



**KING'S
CHURCH**
EDINBURGH

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Total Humility

Philippians 2:1-5

1 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.
3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. ⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

The Christian life is at times deeply uncomfortable. Paul wrote these verses from a prison he was in for the sake of the gospel. He's telling the Philippian believers that personal comfort isn't something they should strive for- rather they should serve and love others interests ahead of their own. How counter cultural- yet Paul is teaching this is the best way- the most joy-filled way to live! At the centre of the Christian faith is a saviour who took on the confines of humanity, served them and died on their behalf. Christians joyfully follow Jesus in his attitude towards others.

The starting point isn't thinking about yourself but about your new life Christ.

Paul uses a grammatical structure "If..then..." to make logical connections between our life in Christ and the effect on our everyday life. Each "if", is a statement of what is true for you as a Christian.

1.If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ. He starts with your relationship with Jesus. "In Christ" is a doctrinal term, describing all that has been accomplished in your union with Christ.

- **Justified.** (Rom 5:1). Declared right with God, not guilty. Just-as-if-I'd never sinned!

In the Narnia stories Aslan confers a new name on the child Edmund who had disappointed and lied and betrayed. He calls him King Edmund the Just.

- **Sanctified.** 1 cor 6:11 Being made more like Jesus through Jesus who lives in you.
- **Adopted.** the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, “Abba, Father.” Brought into God’s own family. Not a slave but a son. God has put you on the inside track! “And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,” (Ephesians 2:4).
- **Redeemed-** 1 Peter 1 For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.
- **Forgiven.** Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them. (Rom 2:4)

Not to mention we are **‘hidden with Christ’**, there is no condemnation for those in Christ, you are a citizen of heaven, God’s temple, God’s possession, Accepted in Him!

Paul wants you to be greatly encouraged at your Union with Christ. As we talk about humility in relationships we immediately see that it has nothing to do with “dourness” or a miserable disposition- we’re to be thrilled with God’s work on our behalf!

2. Any Comfort from his love.

It’s not just doctrinal. Jesus meets our emotional needs. You can blow every other relationship- yet Jesus will always love you.

Comfort isn’t primarily found in home comforts but in God who loves you.

Comfort is for when we need it most- grief, loss. How comforting to know he will never leave us and “*nothing in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*” Rom 8

3. Any Common sharing in the Spirit.

Not just doctrinal or emotional- but also experiential. The “Fellowship” The Spirit- Paul always speaks of the Spirit being the deposit of the age to come. It’s the proof we belong to God. And we experience the future age now through the Spirit.

In church when we gather- the Spirit strengthens us with his gifts. When we’re alone the Spirit helps us commune with God.

4. Any Tenderness and Compassion.

Paul also draws our attention to the life change that has happened in us. Jesus has made us more tender, compassionate, soft-hearted. We see the world differently. We feel concerned over other's misfortune. We can't ignore the things we used to. We feel eager to help the world around us.

On the basis of these 4 things that are true for Christian's there is no amount of personal discomfort that doesn't seem worth it all!

2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Paul is encouraging them to work towards the very closest kind of unity. Unity of love, spirit and mind.

"Doing nothing out of selfish ambition". Do you know what that feels like? I'm sure you do! My son Ben asked what do you want to be when you grow up responds immediately with "the king". We all get told to aspire to be the greatest or the best or the top. Nobody says my ambition is to be second! Yet that's a noble ambition to have in God's Kingdom. Jesus modelled it, washing his disciples feet.

Spurgeon said: *"Do not desire to be the principal man in the church. Be lowly. Be humble. The best man in the church is the man who is willing to be a doormat for all to wipe their boots on, the brother who does not mind what happens to him at all, so long as God is glorified."*

"Or Vain conceit". Narcissus in Greek mythology was a god-character who was incredibly beautiful, and when he looked at his reflection he fell in love with it and didn't ever move again, so stricken with himself! Self-centredness paralyses us, deferring to others saves us.

"In humility value others above yourselves". Knowledge puffs up, love builds up (1 cor 8:1).

Education and experience can when incorrectly applied result in us becoming less loving people who look down on others. E.g. you read a book on parenting and conclude- I am now the expert- look at them! Ugh! Or when you're in a later stage of life to look down on a younger person and say "when they're my age they'll

understand”

5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Church is to be a place where we model humility, acting like Jesus acted towards us. In our church relationships we don't simply ask “who do I get on with”, but “who can I help?”.

Questions:

1. Connecting with encouraging truth. Each of us is different. How do you most readily connect with God? Through encouraging doctrine (united with Christ), knowing he loves you, experiencing the Spirit, seeing God changing your heart etc. Do we miss out when we overfocus on one thing?
2. A humble disposition. Some Christians would assume humility equates to joyless, unenjoyable living! Based on the statements of v1, what do you think Paul would say?
3. Selfish ambition. How do we guard against this? Is all ambition wrong?
4. Vain conceit. How can we prevent ourselves becoming overly self-obsessed?
5. Knowledge puffs up. Love builds up. How can we ensure our education doesn't make us look down on people? How can we apply love?



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