got its fingers in everything we do.

Phil Keggy used to sing a song, I never had a selfless thought since I was born. It touches everything we do.

So don't let us get this idea that, well, I see it here. I'm not to do nothing out of pride and self-centeredness, out of humility and unselfishness.

Folks, that verse itself is meant to humble us, isn't it? You try to do that for a week and what do you find? You find more of your sin, more of your weakness, more of your need for Christ.

That's what it's meant to do. It's meant to drive us to Him, humbled. Lord, I can't even do what you tell me to do. I'm so self-centered. I can't get my thoughts off of me and get it on my brother and sister.

[47 : 55] I'm so proud that I'm always considering everything I look at in terms of me and how it affects me. So I come and I bring Him my pride. I bring Him my self-centeredness and I say, I can't handle these enemies.

But you can. You redeem me from enemies that are too strong for me, the psalmist said. We have a Savior for our pride. We read of Him in Psalm 93.

He's majestic in power. He's a strong Savior. He can kill what we can't even wound. So let us bring our sins to Jesus, confessing them and asking Him for power.

He is our Redeemer, mighty to save, and He delights in this work. You know that, don't you? Jesus delights to have His people coming humbly to Him.

I can't, Lord, please, You, cleanse me, wash me. He delights in that just like He delights in a church that's unified.

[49 : 00] So are we asking for Him to wither up our root of pride and self-seeking? That's praying according to God's will. The Lord Jesus delights to do such. Let's seek Him in prayer, even now as we come to respond to Him who's laid His heart and mind before us again this morning.

Let's pray silently and then I'll conclude. Father, we are humbled before Your Word. It finds us out and we realize again this is more than the words of man. Paul writes by the inspiration of the Spirit who knows our hearts, before whom all things are uncovered and laid bare. Lord, You know our struggle with self-centeredness and self-importance. Forgive us for such thoughts before You, before one another.

Forgive us, Lord, that we're no humbler than we are. Come and teach us ourselves. Teach us who we are and come and build in us this humility that would have no trouble looking over at our neighbor and seeing them as to be honored above us.

[50:28] Come and teach us, Lord, for the unity of this church, that it might continue, that You would continue to weaken all these attitudes that would destroy unity.

Do it for Your name's sake. Is it not a glory to Christ to have a church united, to have self-centered, proud people changed to where we care more about each other than ourselves?

Is that not what Your Son taught us and how He lived? Come and stamp us with that same life, that same heart and attitude. And we ask it then for Jesus' praise.

Amen. Let's be thinking about our Savior this week and how He humbled Himself and served our interest. Amen.

Amen.