

Radio Handout The 4-fold Foundation of Unity from Philippians Jan 19

When Paul wrote he was usually addressing the church to whom he was writing about a problem which currently existed within the church. In Philippi there was a problem between 2 ladies that had worked with Paul that was causing disunity and strife. He wants to get the problem corrected.

Because of the fall in the Garden and the consequences that resulted in the human nature, (and they haven't changed in over 2,000 years) problems that were relevant then still exist today.

Paul details out the simple solution in chapter 2:1-4 and then again in 2:5-8. He was giving by an example of why we should desire to live in unity and in the second example he was showing the mindset of Jesus Christ in human form living it out. Most all divisions can be solved when the saints will develop Christ like humility by living in dependence on the leading of the Spirit.

The first issue that needs clarification is the word "IF". Usually means there is a possibility under certain conditions in the Greek text. However, there is another meaning that can be applied and is used here. It is the word "since" or "in view of" representing a fulfilled condition. The view here is that the facts are certain things as facts. No possible condition could be a possibility that these words were not sure and certain. They are based on the personhood of Jesus Christ and His character, His sovereignty.

CONSOLATION: Usually means to give comfort to people. However, here it has more of a meaning of exhortation to have unity that is found in Christ. The need in this given situation was coming from the spirit of pride which existed between Euodia and Syntyche. Paul is saying look at the life of Christ and makes the appeal to the church to correct the disunity by appealing to the way Jesus Christ lived His life here on earth. They had been given the power and desire from the Holy Spirit to correct the disunity. They are to be like minded. Now would they do so?

CERTAIN COMFORT OF LOVE: The complete word meaning here is "to come to the side of one to stimulate or comfort. Similar words would include "incentive or encouragement, with an added element of tenderness."

This love is a divine love that only God can produce in the heart of people totally given over to living by the Holy Spirit. He is the agent that applies this truth in the inner most part of us. The incentive toward unity is LOVE. If the saints in the church would love as Christ loves us with a sacrificial love; then divisions would clear up and unity in caring and serving one another would be the norm.

CERTAIN FELLOWSHIP OF THE SPIRIT: This is not talking about fellowship between the child of God and the Holy Spirit. This is the fellowship with the Father and His Son Jesus Christ. (1 John 1:3 and Eph. 3: 16-17.) This is possible only through the work of the Holy Spirit. The word fellowship is from a Greek word that refers to a relation between individuals which involves a common interest and a mutual, active participation in that interest. The application here is the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives and our cooperation with Him in His work, causing us to grow in grace as we yield. It definitely involves our free will in choosing right and doing it. When this condition is followed the ministry of the Spirit enables us to live in unity with our fellow saints.

CERTAIN BOWELS AND MERCIES: In the time when these words were penned, the heart, lungs, and liver were known as the sea of tender affections and translated "bowels". Now days we refer to this as the heart of a person, the inner most part. Mercies literally means compassionate yearnings and actions.

When believers are tenderhearted toward one another and have compassion upon one another, division and disunity will stop.

To recap this first portion to the church: In view of these facts.....

1. Exhortation to live the Lord's life as He has provided, mainly that of Christ like humility.
2. Divine love, living through us and produced in our hearts by the Spirit will give love to one another.
3. The indwelling of the Spirit is in each one of us and if we will yield to His control we will be controlled by His presence. His will, heart, and mind will become ours.
4. If believers will show tender heartedness to and compassion for each other, unity will prevail.

In Philippians 4:6-8 we have a list of Christian virtues. A virtue is any mental excellence, moral quality, or physical power. Paul usually avoids this word, but here he desires to make sure nothing is omitted from any possible ground of appeal. We can have virtue in our natural being, but Paul list the virtues that will mean something in our Christian walk as these are only by the life of Christ through the power of the Spirit.

Then he says "think" and that is the act of careful reflection. Believe in practice it can include meditation although a different word is used in the Greek. Whatsoever things are..

Verse 8: True: in character in the widest sense:

Honest: inviting reverence, worthy of reverence. A noble seriousness.

Just: righteous a right standing in our position with Christ in a comprehensive sense.

Pure: purity in all things.

Lovely: speaks of what can excite love to endear him who does such things. Other like words, winsome, pleasing, amiable.

Good Report: Literally "fair speaking", winning, attractive.

Verse 9: The word DO is next "to practice as a habit. When we do practice these virtues, then the God of peace shall be with you.

In 2 Pet 1:5 Peter tells us to supplement our faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge adding self-control, godliness with brotherly kindness and brotherly kindness with love. We should take notice that getting to the ultimate of true love, virtue must be recognized and applied as a habit for us to move forward. With the battle for the mind, no wonder we flounder.

How privileged we are to have the scriptures to instruct us in 2 Corinthians 10:3-5 Of course we do walk in the flesh, but we certainly don't fight according to the flesh. The weapons that we use to fight aren't fleshly; rather, they are divinely powerful to tear down strongholds. By them we tear down arguments and every high barrier that is raised against the knowledge of God, and take every though captive and bring it into obedience to Christ.

Being grounded in these principles and precepts will be pleasing to our Lord and open the door of unity resulting in JOY with unity of family, serving in ministry, and growing in grace and knowledge of our Lord.