

Fellowship of Joy in Perfection: Unity (Part 2)

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[0:00] Let me take your Bibles this morning and open them to Philippians.

! Our text begins Philippians chapter 1 verse 27. I read this passage last week and we have some unfinished business here in this particular text.

! And so I'm going to start reading with verse 27 and all the way through to chapter 2 and verse 4. These verses go together even though there is a chapter break.

Alright, chapter 1 verse 27. Only let your conduct be worthy of the gospel of Christ so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of your affairs that you stand fast in one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel.

And not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them a proof of perdition, but to you of salvation and that from God.

[1:13] For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake, having the same conflict which you saw in me and now here is in me.

Therefore, if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

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. All right, there is our text and part of this we've already seen.

We looked in detail at those verses that close chapter one. And now we're going to pick up the rest of it. But let me remind you that, again, that our theme is the fellowship of joy.

[2:24] The fellowship of joy. That's Paul's theme, a theme that runs throughout this, I think, jewel of a New Testament book. And Paul has applied this theme to a number of key points of instruction.

First of all, the fellowship of joy in prayer, which we have already considered. Chapter one, verses three through eleven. Second, the fellowship of joy in persecution. We've already seen this.

Chapter one, verses twelve through twenty-six. And now, in our current study, the fellowship of joy in perfection. Perfection. Perfection.

Spiritual perfection. Spiritual maturity. Chapter one, verse twenty-seven. And really running all the way through to verse eighteen of chapter two. All right?

The fellowship of joy in perfection. Again, perfection in the sense of spiritual maturity. Or spiritual perfection in that sense. And really, to fine-tune it even more, the fellowship of joy in perfection in a certain context.

[3:30] And that context being the church. The local body of believers. The church. Now, this is or was, well, is Paul's desire for the church.

Certainly for the young church there in Philippi. And by way of the New Testament to all churches today. This was Paul's desire.

And it's given to us in verse twenty-seven. And I want to read it in a paraphrase. Here's how it would go in a paraphrase. I have a single desire.

This is Paul speaking. I have one desire. That your daily life should match the worth of the gospel. I love that paraphrase.

And that really is what he's saying. Let me read it to you again. I have a single desire. This was Paul's desire for the church at Philippi. Really, this is my desire for the church at Highland Park.

[4:33] This ought to be our desire collectively as the body of Christ. That our daily lives should match the worth of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

That is the mark of the church. The mark of the church. The mark of spiritual maturity. The church is all about the gospel of Christ. That's what we're all about.

That is, from start to finish, job one in the church is the gospel of Jesus Christ. And so Paul says, the way people ought to conduct themselves must always complement and promote the gospel of Jesus Christ with no inconsistency, no distraction, no detraction away from or detracting from the gospel of Jesus Christ.

And so as I pointed out last Sunday, as we look at the larger text, Paul focuses on three major points of spiritual perfection or spiritual maturity that have, by the way, a significant impact on the church as a whole.

And what are these three points of spiritual maturity? Here they are again. Unity, humility, and integrity. Unity, humility, and integrity.

[5:57] Now last Sunday we started our discussion on the subject of unity, and we'll finish that up this morning. And Paul began with what I call the exhortation to unity.

We saw this last Sunday. Paul's exhortation to unity. Unity, that is, in the church is not only recommended, it is required. Unity within the body of Christ, the local body of Christ, the church. Unity is not only recommended, it is commanded. It's commanded. Now remember, Paul introduced this section of the letter with a command in verse 27.

This is a command in verse 27, and I'll read it in this version. Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. That sets the tone, sets the mood for this entire section, not only in regard to what Paul is going to tell us about unity, but also what Paul is going to tell us about humility and integrity.

It sets the tone. This is a command. It's an exhortation to unity. And Paul's exhortation is threefold, remember? We looked at this last Sunday.

[7:06] Verse 27. Let me just read that and expand upon it. Look at verse 27 very carefully. Stand fast. Here's the exhortation. Stand fast or firm in one spirit.

That is, in a spirit of unity. With one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel. That is, the advance of the gospel. And not in any way terrified by your adversaries, which is to them, he said, that is, their opposition to the gospel is to them a sign and proof of perdition.

But to you, that is, those of you who are committed to the gospel of Christ, that's a sign of something else. Your salvation. Our salvation in that from God. For to you it has been granted in behalf of Christ not only to believe in him, but also to suffer for his sake.

