

Philippians 1:27 – 2:4 – Having the Same Mind/Heart/Direction

Michael Silva / October 9, 2016

Opening:

- A Swiss guy, looking for directions, pulls up at a bus stop where two Americans are waiting. "Sprichst du Deutsch?" he asks.
- The two Americans just stare at him.
- "Excusez-moi, parlez vous Francais?" he tries. The two continue to stare.
- "Parli Italiano?" No response.
- "Habla Espanol?" Still nothing.
- The Swiss guy drives off, extremely disgusted.
- The first American turns to the second and says, "Y'know, maybe we should learn a foreign language."
- "Why?" says the other. "That guy knew four languages, and it didn't do him any good."

- 1) Have you ever felt like there were so many **differences** between you and another person that it's like you both are speaking different languages?
 - a) In our passage talk today Paul challenges us to get on the same page, speak the same language, and develop the **Same Mind, Heart, and Direction**.

Intro to our passage in Philippians, The Epistle of Joy...

- 1) The **theme** of this letter is **joy no matter our circumstances**.
 - a) Paul **modeled this** as he wrote this letter to the believers in Philippi as a prisoner in Rome.
 - b) As we will see in our continued study of this book that Paul's joy was rooted in staying **focused on Christ** and the His work in our lives through the power of the Holy Spirit.

Let's read our passage: Philippians 1:27-2:4 (NKJV)¹

- 1) We show up to church.

¹ All scripture references, unless otherwise noted, are taken from The New King James Version. (1982). Nashville: Thomas Nelson .

- a) We are altogether here. That makes us good right?
 - b) We're doing what we ought to as Christians right...?
 - c) Is there more?
- 2) Quotes:
- a) Abraham **Lincoln** said, "*A house divided against itself cannot stand.*"
 - b) Winston **Churchill** once said, "*If we are together nothing is impossible. If we are divided all will fail.*"
- 3) Is it possible to all be together, but to still be divided? Can we come together at church but still miss what the church is really all about? Yes it is.
- a) More than just showing up together, we are to have the **same mind**, same **heart**, same **direction**!
 - b) We are to stand together as believers with Christ.

Philippians 1:27 ²⁷ Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs, that you stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel,

- 1) In the preceding verses Paul has just declared his belief that he would be released from his imprisonment and that he would see the Philippian believers again.
- a) But here in verse 27 Paul's saying, whether I am present with you or not, let me hear of how you are standing **fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel**.
 - b) I know that for many of the **guys** in here you've been at your desk checking out the **scores** from the weekend when your **boss** has walked up.
 - i) What do you do? **Minimize** the screen so only your work documents can be seen.
 - ii) **Ladies**, perhaps you too have found yourself scrolling some page on your phones when someone walks up and you immediately navigate away or lock the phone.
 - iii) What you are doing isn't necessarily bad, but you still don't want to be seen doing that thing.
 - c) Paul's saying always **let your conduct be worthy of the gospel** even when I'm not watching or with you so that you have **nothing to hide or minimize**.
- 2) The word "worthy" means **integrity** – the idea of living consistent with what you say you believe as a Christian.

- a) This statement corresponds to our [heavenly citizenship](#).
- b) Later in this letter Paul writes in **Philippians 3:20** For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,
 - i) We are to live here on earth with integrity as though we are ambassadors of our homeland, which is heaven.
- 3) In **Verse 27** Paul also uses [phrases](#) that correlate with [military service](#) when he challenges the believers in Philippi to “stand fast” and that they should be “striving together.”
 - a) To [stand fast](#) – invokes the idea of a Roman [soldier guarding his post](#). He would die before leaving his post because if he did leave his post he would be put to death.
 - i) So to stand fast is to stick it out, no matter what.
 - ii) I remember when I was a [young Marine](#) and I was assigned to 30-days of guard duty.
 - (1) It was from November 15 – December 15. It was [cold](#)!
 - (2) We had to guard an armory full of weapons back before there were alarm systems installed on such buildings.
 - (3) We were given loaded weapons and we were to stand our ground, regardless of who came, or how wet it was from rain, or how cold out it was.
 - (4) The midnight to 4am watch was always the worst.
 - iii) One night both me and the other Marine on duty with me were not being as watchful as we should have been and our sergeant approached our position without our notice.
 - (1) We failed to properly stop and [challenge](#) him for his identification before advancing.
 - (2) He was [livid](#) and for good cause. We had failed to properly do our job.
 - (3) So for two hours we ran circles around the armory as he watched.
 - (a) In full gear, me with a 30 lbs. PRC-119 radio on my back.
 - (b) Then when we got back to the office we had to do hard [calisthenics](#) for almost another hour!
 - iv) From that night on we challenged anything that came even remotely close to our position.
 - v) To stand fast means not to leave your position, but it also means to [keep your guard and awareness up](#)!
 - b) Paul also uses the military term [striving](#) – which is [struggling](#).
 - i) It’s pushing through the difficulties and continuing on with the Lord down the path

