

Phil 2:1-11

READ Phil 2:1-11

Q: v1 What four things provide the basis for true Christian unity?

- *[1] Being united with Christ. [2] Being comforted by His love. [3] Being in fellowship in His Spirit. [4] Having tenderness & compassion.*

Q: v2 What is Paul looking forward to in the Philippians?

- *To be like-minded. Have the same love. Be in one in spirit and purpose.*

Q: v3 What are the characteristics that destroy unity that are to be discarded?

- *To be selfishly ambitious. To have vain conceit. In humility consider others better than yourselves.*

Q: v4 In what ways do these baleful characteristics show themselves?

- *We look to our own interests. And neglect the interests of others. Over confidence in our own views. Being schismatic.*

Q: v5 Paul says the foundational model of how do we individually promote and maintain the unity of the local church is by having the same attitude as that of Christ, v5. What sort of things show such an attitude?

- *Focus on the main things of faith, recognise the ambiguities of faith. Be generous to those we theologically disagree with.*
- *Pastorally be inclusive.*
- *Give clear leadership (do not dither) but do consult. Avoid "clericalism".*
- *Recognise that Christian faith may be exercised within The Church, but outside the organisational boundaries of your own church (e.g, HCBH, faith schools, Christians in secular work, local wise women in the community, etc)*

Q: What is the 'mind of Christ' as described in v6–11

- *Humility. Servanthood. Acceptance of suffering.*
- *Trust that justification and recognition will come not from ones own efforts, but from God himself. Ego-erasure.*

Q: What are we to note about Jesus in v6-11

- *Note in v6-8 the descent: "though he was in the form of God ... made himself nothing,he humbled himself....becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross"*
- *But note in v9 the exaltation: "God has highly exalted him....."*

Q: v7 talks about Jesus making himself nothing, being a servant, but looks to a later exaltation. Consider the TV series "Undercover Boss" Channel 4 2009, and "The Secret Millionaire" Channel 4 2006-12, how far are they helpful illustrations, and how far was Jesus' undercover/secret work was a step beyond the analogies?

- *"Secret Millionaire": they go undercover, they lose status, they are to "save" someone who is "lost". But there is no suffering, and little cost. Even a lot of gain from the good PR.*
- *"Undercover Boss": they go undercover in their own business, they lose status and may discover the damage done to the work they seek to lead. To a very limited extent then, there is suffering. And in the end, there is exaltation, and restoration to "glory". But there is no personal "pain or death", nor is the rebound so exalted.*

Q: v6-8 lay out a staggering road of self-denial. What sort of self-denial is encouraged in the Bible by verse such as these?

- *Deferred personal ambition. Avoiding demarcation or silo thinking. Avoiding pride. Willing to listen to contrary views. Embracing potential rivalries. Conceding on conceit. Ego deflation. Willing to pass up on own interests, etc.*

Q: How does this differ from the form of self-denial discouraged by Jesus?

- *Arrogant*
 - *Secret giving -or- Acts of goodness, to raise prestige. Virtue signalling, Matt 6:1-4.*
 - *Fasting, but being cheerful -or- being long faced/gloomy, Matt 6:16-18.*
- *Neurotic*
 - *poor image before God (The Tax-Collector and Pharisee Lk 18:9-14)*
 - *Shamed, isolating (The Woman with the issue of blood Mk 5:21-34)*
 - *Mental illnesses (The Man who was legion Mk 5:1-19)*

Material from: Iain Broomfield and Bill Lovett