

Philippians 1:27 – 2:11 - Study Questions

Lesson 4

1. This week's memory passage is Philippians 2:3-4

"Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others."

2. Review Philippians 1:1-26. List some of the ways in which Paul lived his life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Philippians 1:27-30

3. Read verse 27. Kenneth Wuest, a Greek scholar, said "striving" is the translation of a Greek word used of an athletic contest. Paul was exhorting the Philippians to work together like an athletic team.
 - o Describe what makes a successful athletic team.
 - o What problems can occur among team members that affects the team?
 - o How is the church like an athletic team?
 - o What phrases does Paul use in verse 27 to encourage "teamwork"?
4. The New Living Translation (NLT) puts verse 28a this way: "Don't be intimidated in any way by your enemies." How does our culture and the devil attempt to intimidate believers?

- In what ways do the following passages encourage believers who are facing opposition?
Isaiah 51:7-8, 12-15
5. The word “granted” in verse 29 is derived from a Greek word meaning “grace”. Paul is saying that God’s grace is involved in salvation and in the suffering He allows. What is the attitude of today’s culture toward suffering?
- How is a believer to view suffering? Acts 5:40-41; 1 Peter 4:12-13
 - What phrase follows “to suffer” in verse 29?

Philippians 2:1-4

6. Look up verse 1 in the NLT (Can be found online by doing a Google search of the verse, or blueletterbible.org). Write out the 4 questions listed in the verse. Why do you think Paul asked these questions before giving his instructions about unity in 2:2-4?
7. List and define the phrases used to describe unity in verse 2.
- How important was unity to Paul? (1 Corinthians 1:10-11; Philippians 4:2-3)
 - What effect does our unity have on the unsaved? (John 13:34-35; 17:20-21)
8. Write out and define the phrases in verses 3 and 4 that state how unity is achieved.

- What hinders unity according to these verses?
- Summarize how unity can be achieved in a word or phrase.

Philippians 2:5-11

9. In verse 5, Paul points the Philippians to Christ, the ultimate example of humility. Describe how the humility of Jesus was demonstrated in verses 6-8.

Explanation of Philippians 2:6-8

This passage contains some of the most important statements about Christ. What is spoken of in these three verses cannot be fully understood. In addition, there are different opinions among Bible scholars about some of its meaning, partially due to the difficulty of translating from its original language, Greek, to English. However, looking at the passage in its original language helps to determine the intended meaning, and reading these verses in the context of other Scriptures also increases understanding.

The following explanation of Philippians 2:6-8 has been taken from Bible scholars such as Kenneth Wuest, John Walvoord, Gordon Fee, and more. (For further study, look up the supporting verses listed.)

In the beginning of chapter 2 Paul reminded the Philippians of the importance of unity. Believers are drawn together as they humbly put others first. Paul exhorted them to have the mind of Christ. Philippians 2:6-8 is the beautiful example Christ gave us of humility.

Verse 6 – “who (Jesus Christ) being in the form of God”

Being in the form of God means He is equal with God. The word “form” comes from the Greek word “morphe.” This word means “the outward expression of the inward being.” Christ was God before and during His incarnation (coming to earth as a Man). The outward display of His glory (deity) was expressed differently on earth than in heaven, but that did not change who He was. In heaven, His glory was clearly seen; on earth, it was veiled (except at the Transfiguration). But whether He was illuminated with light and glory or bending down to wash the disciples’ feet, He was always God. (Matthew 1:23; John 1:1, 14; Colossian 1:15-17, Hebrews 1:3)

Verse 6 – “did not consider it robbery to be equal with God”

The word “robbery” in this context means “a matter of grasping or seizing.” It is grasping onto something for one’s own personal advantage. Christ was equal with God and yet He did not think He

needed to take advantage of this fact. Deity has the right and the desire to be honored and glorified. He set aside His desires and His rights for the sake of others. (John 10:30; 2 Corinthians 8:9)

Verse 7 – “but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant”

“Made Himself of no reputation” means “to empty.” This phrase must be understood in the context of what follows – that He became a Man, taking on a human body. He did not empty Himself of any part of who He was (His deity). He added humanity without the subtraction of deity. He set aside the outward expression of His glory to come to the earth as a Man and not *only* as a Man, but a Bondservant. Servants have no rights, but this Servant was different. This Servant was God who willingly gave up His rights for others. (Isaiah 53:4-7; Mark 10:45)

Verse 7 – “and coming in the likeness of men.”

“Likeness” speaks of Christ being similar to man, yet different. He was a real Man with a human body. He had to become a Man to die. But He was different from all others in that He was both God *and* Man. He was also unlike all other men because He was sinless. (Romans 8:3; Galatians 4:4-5; Colossians 1:19-22; Hebrews 4:15)

Verse 8 – “And being found in appearance as a man”

“Appearance” refers to the outward qualities that made Him resemble a man. He had a body, He got hungry and tired, and He showed emotions. These were all things a man would do. (Matthew 26:12; Mark 11:12; John 4:6, 11:35)

Verse 8 – “He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”

His death was like no other. Christ had power over death but chose to die to save mankind. Will we ever *fully* understand what it meant for God to die on the cross for us? What a Savior!! (Romans 5:6-8; 2 Corinthians 5:15; Hebrews 2:9, 12:2; Revelation 1:5)

10. How did the above explanation of Philippians 2:6-8 add to your understanding of the passage?

11. What were the results of Christ humbling Himself and dying on the cross listed in verses 9-11?

“That any of us would be willing to reach the lost is nothing wonderful—they are, after all our own race; but that He, the offended God, against whom the transgression has been committed, should take upon Himself the form of a servant and bear the sin of many and be willing to receive the worst of sinners – this is marvelous.” Charles Spurgeon

Philippians 1:27-2:11 - Discussion Questions

LESSON 4

Read Philippians 1:27-30

1. The word “worthy” is defined as having great merit, character, or value; of commendable excellence; deserving; a person of eminent worth or position. How does a believer’s conduct reflect their belief in the worthiness of Christ? Give examples.
 - What does “conduct worthy of the gospel” mean to you?

2. List the three things Paul says he wants to know about these believers in verse 27b and 28a.
 - How do these commands work together to build each other up and to spread the gospel?

 - What type of opposition to Christianity do you see in our world or in your life today?

 - When a believer goes through persecution courageously, what does this say to an unbeliever?

3. Paul asks four questions in Philippians 2:1 New Living Translation (NLT): Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from His love? Any fellowship from His love? Are your hearts tender and compassionate?
 - Prayerfully consider each of these rhetorical questions (as Paul assumed an affirmative answer) and give an example, where possible, of how these have been a reality in your life.

4. What four things does Paul say would make his joy complete in 2:2?
 - How do these traits in a church bring about joy?

5. When things are done from a motive of selfish ambition or conceit what are some potential results in a church?
 - How does Paul exhort us to avoid these problems in verses 3 & 4?

6. Read 2:5-11. What was the attitude of Jesus, our example?
 - Search your heart. Are there any areas where you struggle to lay aside your “rights”? If so, what are they?

 - Have you made excuses for selfishness, pride, or evil? Read and pray Psalm 51. Thank God for His provision and what it means to you.

Humility...

- * Promotes others
- * Is the absence of pride
- * Is the character trait you will never know you possess
- * Grows by exalting Christ