He has you on.

- c) Note: It's **striving together**. We are in this together as family in Christ.
 - i) Like fox-hole buddies, you've got my back and I've got yours.

Philippians 1:28 ²⁸ and not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation, and that from God.

- 1) The word “**terrified**” is a vivid term, unique in the Greek Bible and denoting the **uncontrollable stampede** of startled horses. (Martin)²
- 2) Paul's saying don't be afraid or startled by those who come against you.
 - a) Remember that Paul just spoke about those who were against him (Phil 1:16).
 - i) And he's saying, “*You don't have to be afraid of them.*”
 - b) As a matter of fact, when you **aren't** afraid of them... when you **overcome** their threats and attacks in the power of the Lord...
 - i) Paul says that your **victory** over them **sends them a message**.
 - ii) That message is not only did they will **not** win, but their method and ways will be destroyed.
 - c) The word “**perdition**” means **destruction**.
 - i) Their evil ways will be destroyed.
 - ii) **Isaiah 54:17** No weapon formed against you shall prosper, And every tongue which rises against you in judgment You shall condemn. This is the heritage of the servants of the LORD, And their righteousness is from Me,” Says the LORD.
 - d) What then??? In every way, God WINS!!!
 - i) God WINS!!!
 - ii) Because what we have, our **salvation** and our strength come from Him.

Philippians 1:29-30 ²⁹ For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, ³⁰ having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear is in me.

- 1) The word “**granted**” here comes from the Greek root word for **Grace**.

² Guzik, D. (2013). *Philippians* (Php 1:28). Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik.

- a) The idea is that believing and suffering are gifts from God, **not** for the purpose of **experiencing pain**, but for **molding us** into the image of Christ so that the world can see Christ in us.
- i) **Isaiah 64:8** But now, O LORD, You are our Father; We are the clay, and You our potter; And all we are the work of Your hand.
- ii) If **clay** had a **voice and feelings**, how do you think it would describe the process of being molded in the potter's hands?
- (1) It's **spun** silly.
 - (2) **Water** begins to loosen the clay so that it **no longer** can **hold its form** by itself.
 - (3) That's when the **hands** begin to **push and pull** the lump of clay apart.
 - (4) The hands **stretch** the clay as it spins and water continues to **loosen** its bonds.
 - (5) Next a big **hole** is made in the middle.
 - (6) The potter is making the clay **empty inside**.
 - (a) No wait, the potter is hollowing out the middle so that when he's finished he can **fill that pot** with something he's already got in mind.
 - (7) But before he's done, he **bakes that pot in the fire** so that it becomes strong and all that water that loosened its form will be eliminated.
 - (8) Only after it goes through all those things is the pot finally ready to be used for its intended purpose.
- b) If you are suffering through something right now, know that there is **grace there in the struggle**.
- i) Let God's hands as the potter continue to shape you, make you and mold you into the vessel of His making.
- 2) The phrase "**having the same conflict...**" is translated as "**engaged in the same conflict...**" in the ESV.
- a) They were partakers with Paul in all aspects of ministry... the grace (Phil 1:7) and the **conflict**.
 - b) The Greek word translated "**conflict**" is *agon*, from which we get our word "**agony**."³
 - c) Jon **Courson** shares these insightful words in relationship to the conflict we face. He says, "*There's no way to be deep in the Lord without going through some difficulties for the Lord. There's just no other way. So Paul says, "Don't be blown away; don't be taken aback; don't fall down because you're going through attacks and difficulties. They're proof*

³ Courson, J. (2003). *Jon Courson's Application Commentary* (p. 1277). Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson.

that you're on target; they provide a privilege for you to suffer; and they're part of a process you must go through even as you see me go through it.”

