

Radical Love

A study of Philippians 2:1-11,
New Revised Standard Version

THE APOSTLE PAUL STRESSES SPIRITUAL UNITY AMONG THE CHRISTIANS. He further reminds us to be more like Christ, being like-minded and having the same kind of radical love. Christian love should be mutual, i.e. "love and you will be loved." Jesus was divine, yet he was human. He humbled himself; he became a servant; he was brought up meekly, probably working with his earthly father as a carpenter. He became obedient to the cross, a shameful death full of pain; the death of a slave.

Introduction

Philippians 2:1-11

In these verses we will get an understanding of how Christian believers should live in order to receive everlasting life. Paul is asking the Philippians, and us, to love one another and be one in spirit and purpose. When we work together caring for the problems of others, as if they were our problems, we demonstrate Christ's example of radical love. There is no need to be concerned about making a good impression, or doing things only to please ourselves. This kind of attitude causes discord within the Body of Christ. God promised to supply all our needs according to his riches in glory, through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Chapter 2:1-5: Imitating Christ's radical love and humility.

Selfish ambition can ruin the Church and the world, but genuine love can redeem them. For us, genuine love and humility means having a true perspective about ourselves. Being humble does not mean that we should put ourselves down. Bear in mind, we are sinners saved only by grace; but we are saved, and therefore have great worth in God's kingdom. So let us lay aside selfishness and treat each other with respect and common courtesy. Let's look towards Christ,

who was a true example of radical love and humility.

Like the city of Philippi, The Bahamas – and many other countries of this world – are cosmopolitan. The Church is a reflection of the community, with people from a variety of backgrounds and walks of life. The churches in The Bahamas include a diversity of cultures and peoples (Haitians, Jamaicans, Guyanese, Barbadians, Americans, Bahamians from different islands, etc.) Also, there are some wealthy business men and women, some not so wealthy, and some who are a little below the poverty line.

With so many different backgrounds among the members, unity is sometimes difficult to maintain, even though there is no apparent evidence of division in the church. As followers of Christ we must safeguard the unity in the body of Christ. The Apostle Paul admonishes us to guard against any selfishness, prejudice, or jealousy that may lead to dissention. Showing genuine interest in others is a positive step forward in maintaining unity among believers and reaching out to the community.

Christ was humble, and obeyed God by serving the people. Like Christ, we should have a servant attitude, serving out of radical love for God and for others; not out of guilt or fear. Remember, we can choose our attitude; we can approach life expecting to be served, or we can look for opportunity to serve others. Mark 10:45 states, "For even the Son of man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." See more on Christ's attitude of servanthood in John's Gospel, chapter 13:1-17.

Question:

What was the most helpful assistance you ever received or you ever gave? What made that assistance relevant?

Talking Points:

- Assistance from a Christian source or from the community that met an immediate need or provided a long-term solution

Chapter 2: 6-11: Radical love service as a believer in Christ.

Even though Christ is God, he became a human being in order to fulfill God's plan of salvation for all people. Christ did not merely have the appearance of being a man; he actually became human to identify with our sins. "Though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God." (Verse 6.)

He died on the cross for our sins, so we wouldn't have to face eternal death. How can we do anything less than praise Christ as our Lord, and dedicate ourselves to his service?

Many times in our society, people excuse selfishness, injustice, or evil, claiming their privileges. For example, people think, "I can cheat on this exam. After all, I deserve to pass this class," or, "I can spend all this money on myself, I worked hard for it." We should have a different attitude in order to be able to serve others. If we are true followers of Christ, we must also live as he lived. We should develop his attitude of radical love as we serve, regardless of any recognition for our efforts. We must frequently ask ourselves, "Am I selfishly clinging to my privileges, or am I willing to serve?"

All of us lead in some way; whatever our role, our leadership should be in line with Jesus' example. Signs of radical love in leadership:

- ✓ Care for God's flock, not their own;
- ✓ Lead out of eagerness to serve, not out of obligation.
- ✓ Concern for what one can give and not what one can get.
- ✓ Lead by example not by force.

Question:

Was there ever a time in your Christian life at which focusing on love and serving helped to alleviate your fear?

Talking Points:

- Health or Financial issues;
- Work-place or Family Issues;

Conclusion

And so, my friends in Christ, Jesus asks all of us this question: "Do you know what I have done to you?" He was God and human at the same time. He displayed an attitude of humility and service. We, as his followers, must have the same mind as Christ; we must embrace every opportunity to exemplify him.

Take time to do simple acts of love, like appreciating people, regardless of who they are. Encourage someone each day. Look for the good in people; let people know what you like. God will use your smile, your hug, and your service to uplift someone who is weeping on the inside. Practice radical love! Be kind, be loving, be humble, be genuine, be just! These simple acts bring healing and peace and you will be surprised by God's everlasting grace.