

Philippians 2:1-12

Introduction: Have you ever heard someone say “you are to work out your own salvation with fear and trembling?” Do you know what that means? That verse holds the answer to solving any church problem.

Breakdown of the Text:

Paul writes the book of Philippians while in jail. It was a church that Paul had founded on his second missionary journey. The church is praised for being a generous church, a loving church, a sacrificing church, and yet we see here in Paul’s letter to them they had problems as seen in Philippians 2:14, “Do all things without murmurings and disputing.” The fact Paul had to tell them to do all things without murmurings or disputing means, they had murmurings and disputing. We don’t know what the complaints were about. We do know the how it was effecting the church as we read in Philippians 1:27, “Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.” Again reading into what Paul was saying, the church at Philippi had divisions in it. Are there divisions in churches today? We don’t want to gloss over the issue of division in a church, because the Bible speaks very clearly about it. In Proverbs 6:19 God calls it an abomination to sow discord among the church. Romans 16:17 tells us how to deal with those who cause division when it says mark them and avoid them. 1 Corinthians 3:3 may be the second strongest rebuke against divisions in the church when it says, “For ye are yet carnal: for whereas *there is* among you envying, and strife, and divisions, are ye not carnal, and walk as men?” Paul is saying in 1 Corinthians 3:3 that when there are divisions or strife in the church it is because the members are acting carnally. In other words Paul is saying the church is acting like the unsaved act when you have division and dissension. 1 Corinthians 1:10 gives us the desire of God for the church when it says, “Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you; but *that* ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.”

Clearly God's desire is unity for His body. However, we must admit that there is a clear distinction between what God desires for His church and what is actually taking place. So how can we achieve what God desires in the church?

The Solution for All Church Problems:

Look at Philippians 2:5, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." The solution here is to have the mind of Christ in me. This means I must focus on my relationship with God and not run around and judge other's relationship with Christ. It is one thing to say we need to have the mind of Christ, but what does that mean exactly? Let's look at Philippians 2:2-4, "Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. *Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others." There are three things here that I see that describe the mind of Christ. **The first one is we are to have one desire.** Notice in verse 2 it says, "that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind." If we are going to have the mind of Christ we need to care about what God cares about. I would submit to you this morning that most church fights, division, and dissensions are not about what God cares about. God cares about people. **The second thing necessary to have the mind of Christ in you is humility.** Notice verse 3, "let nothing be done through strife or vainglory (self-glory); but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Notice if we are going to have the mind of Christ in us it can't be about us. We can't desire to have credit or recognition; it must be all about what God is doing. The third and final aspect of the mind of Christ is found in verse 4 which says, "Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of other." **If I want to have the mind of Christ in me, I must see myself as a servant.** In many ways this last one encompasses the other two. As a servant, my opinion doesn't matter. My sole purpose is to serve my master in a way that pleases him. As a servant I can't claim any glory, because all I am doing is carrying out my master's desire. We see Christ modeling all of this for us in verses 6-8. I want you to think about this for a second. The Almighty God (v. 6), maker of heaven and earth left His home in glory to come to His creation not to be served,

but rather to serve His Father (Mark 10:45-the Son of man came not to be served but to serve) for the benefit of all mankind.

You may be asking, how does this help me to work out my salvation with fear and trembling? First I want you to understand what Paul meant when he said “salvation” here. Paul was not referring to the salvation of our soul from eternal damnation. Because Paul knew and wrote that salvation for our soul is not by works but rather by our faith in God. The “salvation” spoken of here means the deliverance from the problem that is plaguing the church at Philippi or our churches today. That problem is pride. When we are delivered from our pride problem (and that is almost if not always the source of our church problem-the problems of me, myself, and I) then and only then are we free to carry out the will of God. As you see in verse 13, what is accomplished is not because of our own intelligence, hard work, or even our own clever ideas. What is accomplished is accomplished because of God working in us and through us. So if it is God, how can we take credit for it? How can we say look at what we did? If a church wants to be problem free, then the “I’s” have to die and we must work with each other to pursue God’s one desire-see people saved, with humility and a desire to serve that purpose however God desires to use us.