

LET NOTHING BE DONE THROUGH STRIFE OR VAINGLORY PHILIPPIANS 2:1-4

Text: Philippians 2:3

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³ *Let nothing be done* through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Introduction:

Mark Twain once said, "I built a cage and in it I put a dog and a cat. After a little training I got the dog and the cat to the point where they lived peaceably together. Then I introduced a pig, a goat, a kangaroo, some birds, and a monkey. And after a few adjustments, they learned to live in harmony together.

So encouraged was I by such successes that I added two Baptist, and in a very short time there wasn't a single living thing left in the cage."

It's sad that many churches instead of majoring in communion are muddled in contention.

In the opening verses of chapter two, Paul speaks of believers getting along with each other. He desires to

see unity and harmony among believers and tells how we can get along with each other.

The Lord said in John 13:35:

John 13:35

³⁵ By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.

Jesus was saying that the one thing that would give credibility to the message was the unity of the messengers. As believers it is important that we get along with each other. It is important because division and strife hurt the credibility of our witness for Christ and the ability of our work for Christ.

1. THE ADVANTAGES THE DEMAND HARMONY

Philippians 2:1

¹ If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies,

Paul speaks of the advantages or the blessings that are enjoyed by a harmonious people. There are 4 "Ifs" in verse 1 that distinguish four advantages of harmony. Paul says, "If these things are to be experienced and enjoyed, believers must get along with each other."

A. The Consolation of Christ

He says, "*If there be any consolation in Christ.*" The word "consolation" speaks of "encouragement, comfort, and cheer." The idea is of someone standing with you to help and strengthen you. If we are to experience this help and encouragement as a group of believers, harmony is essential.

We need each other's support, but even more we need His strength. There are the battles of life and the burdens of life that necessitate His help and encouragement. Division and discord deprives us of this work of Christ.

B. The Comfort of Love

He also says, "*If any comfort of love.*" We need the comfort and consolation of a spiritual family that loves us and cares for us. In the dark, distressing, difficult hours of life, we need those who will be there for us and with us.

C. The Fellowship of the Spirit

He says, "*If any fellowship of the Spirit.*" Nothing grieves the Holy Spirit anymore than division and discord. A people fussing and fighting never enjoys the presence of the Spirit.

Paul said in Ephesians 4:30-31:

Ephesians 4:30-31

³⁰ *And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption.* ³¹ *Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice:*

D. The Compassion of Others

In Paul's day, the bowels were considered the seat of emotions. Paul is describing an act of affection and kindness by the part of one for another.

Paul say's "IF." If these wonderful things are to be enjoyed and experienced, harmony is a must. These are the advantages of harmony. These are things that demand that we get along other. These are blessings that we miss if we can't get along with each other.

2. ACTIONS THAT DEVELOP HARMONY

Philippians 2:2

² *Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.*

If these things are to be enjoyed and experienced, then we must fulfill certain things. The word "fulfill" literally means to "fill full." We must fill out life full of the things that promote and develop harmony.

A. There Must Be a Common Motive

Paul spoke of being "*likeminded*" and "*being of one accord, of one mind.*" The idea is that of thinking the same thing.

When Paul spoke of being likeminded, being of one accord, and one mind, he was speaking of a common purpose and cause that brings us together.

The analogy of a wagon wheel is the best description I have ever heard. The hub represents Christ and the spokes represent each believer. The closer we get to the hub the closer we get to each other.

B. There Must Be a Constant Ministry

We are to have "*the same love.*" Now to understand what Paul meant by the same love, we have to define love. When we think of love of usually think of how we feel. We think of our emotions and feeling for someone.

But love as described in the Bible is more than words that say, "I love you," but works that show "I love you." Many times our love is no more than words.

Illustration:

Often we are like the fellow who called his girl friend: "Darling, I love you. I'd climb the highest mountain for you; I'd swim the deepest stream for you; I'd fight a jungle of lions for you; and if it doesn't rain, I'll be over to see you tonight."

The love that Paul described is a love that results in actions and ministry to others. It is a love that ministers to others. It is a love that is best expressed by our feet rather than our lips.

Someone once said, "Love always comes to visibility."

Love is an action, not just an attitude.

3. THE ATTITUDES THAT DESTROY HARMONY

Philippians 2:3-4

³ Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. ⁴ Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Just as there are certain actions that will develop harmony, there are certain attitudes that will destroy harmony. Paul speaks of that which is destructive and that which is constructive.

A. Living Selfishly

Paul speaks of "*strife*" and "*vainglory*." The word "strife" speaks of "selfish ambition." It describes someone who only thinks of themselves. The word "vainglory" means, "to make good impressions." It describes someone who makes great claims for himself by putting everyone else down.

Illustration:

One lady arrived to church late for a service and waiting outside in the vestibule for a convenient time to slip into the service. After listening for to the preacher for a few minutes, she asked an usher standing at the door "Who is that in there preaching?" The usher said, "I don't know, but he sure does recommend himself highly."

Someone has said that the man who lives for himself is engaged in very small business. There are those who live only for themselves. They like to think of themselves as important and as indispensable.

Someone has said that the mental cases most difficult to cure are those people who are crazy about themselves. There are none so empty as those who are full of themselves. Those who live for themselves are those that live in vain, selfish living.

B. Living Selflessly

Paul said, instead of living for self, *"let each esteem other better than themselves Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others."*

The ideal is that we want to make others and see others better than ourselves. We should shout over the achievement of others, not pout. Paul is talking about living selflessly not selfishly. Selfish living is destructive to harmony. Selfless living is constructive to harmony. This is how we can get along with each other.