

INTRODUCTION.

TODAY, ~ WE RETURN TO THE LETTER TO THE PHILIPPIANS AND BEGIN CHAPTER 2.

▶▶Reading . . . . .

THIS A.M., ~ WE TURN OUR ATTENTION TO THE NEXT SECTION OF PHIL., ~ 2:1-11.

▶▶Remember that in 1:27-30 Paul dealt with external opposition to the gospel.

▶▶In Phil. 2:1-11, ~ Paul turns his attention inward and deals with believers' relationships with one another within our local church.

▷▷Two parts: ~~ 1-4 and 5-11. ~~ Next couple messages: ~~ 1-4.

▶▶Paul's main point in 2:1-4 is a call to believers to be "of the same mind."

▷▷I.e., ~ his main point is a call for unity within our local church.

▷▷Recall from 1:27-30 that, ~ in the face of opposition, ~ Paul calls us to figuratively form that Roman military formation in which the soldiers stood shoulder to shoulder ~ ¶¶

↪↪and back to back ~ with their shields up and their spears outward.

→→Stand firm in the face of opposition together . . . . .

↪↪And also recall from 1:27-30, ~ it is teamwork that will enable us in the face of opposition to victoriously contend for the body of God's revealed truth.

▷▷And now in 2:1-4, ~ Paul's main point is a call for that same unity and teamwork to be present within our church in our relationships with one another ~ ¶¶

↪↪and in the functioning of our church.

NOW, ~ IT'S IMPORTANT TO UNDERSTAND, ~ EVEN THOUGH IT MIGHT GET A LITTLE technical, ~ ¶¶

▶▶And I apologize . . . . ~ ¶¶

▷▷it's important to understand that in the Greek text there is only one main command in this paragraph, ~ and that is to be unified. ¶¶ 1/6

▶▶ All of the other statements, ~ while important, ~ are supportive of the main command.

▷▷ I.e., ~ they elaborate on the main idea.

▶▶ Most English versions translate these verses as main commands.

▷▷ 1 reason given is that apparently it is awkward in English to have so many elaborations in a row. ~~ ASV . . . .

▶▶ Trans. as main. ~~ And it's possible to teach them as separate commands.

▶▶ This is all ok as long as we understand that in the context of Phil. 2:1-4, ~ there is only one big idea, ~ the call to be unified in our church.

▷▷ Everything else is important, ~ but it all plays a supporting role to call for unity.

▶▶ I think it might be fair to say that it's good to remember that since the NT was originally written in Greek, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ the Greek text and how it's structured takes precedence over English translation.

▶▶ Nothing wrong w/ Eng. trans. ~~ Ok . . . .

▶▶ Black & white TV. ~~ Color TV . . . . \*\*

**\*\* WE COULD SUMMARIZE VERSES 1-4 THIS WAY. ~~ AND MAYBE THIS WILL HELP make what I just said a little clearer.**

▶▶ Verse 1 is designed to get us to see that it is logical to be united with each other.

▶▶ Verse 2a is Paul's main point: ~~ He calls believers to stand united.

▶▶ And then 2b-4 tell believers how each of us can help promote, ~ strengthen, ~ and maintain unity within our church.

**WE'LL COVER VERSES 1-2a TODAY.**

**IN VERSE 1, ~ PAUL GIVES A SERIES OF "IF" STATEMENTS THAT ARE DESIGNED to get us to see that it is logical to be united with each other.**

▶▶ I.e., ~ if what Paul says in verse 1 is the case regarding the believers in Philippi, ~ then, ~ logically, ~ verse 2a, ~ they should be unified. ¶¶ 2/6

▶▶ Now, ~ it's important to understand that, ~ in using "if," ~ Paul was not expressing doubt.

▷▷ The structure that Paul used showed that he was saying, ~ ¶¶

↪↪ "If there is any . . . (and there is), ~ then be of the same mind."

TO LOOK AT IT A LITTLE DIFFERENTLY, ~ VERSE 1 COULD BE PARAPHRASED AND looked at as a series of four rhetorical questions to which Paul expected an affirmative answer.

▶▶ The reason Paul expected a "yes" to these questions is because these are four things that all believers experience in our relationship with Jesus.

▷▷ I.e., ~ four things that all believers have in common.

▶▶ Paul asked the Philippian believers, ~ "Is there any encouragement that comes from your relationship with Christ, ~ is there any comfort from Jesus' love, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ is there any fellowship with the Holy Spirit, ~ is there any affection and sympathy from Jesus?

▶▶ They would have responded: ~~ "Yes."

▷▷ And their yes answers would have led the Philippian believers to the logical conclusion that they should be united.

IT'S THE SAME FOR US, ~ MY . . . . ~~ WE COULD ASK:

▶▶ "Is there any encouragement that comes from our relationship with Jesus?" ~~ To which we would respond, ~ "yes."

▷▷ When we think about all the blessings that come . . . . ~~ Go back & read Eph. 1:3-11.

▶▶ "Is there any comfort from Jesus' love?" ~~ "Yes."

▷▷ What God told Israel is true of all believers. ~~ Jer. 31:3b, ~ "I have loved you with an everlasting love."

