

#4 Philippians 2:1

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Chapter 2 **Verse 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.'

Yes: obviously, **since there is** consolation in Christ, there is comfort in love, there is fellowship of the Spirit, etc: since that is all true, Paul says, I command, God commands, that you love one another and think the same, all of you, according to what God has given me to teach to you. Learn it and do it!

Paul never lets up on love... every letter, it seems like every chapter; he is constantly encouraging and reinforcing upon us the absolute necessity of Christians choosing to love other Christians, all other Christians which happens to be the thing that is most difficult for most Christians: that we love each other, sacrificially... and far beyond just our personal list of favorite Christians who are deserving of our love.

This means, especially those whom we find most difficult to love. And what exactly is love, God's kind of love? 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I have become sounding brass or a clanging cymbal. ² And though I have *the gift of prophecy*, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, **but have not love, I am nothing**. ³ And though I bestow all my goods to feed *the poor*, and though I give my body to be burned, (even though I do countless good works, feeding the poor or even die as a martyr) but have not love, it profits me nothing.' (no reward) Nothing that we can do can take the place of loving each other or make up for our not loving each other.

'Love is patient (always patient) love is kind (always kind); love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil (doesn't think badly of any believer); ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things (keeps all confidences), believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things... ⁸ **Love never fails**. But whether *there are* prophecies, they will fail; whether *there are* tongues, they will cease; whether *there is* knowledge, it will vanish away. ⁹ For we know in part and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰ But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away. ¹¹ When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things. ¹² For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part, but then I shall know just as I also am known. ¹³ And now abide faith, hope, love, these three; **but the greatest of these is love**. 1 Cor 13

That is exactly how God loves us and that is how He commands us to love each other and all other believers.

Re: 'But when that which is perfect has come, then that which is in part will be done away.' There are two schools of thought regarding what Paul is saying there. First, that it refers to Jesus Christ but that is doubtful since that word is never used to describe Jesus Christ but, rather, always refers to something or someone coming to its full completion. What is more likely, since Paul is referring to tongues, prophecy and knowledge being then, at the time of his writing, being imperfect, not yet complete, he is referring, instead, to the completion of God's Word, compiled in written form: the Bible. Paul is saying that then, during the early Church, tongues, like at Pentecost, prophecies and words of knowledge were all necessary to confirm God's Word through Jesus, Peter, Paul, James, etc. but when God finished giving His Word to be written down and preserved, then those other 'sign gifts' were no longer necessary. The Bible is its own proof of perfection. Miracles, prophecies and tongues are no longer necessary because the Bible confirms itself; it is the only proof that is necessary to give birth to faith for believing.

The Bible is its own proof; we can see the proof of God through countless written prophecies fulfilled and that is what gives us faith to believe every other prophecy and promise of God will be fulfilled exactly.

Whenever any group believes that tongues, prophecies, miracles, words of knowledge, etc. are necessary for the Church, today, they are really saying that they believe God's Word, the Bible, is insufficient for today and that is the heresy of the modern movement of NAR (New Apostolic Reformation), that God is currently establishing apostles and prophets to whom He is giving new words and messages that even supersede what is written in His Word, the Bible.

Paul was saying, 'When that which is perfect), complete, brought to fulfillment, God's complete written

Word), has come, then that which is in part (tongues, prophecies, miracles), will be done away.

Verse 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.

That is a huge order... how could we ever do it?

In Verse 2 he wrote: fulfill my joy by being like-minded. Here it says, 'in lowliness of mind.' We are to be like-minded... like whose mind? Mine? Everyone should think like me? I've always said so... don't we often think that? Like whose mind?

In Romans, Paul wrote: 'Let us be like minded: And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind Rom 12:2 ' To the Corinthians, he wrote, 'For "who has known the mind of the LORD that he may instruct Him?" But we have the mind of Christ.' 1 Cor 2:16

To the Romans, he wrote, '**Be** like minded. 'To the Corinthians, he wrote, '**we have** the mind of Christ.' Here, to the Philippians, he commands:

Verse 5: '**Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus**, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, ⁷ but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death**, even the death of the cross. ⁹ Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, ¹¹ and *that* every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ *is* Lord, to the glory of God the Father.'

Paul is telling us to be like-minded, to think alike but our minds and thinking are to be modeled after the Lord Jesus Christ, His mind and His way of thinking.

He came, the first time, as a patient, humble servant, willing to suffer, laying down His own life for the good of others. When He returns, it will be as the magnificent, all-powerful, King of kings and Lord of lords, Righteous Judge and destroyer of His enemies; with all might, majesty, power and glory, ruling and reigning over all Creation forever.

