

"Rearranging Your Soul"

Philippians 2:1-11 February 6, 2019 – Jeff Lyle

We must be perfectly clear on this: to become a Christian is to enter into a lifelong process where everything continues to be changed by God. The idea that we can be brought from the kingdom of darkness into the Kingdom of God without there being substantial change is spiritually impossible. We move from death to life, and then from life to deeper, abundant life. Because of this, our relationships with others change dramatically. We move from living for self to living in Jesus who calls us to serve others. Ultimately, God brings us into His deepest commitments to His own Son. He is set to establish the glory of His Son – and He invites us to live joyfully in that reality. Paul tells us in these verses, what that will look like in your own life.

I. A Healthy Reminder of Our Vertical Experience (1)

A. We are spiritually strengthened - "So if there is any encouragement in Christ..."

B. We are reassured about our burdens - "...any comfort from love..."

C. We are always accompanied - "...any participation in the Spirit..."

D. We are deeply touched within - "...any affection and sympathy..."
affection = bowels, innards

Paul uses these five descriptors to give us a creative look at the whole of what it means to belong to God through Jesus Christ. Within each Christian's salvation, there is the presence of **encouragement, comfort, partnership** with the Holy Spirit, deep reaching **affection** and **mercy/sympathy** received and mercy given to others. Paul is masterfully reminding each of us that our salvation is a package-deal that includes so much more than a forensic justification before the holy judgment bar of God. Eternal life is not merely a new duration of existence with God, it is a completely new quality of life in the Spirit. We are reminded in these verses not to fail to remember all our benefits granted to us through Christ (**see also Psalm 103:2, 116:12**). The need here is for us to intentionally remain grateful for all that we have been granted in Jesus Christ. All that flows in the rest of this passage is to spring forth from the well of gratitude for all that we have received in grace through Jesus Christ.

II. A Clear Expectation for Our Horizontal Experience (2-7)

"Rearranging Your Soul"

Philippians 2:1-11 February 6, 2019 – Jeff Lyle

A. Intentional pursuit of unity (2) - "...complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind."

We are here called to pursue oneness with all others who share life in Christ. Paul's writings are crystal clear in portraying salvation, not as an individual experience lived out in isolation, but as an intertwined life with other believers. We are called to cultivate oneness about every possible Kingdom element. This requires work, a consistent approach in properly knowing both the heart of God and the Word of God. It is important that believers share the same mind about Kingdom essentials. When we cannot reach that place on full agreement, then we are to operate in the same love with one another. We value one another, we serve one another, and we abide with one another. Love must be defined as our commitment to seek the highest good of the other person. When we do that, we exude effort in remaining in oneness with each other. We want to do life in harmony with one another, so we continue to pursue oneness of mind and heart with each other. This is the Holy Spirit's work in our lives. Paul, as the leader of the Philippians, states that his own personal joy could only reach fulness when he was able to know that the Philippian Christians were operating at this level of intentional unity.

B. Perpetual commitment to deeper humility (3) - "Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves."

So, how does a Christian live in this manner? What happens when we get at odds with someone else in the Church – especially if they are objectively wrong? This is where we are reminded of one of the most powerfully functional attributes of Jesus Christ: HUMILITY. It is spiritually impossible for any Christian to live for the glory of Jesus apart from an intentional commitment to remain humble throughout life. Humility is a non-negotiable for the believer. We are expressly forbidden from living under the impulse of ambition that promotes ourselves. We cannot live with any inward heart-posture of conceit, believing ourselves to be better than any other. Proactively clothing ourselves in the garment of humility, we actually reverse the default posture of our human heart by counting other people of greater value than ourselves. Plant to be tested in this area repeatedly. You will need at least one occasion of breakthrough in this area, possibly more. Humility is anchored in our love for others so, as our love grows, our humility will deepen.

C. A pursuit of advancing others (4) - "Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."

"Rearranging Your Soul"

Philippians 2:1-11 February 6, 2019 – Jeff Lyle

Beyond a simple heart posture of humility, there is a reasonable expectation that there will be *an outflow of humility*. We will actually be transformed to begin looking out for the betterment of others. Our flesh trains us to look at for ourselves at the expense of others' needs. The Holy Spirit produces within the yielded believer a flow of life that seeks to serve others in love, promoting them and welcoming the Lord to promote us when and if He chooses to do so. If we live for self-promotion, we cannot walk in fellowship with Jesus. This is the practical reason that we are forbidden in these verses from looking only to our own interests. Looking to our own interests is an all-consuming activity which cannot facilitate a life in which Jesus lives through us into the lives of others. Deliverance from being consumed with our own needs is to begin intentionally looking out for other people.

D. A refusal to live in self-promotion or preservation (5-8) - "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

Now Paul motivates us by connecting this call to live selflessly with our identity in Jesus Christ. There is no higher example of selflessness and humility than Jesus. This is not only true because of what Jesus did while He walked on earth, but because of where He originally was before coming to earth. The Prince of Heaven evacuated His glorious throne where He was worshipped continually. He did not clutch His divinity – and all the rights which are attached to it. He intentionally embraced a self-emptying which divested Himself of His position and privilege. The ultimate arrival of this *kenosis*, the emptying of Himself, was the cross where Jesus died. Notice the downward direction that Jesus took upon Himself: from a divine throne downward to a human womb. From a human womb into a servant's role – yes, the King of glory became an obedient servant. Everything and everyone Jesus served had no authority over Him. Yet, He became servant to them. Ultimately, Jesus, the source of all eternal blessing, took up the cross as the instrument of cursing. The holy One became sin for us. He did not promote Himself or preserve Himself. He poured Himself out for the eternal good of others, and at an immeasurable cost to Himself.

"Rearranging Your Soul"

Philippians 2:1-11 February 6, 2019 – Jeff Lyle

III. The Full Context for Our Entire Experience (9-11) **THE LORDSHIP OF CHRIST**

A. Where our focus rests (9) - "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name..."

As Jesus completed the work that the Father gave Him to do (John 17:4), and always did the things which brought pleasure to the Father (John 8:29), He was eternally placed at the pinnacle of glory. As the Supreme focal point in the cosmos, God the father saw to it that there would never be any name higher than that of His Son. During His life, Jesus was diminished and despised (Matthew 13:55) by many. Names like Herod, Pilate, Caiaphas and even Caesar were circulating about within the story of Jesus' rejection and crucifixion. When He died, it seemed like these names would forever tower over the name of Jesus. Not so! God exalted Jesus' name above every other name.

B. Where our will bows in honor (10) - "...so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth..."

We are here told why God the father exalted Jesus above every other. The Father made his Son, Jesus, to become the visible Lord over all of creation. Jesus is supreme. Jesus is the greatest, the highest and the most glorious. Every created being – angelic, demonic and human – will bow before Him. Christians, we did this when we were saved. We honored Him as our Lord. We continue to do that for the rest of our lives and throughout all of eternity. Mark this down: every created being will unquestionably bow before the Son of God. All will acknowledge His supreme. Lordship. It has never been a matter of *if* this will happen, only when.

C. What our mouths & lives proclaim (11) - "...and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Imagine: every rational creature created by God will, in the end, give verbal expression that Jesus is Lord of all. We will not merely bow our knees, we will declare with our mouths His lordship. The entire context for the Christian life is that we are visible and verbal testimonies of the supremacy of Jesus Christ. In this, God the Father is glorified and pleased. He loves the exaltation of His Son. This is the purpose of our rearranged souls: glory for Christ, both now and forever.