Disciples Church

Joy in Humility <> Philippians 2:1-11

Week of June 7, 2017

**TEACHING NOTES**

**Philippians 2:1-11** (ESV)

**1**So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, **2**complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. **3**Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. **4**Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. **5**Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, **6**who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7**but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. **8**And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. **9**Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, **10**so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11**and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**Intro**

I cannot tell you how excited I’ve been to teach this lesson. The richness of this passage is so deep, so beautiful, and so helpful, that I’ve been anxiously awaiting getting to this week so we can look at it together and be spurred on to love for God and love for one another--a love that is displayed in joy-filled, true good works.

The title of our lesson tonight is “Joy in Humility.” We will talk a lot about unity tonight, as well. This is because in the blood-bought family, humility is to produce biblical unity. We’ll see this in our text tonight.

As we begin our lesson tonight in Philippians chapter 2, we know, of course, that we come to this passage on the heels of Chapter 1 and particularly on the heels of Steve’s lesson. He led us in looking at the final portions of Chapter 1, and a main focus was on *Joy in Sacrifice.* The theme of sacrifice is a very fitting thing to lay the foundation for our lesson tonight on humility. Certainly you know that sacrifice and humility have a necessary connection. Steve also spoke strongly on Christian unity, something we will look at more in our lesson tonight.

So let’s jump in. We’ve got so much to see tonight.

**Gospel Foundation**

Philippians chapter 1, verse 27 says, “Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.” That is the train of thought that Paul (the Apostle who was divinely inspired to write this portion of Scripture, this letter) has when we get to our passage tonight.

This is why our passage begins with “So.” Like the word “therefore,” “so” indicates a train of thought that is continuing, that is built on what came before it.

“Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ” is the train of thought. Let’s see how Paul the Apostle continues now:

Philippians 2:1

**1**So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy

Our first verse here is right in line with Paul’s train of thought. He’s speaking *about* and *to* gospel-redeemed people: those of us who know the gospel of Christ and are saved by this gospel and, therefore, are eternally united to Christ and are living by the Holy Spirit. We are the ones called in this letter to let our manner “be worthy of the gospel of Christ.”

We see in our first verse here the word “if” used in a way that may throw off some. So, let me clarity for you using an helpful and concise explanation from MacArthur:

*The word "if" introduces in the Greek what is called a first-class conditional clause. The Greeks have different conditions in their "if" clauses. And based upon the construction of the Greek, you can tell what that "if" means. For example, if it's a first-class conditional [as in our passage here] it means "if, and it is true," or "if, as the fact is."*

*There is a conditional clause that means “if, and it might be true”; there is one that means “if, and it is possibly true”; but the first-class conditional form [like ours] of the Greek means “if, and it is true.”*

*So you could substitute another word altogether for “if” and make it clearer [in English], it would be the word “since.” “Since there is encouragement in Christ”; “since there is consolation of love,” and so forth. Or better yet, let's use the word "because." And that's exactly what it means. “Because there is encouragement in Christ, because there is consolation of love, because there is fellowship of the Spirit, and because there is affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind.” Because of all of these things, these are the driving motives, these are the truths that should compel you.*

This lines up perfectly with Paul’s train of thought, right? “Because of these gospel truths, heed what instruction I am about to give.” We are going to get into the instruction later in our lesson, but before we do I want to cover this more because of the critical nature of gospel foundations.

Looking at verse one, we understand it to be saying, ”*Because there is* encouragement in Christ*, because there is* comfort from love*, because there is* participation in the Spirit*, and because there is* affection and sympathy.”

These are not hypothetical things; these are not mere possibilities. These are statements of fact for those united to Christ. These are gospel realities.

Look at the foundational nature of these statements:

*Because there is* encouragement in Christ

*because there is* comfort from love

*because there is* participation in the Spirit

*because there is* affection and sympathy

Paul is saying, by the gospel of Jesus, these things are true of you, believer.

