

Commentary on Philippians 2 by Chuck Smith 4.14.24

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March & April memory verses

Ephesians 3:20 (NKJV) Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,

Ephesians 3:21 (NKJV)

to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

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If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if [there is] any comfort of love, if [there is] any fellowship of the Spirit, if [there is] any bowels [compassion] and mercies, fulfill ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind (Phl 2:1-2).

And so Paul's appeal to them now, a very powerful appeal: if there is any consolation in Christ, if there is any comfort in love, and surely there is consolation in Christ, how we are consoled by Him, how we are comforted in the love, and especially the time of death, the fellowship in the Spirit, the compassion and the mercy fulfill my joy. As John said, "I have no greater joy than to hear that the children walk in truth" (3 John 4). Fulfill my joy, that you be likeminded having the same love, being of one accord and one mind.

And let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves (Phl 2:3).

You want to be great in God's kingdom? Learn to be the servant.

It is interesting to me, how that these words of Paul are so often disregarded by the church. I have shared with you before how my break came with the denomination, over the fact that they announced to the pastors that competition was carnal motivation, but we must realize that the majority of the people we minister to are carnal, and thus, have to be carnally motivated. So we have to use competition to motivate them. Well, competition is striving, because we were to call another pastor and challenge his church to an attendance contest. "We are going to strive with you to see who can have the largest attendance." And then the church that lost was going to have to treat the church that won to a dinner. And the church that won was going to be honored. You know, "We want to be first so we can be honored." Vainglory and strife, or striving for vainglory. And how many times, that is the motive that is being used with people within the church: get them into competition, get them into striving, and get them into vainglory. "We are going to put the names up here on the wall. In each windowpane we are going to inscribe your name. We are going to put stained glass in. The Lord has told me we

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should have stained glass windows, and you know, you can buy your window and put your name or the name of your loved one in a window." And everybody that comes, as they look down the window, they will see your name. Vainglory.

Let nothing be done through strife and vainglory. Those are wrong motivations for serving God. But in lowliness of mind, just esteem others better than yourself.

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others [or the needs of others]([Phl 2:4](#)).

Don't just look at your own needs, but look at the needs of others around you.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus ([Phl 2:5](#)):

And God minister to us now by Your Spirit, because we are treading in the Holy of Holies. We are getting down to the heart now of the whole issue. The issue of Christianity: my attitudes, my attitudes toward myself and my attitudes towards others. What is the mental attitude that I have towards myself? What is my mental attitude towards others? Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

"Do you know what he had the nerve to ask me to do? I told him I wanted to serve the Lord, and Romaine gave me a broom and told me to sweep the sidewalk. I hire people to sweep my sidewalks. Doesn't he know who I am? How much I have contributed to the church?" Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery [something to be grasped] to be equal with God ([Phl 2:6](#)):

He didn't grasp, have to grasp equality with God; He was with God. "In the beginning was the Word, the Word was with God, the Word was God" ([John 1:1](#)). So being in the form of God, and not something to be grasped to be equal with God.

Now you talk about, "Hey, don't they know who I am? Don't they know how important I am? They didn't even offer to carry my suitcase. Don't they know?" Who, being in the form of God, and thought it not something to be grasped to be equal with God:

But made himself of no reputation [or in the Greek, emptied Himself], and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men ([Phl 2:7](#)):

Well, we see now the steps downward as He emptied Himself: starting with God, equal with God, and yet, He emptied Himself and He came in the form of a servant, and was made like men.

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross ([Phl 2:8](#)).

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And so, from glory and equality with God to that cruel Roman cross, hanging there with the jeers and the anger of the crowd, despised and rejected by man. What a tremendous downward, I mean from the highest height, down to death on a cross, surrounded by murderers. That tremendous plunge Jesus was willing to take for you. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him (Phl 2:9),

Now we see the steps out. For God said, "I will not leave your soul in hell, neither will I allow the Holy One to see corruption" (Psalms 16:10). And God has highly exalted Him.

and [He has] given him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father (Phl 2:9-11).

So from the glory to the glory, but the cross in between. He emptied Himself. Now let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus. That willingness to set aside what you are, to become a servant to others. Not esteeming yourself more highly than you should, just considering yourself privileged to be a servant of Jesus Christ. "Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord and He shall lift you up" (James 4:10). Christ the example, humbling Himself, but wherefore God has also highly exalted Him and given Him a name above every name, that at the name of Jesus, Jehoshua, every knee will one day is going to bow, every tongue one day is going to confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord.

Now, you may not want to make that confession now. You may say that you are the lord of your own life. "I am the master of my fate. I am the captain of my soul. My head is bloody but unbowed." One day you are going to confess Jesus Christ is the Lord. Those people who speak so despairingly of Him now, those people who still mock His name, those who use His name so carelessly in their profanity, those who have spoken out so adversely against Him, one day they too shall bow their knee, and they shall confess Jesus Christ is the Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The problem is that in that day their confession will not be unto salvation. You see, Paul tells us that if we confess with our mouth that Jesus Christ is the Lord, and believe in our hearts that God has raised Him from the dead, we will be saved, for with the mouth man confesses unto salvation. But that will not be so in that day, the confession will not be to salvation. It will be of condemnation of themselves. "Yes, He is Lord. I was wrong in rejecting Him as Lord of my life."

Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling (Phl 2:12):

Now, unfortunately many people stop right there, and we get a tremendous exhortation on works and the importance of you working out your own salvation with fear and

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trembling. And rather than working out your salvation, it is usually interpreted, "work for your salvation with fear and trembling," and you're exhorted into all the works that you ought to be doing for God in order to be saved. And those who are emphasizing a "works" gospel, which is not a gospel, because you tell me I have to work to be saved, that is not good news, that is bad news. They use this text so often, but they don't go into the very next verse where He declares:

For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure (Phl 2:13).

That is what it is all about. You see, God said to Jeremiah when Israel had totally failed in the keeping of the law, "There is going to come a day, Jeremiah, when I am no longer going to write the law on these tables of stone, but I am going to write my law in the fleshly tablets of their heart." It is He who works in you to will.

How does God reveal His will to me? He reveals His will by the desires that He places in my heart, not the desires that I necessarily have in my heart that come from me. But He places in my heart His desires, so it is He that works in you both to will. God puts it in my heart to do something. God gives me the desire, the yearning to do a particular work, to go to a particular place. And I discover that that which I desire is actually God's revealing to my heart, that which He is wanting me to do. And so, He puts it in me to will, and then He gives me the capacity to do of His good pleasure.

Several years ago I was supposed to speak in Ventura on a Sunday evening, and I decided to go up on Saturday and spend the night with my aunt in Santa Barbara. My Aunt Lois, in fact, who is now moved down into the area that we can be near her. And she made such fabulous enchiladas, and I called her and said, "Put the enchiladas on. I will be up for dinner, spend the night with you, and then I will come back to Ventura tomorrow night and speak." So, I took off for Santa Barbara. Heading up towards the Ventura freeway, when I got to Sunset Boulevard I thought, "Oh, this is such a beautiful day. I might as well drive along the coast, drive along Sunset Boulevard to Pacific Coast Highway. It is such a beautiful day I will just put the top down on my car, and I will cruise up through Malibu and go up Santa Barbara that way and just look at the ocean, because I love to stop up there at Point Magu and watch the surf come in and just the beauty of that drive." And I thought, "I just want to go the coast." I am such a water nut, and just enjoy the beach. So, I wound all the way down Sunset Boulevard, and as I was winding down Sunset Boulevard, I thought, "My, I don't remember it being this far down Sunset to the Coast. I probably made a mistake. I probably should have stayed on the inland route. Oh, well."

And as I pulled on to the Coast Highway, there was a couple there hitchhiking, and I felt rather selfish in this convertible all by myself and all, and here they are hitchhiking, and so I don't pick up hitchhikers as a rule, but I stopped and I picked them up. And I started to share with them about Jesus Christ. By the time we got to Ventura, we pulled over and they accepted the Lord. And I took them by the church where I would be speaking the next night, and I said, "Look, if you show up here tomorrow night, I will be glad to meet you." The fellow was looking for a job. He was a farmer, and he had been looking

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in Los Angeles for a job. I said, "They don't have any farms in Los Angeles." So I bid them farewell, drove on up to Santa Barbara, and like so many experiences, you think, "Well, probably I will never see them again." But the next night when I was at the church speaking and I gave the invitation, they came forward to accept Jesus Christ publicly. And the man in the church, the elder who came down to pray with them, happened to be the foreman of the Del Mar Lymanair Ranch, and happened to be needing an extra hand. It had housing and everything else. So, they came up afterwards and they came up with Mr. Jenkins, and they said, "Oh, guess what has happened to us? This man who prayed with us, he is the foreman of this ranch." I knew that, and he had given them a job, and then I thought back yesterday, as I was driving up and I got that sudden inspiration, "Why not go by the coast," I realized it was He who puts it into my heart to will. That thought was actually planted by the Lord, because He knew that that couple from Montana, really desperate and in need, basically for a real experience with Jesus Christ, were waiting for someone to come and share the truth with them.

And so, it is God who works in you both to will and then to do. He gives you the capacity to do, but He plants first of all the will in your heart. And this is the way that God leads us. So often it is by a sudden inspiration, a thought, an idea, God is working in you to will, and then to do. And so again, it is initiated by God. Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, but it is God who is actually working in you. It is God who has put that yearning in your heart. It is God that has given you that desire. And now God will work out the ways by which that might be fulfilled. For He works in you both to will and then to do of His good pleasure.

So, the net result is that my pleasure is doing His pleasure because He put the desire in my heart to do it, and so it becomes, really, the desire of my heart or my life, and thus the pleasure of my life, and thus I can say with Jesus, "I delight to do thy will O Lord." Why? Because He has planted it in my heart. It is God who is working in you.

