

## PHILIPPIANS

### CHAPTER TWO

1. Upon what would Paul's joy be predicated?

*"Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy" (Philippians 2:1-2). He counted on consolation, love, fellowship, affection, and mercy; otherwise there would be no joy. And all that came from Christ and the Spirit.*

2. How would Paul's joy be fulfilled?

*"Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind" (Philippians 2:2). He would have completeness of joy if the brethren would attain to unity, which means loving the same, but also, and this is said twice: having the same mind, thinking alike (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 1:10).*

3. What is the obstacle to unity? How is that overcome?

*"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others" (Philippians 2:3-4). Selfishness and arrogance prevent unity, but humility brings it about (Ephesians 5:21). Christians must not only not be selfish, but we must be selfless (Romans 12:10).*

4. Who should we emulate?

*“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 2:5). We should always follow Christ’s example (1<sup>st</sup> John 2:6) of lowliness (John 13:14-15) and keep that example in our minds (Romans 15:3).

5. Compare translations of verse 6.

*“Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God”* (NKJV; cf. KJV).

*“Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped”* (ESV; cf. ASV, NASB, NIV).

There is no manuscript variation for this verse. Translators simply present it differently, which is troubling because the Greek word rendered *“robbery”* (NKJV, KJV) or *“a thing to be grasped”* (ESV, ASV, NASB, NIV), is, in fact, a noun as the NKJV/KJV put it, not a verb as the others do. The ESV, ASV, NASB, NIV requires the explanation that He did not need to reach for His divinity because He was already in possession of it.

The point of the passage, in any translation, is that Jesus really is God and, yet, He chose to humble Himself by becoming human. The NKJV/KJV emphasizes this fact, while the others seem to detract from it.

6. How did Christ demonstrate lowliness of mind?

He *“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”* (Philippians 2:7-8).

- 1) Experienced humanity.
- 2) Specifically, chose to become a no-reputation bondservant.
- 3) Experienced death.
- 4) Specifically, chose to die in a violently gruesome manner: crucifixion.

7. Describe Christ's reputation.

He *"made Himself of no reputation"* (Philippians 2:7), means He chose an earthly existence in which He would be unliked. This was foretold (Psalm 22:6-8; Isaiah 53:3).

8. How was Jesus' death obedience?

*"He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death"* (Philippians 2:8) means that He was doing God's will more than His own when He suffered (Matthew 26:39, 42). In surrendering Himself to abuse, He was obeying what God commanded (Isaiah 50:5-6; Hebrews 5:8).

9. What is the outcome of Christ's humility?

*"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him"* (Philippians 2:9). His humble obedience lead to eternal grandeur (Acts 5:30-31; Hebrews 12:1-2). He intends the same for us (1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:6). When we practice humility even in social settings, it can lead to exaltation (Luke 14:7-11), so it must be even greater in spiritual things.

10. What is the status of Jesus' name?

*"Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 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, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:9-11).*

His name excels all other names, even the name Jehovah, despite what the Watchtower crowd would have you believe. His name is the only one that brings salvation (Acts 4:10, 12). Even in heaven, they exalt His name (Revelation 4:9-11). There is no salvation without confessing His name (Matthew 10:32-33).

11. What did Paul expect the Philippians to “work out?”

*“Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13).* Their salvation was their own personal responsibility and it came by obedience. While God was working in them, they could not be passive. Active participation was required for their salvation.

12. What should be eliminated from a Christian’s behavior in order to “become blameless and harmless?”

*“Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless” (Philippians 2:14-15).* The reason a complainer is blameworthy and harmful is that complaining communicates discontent (Hebrews 13:5-6), ingratitude (1<sup>st</sup> Thessalonians 5:18), anxiety (Matthew 6:31, 33), and hopelessness (Romans 5:1-5).

13. What is the proper role of God’s children in this world?

*“Children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:15).* We are expected to be

faultless in the midst of perversion and lights in the darkness. Christians absolutely must be different than worldly people (Romans 12:2; James 1:27).

14. What would cause Paul to know in the judgment that his work was worthwhile?

*“Holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain”* (Philippians 2:16). The steadfastness of his converts would be eternally satisfying. Being evangelistically energetic is of little value if the converts are not built up for ongoing faithfulness following conversion.

15. Why should the Philippians rejoice with Paul?

*“Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me”* (Philippians 2:17-18). Paul considered himself a libation, as if spilling his blood would be an offering to God. He took literally Jesus’ words about rejoicing in persecution (Matthew 5:10-12; cf. James 1:2) and expected the brethren to join him.

16. How was Timothy special?

*“But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. But you know his proven character, that as a son with his father he served with me in the gospel. Therefore I hope to send him at once, as soon as I see how it goes with me. But I trust in the Lord that I myself shall also come shortly”* (Philippians 2:19-24).

Timothy was as genuinely concerned about the Philippians' progress in the gospel as was Paul. This makes sense because Philippi was the first congregation that Timothy helped to plant (Acts 16:1-40).

17. Who was Epaphroditus to Paul and who was he to Philippi?

The apostle called him *"Epaphroditus, my brother, fellow worker, and fellow soldier, but your messenger and the one who ministered to my need"* (Philippians 2:25).

We should count all who obey the Lord as brothers (Mark 3:33-35) and this is how Paul perceived Epaphroditus. Disciples who labor together for the Lord have an even deeper bond (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 3:8-9). Those who have fought side by side, even more so (Philemon 2). This man was useful to the apostle, who was not eager to release him.

To them, he was their messenger, sent for Paul's relief (Philippians 4:15-18), and Paul was keeping him busy in that work.

18. Why was Paul sending him?

*"I considered it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus... since he was longing for you all, and was distressed because you had heard that he was sick. For indeed he was sick almost unto death; but God had mercy on him, and not only on him but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. Therefore I sent him the more eagerly, that when you see him again you may rejoice, and I may be less sorrowful"* (Philippians 2:25-28). The Philippians needed reassurance their messenger was recovered from the serious ailment they had been informed of and he was homesick, ready to get back, so he was sent before Timothy. Very similar to the situation with Onesimus

(Philemon 10-16), Paul did not want to send away such a useful helper as Epaphroditus, but it was “necessary” to do so.

19. How severe had the illness become?

*“He was sick almost unto death”* (Philippians 2:27). Even in the age of miraculous healing, believers experienced illness (2<sup>nd</sup> Timothy 4:20, even chronic illness (1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 5:23; 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 12:7-10), and, yea, even life-threatening illness. Miracles served the explicit purpose of confirming inspired messages (Mark 16:17-20) in order to produce saving faith (John 20:30-31), not for the convenience or even comfort of the saints.

20. How are men like him to be regarded?

*“Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness, and hold such men in esteem; because for the work of Christ he came close to death, not regarding his life, to supply what was lacking in your service toward me”* (Philippians 2:29-30). It is important to respect the Lord’s workers (1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 16:18).