You have--I have--all believers have--encouragement in Christ, comfort from love, participation in the Spirit, and affection and sympathy.

From there Paul moves to instruction, but we are going to jump down a few sentences in our text and really build out the gospel foundation first. The reason I want to do that is because each of us **must have** a right understanding of the gospel in our lives before we consider doing “good works.”

If we do works without the gospel reality and gospel motivation, then we are not doing these so-called good works unto the glory of God. It is not and cannot be mere duty that compels us to works, or religious zeal that compels us to works, or any other non-gospel foundation and motivation.

Non-gospel foundation and motivation says, “I will perform before God to get my right standing.”

Gospel foundation and motivation says, “I am redeemed by God--united to Christ eternally--on the basis of the gospel alone by grace through faith; therefore, I obey God.”

Non-gospel foundation and motivation: “I obey; therefore, I’m accepted.”

Gospel foundation and motivation: “I’m redeemed by God and untied to Christ forever; therefore, I obey.”

With this in mind, I really want all of us to be reminded of the gospel foundation and motivation and always be working from it.

Paul wants that too. That’s why his letter we are studying has so much gospel in it. That’s why he made that clear in Chapter 1 and why he continues that in our passage tonight.

So let’s jump in our text down to verse 6.

In speaking of Christ Jesus, Paul says:

Philippians 2:6-11

**6**who, though he [Jesus] was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7**but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. **8**And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. **9**Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, **10**so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11**and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Paul is teaching gospel here. Do these verses floor you? They should. These gospel truths are amazing. Amazing doesn’t even describe it…it doesn’t feel like words can.

We are building towards the humility we are to have, but to have true Christian humility, I am saying it starts by seeing and knowing and being united to the Humble One, Christ Jesus.

Now, these verses (6-11) are theological, immensely theological. And it’s not easy for me to not delve into all the theological truths taught here, as that’s something I love so much. But doing that is not our primary focus tonight, and doing so would mean we don’t have enough time to cover what we need to. Additionally, as theological as verses 6-11 are, it’s not even Paul’s main point. Paul is teaching these things to build his main point about Christian humility and unity.

So we will follow Paul’s primary point in this lesson, and Lord willing, we cover the theological truths more deeply in future teaching.

MacArthur says this this way “…as theologically profound as [these verses are], …its purpose is as an illustration of a proper attitude.  [Paul] looking at the incarnation of Jesus is not viewing the incarnation for its own sake, but as an illustration of humility.  And therein is the ethical implication here. The main point here is not to identify that God became man, but to show that in God becoming man you have the supreme illustration of humility, an illustration which we are called to follow.  Here you see self-sacrifice.  Here you see self-denial.  Here you see self-giving.  Here you see humble love.”

So, let’s live in this text for a bit.

Philippians 2:6-11

**6**…though [Jesus] was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7**but emptied himself,

This portion is teaching about the reality of Jesus’ divinity (He is the second person of the one true God) and His condescension.

Jesus is God. He has total sovereign authority and power over all things. He created all things. And yet, in humility, He did not “grasp” on to that as reason for not serving His bride--the elect. No, He decreed to “get low” and lower Himself to man…to become a man Himself (taking on flesh) in the most humble act of condescension in all eternity.

To be careful and clear here, as Theologian John Gill says, “Though he took that which he had not before, he lost nothing of what he had.” Jesus did not cease to be God, but he added the second nature, human nature, being then fully God and fully man. This is called the Hypostatic Union, which we’ve studied before and don’t have time in this lesson to cover it again. But the point of this is the second Person of the triune Godhead did the most humble act of all eternity in this.

Folks, He is our model. This isn’t just facts or theology. This is our Savior, doing what was needed in humbleness for the good of His chosen ones. This sets the ultimate definition and example for humility. Do you see that?

Christ Jesus was humble for us, so that we should be humble for others.

