

Being Disciples: Practicing the Way of Jesus

A STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS

Practicing the Way of Jesus Together For Brooklyn

Dear RPS family,

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves (Phil. 2:3) These words by the Apostle Paul to the church in Philippi were revolutionary in the first century. The Philippians were living under Roman rule and therefore immersed in Roman culture where humility was not valued. Rome was built on a culture of systemic exploitation, and therefore everything in Rome was about exercising power at every turn. The quest for power was the story the Romans lived by, it was the story of the gods they worshipped and it was the way to flourishing.

But Paul lived by a different story because he worshipped a different God and he was intent on forming this church in Philippi to live by this true and better story as well. It's the story of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit creating the world in love, redeeming the world from slavery and death and sustaining the world to bring it to its beauty and glory. This for Paul meant that the Philippians ought to be encouraged by Christ's work, comforted by God's love, and participating in the life of the Spirit which will move them to affection, sympathy, humility and, ultimately, unity.

To live in humility counting others more significant than yourselves is revolutionary in our culture as well. We don't see humility modeled or valued very often in our world. But Paul calls us to be motivated by the same story (v. 1), cultivate the same mind and love (v. 2), and live with a shared interest (v. 3-4). This, he says, is the way of unity, and this is the way of the church. And so important is this call to unity by way of humility that Paul says it would make his joy complete! Paul would delight in nothing more than to see God's people putting the needs of others above himself. These are astonishing words from a man in prison. One would think his joy would be made complete if he were released. But Paul is so caught up in this story of God's redemptive work and the mission of the church seeking to follow the way of Jesus, that this would complete his joy. The priority of unity is something for us to consider as we seek to bear witness to King Jesus in a divided world.

In Christ,
Chris

LOOKING AHEAD:

10.11 | Philippians 2:5-11
The Way of Lordship

10.18 | Philippians 2:12-18
The Way of Love

10.25 | Philippians 2:19-30
The Way of Friendship

11.1 | Philippians 3:1-11 The
Way of Worship

11.8 | Philippians 3:12-4:1
The Way of Citizenship

11.15 | Philippians 4:2-9 The
Way of Leadership

11.22 | Philippians 4:10-23
The Way of Stewardship

We are regularly being formed by the pace, noise, and values of the surrounding world. Yet to be deeply formed is to regularly come back to a different rhythm - a rhythm marked by communion, reflection, and a life giving pace that enables us to offer our presence to the present moment.

Rich Villodas

The Way of Unity

Study for the Week of 10.4 | Philippians 2:1-4

Look to the Scriptures

- Open in prayer ask God to for wisdom to discern, for eyes to see and ears to hear.

Look to the Text

- What's happening in this passage? How does this passage connect to chapter 1 in Philippians? What phrases jump out at you?
- Faith - Philippians teaches us what to believe about Jesus. Consider again v. 1. What story are we being asked to believe about God in this verse? What encouragement in Christ are we supposed to be receiving? Can you think of examples from this week?
- Love - Philippians teaches us how to love. Paul says if there is any comfort in love, be of the same mind. What do you think he means by "comfort in love"? How might the love we receive from Christ help us then to love others by counting others more significant than ourselves? What do you think Paul means here by being "of the same mind"? Do you think he means agreement on all issues? How might the call to love help us understand what it means to be of the same mind?
- Hope - Philippians teaches us how to hope in Christ. V. 5-11 really get at the source of our hope which we will spend time on next week, but for now how might realigning our hopes in Christ help us to lead lives of humility and unity? For instance, if our ultimate hope lies elsewhere, politics, economics, family how would that prevent us from living lives of sacrificial humility?

Listen to one another

- Consider sharing places where you are facing hardship in this season of your life.
- Or pray a version of the Examen such as sharing the following:
 - Consolation: A time in the past week where you felt close to God.
 - Desolation: A time in the past week where you felt far from God.
 - Looking ahead: What are you looking forward to or most worried about in the coming week

Pray

- Spend time praying for one another and our world incorporating both what you have studied and prayer requests in your time of prayer.

Practice

- Paul encourages the Philippians in Phil 4:9 to “practice these things”, so take this time over the next few weeks on 1 or 2 spiritual practices that you would like to work on. It could be something you are currently doing or a new practice you want to take up. You can do this as a group together or as individuals, but consider how you can practice the way of Jesus together during this time. Some suggestions: Daily Scripture reading, keeping Sabbath, fixed-hour prayer, memorize Philippians 2:5-11 together, etc. Talk about how what you have discussed in your group might help your daily/weekly practices.

How are your spiritual practices helping you renounce selfish ambition and conceit? How do they lead you out of thinking first about yourself and instead thinking and serving others?