

Complete My Joy

Philippians 2:1-11

Sunday, March 26, 2023

@ Grace Baptist Church

This morning we will be taking a look at Paul's letter to the Philippians. In order to understand the heart of this epistle we must first understand Paul's relationship with the Philippians. Paul loved to gather, fellowship if you will, with the Philippians, not because of the common hobbies, not because of good food and drink, not because their kids were best friends. The fellowship that is shared between Paul and the Philippians is "the fellowship of compatriots bound together in a great cause."¹

This great cause leads to an epic fellowship which brings two parties together, united under one banner, striving forward together, encouraged by one another, seeking to live lives worthy of the gospel. They loved generously, gave cheerfully, served humbly, and suffered well together for the sake of the gospel. In the passage we will be looking at this morning, Paul encourages the church at Philippi to examine their lives for evidence of uniting faith, then once the evidence has been proven for proper judgment Paul encourages the church at Philippi to carry out these principles which are evidenced. And lastly Paul shows us the source of this evidence and out-working of our faith in Christ alone.

And you're probably asking what does this have to do with the title. Let's read **Philippians 2:1-11** and we will consider the title in a moment before looking at three truths and applying this passage to us here at Grace.

¹ Kent Hughes, *Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon* (2 volumes in 1 / ESV Edition) : *The Fellowship of the Gospel and The Supremacy of Christ.*

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

So, let's consider the completing of Paul's joy. We are going to consider this from our context here at Grace as well. Paul's joy was found complete in Christ. I mean, this is simple, this is where we find our joy, right? This is first and foremost where Paul's joy is found. When Paul says, "*complete my joy*" he is not saying that Christ lacks in fulfilling his joy. Rather, Paul's joy, found in God's people is for Christ's sake. Paul is in fact celebrating the work that Christ has accomplished, is actively accomplishing and will bring to completion in and through the church at the day of Christ. This is the joy that Paul is considering.

In the same way, we rejoice, your elders rejoice, when we see God open the eyes of people to see the supreme beauty of Jesus when the gospel is preached. We rejoice together when prayers are answered, we rejoice together when one brother or sister has victory over sin, we rejoice together when one is healed from sickness, we rejoice when we see one another mature in their faith, in their love, in holiness, in their knowledge of God. And we rejoice when these things work out in each other's lives. Paul is finding his joy made complete when those he loves, those whom he calls "**my joy and crown**" in **Philippians 4:1**, is of the same mind, live together in

such a way that evidences a same mind and rejoice in Christ together. This brings us to our first truth, the evidence of same mindedness.

1. Evidence of Same Mindedness (2:1-2)

Paul mentions in the previous chapter of how our lives are to be. “Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:27). Paul calls for the church to examine their lives in a similar fashion that one examines evidence in a court case. Paul urges them, whether he comes or not, to make sure that they are found guilty of being Christians rather than being found guilty of neglect and apathy. So what are these marks of a Christian that Paul puts forth that one is to look for? Encouragement in Christ, where do we find our hope and joy? Do we find our encouragement, meaning, purpose in Christ or are we devoted to the world and the things of it? Do we love the Word of God? Do we spend time there, do we meditate on it, does it encourage us to press on?

Do we find comfort from the love of Christ? The gospel? The gospel, as we often teach here at Grace is not just the good news for the lost, but also still the good news for us as believers. We find hope and encouragement in the gospel. We put it before us daily, reminding us that we have been bought with a price and with that purchase we have been called to a life that is different from this world. We no longer live according to the ways of this world, we no longer participate in the depraved practices of this world, we no longer embrace the things this world holds dear. Yes we have liberty, but we do not have liberty to sin, we do not have liberty to live in such a manner that is unworthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

We participate in the Spirit, meaning we have fellowship with the Spirit. As Christians we possess the Holy Spirit, but do we exercise that fellowship actively?

Do we pray?

Do we read the Word?

Do we gather with the Church regularly?

Are we convicted of sin?

Affection, compassion, sympathy; each of these are really love in action under different circumstances.