Look, Paul continues to drive this mind-blowing gospel example. Verse 7:

Philippians 2:7

…by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

The Greek word for “servant” here is the root word Pastor Josh has taught on before, often better understood as “slave.” Servant, bond-servant, slave (these are the variations translators use for this Greek word) all get to the point, but I think slave does most accurately. Jesus went from the highest of all positions, took on flesh (“born in the likeness of men,” as our passage says), so He could serve in the most lowly of positions--a slave. Do you get the gravity of that?

Remember, this is not just facts to know; this is theology to exemplify and motivate.

Let’s continue, verse 8:

Philippians 2:8

**8**And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Family, are you marveling? Are you worshiping?

Our Savior humbled Himself! He humbled Himself!!!

He served you and I in the most humble of ways. First, Jesus did the most humble act of condescension in all eternity (by taking on flesh), and this led to the most humble act of service in all eternity: namely, he lived the perfect life we couldn’t live; was scorned, reviled, persecuted, mocked, and hated (even by many He came to save--that should blow our minds); unto eventually dying in His flesh by what was meant by fallen man in this time to be the most shameful and embarrassing way to die.

Verse 8 says, “He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” He was murdered on a cross. God in flesh willingly took this on. He wasn’t forced to do it, for it was planned by the one eternal will of the Triune God in eternity past in the Covenant of Redemption.

Christian, this is our model. But before it’s our model, it is our foundation and motivation. That’s why we are beginning here, remember?

Because Christ Jesus did these things, we are saved from the wrath of God, united eternally to Jesus, and given the Holy Spirit for sanctification and empowerment in the efforts that come from these gospel realities. I’ve said that many times tonight; you cannot be missing that point. Because Jesus did these things, we then do likewise for His glory and the good of others. We follow the model--the example--of Christ.

In true gospel proclamation form, Paul ends this portion of His teaching with the awesome gospel truth that our Savior was risen from the grave and raised to His divine position of supremacy.

Philippians 2:9-11

**9**Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, **10**so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, **11**and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Paul reminds us that Jesus is God, and all of this, like the rest of creation, is ultimately to glorify God.

Again, there is awesome theology in those verses that we aren’t covering in detail tonight, but we have at Disciples Church and will continue to.

But with these gospel things being our foundation and hope, let’s turn now to the exhortation that Paul gives for humility and Christian unity.

**Exhortations for the Redeemed**

Let’s read verses 1-5 now and unpack them.

Philippians 2:1-5

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, [*Because there is* encouragement in Christ*, because there is* comfort from love*, because there is* participation in the Spirit*, and because there is* affection and sympathy] **2**complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. **3**Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. **4**Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. **5**Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus

Let’s look at this piece by piece. Verse 2:

**“2**complete my joy”

Our lessons through Philippians have a high motivation to show you and teach you what it is to have true joy--Christian joy: joy that endures all things. Joy that is rooted in the gospel of Christ Jesus.

This true joy loves the flourishing of all the saints. And that is not hidden by Paul here. He says, “Complete my joy.” Paul is saying his joy is increased when the bride of Christ is acting like the bride of Christ. We can and should have joy when there is holiness in the blood-bought family. This is a true and good thing, Christians acting like Christians. And pastorally, this seems to be even heightened. There is something very special to a pastor when those he is shepherding and teaching are obeying God from a right heart. When there is humility and Christian unity in those he is leading, there is a deep joy that is a real blessing. So I get this statement from Paul. It resonates with me, with your other elders, and with your other leaders here.

Now, how Paul, since there is *encouragement in Christ, comfort from love, participation in the Spirit, and affection and sympathy*, how shall the believers be and act? How do you, Paul, have the joy you are describing?

Paul answers this in his commands starting in verse 2:

“by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.”

His answer? **UNITY**. When Christian unity abounds, God’s people are living rightly.

The words used here are so powerful. Be “of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.”

Steve began to hit on this in our last lesson, but we must understand this in detail here tonight.