Here's the exhortation to unity. And it's threefold. Stand firmly together in one spirit. The spirit of unity. Strive fearlessly together in one salvation.

That's the gospel. And suffer faithfully together for one Savior. In behalf of the Savior. In behalf of Christ. Alright, so there's the exhortation to unity.

[8:19] And we covered all that last Sunday. Now we're up to speed. What's the second thing Paul says? What is the second point of instruction regarding unity?

This form of spiritual maturity. Well, not only the exhortation to unity. But something we need. And that is the motivation. We need something to motivate us.

To be unified as a body of believers. As a church. What is the motivation to unity? Well, I would say on the front end that we have every reason to strive to have real unity in the church.

Every reason. And Paul gives us four. Four, I think, huge reasons. Why we ought to be unified. Ought to desire unity within the body of Christ.

Four huge reasons. Let me point out something to you. Verse 2. There in chapter 2. Sounds very much like verse 27 of chapter 1.

[9:24] In fact, you put the two together. And the idea is very similar. And so I would tell you that really verse 2 is a restatement of Paul's exhortation that we've already seen in verse 27.

They sound very similar. Look at it. Verse 2. Fulfill my joy by being what? Like-minded. Having the same love.

Being of one accord. Of one mind. You see, the verse exudes this whole idea of unity. It's very similar to what he said in verse 27.

And yet, here's what I want you to see about verse 2. It is a command. Here again, we have a clear indication that unity in the body of Christ in the church is not suggested.

It is commanded. Paul wrote in verse 2. Fulfill my joy. That's a command. Well, more accurately, we could translate it, make my joy full or complete.

[10:25] He is issuing a command to us. Now, actually, Paul issues this command in verse 2 after he provides for us four reasons why we should obey it in verse 1.

All right, so he gives us the reason to obey the command before he gives us the command. And so here's what you ought to notice here. Verse 2 is the then after four ifs.

Let me say that again. You need to pay attention to this. This will unlock the meaning of what Paul is saying to us here. Verse 2 is the then after four ifs.

The four ifs or conditions are given to us in verse 1. And then in verse 2, we have the response or the result.

And so Paul says, verse 1, if this and this and this and this, then this. Verse 2. Look at it.

[11:31] Look at it again. Therefore, if, in your translation there ought to be an if there. Some, I think, leave some of the ifs out, but they're all there in the text. Therefore, if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy.

So you see, if, if, if, and if, then what? Verse 2. Fulfill my joy. Fulfill my joy.

By being in perfect unity. Ultimately, that's what he's going to say in verse 2. If, if, if, and if, then, then, then. Now, here's what we need to see. These four ifs in verse 1 represent much more than just some good reasons, some possible reasons to be in unity.

He's not just issuing some reasons for it. He is giving us some strong motivations for unity. In fact, and I won't get into the technical features of the Greek grammar here, but these four ifs, these if clauses, really identify for us four fulfilled conditions.

Four realities in the life of the believer that ought to motivate us to unity.

[13:02] Meaning. And so, really, the meaning is sense, not if. In fact, you could just mark out the word if if you wanted to. I'm not telling you to change your copy of Scripture, but you could at least make a note that if means sense.

Or, more literally, in view of the fact. You could write that out there. Right there in the margin of your Bible. And you can point to all these ifs in verse 1. Really, the idea is in view of the fact.

In view of the fact. And so, these four things Paul mentions in verse 1 are not hypothetical for the believer. They're not theoretical. These four ifs in verse 1 that Paul declares to us are not, in the technical sense, in the normal sense, conditions.

They're not conditional. Not for the believer. These are facts. That's how you ought to look at verse 1. These four things he mentions are facts about you and about me that we ought to realize.

And when we do realize that these are facts, then they serve as strong motivations for unity in the body of Christ.

[14:15] So, we could read it this way. Since it is a fact that for the believer there is consolation in Christ. And since it is a fact that for the believer there is the comfort of love.

And since it is a fact that for the believer there is affection and mercy.

Then. And the word then is implied in the text. It's not there, but it belongs there. Then. Then what? Fulfill my joy by being like-minded.

All right, so quickly, what are these four conditions that are true of every believer? These four facts. That really do stand as factual motivations for unity in the church.

What are they? Well, let me identify them with four words. Consolation. Compulsion.

[15:21] Communion. And compassion. There they are. Four words that represent these facts that stand as motivations for unity within the body of Christ.

Consolation. Compulsion. Communion. Compassion. All right. First motivational fact. Consolation. And I take the word right out of the New King James translation.