- d) J.Vernon McGee said, “When you get to the place where He lets you suffer for Him, you have arrived—that is the high calling of Christ Jesus.”⁴

Philippians 2:1-2

¹ Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, ² fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

1) The word “if” should really be translated as “Since”.

a) Christ has done these things...

b) The word “any” could be translated as “some”

i) Since there is some consolation (**encouragement**) in Christ... (read Vs 2)

(1) C.H. **Spurgeon** said, “*The Holy Spirit consoles, but Christ is the consolation. If I may use the figure, the Holy Spirit is the Physician, but Christ is the medicine.*”

ii) Since there is comfort of love... (read Vs 2)

(1) **2 Corinthians 1:3–4** ³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, ⁴ who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

iii) Since there is fellowship of the Spirit... (read Vs 2)

(1) This is Koinonia or a sharing with the Spirit in all things.

(2) This means that you are allowing the Spirit to be at work in all areas of your life.

iv) Since there is affection and mercy... (read Vs 2)

(1) **John 3:16** For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

2) Paul’s joy is made full by the believers being like-minded.

a) The idea is that they are **single-minded**.

b) They have a common unifying interest, which is Jesus Christ.

c) The only way we can have the “**same love**” is to share in His love for us.

⁴ McGee, J. V. (1991). *Thru the Bible commentary: The Epistles (Philippians/Colossians)* (electronic ed., Vol. 48, p. 38). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

- i) **1 John 2:5** But whoever keeps His word, truly the love of God is perfected in him. By this we know that we are in Him.
- ii) There is a **correlation** between keeping His word and the His love being perfected in us.
- iii) We cannot truly know the Love of God apart from the Word of God.
- d) We are to be **of one accord**, which can only happen if we all own a Honda.
 - i) No, if we are following His purposes and will, which brings us into step and **accord** with one another.
- e) We are to have **one mind**, which is **His mind**, revealed through His Word and His Holy Spirit.

Philippians 2:3-4 ³ Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. ⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

- 1) Ambition is not bad; I think it is great to be ambition for the Lord.
 - a) Jim Elliot, Hudson Taylor, Gladys Aylward, William Carey, and George Mueller were all ambitions for the Lord.
 - b) But “**selfish ambition**” that Paul speaks of is a problem in the life of Christians.
 - c) We are not to be self-focused. Rather, we should have the mind of Christ.
 - i) The **needs of others** and how He might help them was on the mind of Christ.
 - ii) Therefore, it should be on our mind as well.
- 2) “**conceit**” is thinking too highly of one’s self
 - a) And in the life of a true Christian, **selfish ambition** and **conceit** are to have no place.
 - b) Instead we are to **look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others**.
 - i) That word **look** in the original Greek is **σκοπέω** (*skopeo*) and it means to both **look at** and **contemplate**.
 - ii) And the root word of *skopeo* means to mark or set as a goal.
 - iii) It’s not merely observing, but **tending to**.
- 3) We put **the interests of others** ahead of our own by taking the time to get to know others.

- a) By listening to and contemplating their story.
 - b) Consider their hurts and pains and join them in it by praying earnestly over them.
 - c) Rejoice with them in their victories and triumphs.
- 4) If I consider you above me and you consider me above you, then a marvelous thing happens: we have a community where everyone is looked up to, and no one is looked down on.⁵

Conclusion: What can we glean from this passage?

- 1) In **Africa** there is a saying, *“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”*
- a) The Great Commission to go and make disciples was not a command to go fast, but to go far.
 - i) We are not called to make disciples quickly,
 - (1) But rather that we would make disciples of all nations...
 - (2) That’s going far!
 - (3) And if we are going to make it happen then we need to do this together.
- 2) In the struggles that we face, we can easily enter an endless pace.
- a) But if we put them in His hands, He places us in grace-filled lands.

⁵ Guzik, D. (2013). *Philippians* (Php 2:2–4). Santa Barbara, CA: David Guzik.