Therefore,

Do all things without murmurings and disputings ([Phl 2:14](#)):

Now, I have to confess that I don't always succeed in this particular injunction. There are certain tasks that I do that I catch myself murmuring. "I wonder where Romaine is, you know, I have to clean up this mess. Where is Romaine, you know, he is not around to clean up this mess." You know, and I think, "Hum, I have got better things to do than to sweep up this mess here, you know." And so I don't always pass with an "A" on this particular phase. I do catch myself at times murmuring over some of the pressures, over some of the things. But God is working in my heart in that. Because when I do things and I am murmuring, He usually speaks to me and says, "Why are you doing it?" And, of course, I have to respond, "I am doing it for You, Lord." And then He says, "Quit your murmuring, or quit doing it."

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You know, God doesn't want any griping service. Whatever you do in word or deed, do for the glory of God, and do it as unto the Lord, and do all things without murmuring or disputing.

That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation [generation], among whom ye shine as lights in the world; holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain (Phl 2:15-16).

So, Paul is exhorting them on how they are to serve the Lord. And the effect of their service to the Lord is the rejoicing in the heart of Paul, realizing that his ministry to them has been an effective ministry, for he has brought them into the attitude and the mind of Christ, who was willing to step from His glory into this sin-cursed world to hang on a cross. Let this mind be in you. And when you see the work and the effect of the work of God in the ministry in the hearts of the people, it creates great rejoicing. Paul said,

Yea, and if I be offered [if they take my life] upon the sacrifice and service of your faith [if I die for this], I joy, and rejoice with you all (Phl 2:17).

I rejoice because of what God has done with you. I die happy knowing that God has worked in your life through my ministry.

For the same cause also do ye joy, and rejoice with me (Phl 2:18).

If they take my life, rejoice with me, don't weep.

But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know of your state. For I have no man likeminded, who will naturally care for your state (Phl 2:19-20).

Now, this is very interesting statement of Paul, for he is sending Timothy because Timothy shares his heart, his burden. And Paul said, "I don't have any one else who really has the same heart that I have, for you and for the work." It is really very difficult to find someone who has the same heart as Paul the apostle. One who is willing to give himself so freely. One who is really looking so little for himself, but always looking for the needs and the welfare of others. It is hard to find that kind of a minister, one that is really so careful and circumspect about the things of the Lord. Paul said, "I really don't have anyone other than Timothy who has the same mind, the same heart and concern for your state as I have."

For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's (Phl 2:21).

What sad indictment against the ministers, even those that were accompanying Paul, and with Paul. "I send Timothy because he has my heart for you; he cares for you as I do. Most everybody else really care for themselves more than they care for you. They

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are seeking their own welfare above your welfare." That is, the mind that was in Christ is not in them, who emptied Himself.

But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the father, he hath served with me in the gospel. Him therefore I hope to send [him] presently [soon], so soon as I shall see how it will go with me (Phl 2:22-23).

As soon as I am able to free him, I am going to send him to you.

But I trust in the Lord that I also myself shall come shortly (Phl 2:24).

You know, if Caesar lets me out of here, I hope that I will be able to come.

Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and the fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants (Phl 2:25).

In other words, he brought to me the offering that you sent, and ministered to my needs.

For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh [he was near] death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow (Phl 2:26-27).

So Epaphroditus almost died. He was extremely sick, and they had heard of his sickness and were worried about him. And so Epaphroditus was concerned, they were worried for him, because of that sickness.

Interesting, Paul had a tremendous ministry of healing. Miracles were wrought, and yet, he speaks of Epaphroditus almost dying with his sickness. Why doesn't God heal everybody? Why is it that God heals some and does not heal others? Hey, we will never know the answers to that. Beware of those who have pat answers on the subject of healing, on the subjects of the works of God or the whys of God. God says, "My ways are not your ways, they are beyond your finding out." We really don't know, and it is wrong to place the guilt upon the sick person. That's the last thing they need, for you to come in and say, "Well, brother, there must be something wrong with you, some sin in your life that you are so sick. You just don't have enough faith, and if you only believed God, you could get up out of this bed and walk. You have been making the wrong confession. Don't say you feel bad, say, 'I feel great.'" It is not going to do it.

God does heal; I believe that. I have been healed many times, I know that. But God doesn't heal everybody, I recognize that. And why, I don't know. I have known reprobates who have been healed; I have known extremely godly people who were not healed, but died. It has nothing to do with a person's righteousness. It has nothing to do with a person's faith. Healing is a work of God, and it is sovereign with God and it is in God's hands. It is wrong to put the burden upon the people who are sick or upon your

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relatives. And I thoroughly discount as junk the messages that God wills that everybody should be healed.

So Paul said,

I sent him [Epaphroditus] therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and that I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: because for the work of Christ he was nigh [near] unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me (Phl 2:28-30).

So, he hazarded his own life in order to bring their help to Paul, and Paul appreciates it, and is sending him back with the commendation for his faithfulness.

We can finish the book of Philippians next Sunday, and these next two chapters are classic. I'll tell you, they are so much. I just love them.

Now, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit rest and abide with each of you through this week, that you might be strengthened by His Spirit in your inner man, that you might receive the Spirit of understanding and enlightenment, that you might be able to understand how much God does love you, and His plan for your life, that you might live your life for Christ, and share with Him in His kingdom forever. God bless you, children of the King. May you walk in His love, and in His grace, in Jesus' name.