Consolation. Consolation. That is. Consolation of the life of Christ. There's point number one.

Motivation number one. Consolation of the life of Christ.

Verse one. If there is any consolation in Christ, then. Verse two. Fulfill my joy by being like-minded. That's the corresponding thought.

If this, then this. If there is any consolation in Christ, then fulfill my joy by being like-minded. Now, the word consolation might be a little confusing to most of us.

[16:26] In fact, it's not translated that way in some versions of the Bible. But that is the word, literally, consolation. Though it's a word that's kind of old and archaic. And it's not one that we really know how to apply all the time.

And so what does it mean? Well, it comes from a word in the Greek text that might be familiar to you. It is the word *paraklesis*.

Paraklesis. You say, oh, I've never heard of that word before. Well, yeah, you have. I mean, every preacher loves this word. Every time we get on the subject of the Holy Spirit, we want to identify one of the names of the Holy Spirit.

And he is the parakletos. That's the word here. Paraklesis. Paraklesis. Which means to come alongside someone.

To comfort. Or for purposes of counsel. Or even, sometimes, for purposes of command. To come alongside someone.

[17 : 33] That's what the Holy Spirit does. When we were saved. He's the parakletos. He came alongside of us. And you might remember that in John chapter 14, verse 16, Jesus used a form of this word to identify the Holy Spirit, as I've said.

And this is what he said to his disciples. Jesus said, and I will pray to the Father, and he will give you another helper. Now, it's translated in some versions.

Helper. But it's the word parakletos. Parakletos. He's the paraclete. I will give you another helper. The Father will give you another helper. A comforter. A counselor.

That he may abide with you forever. And it's a wonderful gift, isn't it? It's the gift of the Holy Spirit to all born-again believers. That is, the moment you believed, the Holy Spirit came and indwelt your life.

And he is the parakletos. He has come alongside of you. It's really Jesus living in you in the person of the Holy Spirit. And it's a wonderful gift.

[18 : 35] And so here, then, is a tremendous truth that Paul is giving us here. In verse 1. As a motivation for unity. It's a tremendous truth. It's an incredible reality.

And listen, every born-again believer ought to know this. Jesus lives in us. Jesus lives in us. You ought to know that. Do you know that? Jesus lives in us in the person of the Holy Spirit.

And therefore, His life is our life. And we are one with Him. And this is the idea or the reality that Paul is conveying here.

With the word consolation in Christ. We are one with Him. And that should then serve as a strong motivation to unity in the body of Christ.

You might remember Jesus' high priestly prayer in John chapter 17. And in John 17 and verse 20, I want you to listen to what Jesus prayed for you and for me.

[19 : 36] He said this. He said, I do not pray for these alone. He's speaking to the Father. I do not pray for these alone. And that's a reference to His apostles. But also for those who will believe in Me through their word.

And that's a reference to all Christians today. Every one of us, Jesus is praying for Him. What did He pray? This is what He prayed. That they all...

Now listen to this very carefully. That they all... I'm praying to all those who will believe in Me. I'm praying this. They all... All believers...

May be one. That's unity. They may be one. As... Listen to what He said. As you, Father, are in Me. And I in you. That they... That's all of us. May be one in us. That's a tremendous prayer. What a prayer for unity.

[20 : 39] And by the way, let me add, because Jesus adds, what is the purpose of this prayer? Why would Jesus want us to be unified? He says, that the world may believe. It's evangelistic.

In fact, the implication is that if there is not unity, if we're not one with one another, then we will not be evangelistic. Because it will not believe us.

If we're not unified. So, motivation for unity, number one. If there is any consolation in Christ, any comfort from His life and ours, any counsel from His life and ours, if there is any consolation in Christ, and there is, that's the whole point, there is, He lives in you, then fulfill my joy by being like-minded.

Motivation to unity, number two. Compulsion. Compulsion of the life of Christ. Or love of Christ, excuse me.

The compulsion of the love of Christ. Verse one. If any, here's the second one. If any comfort of love, then, verse two, fulfill my joy by having the same love.

[22 : 03] You see, there are four things, four ifs in verse one, four thens in verse two. And the thens correspond with the ifs. And so the second if is, if there's any comfort of love, then, the second then, is have the same love.

Fulfill my joy by having that same love. Now, the word comfort here is also a little confusing. And it is very similar in meaning to the word consolation.

