

Philippians 2:1-11

1. Why?

- a. Incarnation
 - i. "in-flesh/meat-thing"
- b. Easy to connect to
 - i. God experiencing existence as we do
- c. Elegance of the language
 - i. Overwhelm us with the greatness of God

2. Background and Context

- a. "So" (Philippians 2:1)
- b. Acts 16:1-40
- c. Philippians 1

3. Philippians 2:1-11

- a. "So" (v. 1) - be especially mindful of 1:29, 30
 - i. Suffering and conflict an ongoing reality for Philippian believers
 - ii. The "surprise" of trials and difficulties
 1. Paul understands that it is easy to be caught off guard
 - a. Examples in your past week?
 - b. Suffering is a human reality, but unique for the Christian (attention of the enemy)
 2. In light of this Paul offers our reasonable response to difficulty when it arises
- b. Response to Suffering/Conflict (v. 1-4)
 - i. "If/Since" (v. 1)
 1. "If" - questions the reality of something
 2. "Since" - affirms the reality of something
 3. In this passage - recall the reality of what I am about to tell you...
 - ii. ...namely (v. 1)
 1. Encouragement in Christ
 2. Comfort that comes from love
 3. Participation in the Spirit
 4. Affection (literally "bowels, intestines")
 5. Sympathy/Compassion
 - iii. "complete my joy" (v. 2)
 1. Paul finds joy in the midst of suffering by his constant remembrance of these things
 2. Paul finds **fulfillment** (joy to the fullest extent) when fellow believers do the same and do so in unity, not in conflict with one another
 3. What does that look like?
 - iv. The "together psyche" (v. 2)
 1. Cumbersome sentence in Greek that seems to really emphasize our shared experience as Christians

2. Psyche - mind, internal being, etc. - where we keep our true understanding of who/what we are
3. Offering in fellowship who we truly see ourselves to be
 - a. Not letting our individuality/uniqueness divide us
 - b. Not being afraid to be known at the deepest level
 - c. Not being afraid, perhaps, to even allow our self-concept to grow/change/mature
- v. Seeking unity and healing in relationships (v. 3)
 1. Nothing from rivalry (selfish ambition - an especially political term)
 2. Nothing from conceit ("empty glory")
 3. Consider others to supersede you
 - a. May or may not be literal reality (think Jesus washing the feet or a good leader)
 - b. But act as though it were
 4. Caring for the interests of others (v. 4)
- c. Example of Christ (v. 5-8)
 - i. Invitation to follow in Christ's footsteps
 - ii. When we do what Paul is describing here we are sharing in the experience of Jesus
 - iii. In other words, Christ's experience is something we can relate to on a purely human level
 1. Doing something, whether by choice or by force, that takes us completely out of our concept of who/what we are
 - a. Marriage?
 - b. Raising children?
 - c. Public speaking (scrutiny)?
 - d. Practical evaluations (school)?
 - e. Military service?
 2. Doing these things and persevering through them to the end deepens our connection to Christ and leads to great reward
 3. What did it look like in Christ's experience?
 - iv. Where He was - His self-understanding (v. 6)
 1. Form of God
 2. Equality with God
 3. But He chose not to cling to it (grasp onto it selfishly)
 - v. What He did instead of clinging (v. 7)
 1. Made Himself nothing (empty, evacuate, divest oneself of prerogatives)
 2. Form of a servant
 3. Likeness of humankind
 - vi. He did without quitting (vs. 8)
 1. Found in human form (i.e., He experienced the self-sacrifice on the God-level)
 2. Now He experiences self-sacrifice on the human level by humbling Himself again as a man
 - a. Lived in obedience to God His Father
 - b. To the point of death

- c. Even death on a cross (considered a curse)
- d. Great reward that comes from carrying through to the end (v. 9-11)
 - i. God highly exalted Jesus
 - ii. God gave Him a name above all names
 - iii. God fully endorses that all creation worship Jesus and call Him Lord
 - iv. God receives glory as a result of this
 - v. So, look closely and you can see that God the Father also understands this concept of emptying Himself
 - 1. He gives something to His Son that is His own by nature/right
 - 2. And in making that sacrifice He receives the glory that is His due

4. **Conclusion**

- a. Reality of suffering and trials of life, especially as we seek to be obedient to God
- b. We can find joy in the midst of suffering by
 - i. Remembering how awesome it is to be Christ
 - ii. Sharing in that reality with other Christians
- c. God Himself fully understands what it means to suffer and to be outside of His "comfort zone"
 - i. When He asks us to sacrifice and be out of our own comfort zone, He is inviting us to share in His own experience
- d. There are amazing rewards for going through this process and not quitting
 - i. Rewards in this life and in the next