Let me give some very important points here.

The thing most threatening to a local church is a lack of Christian unity. Christian unity is fully founded on the truths of God, and it describes people who are living for the glory of God and the good of one another.

The opposite of this Christian unity is falsehood, discord, disunity, conflict, and unbiblical division.

This clearly is a big deal to Paul, because every time he wrote a letter to a church, he brought up the issue of unity. When he wrote the Romans, he brought it up at least three times: Romans 12:10, Romans 12:16, and then in Romans chapters 14 and 15; it's the topic of those two chapters. And when he wrote the Corinthians in the first epistle, unity is discussed in verse 10 of chapter 1, and in the second epistle, he brings it up again in verse 11 of chapter 13. In writing to the Galatians, in chapters 5 and 6, he brings it up. In writing to the Ephesians, in chapter 4; to the Colossians in chapter 3, he brought it up. In writing to the Thessalonians in the first letter, chapter 4, verses 9 and 10; and the second letter chapter 1, verses 3 and 4. And here he brings it up in writing to the Philippians.

Because a breakdown in unity is always lurking, a constant prayer of your pastors and leaders for this great church of which we're all a part is that men and women will never tear apart true biblical unity; that falsehood, discord, disunity, conflict, and unbiblical division would not happen.

We all have a responsibility in this; we all too easily seek our own desires and fall to what is right in our own eyes. One writer had an interesting thought about these things. He said this: "There is a sense in which [disunity and discord] is the danger of every healthy church. You see, it is when people are really in earnest, when their beliefs really matter to them, when they are eager to carry out their own plans and their own schemes that they are most apt to get up against each other. The greater their enthusiasm, the greater the danger that they may collide."

So, churches have the possibility of discord and disunity, and this happens by seeking what is right in your own eyes, rather than being fully founded on the truths of God and living for the glory of God and the good of one another.

So, why does Paul say it the way he does in verse 2? Be “of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.”

This *be of the same* talk is very important.

There is an idea in fallen mankind that says “to each his own.” That philosophy runs directly opposed to Scripture when it comes to what man thinks and believes. There is one God of truth. And His truth is *the* truth. And man has an obligation to know and affirm and love God’s truth. In doing that, there is true unity with the others who rightly do likewise.

You see, a church has the “same mind” and “same love” when they are rightly knowing God’s truth and trusting in the gospel of Jesus. I said here tonight that *Christian unity is fully founded on the truths of God*. That is very intentional. Do you see that now? There is no true unity if we do not have the “same mind” in regards to the truths of God. Many churches say otherwise. They don’t understand this teaching from the Bible, or worse yet, they are more concerned with temporary things, like large crowds, financial prospering, self-glory, et cetera that they see this teaching and put it aside to fulfill a greater desire that is in them. These two types of disobedience to this teaching produce a fake unity at best. It says it’s okay to not have the “same mind” on the truths of God, it’s okay to believe what you want while I believe what I want, it’s okay to do what’s right in your own eyes, to each his own.

But God calls us to be of the “same mind,” having the “same love.” This is not optional or one way of doing things; this is God’s expressed will for His people.

I’ll be frank: This isn’t easy for fallen man. We really struggle with this teaching. We love freedom, autonomy, ability to do whatever I want, etc.

Christian unity is not the default mode of fallen man. You know this. You know what it’s like to hear Pastor Josh preach something on Sunday and not agree. You know what it’s like to read a passage from Scripture during your table group time and not like what the text says. You know what it’s like to be challenged in your theology over the last few years. You know what it’s like to be challenged by your disciple-maker or other brother/sister in Christ about the way you are living.

In all of these moments, our flesh’s default is *no, get away, I don’t agree, I don’t share that belief or that request for me to change. I disagree, and that’s fine with me.*

But that is not living in unity by being of the “same mind” and having the “same love.” That is discord, dissension, and unbiblical disunity.