In fact, some versions, I think the NASB, may even put consolation in the second part. But what does it mean? Well, the word means, or carries the idea of persuasion.

Persuasion. I know it doesn't seem that way in the English reading, but the word really conveys the idea of persuasion. But it's not just persuasion by itself.

It's a tender, loving persuasion. The word love is, as you might have guessed, the word agape, which is a reference to divine love.

[23:17] Now, here's the idea. Put all that together. The unconditional love of God in Christ should persuade all of us to love one another unconditionally.

That's exactly what Paul's getting at. The unconditional love of God in Christ, that, by the way, the Bible says, has been shed abroad in our hearts.

God should persuade us, tenderly persuade us, to love one another unconditionally. Or to put it another way, and think about this, the divine love that reached down out of heaven and saved you should compel you to live in a spirit of unity with one another, to love one another sacrificially.

That's what the word agape means. To put aside all of our petty disagreements and differences. To love in spite of imperfections, which we all have.

That's the idea here. The love of Christ, which has been shed abroad in our hearts, compels us to unity in the church. That's a strong motivation.

[24:42] God's love. All right, so, if there is any comfort or tender persuasion of love, and there is, there is, plenty of it, God loves you, then fulfill my joy by having the same love for one another.

You see, it's very simple. I don't mean simple to do. I mean simple to understand. If this, then this.

If this, then this. If there is this comfort of love, then have that same love for one another.

Motivational, or motivation to unity number three.

Communion. Communion. Consolation. Compulsion. Communion. There's consolation in Christ.

There's this compulsion of love.

And then there's communion. Communion with the Spirit of Christ. Verse one. Here's the third. If. If any fellowship of the Spirit, then, verse two, fulfill my joy by being of one accord.

[25:57] There's the third. Then, verse two, if any fellowship of the Spirit, then fulfill my joy by being of one accord. One accord. One accord corresponds with fellowship of the Spirit.

Now, what's the motivation here? Well, the word translated fellowship, or participation in some versions of the Bible, is also a word that ought to be familiar.

You've heard this word from this pulpit a number of times. I've explained the meaning of it. It is the word koinonia. Koinonia is the word that Paul selected here, and koinonia is a key word in the New Testament for describing the church, or a word that ought to describe the church.

Koinonia, or fellowship. Now, Paul is not using it in the first sense to refer to the fellowship here.

He's using it in the first sense to reference our fellowship with God.

He said the fellowship of the Spirit. Koinonia, of the Spirit. And our relationship, you see, with God is one of fellowship.

[27:10] Or, more accurately, it is one of joint participation. That's why some versions use the word participation there.

Joint participation. That's our relationship with the Holy Spirit of God. And so here's the idea. We are joint participants in the things of God.

That's a wonderful thing. When you think about it. An awesome reality. I mean, just us. Little old us. But all of our imperfections, and all of our weaknesses, and we're just puny little humans, and we, by virtue of God's grace, have been brought into a position of joint participation with Him.

With God. The great almighty God. And all of His purposes in this world. We are joint participants in that.

[28:16] In all the things of God. And so, we should ask ourselves, if each believer in the church is a joint participant with the Holy Spirit of God, and we are, then should we not also be joint participants together in that work?

And not at odds with one another. Not in competition with one another. Not going different, each one's different way, and having our own interests.

If we are in joint participation with the God of the universe, then we ought to be joint participants with one another.

And by the way, the corresponding phrase, being of one accord, that's in verse 2. Be of one accord. That corresponds with fellowship.

Being of one accord. We could even say, being in fellowship with one another. Being of one accord. That word means, is a word that means soul to soul.

[29 : 25] That would be a literal translation of the Greek word. Soul to soul. We're to be soul to soul. That is the idea is, that we come together, and fit together, and cooperate with one another, in all those things that matter to the church, and matter to God's purpose.

Soul to soul. We come together. That's such a picture. A picturesque word of unity. We're not souls and souls.

We're soul to soul. We come together. It's very much like the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle. Each individual piece. Now think about a jigsaw puzzle.

You can picture that. How many of you like to put puzzles together? Just raise your hand. How many of you don't like it at all? Raise your hand. I've got a few out there, even my own son. Well, even if you don't care about jigsaw puzzles, you know what they are, right?

Okay. So the illustration will work. All right. Now think about it. Each individual piece of that jigsaw puzzle, whether it has, you know, 25 pieces, and that might be the kind that you like to put together, or it has 1,000 or 2,000 or 3,000 or however many.

