

PHILIPPIANS Part 6: One Minded 07.11.10

Play: "Robin Hood Gang" Video Clip [2:05]

Intro – I love to read science fiction. I know it's not a genre that everyone loves, but I find some fascinating "what-if" themes in science fiction that really make someone think about the possibilities. One theme that occurs over and over again is the theme of the "ONE MIND." In Isaac Asimov's classic writing we have the theme of "Gaia" where everyone's mind is linked together for the betterment of everyone. Some might remember the evil enemies of Star Trek lore - the Borg - half human, half machine. Their minds were all linked together. Their threat to individuals was "You will be assimilated. Resistance is futile."

Our natural reaction to such science fiction is to shudder at the prospect of group think, hive mentality, assimilation. We hold our independence and individuality as a high core value. But there is something beneficial when people share one mind, one love, and one purpose. Isn't it interesting that what science fiction dishes out to us as an enemy to be avoided, 2,000 years ago Paul talked about with inviting and poetic language. Be like minded! Be one souled!

We all experience this like-minded nature from time to time when we share an empathetic moment with someone else. The Robin Hood Gang clip shows two boys who share the grief of an old man who loses his dog. Their response? Provide the man with a puppy. Whose heart is not warmed when we see people love and care for one another? How can we experience that reality in our own lives? This is what we want to learn today as we study Philippians 2:1-5.

READ Phil. 2:1 (NIV). Paul's writing is rhetorical. When read in the original language, there is no subject or verse as in the NIV "If you are..." Rather it reads, "if any encouragement, if any comfort, if any fellowship, if any heartfelt emotions, if any compassions." In other words these are the presumed experiences of the Christ-follower.

encouragement (παράκλησις **paráklēsis**) **in Christ.** The same root word used for the Holy Spirit in John 14 and 16, the Paraklete. Paul is NOT saying IF you have this, but SINCE you have this. It is presumed. Since you have encouragement, exhortation, consolation, comfort, appeal, help, counsel, advocate, Para - come along side / klasis - to call - to urgently call for help, appeal

comfort (παραμύθιον **paramúthion**) **of love.** to speak to someone, coming close by his side. The basic sense is to "speak to someone in a friendly way."

fellowship (κοινωνία **koinōnía**) **of the Spirit.** a relationship characterized by sharing in common. "fellow feeling." Giving so others can share generosity. Translated not only as fellowship, but as participation, partnership, contribution, sharing.

heartfelt emotions (σπλάγχνον **splágchnon**). NIV "tenderness" ESV "affection." Literally means the inward part of the body, such as heart, bowels, liver. Figuratively "the deep, inner seat of tender emotions of the whole personality."

compassions (οἰκτιρισμός **oiktirmós**). a motivating emotion. sympathy, mercy, pity. (what we saw in the Robin Hood Gang video).

This is Paul warming up his rhetorical engines. If(Since) you have these small individual glimpses of what Christ is like and what being a Christ-follower is like... THEN MAKE MY JOY COMPETE! How? Be

ONE-SOULED / **ONE-MINDED**

Paul, using his rhetorical skills, emphasizes this point by saying that we be not only one-minded, but that we even be one-souled. If I could translate verse 2 coarsely, directly from the original it would sound like this. "(You all) fill up my joy THAT (you all) be same-minded, having the same love, "together-souled," the one-minded. Now that's pretty rough. But it gives you the sense of how much Paul is pushing this idea.

Let's explain. First - what it DOESN'T mean: that you give up your individuality. that somehow you have a hive minded-ness like bees. God has created each one of you uniquely and it's His desire that He be able to use your unique skills and talents for his kingdom. Second - it doesn't mean that you will always agree with everyone about everything. (Paul had his disagreements / split with Mark) Third - it doesn't mean that you will always think the same thoughts that someone else thinks.

What it DOES mean: (1) that there is a HARMONY, a blending together of differences that makes a beautiful new sound, music. (2) that there is DIRECTION, your destination is agreed even if your preferred routes are different; (3) that there is PURPOSE - you have the desire to bring God's will and kingdom to Earth and be a united part of that; (4) that there is LOVE - having the same love means loving God together and, in turn, loving other people the way God inside you would love them.

In order to describe this the best he can, Paul *makes up a word*:

σύμψυχος **súmpsuchos** - the combination of "sum" meaning together with AND "psychos" where we get our word for psyche, psychology, means "soul," but not just in the spiritual sense, rather "everything that makes me who I am;" "my sense of identity" Paul takes these two words (ONLY HERE IN NT) "together" + "souled" to describe this unique one-mindedness that Christ-followers share. Translations don't fully grasp this raw "red-lined" style that jumps out in the Greek:

- NIV - "being one in spirit"
- NRSV, KJV - "being of one accord"
- ESV - "being of full accord"
- NET - "being united in spirit"

One can almost see Paul working to figure out how to describe this "together-souledness." So he gives us TWO Don'ts and ONE Do.