In good times, bad times, hard times, easy times, do we love?

Does the love that has been shown to us flow out from within to others in these ways?

Paul writes, “complete my joy by being of the same **mind**, having the same **love**, being in **full accord and of one mind**” (v.2). This is where we see our joy complete for the church. When these evidences of verse 1 are found, note that this is certainly not an exhaustive list, but these are certainly some marks that must be evidenced in a believers life; it creates joy for other Christians. It really creates joy for your elders. It encourages us as we see God work, not that we are special, not that we have done anything extraordinary, rather because we have been called to shepherd the church and in that calling we rejoice when God moves among his people in this way. Paul rejoices when the church at Philippi are united in doctrine, in practice, in love and example of Christ. When the church is united in mind it will overflow in their actions. Which brings us to truth number two.

2. Consider One Another in Humility (2:3-4)

Paul's examination of evidence demands action. It demands that we consider one another in a manner which is worthy of the gospel. This manner in the context of verse 3 is humility and love. How do we consider one another. "Do nothing from selfish ambition, but in **humility** count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others" (v. 3-4). Paul is calling the Philippians to a radical culture shift. Selfish ambition and conceit fit in well with the secular Greek culture. In fact the Greek literature rarely used the words humility and lowliness and when these words showed up they were used in a derogatory sense to imply weakness. But we at Grace know, thanks to Greg's Sunday School lessons from the book *Gentle and Lowly* that humility, and lowliness is not weakness. It is loving, it is power under control, it considers others greater, more significant than ourselves for the glory of God. We see this portrayed in the person and work of Christ as we will see a little later.

Paul is not writing this as one outside of this teaching. He has provided an example of this in 1 Corinthians 10:33-11:1, "I try to please everyone in everything I do, not seeking my own advantage, but that of many, that they may be saved. Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." A life that is worthy of the gospel is one that seeks not his own good, but the good of his neighbor (1 Cor. 10:24). The focus of the gathered church is the others-oriented. This is familiar in our homes, our parenting. Mothers and fathers are often others oriented. This is the heart of godly parenting. There is nothing a mother and father will not do for their children in order to provide for their needs. Our friendships only flourish when they are others-focused. And if we are to live in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ then our lives as Christians must be others-directed.

When our interests are for one another we will “submit to one another in the reverence of Christ” as Paul writes to the Ephesians in 5:21. Paul shows this in his letter to the Galatians 5:13, “do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another.” Greg taught on this passage last Sunday, 1 Peter 4:10, “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace.” Paul also writes to the church at Rome that we are to love one another, out doing one another in showing honor (Rom. 12:10), also writing to the church at Ephesus, bear with one another in love (Eph. 4:2).

What does this look like in our lives, specifically, how does it look here at Grace?

How does it look for us to put the interest of others before our own interest?

How does it look to submit to one another in love in the reverence of Christ?

How does it look to live in a manner worthy of the gospel? Well, for us the answer is quite simple. In fact, everyone who is listening and is a covenant member at Grace Baptist has participated in the signing of a church covenant in which we covenant together to carryout the principles of our covenant but also to carryout the principles of Scripture in which our covenant is founded. We at Grace have signed a covenant declaring that we are of the same mind, that we are devoted to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ thus we have signed this document which allows us to examine ourselves, encourage one another and to live together in an understanding way. Let’s take a look at our covenant applying this passage to us as covenant members at Grace.

Application (Covenant):

Please read along with me and after each slide I will say a few words between each statement.

Having been brought by Divine Grace to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and, on the profession of our faith, having been baptized in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, we joyfully, and with the utmost seriousness, now enter into covenant with one another as one body of Christ. We acknowledge our dependence upon God and the Bible, and that we constantly need the assistance of the Holy Spirit, especially in fulfilling this covenant.

We enter this covenant as "one body," one body has a singular mind and works for the same purpose, the same goal, with the same vision. If we as individuals do not operate in a schizophrenic manner in which we are divided in purpose and direction, why would the church operate in a divided manner? Even more so, God the Father along with the Son and the Holy Spirit operate in single mindedness, thus his church should function likewise.