[30 : 47] Each individual piece has what we could call protrusions, things that stick out, and indentations, don't they?

Every piece of the puzzle has protrusions and indentations. That's the nature of a jigsaw puzzle, each piece. Now compare that to the church. We are all individual pieces of the puzzle, in a sense. And we have our protrusions and our indentations. And our protrusions, I think, could represent our strengths. That is, our gifts that God has given to each one of us.

Talents. They're similar to gifts, but something a little different. Our experiences and our abilities. All right. So the protrusions, like a piece of the puzzle, our protrusions represent our strengths.

The indentations represent then what? Our weaknesses. And I know this may come as a shock to you, but every one of us have weaknesses.

[31 : 59] And so our indentations, our protrusions, our strengths, our indentations, our weaknesses, our faults, our limitations, and we all have those.

Our shortcomings, and we all deal with those. Our undeveloped areas of life, and we all have those. Indentations. Now, the beauty of it is this.

Like the pieces of a puzzle that have protrusions and indentations that fit together, complement one another, like the pieces of a puzzle, we complement one another.

God has designed it that way. We complement. We fit together. Here's that idea. Soul to soul. We complement one another, and like the pieces of a puzzle, we form one big picture.

Hopefully it's a beautiful picture. The picture of Christ and His redeeming love for a world of lost sinners.

[33 : 11] We complement one another. Now, just compare the church to a jigsaw puzzle. Each piece of the puzzle is important.

Isn't it? Each piece is. And not one piece is more important than another. I know that within the church we have pieces of the puzzle that may be more visible, may be more prominent by virtue of the job that's been given to them.

But not one piece is more important than another. Just like a jigsaw puzzle. And let me add this. When one piece is missing, I mean, its absence is very obvious, isn't it?

In fact, I would say that it ruins the picture. It ruins the puzzle. I mean, how many of you have ever spent hours putting together a jigsaw puzzle only to discover that there's a piece missing?

It's usually in the pocket of someone there at the table, and they're waiting, you know, to put that last piece in. You know, I see you, Wes. I see that hand down there. But sometimes the piece is lost.

[34 : 27] You know, I think over the years we've had a number of jigsaw puzzles, and you know how the boxes get, you know, they kind of come apart, and maybe a piece will fall out. And then when you get together, and you put the puzzle together, then there's just one piece missing, and it just ruins the whole thing.

How many of you want to hold on to a puzzle that's missing a piece? It becomes useless in a sense. Why? Because there's one piece missing.

And the church is in a sense like that, when there's one piece out of sorts. One piece missing. One piece disengaged. Then it mars the picture.

And I would have this. When each piece of the puzzle is present, and in its proper place, what happens? Each piece blends in with the rest of the pieces to make up a whole picture.

In fact, I would say that no one piece stands out as more important than any other piece when the whole thing is put together. In fact, the individuality of each piece of the puzzle becomes virtually invisible.

[35 : 43] Indistinguishable. Because individuality is replaced by the completed puzzle. By the completed picture. And it's the picture you see, not the individual pieces of the puzzle.

What an illustration of the church. And this is the idea behind this one accord. Soul to soul.

Intertwined. Souls intertwined with soul. We have come together for the things that matter. In God's kingdom. What a motivation for unity.

Communion with the Spirit of Christ. And so, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, any joint partnership of the Spirit, and there is, there is, then, fulfill my joy by being in one accord.

Soul to soul. In joint participation with one another. Motivational, or motivation to unity number four.

[36 : 53] Compassion. Compassion from the heart of Christ. Compassion from the heart of Christ. Here is how Paul articulates this.

Verse 1. If any affection and mercy, then, verse 2, fulfill my joy by being, and here is the corresponding then, of one mind.

Of one mind. Now, affection and mercy are the root and fruit of the unity in the church.

Affection is the root of it. Mercy is the fruit of it. Of unity. The word affection in the New King James, that's how it's translated in New King James, is, if you have a King James, is the word bowels.

Not a very pleasant word. Bowels in mercy, is how the old King's English put it. But the word is affection.

[37 : 58] But the word is translated bowels because it is a picture kind of word, and it's a reference to the internal organs. Still not exactly a very exciting thought.

Stomach. Intestines. Including the heart. In fact, it has come to really mean the heart, in that sense. The inside of a person. And this is where we feel emotion. This is where emotion comes from. From inside of us. You know, that gut feeling.

Or heart feeling. It's emotion. And so, that's why it's translated bowels in some versions. Or King James. So, it's the inward part of this.

