

THE LIFE OF UNITY

Phil. 2:1-11

by Walton Weaver

Introduction:

1. Union is not unity. May tie the hind legs of two cats together and hang them over clothesline.
Have union but not unity!
2. A life of unity is the central characteristic of the worthy life.
3. Phil. 1:27 and Phil. 2:2 belong together.
4. In our text Paul gives us the ingredients of the life of true unity.

I. TRUE UNITY IS FOUNDED UPON THE RIGHT THING, 2:2.

A. Unity in affection, thought.

1. Like-mindedness literally means, "mind the same thing."
2. The three principal phrases define the climate for this unity. "It is the concord not of a common hatred, but of a common love It manifests itself in a complete harmony of the feelings and affections It produces an entire unison of thought and directs it to one end" (Lightfoot).
3. When motivated by love we are able to overcome the small insignificant things that divide. Minds must be set on oneness.

B. Unity in the truth.

1. Unity is never called for at the expense of truth. "It assumes that 'the same thing' is also 'the right thing'" (Homer A. Kent, Jr.).
2. Gouge quotes C. P. Eden: "Our first work is-not to arrive as unity, but-to conform ourselves to the standard of Divine truth; just as the unity of a choir is not gained by each singer striving to keep in with his neighbor, but by all following the prescribed notes of music."

II. TRUE UNITY ALWAYS SPRINGS FROM THE RIGHT INCENTIVES, 2:1, 5:8.

A. A common experience. The "if" of verse one means "since" or "as indeed is the case."

1. The appeal of Christ. If there be any grounds for exhortation because you are in Christ; if your being in Christ means any thing to you; if you are really Christians.
2. Encouragement of love. If love has any power by its tenderness to stir your hearts, then listen.
3. Fellowship of the Spirit. If you really do. share in the life and blessings of the Spirit, hear me.
4. Compassion in the heart. "Tender mercies" is the seat or organ of compassion, the heart. "Compassion is the pity itself. Thus, 'If you have a heart and your heart has any compassion, listen to me,' says Paul" (A. T. Robertson).

B. A Divine example.

1. He was sacrificial (vs. 6-7). Let this mind be in you (vs. 5): Do nothing through strife or self-ambition (vs. 3a), look on the things of others (vs. 4). Look what Jesus gave up for

others.

2. He was humble (vs. 8). Let this mind be in you (vs. 5): In lowliness of mind count others better than yourself (vs. 3b).
3. He was obedient (vs. 8), Let this mind be in you (vs. 5): Become completely obedient, learn obedience through suffering for others like Jesus did (Heb. 5:8-9). To learn obedience all selfishness must be put aside. This is the way to true unity.

III. TRUE UNITY PRODUCES THE RIGHT RESULTS, 1:27-28, 2-2a.

A. A solid front against a hostile world.

1. Unity in affections and thought, and unity in the truth, results in unity in action: striving side by side for the faith of the gospel (1:27) against the common enemy (1:28).
2. "The church which is experiencing unity must be a church without passengers. Is there unity where there is the 'tacit or spoken attitude, 'I agree with you but I will not do anything for you,' or 'I agree with your aims but I will not go with you to fulfill them'?' Acquiescence is not unity; consent is not cooperation; approval is not partnership; a nem. con. vote is not enough" (Alec Motyer).

B. A cup full of joy.

1. Paul's joy found in the spiritual welfare of his brethren (Phil. 1:3-5). He wanted to hear of their progress in Christ (Phil. 1:27). Progress always brings joy to the mature Christian (Lk. 10:17; 1 Thess. 3:9; 2 Jno. 4).
2. "Fulfill ye my joy" (vs. 2:2a) shows Paul's personal happiness will be made complete by their giving heed to his exhortation to oneness. "Fill it to the brim." Cf. 2 Jno. 12.

Conclusion:

1. Must work to keep the unity that exists. It must be maintained (Eph. 4:3).
2. The pleasantness of unity makes it worth the effort (Psa. 133: 1).