So we all have work to do here, and we will until God makes us sinless in glorification. We have the constant work to do to seek Christian unity being founded on the truths of God, living for the glory of God and the good of one another.

Constant work. That's why in Ephesians 4:3 Paul says, "Maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Maintain. It takes tremendous effort. It takes laying aside our own selves for the glory of God and the good of others--seeking to have the “same mind,” having the “same love.”

Now, as we look back to our text, we will see some ways that Paul commands us to have this true unity. I’ll tell you upfront again: it’s by having a Christ-like humility.

Let’s see, verse 3:

**“3**Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit”

This gets to pride. Pride is the opposite of humility. Pride is a unity killer. Pride has been said to give birth to all other sins. Pride works itself out in selfish ambition and conceit.

God hates pride in fallen man. Scripture is clear about this:

Proverbs 16:5 (ESV)

**5**Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord;  
    be assured, he will not go unpunished.

Proverbs 8:13 (ESV)

**13**The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil.  
Pride and arrogance and the way of evil  
    and perverted speech I hate.

James 4:6 (ESV)

**6**…“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

Proverbs 16:18 (ESV)

**18**Pride goes before destruction,  
    and a haughty spirit before a fall.

Proverbs 26:12 (ESV)

**12**Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes?  
    There is more hope for a fool than for him.

Romans 12:16 (ESV)

**16**…Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.

When Paul commands in Philippians, “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit,” he is saying, “Don’t be prideful; kill off pride so that you don’t seek selfish ends.”

To the married or previously married in the room, we know the damage selfish ambition or conceit creates. In marriage, this is one of the most amplified areas for many to struggle. Husbands fail to emulate humble Christ-like leadership when we act in selfish ambition or conceit. Wives fail to submit like the bride of Christ is called to when they act in selfish ambition or conceit. And what does selfish ambition or conceit create? Discord, disunity, conflict, and unbiblical division. Selfish ambition or conceit kill true unity.

If we are to have true unity, we cannot be prideful; we cannot desire or act in selfish ambition or conceit.

Think about other areas of your life. The same principles apply. The moment we think about ourselves above others’, true unity doesn’t exist.

Instead, we should be thinking of ourselves less. This is very profound; think of ourselves less.

Thinking of oneself is sure to bring down true unity. You see this happen in some people in churches and this shouldn’t be. The church should be a gathering of people who are exercising Christ-like humility, not selfish ambition. What happens in this self-focus is a person falls into the trap spoken of in Proverbs 26:12 we read a moment ago; they become "wise in his own eyes." The outworking of this is they begin to think of themselves over others. Oftentimes, this plays itself out by being offended easily. That’s pretty common these days. But being overly sensitive to being offended is not a personal quality trait. In fact, we see that the only perfect person to ever live, Christ of course, was anything but offended easily. Christ modeled godliness while truly being mocked and scorned. Now for us, we are rarely truly mocked or scorned, yet we commonly become too easily offended. Oftentimes, this being offended is based on assumed wrongdoing, or perceived behavior we don’t like. This is all *pride* working itself out in various ways. This is all a lack of *thinking of yourself less*.

All of us need to do work here. We need to identify our personal tendencies of being offended easily, ask others for input to the ways we do this and don’t see it, and repent of these things. This kind of *offended easily* behavior ruins friendships, families, work relationships, and worse yet, church communities to the point where some people don’t seek biblical resolution to problems or perceived problems and instead simply leave a church, acting in disobedience to God and creating an unbiblical disunity/division. Don’t get me wrong, there are biblical reasons to divide from or leave a church. I taught on some of this in the Christian Accountability lesson a few months back. But leaving a truly biblical church because you’ve been offended and haven’t allowed the biblical steps of conflict resolution to take place seriously dishonors our Savior. So, we must fight our flesh’s desire to be prideful, wise in our own eyes, easily offended, and willing to have wrong types of division. If we are to have true unity, we cannot be prideful; we cannot desire or act in selfish ambition or conceit.