Paul is telling us the same thing about ourselves. If we will be faithful to also lay down our lives for each other, being like minded in all humility, we will be rewarded at His coming.

When Jesus finally and fully gave up His life for us, it wasn't a quick, simple and easy death like a bullet to the brain; it was the slowest, most excruciatingly horrible death any person could imagine... and as we lay down our lives, as we crucify our own flesh, there is a similarity. It is never quick and easy. In fact, it is a life-long process of laying down our lives for each other. Often, it is without any acknowledgement, often met with hostility, never with glory, honor or praise, often with rejection, always as a servant.

But, Paul is saying, if we will be faithful to do so... then, when He comes in Glory, we too, shall come with Him in our own glory; we will receive, from God, honor, praise, glory and we will rule and reign with Him forever.

To Timothy, he wrote, 'Therefore I endure all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus **with eternal glory**. *This is a faithful saying:* For if we died with *Him*, We shall also live with *Him*. ¹² If we endure, we shall also reign with *Him*.' 2Tim 2:10

David wrote prophetically: 'O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth, Who have displayed Your splendor above the heavens! ² From the mouth of infants and nursing babes You have established strength because of Your adversaries, to make the enemy and the revengeful cease. ³ When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained; ⁴ what is man that You take thought of him, and the son of man that You care for him? Yet **You have made him a little lower than God**, and **You crown him with glory and majesty!** ⁶ You make him to rule over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet, ⁷ all sheep and oxen, and also the beasts of the field, ⁸ the birds of the heavens and the fish of the sea, whatever passes through the paths of the seas. ⁹ O LORD, our Lord, How majestic is Your name in all the earth!' David wrote prophetically of Jesus' future Kingdom on Earth. Psalm 8

'Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus'... and as you do... you will be rewarded, richly, beyond anything you can think or imagine, when the true King returns with you accompanying Him.

Back to verse 5, 6: Think like Jesus Christ. Even though He has always existed, as God Almighty, an equal member of the Trinity, He caused Himself to have the same seemingly invisible anonymity as any human, being born like one of us with no reputation or anything to commend Himself before He began His ministry. He laid down His life, completely, even willingly submitting to crucifixion. Therefore, God the Father has exalted and glorified Him above all others, in all time and eternity. When He returns, everyone will bow to Him and confess His Lordship. Then, at the Final Judgment, everyone who has been in Hades, Sheol, from the time on Cain, onward, will also be forced to bow to Him and Confess His Lordship, before they are all cast into the Lake of Fire to be punished forever for their rejection of the Love, Grace and Mercy of God, Almighty. Notice that God includes every being from all time in the inclusivity of ALL who will bow the knee and declare His Lordship: all in Heaven, all on the Earth and all under the Earth. How blessed to do so, now, willingly.

Also, the Name to which all will bow is, Jesus, Joshua, J'shua, His Name means: **God is Salvation**. His name is not Christ; that is His title, His office; it means, anointed one, the Greek form of Messiah. His Name is Jesus!

And... that every knee will bow in submission does not imply that all will be saved. They will be forced to submit but they will never be reconciled to God. One third of the created angels and who knows what percentage of created humans will be sentenced to eternity in the Lake of Fire. **Many** walk the broad road that leads to destruction but narrow is the way to Life Eternal and **few** there be that find it. Matt 7

Aside: It's interesting to note that God allowed His Son's Body to be abused beyond measure in His Holy Work of Atoning for our sin, abuse that had to be horrendous in order to satisfy the Holy Wrath of God against Sin in all its filthy expressions, but once the Roman soldier pierced His side, allowing the rest of His blood to be poured out... and notice, too, that His hands and feet were pierced so that all His blood could run out in payment for our sin... once that was completed and He willingly gave up His Spirit, God the Father never allowed His Son's Body to be even so much as touched by sinful man again. His Body was taken down, lovingly wrapped, cleaned and prepared for burial by loving, heartbroken disciples. After His Resurrection, it was, again, only disciples who touched Him. Now He is the Lord King and no one approaches or touches the King without invitation but we will have been invited to love and to touch Him forever as His children, as His brothers, as His Bride, as His friends... I am His and He is mine... forever.