▶▶ "Is there any fellowship with the Holy Spirit?" ~~ "Yes."

▷▷ Jn. 14:16-17, ~ <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, <sup>17</sup> even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."

▶▶ And the last question. ~ ~ "Is there any affection and sympathy from Jesus?" ~ ~ "Yes."

▷▷ Heb. 4:15-16 says, ~ "15 For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin. 16 Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

▶▶ Like our brothers and sisters in Philippi, ~ our yes answers should lead us to the logical conclusion that we should be united.

### IN VERSE 2a, ~ WE HAVE THE LOGICAL CONCLUSION.

IF THE THINGS IN VERSE 1 ARE TRUE, ~ AND THEY ARE, ~ ALL BELIEVERS HAVE THESE in common, ~ then, ~ logically, ~ we should agree with Paul that we should be united.

▶▶ And here we have Paul's main command. ~ ~ His call for unity.

▶▶ Being "of the same mind" or unified doesn't mean we should have the same opinions or agree about everything.

▷▷ Paul's desire is for unity, ~ not uniformity.

↳↳ Uniformity would mean that everyone dresses alike, ~ looks alike, ~ sounds alike, ~ thinks alike, ~ acts alike.

→→ But that is neither healthy nor biblical. ~ ~ **Extremely boring . . . .**

▶▶ Orchestras are not made up of only one instrument, ~ right?

▷▷ Are they not made up of different instruments with distinct sounds working together to produce great symphonies?

↳↳ Well, ~ Paul is calling us to be an orchestra.

▶▶ Being "of the same mind" or unified means conducting oneself in a cooperative manner, ~ to be on the same team, ~ ¶¶

▷▷ and to go for the same objectives, ~ for the benefit of one another within our church, ~ for the proper functioning of our church, ~ and for the glory of God.

↳↳ Ultimate goal . . . .

↳↳ 1 Cor. 14:26b, ~ "Let all things be done for building up." ¶¶ 4/6

NOW, ~ HAVING SAID ALL THAT, ~ AT THIS POINT, ~ WE MUST SOUND cautionary note.

▶▶Paul wants us to be united, ~ but not at all costs.

▶▶E.g., ~ we are not to sacrifice doctrinal purity and biblical truth in order to have unity.

▷▷For instance, ~ we are to reject the attitude that says something like, ~ 77

↪↪“We are not interested in doctrines, ~ but in love. ~ Now, let’s forget our doctrines and just love one another.”

→→This attitude must be rejected.

▷▷While not all believers agree on some minor matters of Christian doctrine, ~ they all do agree on the foundational truths of the faith.

↪↪Unity built on anything other than Bible truth is built on a foundation made of sand.

▶▶Furthermore, ~ we are not to tolerate sin in order to have unity.

▷▷In [1 Corinthians](#), ~ Paul, ~ who insists that we be united, ~ was very harsh with the Corinthian church because they were tolerating sin in their fellowship.

↪↪[1 Cor. 5:1-5, ~ 13a . . . .](#)

▶▶It’s quite obvious, ~ we are not to sweep sin under the carpet or sacrifice doctrinal purity and biblical truth in order to have unity in our church.

AS WE WIND DOWN THIS MORNING, ~ PLEASE OBSERVE IN VV. 1-2a THAT PAUL approaches his main idea that believers are to be united from two different angles.

ON THE ONE HAND, ~ HE PUTS IT IN COMMAND FORM, ~ WHICH MEANS IT’S NOT something optional for our church.

▶▶We are to obey it. ~ To **not** be united is sin.

ON THE OTHER HAND, ~ PAUL SHOWS US THE LOGIC BEHIND THE COMMAND.

▶▶Based on [verse 1](#), ~ i.e., ~ the four things that all believers experience in our relationship with Jesus, ~ it’s only logical, ~ [verse 2a](#), ~ that we would be unified.

SO TO NOT BE UNITED WOULD NOT ONLY BE SIN ~ BUT ALSO ILLOGICAL. 77 5/6

▶▶ Paul basically boxes us in. ~~ He gives us no escape route.

▷▷ There are no loopholes that would give us an excuse to not be "of the same mind."

▶▶ That Paul approaches his call to be unified from two different angles shows us, ~ I would suggest, ~ the great importance that God places on unity in the body of Christ.

▷▷ It is incumbent upon all believers to do the same.

▷▷ And this means that we must avoid the things that cause disunity, ~ such as bickering, ~ divisions, ~ and sowing discord.

▷▷ We should mention in passing that in [Prov. 6](#) sowing discord among believers appears in a list of the things the Lord hates.

### CONCLUSION.

IN CONCLUSION MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN CHRIST, ~~ WE, ~ LIKE OUR heavenly Father, ~ are to place great importance on unity within our church.

▶▶ I.e., ~ we are to place great importance on conducting ourselves in a cooperative manner, ~ being on the same team, ~ 77

▷▷ and going for the same objectives, ~ for the benefit of one another within our church, ~ for the proper functioning of our church, ~ and for the glory of God.

LET'S PRAY . . . . 6/6