So, how should we go about this? What should be the desire in our hearts and our outward actions?

**Christ-like humility**, of course.

Christ-like humility in each of us starts with the gospel.

Each of us must have a right view of our own unworthiness to be redeemed and reconciled to the holy God, and Christ’s gracious act of love in doing the work required for us. Truly believing the truth of our own unworthy condition as seen in the gospel completely changes the way we compare ourselves to other fallen sinners. In this, we know and enjoy the humility and love of Christ and we bend it out to others, many of whom often don’t deserve it in and of themselves. But we’ve been shown this from Christ--we’ve received the benefits of this from Christ--now we emulate Him in showing it to others–regardless of if they deserve it. This is gospel-motivated, gospel-defined, and gospel-empowered.

Look at the remaining part of verse 3 in our Philippians passage:

“but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”

Wow, these words. “In humility count others more significant than yourself.” These are big words. This is an awesome call.

Look at a few other translations:

in humility value others above yourselves NIV

with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves NASB

in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. KJV

Is this how you think? Is this the disposition you are working from?

This is very convicting, isn’t it? Each of us struggle with this. And if you think you don’t, you are not evaluating your motive and deeds well enough.

Paul is saying **do this: “in humility count others more significant than yourself.”**

Remember what was said in the first half of this lesson; we cannot or do not simply just do this. Instead, this behavior is birthed from being saved by grace, knowing the Christ who humbled Himself, and being empowered by the Spirit of God. We humble ourselves in light of these gospel realities in us. And we do this in joy. It is a joy to the redeemed to be humble, to “get low,” to count others more significant than ourselves. Where there is joy in that, there is the aroma of Christ. What a beautiful thing.

Remember in an earlier Philippians lesson, Pastor Josh spoke on **Romans 12:10**? It says, “Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.” That’s what we are talking about here. Count others more significant than yourself by outdoing others in showing honor.

Instead of being proud, we get low. Instead of being offended, we give the benefit of the doubt. Instead of being wise in our own eyes, we look to wise counsel from mature Christians around you backed by Scripture.

Is that you? Do you count others more significant than yourself? I hope this lesson increases that in all of us.

Paul continues in verse 4 with how this looks practically:

**“4**Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

How is humbleness put on display? How is counting others more significant than yourself put on display?

Answer: by stewarding your life in such a way that you can and do serve others, in love.

Let’s break that down so you don’t miss both elements of this verse.

When Paul says, “Let each of you look not only to his own interests,” have you ever thought that’s a bit odd? Why not just say, “Look to the interests of others”?

I think there is an important teaching in this first clause of the verse/sentence.

It’s a point many miss too easily. It’s about **stewardship**.

Scripture is very clear, both explicitly and implicitly teaching, that each human has value, and that we have a responsibility to steward the life we have been given by God. It surely is something we will be held accountable to on judgment day. Christ was clear about this in some of His parables and teachings. How you steward life now will matter in how you experience eternity. Cleary, this is not a basis for justification, but it is a basis for reward for the redeemed. We covered this concept in our final section of the Catechism teachings recently.

Each human has value, and we have a responsibility to steward the life we have been given by God, so Paul is speaking to this in his first clause here. There is a *looking to our own interests* that is a reality; it is not sin when done rightly.

Even Christ ate to nourish His body, slept to replenish his body, prayed to experience that fellowship with His Father, evaded threat when it wasn’t His time to be killed, and so on. Christ modeled for us that there is a God-honoring looking to our own interests that must be done, and we call this stewardship. We must be good stewards of this life and all that God has given us. This should be plain to us.

But let’s now connect it with the second part of verse 4; Paul commands us to look “also to the interests of others.”

How does the first clause relate to this? In joyful humility, like Christ, we must look to our own interests (steward our lives) in such a way that promotes our ability to diligently and consistently look “also to the interests of others.”