It's the source of it from where it comes. And then, the word mercy is the outward expression of it. The outward expression.

[39 : 01] The tangible expression of it. The observable expression of it. You know, the part that reaches out to others and actually touches others and in our relationship with one another.

So, there's affections and mercy. The root of it, the fruit of it. Of unity. Now, having explained that, from where do these things come?

Affection and mercy. From where do these graces come? These are graces. From Jesus. They come from Him.

We would not have them apart from Him. He is ultimately the source. Because Jesus has affection and mercy for you.

And so, Paul is saying, here is your motivation for unity. If there is any affection and mercy from Christ, and there is, there is, loads of it, then, fulfill my joy by being of one mind.

[40 : 15] There's the corresponding then. I don't see how those go together. Affection, mercy, and one mind. Well, the idea is, the affection and mercy comes by virtue of Christ's presence in your life.

You and I have received His affection and mercy. This is how He has a mind toward us. And we're to have that same mind toward another.

In fact, the word comes from one word and it means to think the one thing. Think the one thing.

So, it affects the thinking. Now, see, here. Disunity is wrong thinking. To withhold and not have any affection and show mercy to one another.

To express mercy toward one another is the wrong way. It's the wrong way of thinking. In fact, I could say this, that disharmony and disunity in the church is a form of spiritual lunacy.

[41 : 29] We're lunatics. In fact, I heard a story about a man who was visiting a mental hospital and taking kind of a tour of it. And as he was walking around, he was amazed to see that there were only three guards in the entire place to guard a hundred inmates who were mentally disturbed.

And so he asked his tour guide, he said, don't you fear that these people will overpower these three guards and escape? And his tour guide said, no, because lunatics never unite.

And spiritual lunatics who are not thinking the right way. And that is sometimes indicative of God's people. We're not thinking right. We don't unite and come together.

These are motivations, you see. Motivations to unity. So the fellowship of joy and perfection, spiritual maturity, that's our subject here.

And Paul's first point of focus is unity. It's unity, unity within the church, within the local body of believers. First, there's the exhortation to unity.

[42:41] This is a command. It's not optional. And then there is the motivation. We have every motivation. And Paul gives us four huge ones and then one more and I'll be finished.

The demonstration of unity. The demonstration of unity. What does unity in the church look like? What does it look like?

Well, we really only have time to identify it and give just maybe scant little explanation. But look at verses three and four. And I said look at it.

You might want to just listen because I want to read it to you in an old, old version. Really more like a paraphrase. And I like it because it really brings out the dynamics of this.

How unity is demonstrated in the church. What it looks like. Listen to this version. Never acting for private ends.

[43:47] That is, self-centered goals. What does that mean? God's people are never, each of us individuals, are never to be conducting our lives in this way that we are moving toward our own self-centered goals.

Sometimes God's people in the church have their own goals. Self-centered goals. And so Paul is saying never conduct yourself that way.

Never acting for private ends. or, he goes on, from vanity. King James, I think, has vain glory.

That is, self-centered glory. Never, see, never conducting God's people in the church, each of us individually, never, ever, ever, ever, to conduct ourselves for self-centered goals or for self-centered glory.

So how should we conduct ourselves? By humbly considering each other the better man.

[45:01] You can tell this is an old translation. Let me read it again. By humbly considering each other the better woman or man.

Man or woman. Whichever applies to you. Now think about that. By humbly considering not yourself but each one the better person.

What a demonstration of unity. How we demonstrate that each of us individually. And let me go on.

And each, here's how this old translation puts it, each with an eye to or a focus on the interests of others.

Do you think we normally, let me rephrase that, do you think you normally have that as your focus? I ask myself, do I really think that's my focus? That my focus is the interest of others. That's first.

[46:19] Now he does say we ought to look out for the interests of our own interests too. That is, listen to it, each with an eye to or focus on the interests of others as well as to his own.

We care for ourselves as well. But note the priority. Note the priority. And so here, here's the idea. You see, the description of what unity looks like is humility.

That's what it looks like. Unity looks like humility. We humble ourselves. We put ourselves second. We put others before us. We look out for their interests even before we look out for our own. And we do not have, we're not acting for our own ends, our own goals, our self-centered goals, or for self-glory, or aggrandizement.

We're humble, considering each other the better. And having this as our focus, the interests of others, before our lives.

[47:31] Before our own interests. That's what unity looks like. Humility. .