DON'T #1 - Do nothing out of **SELFISH AMBITION**

The word here is ἐριθεία **eritheía** and has as it's root the idea of working as a day-laborer. It is a complex word with a cultural history behind it. Comes from an Aristotelian disdain for the person who

sacrifices the greater good for personal gain, or who sacrifices the long-term benefit for the short-term profit. Someone who “sells himself” for money, not for the greater good of society.

We struggle here because “to be ambitious” is as American as apple pie. But consider both the political and business world we live in to see the ultimate mean of ἐριθεία. Political moves to satisfy the money supplying Political Interest Groups rather than what is best for culture. The continuous concern for reelection rather than governing. Or in business the almost ruinous focus on the short-term profits over long term success. Or the financial instruments that brought profits to the few at the cost of potential economic collapse on everyone else. This is ἐριθεία. And lest we color this black and us as white, none of us are free of it. We will each, left to ourselves, make choices that are selfish.

DON'T #2 - Do nothing out of EMPTY GLORY

Translated as conceit or vanity. The word is κενοδοξία *kenodoxia*. Again the combination of two words (keno) empty and (doxia) glory. You know the word doxia as in the doxology, where we give glory to God. *kenodoxia* would be the taking of glory to ourselves, a vain, empty boasting.

We struggle here too because there is an American kidding with one another that boasts, that brags, that says “I can do anything if I put my mind to it.” However, a little of this goes a long way. Be careful!

Paul is already thinking of the contrast with Jesus who, in verse 7, *emptied himself* [made himself nothing (NIV, ESV)]. Jesus as the son of God had doxia and emptied himself of it to become human. We have no doxia in our own right, only the reflected doxia of God, yet we claim it to ourselves. **This is the exact opposite of DO #3...**

DO #3 - In HUMILITY consider others BETTER than yourself.

Humility is not a false demeaning of our worth, a putting down of self. We are children of God, loved by God, have value and worth that comes from the creative hands of God. We have been given the great task of multiplying and taking care of God’s creation. Jesus loved us so much that He gave His life for us.

Humility is a correct understanding of who we are and where we stand in comparison to God and to others. It means we understand the universe does not revolve around us. It revolves around, is created by, is held together by, is loved by God. We orbit God. God and His universe does not orbit us. When I have the right, proper sense of this I am humble.

Ultimately, how do we do this? Left to ourselves our focus will always be to ourself and away from one another, and single minded focus on my needs and wants and not a one-souled, one-minded purpose, love and togetherness. We read the solution in verse 5. We are to “think this way...” “hold this attitude.”

We are to be like CHRIST

And here Paul gives us THE most IMPOSSIBLE requirement. How do we be like Christ? The fact is that we are not God. We are human. We are not immortal on our own while God is eternal. We are sinful while God is righteous. **There is only one way that our attitude, our way of thinking and acting, can be the same as Christ, and it involves 2 steps... AND BOTH ARE NECESSARY.**

Step #1: We become a Christian. We become “saved,” “born from above.” This involves confessing our sin - agreeing that we are sinful and in great need of God’s forgiveness. It involves a change of direction, that we will stop following the way of our selfish desires and instead follow THE WAY of Jesus’ teaching. It involves a change of heart, a change of will - a decision to follow Christ. (Why we call it being a Christ-follower.)

Step #2: We obey Christ. We name Jesus “Lord” of our lives. We seek his will daily. It is a daily surrendering of ourself to him. It is a daily walk, a daily movement into his direction. Then and only then will we be “like Christ.” As Christ is in us and we follow him and obey him, we will then have the mind of Christ. And as many of us have the mind of Christ, in THIS sense, we will be one-souled, one-minded.

Honest observation: Many of us have stubbed our toes, have tripped up, between step #1 and step #2. We name ourself a Christian because of a prayer we prayed many days, months, years ago, but it has been a long time since we have prayed the daily prayer of step #2 and meant it, and did it, and obeyed it. We say the words, but either don’t listen or don’t obey. We give Christ control and then almost simultaneously take it back away from him. **Many of us are “one-cheeking it” with Jesus...**

PLAY: “The Stool” [1:52]

Conclusion: “Make a choice.” This is what the son of God is asking you today. Maybe there is someone here who has never really, honestly taken Step #1 - becoming a Christ-follower in the first place. Today could be your day. A day of choice. Perhaps you thought you did this at some time, but your life has never reflected that choice, that commitment. Would you like to make the choice to follow Christ today?

Maybe there is someone who would say, “I know I’ve made the choice to be a Christ-follower, but I haven’t been following much lately.” Are you sitting on the stool, trying to share the decision-making with Christ? Give Him control when the decision suits you, agrees with you, doesn’t require anything of you... but then you decide when His Lordship doesn’t suit, doesn’t agree, requires too much. Think right now => where have you and Jesus been “one-cheeking” it? You’ll often see this reflected in the “selfish ambitions” of your life, causing strife with others. Where have you pushed him off the stool? Jesus will never “take” the stool of decision away from you. You must give it away. Do you have glimpses of what this life might be like? A life of encouragement, comfort, fellowship, heartfelt emotions, and compassion? Or are you making a mess of it? Is there a decision, a change of direction to make today?

Let’s pray.