Now, therefore, in the presence of God and by His grace we commit ourselves to love God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

This is the evidence of our singular mind, we are devoted in love for God which overflows in love for others as we make disciples.

We will walk together in Christian love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

We walk together in love, united by love. We walk together with dynamic purpose, united in gospel centered focus.

We will pray for one another and serve one another, giving preference to one another in honor, and seek after that which is good for one another.

This is the focus of our passage this morning. We love one another in such a radical way that we lift up the needs for one another that we serve one another. How does this look in our day to day activity? How does it look when we gather? How do we speak to one another? Do we speak with kindness, are we patient with others when we not only speak, but when we listen? What about how we dress? Ladies, do you dress in a manner that will cause your brother in

Christ to stumble? Men you are not off the hook, **do you love your sisters in Christ in such a way that you look at them with purity instead of lust?** Brothers, I can tell you, when you are looking at your sister in Christ, or any woman for that matter, their eyes are in the same location that your's are brother. You don't have to look them up and down trying to find eyes to make contact with. It is loving to consider one another's interest greater than your own with how we dress and how we look at one another.

We will bear one another's burdens in all humility, and accept one another as the Lord has accepted us.

Once again, we are considering how we treat one another. Bearing one another's burdens with humility. Considering one another, submitting to one another, serving one another.

We will affectionately care for, watch over, and faithfully admonish one another as God gives us opportunity.

This line continues the thought of the previous, we care for in such a way that we will not be comfortable with the fact that a brother or sister in Christ is uncared for. This pertains to the physical, the mental and the spiritual. As it pertains to sinful behavior. We will faithfully admonish one another in order to maintain this same mindedness.

We will strive to live as Christ in the world; and denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we will seek to fulfill our calling to lead a holy life, to be salt and light, looking for the blessed hope and glorious appearing of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ.

When we walk in a manner worthy of the gospel, when we present the evidence of genuine faith, we are striving to live as Christ in the world. We are mortifying, putting to death sin and worldly lusts. We are growing in grace and sanctification in which we are being molded into the image of God. In this process, we are to be faithful in loving the gospel, loving others,

being salt and light so that others might know the great love of Jesus Christ so that we too might share in that “completed joy,” rejoicing when one comes to see the beauty of Christ.

We will guard our tongues, not speaking evil or complaining against one another, avoiding all gossip, not lying to one another, but instead speaking words that admonish one another.

We recognize the interests of others again. We speak in a way that uplifts and does not appease our ears or our own interests. We speak for the good of others, seeking to live in harmony with one another rather than living in distrust of one another. This guards our entire body from distrust of one another, distrust in motive or intention. We speak truth and trust one another for the good of the church and for the glory of God.

We will not forsake the assembling of ourselves together, but faithfully attend the church's meetings for corporate worship, prayer, study, and fellowship, and will use our spiritual gifts for the common good.

I think it goes without saying, but I'm going to say it anyways: **How can we be of the same mind and consider one another, having one another's interests ahead of our own if we neglect to the regular gathering of the church?** Now, I'm not saying that we never go on vacation, that we don't participate in sports and little league or any of those things that take us away from the weekly gathering on occasion. I am being extremely gracious here. However, our neglect to assemble will prove to be a detriment to us individually, to our families, and to our corporate body. We are called to be one body, each contributing as they have been gifted for the common good. As a body, how would you feel if your hand waved to you adios for a couple of weeks each month? How would you feel if your leg just decided to shake a leg and take off for the month. What if your eyes only decided to show up when there was something special to see? Or your mind to only show up when there was something entertaining? While this all sounds rather

absurd, we would not live this way as an individual, why on earth would we live this way as a corporate body when we have covenanted to not forsake the gathering. One more thing, our gathering, whether it be corporate worship, Sunday school, prayer meetings, fellowships, etc are all beneficial. If they cease to be beneficial then let your elders know, we don't want to do anything that is not beneficial to the body or neglects to glorify God.