You see your life is not your own, Christian; you were bought with a high price. Therefore, honor God with your life. All of it. This means we steward every task, every minute in such a way that shows my joy is not in the temporary but in God. Therefore, it is my joy to give myself for the good of others, to serve others. This is how we humbly “count others more significant than ourselves.”

Practically, this means we obey God’s command to “serve one another” regularly (Galatians 5:13). Our lives are to be marked by other-centered service.

I tell this to the men I disciple often, and I seek to model it to them with my life. I tell them, *God has given your life in the here and now for you to give it away, to give yourself to love and serve others joyfully.* I tell them, *you should be tired at the end of every day because you are diligent in good works towards others.*

So we have to ask ourselves, how are we doing stewarding our lives so we can constantly serve this church family?

Are you planning your day and managing it for your hopes and desires? If so, this is living in “selfish ambition” Paul condemned earlier.

Are you intentionally reducing your expenses so you can work less hours, watching less TV, killing laziness, et cetera so you can be more diligently looking “to the interests of others”?

Are you longing to serve this local body more and more as time goes on? Are you realizing that the faith family here has needs, and God has given each of us to play a diligent role in meeting those needs? Are you growing increasingly dissatisfied with having only one area of serving you are committed to because you know you should more diligently serve the blood-bought family in additional ways? I hope so. That kind of desire to serve more and more is a marker of sanctification.

Remember the first clause: we must rightly manage our own affairs to be truly experiencing sanctification here.

As pastor Josh reminded us a few lessons again, we should have joy in the humble disposition that says to the other believers here at Disciples Church, *I want to outdo you in showing honor* (Romans 12:10).

There is a sweet joy in this humbleness that serves and looks out for others. God desires for local churches to experience this joy in humility, this love for one another, and the unity it creates.

This leads us to verse 5.

**“5**Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus”

Notice once again that Paul is exhorting the local church of these things: “Have this mind among **yourselves.**” This is exhortation for the family of God. All of us together, having joy in humility, working to kill pride and to diligently serve and seek the good of our brothers and sisters. In this we should “have this mind,” we should be “of the same mind,” which is ours in Christ Jesus.

The true Christian unity we talked about tonight is possible when Christ-like humility is our reality. Where there is discord, disunity, conflict, and unbiblical division, there is a lack of joy in Christ-like humility. Oh, how we pray we all get these things. May we have unity that would never selfishly seek what is right in one’s own eyes; rather, may our humility and unity prove us as true disciples who love counsel of wise leaders and brothers/sisters, steward our lives for the sake of others, and ultimately do all of this for God’s glory.

Remember, one does not become humble by anything in himself. True humbleness starts where we started tonight: by being saved by grace, looking to our Savior, and being empowered by the Holy Spirit. True humility is a fruit of being united to Christ. Let us always remember this and work from this, so our works are truly good works, and they are for God’s glory and others good.

Remember that Christ is the model for us to follow in matters of humility. In 1 John 2, verse 6, John says, "Whoever says he abides in [Christ] ought to walk in the same way in which he walked." We are to pattern our life after Christ. That's why in John 13 after having washed the disciples’ feet, Jesus says, "Just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another." And how had He loved them? By self-sacrificing, humble service.

Christ is the model for us to follow; the apostle Paul certainly made that very clear in 1 Corinthians 11:1 when he said, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." In 1 Thessalonians 1:6, he said essentially the very same thing.

So church, look to Christ. There has never been such a clear demonstration of the character of humility as there is in the Son of God coming to this earth to serve and die for the elect. So Paul points us to Christ. We are called to pattern our lives after His humility and have joy in it.

Philippians 2:6-11

*[Because there is* encouragement in Christ*, because there is* comfort from love*, because there is* participation in the Spirit*, and because there is* affection and sympathy] **2**complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. **3**Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. **4**Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. **5**Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.

Let’s pray.