He **'...made Himself of no reputation'** the Greek word, here, is: **'Kenosis'** which means, He emptied Himself or, He divested Himself. It does not mean that He ever laid aside His Divinity or His Power but it does mean that He laid aside His rights, His privileges and use of His Deity and Power. He did not claim any rights; He never said, like so many pathetic 'famous' people throughout history, 'Don't you know who I Am?!' The Lord Jesus Christ divested Himself of His rights as the King of kings and Lord of lords; He gave up his rights but not His Righteousness or His abilities. His coming, as the humble servant, is the supreme illustration of what should characterize the lives and choices of every true child of God.

A good illustration of this comes from Solomon and from Jesus:

'Do not exalt yourself in the presence of the king, and do not stand in the place of the great; for *it is* better that He say to you, "Come up here," than that you should be put lower in the presence of the Prince, whom your eyes have seen.' Prov 25:6

'So (Jesus) told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: ⁸"When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; ⁹and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. ¹⁰But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. ¹¹For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." ¹²Then He also said to him who invited Him, "When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. ¹³But when you give a feast, invite *the* poor, *the* maimed, the

lame, *the* blind. ¹⁴ And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just." Luke 14:7

The first Adam chose to be dissatisfied with his high and lofty position as ruler of all the Earth, believing the serpent's lie that he should be like God, and he fell to the lowest position of always, eternally being known as the guy who pulled all of humanity into the bondage of sin. Just imagine poor Adam and Eve. So blessed to be in Heaven and yet eternally knowing that they were the first cause of all sin the World and of the Crucifixion. They will be, as we should all be, eternally and humbly grateful for God's Love, Mercy and Forgiveness.

The second Adam, Jesus Christ, chose to lower Himself to the lowest position in humanity as the servant of all, and He has been elevated above all Creation. So too, as we chose to lower ourselves, below all other Christians, we will be exalted, when He comes for us, far above all Creation, even angels. The only thing, then, which will be above us will be God, Himself, His Three Persons, and other children of God. We, too, with Him, will rule and reign over all Creation forever and evermore.

Verse 12: 'So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling;'

This has nothing to do with works causing or augmenting salvation. He writes to 'work out' our salvation; never implying that we 'work for' our salvation. We cannot work it out if we do not first have it within.

Individually, Paul means that we are to manifest our salvation; do the works that show forth your salvation. Jesus said, 'I must work the works of Him who sent Me while it is day; *the* night is coming when no one can work.' John 9:4 However, in this context, Paul means corporately, that as an assembly of believers we are to govern ourselves and manifest love above all else. Not love for our city, not love for our country but, rather, love for each other, that we sacrificially love one to one, one to the whole and the whole to each one: within the body. People are not drawn to an assembly as they see it loving those outside, anyone can do that, making themselves feel good about themselves but as they see us love each other and as a body loving each individual within, loving those with whom we are most familiar, about whom we know their secrets, supporting each other sacrificially, that is what makes an impression and that is the family that those outside long to be part of... to be genuinely loved. That is **working out our Salvation**: working out what lies within.

When Paul was with them, or with any of the other Churches, they would bring all disputes and problems to him for judgment. But Paul is writing to them from prison in Rome; he had no way of helping them with any disagreement or question. He is saying, grow up into maturity and work it out yourselves under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Every one of you, born again with the Holy Spirit living within, are capable of working out your own salvation, whether individually or corporately, under the leading of the Holy Spirit. The pastor or the deacon is not the final arbiter in an assembly; they are not to be 'lording it over' the flock but each one of you, each one of us should be taking responsibility for our own walking worthy of the Lord, walking in a manner worthy of the calling with which we've been called, loving one another as Jesus Christ has loved us and gave Himself up for us, laying down His rights and privileges, seeking our good; do the same and everything will be just fine in your, in our, congregation. It strikes me that so many Church-goers just want to do the minimum that will make them feel like they are 'saved enough,' and so many pastors are satisfied with that culture.

Only a few decades later, John would address examples of unrighteous leadership, of the clerical system and religious hierarchy that caused far more problems than it ever solved: In 3 John 1 He wrote: 'I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them, does not receive us. Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren (traveling evangelists), and forbids those who wish to, putting *them* out of the church.' And, of Jesus' hatred for religious hierarchy: In Rev. 2, He said, to Ephesus: 'But this you have, that you hate the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate. But to Pergamos, He said, chastisingly: 'you also have those who hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, **which thing I hate**. Repent!' Nicolaitan has to do with religious hierarchy: the Greek, *nico* means: victory, destruction over, *laitan*, *laity*, the people: **victory over the people**: Catholic, as well as other religious hierarchies are the clerical victory over the laity, the lay people; God hates it just as He hates in so many Churches where pastors and their wives are treated like royalty and they love it, living like kings and queens as their flocks are fleeced weekly.