We will contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations.

If we are of the same mind and consider one another we will give cheerfully. We do not teach much on giving, but we do ask that you give cheerfully. Support the ministry, support our missions, our missionaries. We cannot do the work that we do if we cease to contribute cheerfully.

We will faithfully participate in the ordinances of the church, and endeavor after unity of mind in doctrine.

With one mind we participate in the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. In such unity of mind we find our doctrine to be similar as well.

We will both submit to the church's discipline upon ourselves and lovingly assume our responsibility to participate in the discipline of other members, as taught in Scripture.

In church discipline we not only covenant to love humbly but also covenant to *receive* love humbly. Through church discipline we examine the evidence of our lives to see whether or not they prove a manner of life which is worthy of the gospel. We have agreed to submit because we love the body and even more because we love the Lord.

We will abstain from all practices which bring unwarranted harm to the body or jeopardize our own faith or the faith of others.

Once again, we are emphasizing the interests of others over the interests of our own. If we know that a brother is struggling with addiction do we continue to partake of addictive substances with them? If our brother is living a lifestyle that jeopardizes their faith and their witness, do we partake with them or do we question them? And if we fail to keep the spirit of anything we have previously read in our covenant we jeopardize our own faith. This clause not only speaks to drink and chew and those that do. We are looking at anything that jeopardizes our faith. This requires some serious examination as we consider our own hearts, while we have liberty in Christ, not all things are for our benefit, for the good of the church or for the glory of God.

We will practice personal and family worship, to train our children in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

This is where I struggle the most, to put my family's interests before my own. This is my confession that I struggle to do this consistently. Thankfully God is merciful in abundant grace. This is certainly a putting off of self in favor of others, because the salvation and spiritual growth of our spouse and children depend upon it. Men, step up and lead your families well in this area. We are not off the hook here. We must practice this at home if we expect for our families to practice it when we gather corporately.

We will be witnesses for Christ; seeking the salvation of our family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, acquaintances and all the world.

When we have a heart to be witnesses for Christ we have a heart to evangelize. While some are better at evangelism and speaking to strangers, all Christians have the gospel, all Christians know the gospel and what is required to be saved. We are all to put the interests of

others before our feelings of inadequacy and seek to share the gospel with those who are far from God.

We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

When we cease to be members at Grace we still carry out these principles in that we put the interests of others before ourselves.

This brings us to our final truth and I will be brief.

3. We Have This Mind in Christ Alone (2:5-11)

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

We have this mind in Christ alone. Jesus models this in such a way that we cannot imitate perfectly. But because Christ set this perfect example of humbling himself for the sake of sinners like you and me we have hope of growing in grace and being fashioned into the image of God by the work of Christ and the equipping of the Holy Spirit. We do not live a defeated life, rather we are victorious in Christ which provides these evidences of faith.

Conclusion:

By way of closing, I want to read Philippians 3:12-21 for our encouragement in this. I know this has been a hard message. It has forced me to examine my own heart in many ways.

While we strive toward the goal we are not perfect, neither were the Philippians and Paul knew that which is why he wrote Philippians 3:12-21:

Not that I have already obtained this or am already perfect, but I press on to make it my own, because Christ Jesus has made me his own. Brothers, I do not consider that I have made it my own. But one thing I do: forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus. Let those of us who are mature think this way, and if in anything you think otherwise, God will reveal that also to you. Only let us hold true to what we have attained.

Brothers, join in imitating me, and keep your eyes on those who walk according to the example you have in us. For many, of whom I have often told you and now tell you even with tears, walk as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their end is destruction, their god is their belly, and they glory in their shame, with minds set on earthly things. But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

Be encouraged brothers and sisters, we have hope, as we strive forward, be encouraged knowing that Christ will transform our bodies in such a way that we will know the love for others perfectly, especially love for Christ.

If you do not know this hope then please know that “if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.” (Rom. 10:9)

Let's Pray.