

Brookfield Church of Christ Philippians Study Chapter 2

Synopsis of chapter 2 (floralheightschurchofchrist.org)

The Philippians were sure to face persecutions as they went about preaching the gospel message (Phil. 1:28-30). The Philippians needed a milieu in which they could endure said suffering even though Paul states that it is “granted in behalf of Christ” (Phil. 1:29). Jesus (Phil. 2:6-8), Paul (Phil. 2:17), and latter he will mention other faithful Christians (cf. 3:17) were to be their context for suffering. Paul encourages the Philippians to exercise the mind of Christ when faced with persecution (Phil. 2:1-5). The mind of Christ is to be an encourager, able to make events less painful to endure, sharing in truth, compassionate, united with others in truth, not factious, vainglorious, but rather lowly of mind being of the opinion that others are better than self and always looking to the needs of others.

No greater example of selflessness can be found than that of Christ. Jesus existed from all eternity with God as God (Phil. 2:6 [cf. Jn. 1:1, 14, 29-30; Eph. 1:4]). The Lord “emptied Himself” so that others may be saved from the consequences of their sin. Jesus gave up the glories of heaven to live as a servant though He was a king (Phil. 2:7). The author of Hebrews terms Christ, “the effulgence of his (God’s) glory, and the very image of his substance...” (Heb. 1:3). The objective of Christ’s life on earth is given at Hebrews 2:10, “For it became him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through sufferings” (see study # 19). Through the process of suffering at the hands of sinful men Jesus would be made perfect. Again, the author of Hebrews states, “Who in the days of his flesh, having offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and having been heard for his godly fear, though he was a Son, yet learned obedience by the things which he suffered;” (Heb. 5:7-8).

Now we have the Lord’s obedience connected to His suffering and perfection. Paul states in Philippians 2:8, “and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.” Jesus was not unlike all of humanity in that He had to suffer persecution, trials, and temptation so that he may grow into perfection (cf. James 1:3ff). Certainly all clearly see that the idea of God voluntarily suffering persecution and temptations is a humbling of one’s self. If Jesus so desired He could have called legions of angel’s to his aid to destroy the sinful world (cf. Matt. 26:53). The perfection Jesus obtained by humbly submitting to His trials in obedience gave way to man’s perfection. The author of Hebrews goes on to say, “For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin” (Heb. 4:15).

Furthermore, “And having been made perfect, he became unto all them that obey him the author of eternal salvation; named of God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek” (5:9-10). Paul tells us that all that Jesus voluntarily gave up in heaven was regained when He went to the cross, was resurrected, and ascended into heaven (Phil. 2:9-11). The fact of the matter is that we will suffer persecution as we go through life convicting the world of sin (II Tim. 3:12). I can emotionally handle this when I have the support of other brethren of like precious faith who have the mind of Christ!

The last parts of the chapter (verses 19 – 30) are words of commendation from Paul on behalf of Timothy and Epaphroditus. Timothy was to come shortly to the Philippians and Epaphroditus

immediately. Timothy would inform the brethren of Paul's status in Rome and Epaphroditus would comfort them immediately with his being present with them. Epaphroditus brought aid from the Philippians to Paul and in the process became sick and nearly died. The brethren in Philippi were very worried about their beloved brother and so Paul wants to send him quickly to them.

The final words of Paul in this chapter help us to make a strong case for Paul being released from his Roman prison. Paul said, "but I trust in the Lord that I myself also shall come shortly" (Phil. 2:24). Note the significant change in Paul's tone when writing II Timothy 4:6-7, "For I am already being offered, and the time of my departure is come. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith:" Clearly, Paul is at a different condition when writing II Timothy. Consider the following regarding a "fifth tour of preaching" by the apostle Paul.

Outline of Chapter 2

- 1) Have the mind of Christ (2:1-5):** 2Tim 3:12, Eph 5:2, Eph 4

- 2) Jesus temporarily gave up the glories of heaven so that all of mankind may share eternal glory with Him (2:6-11):** Col 2:9, John 1:14, Heb 4:15, 2:10

- 3) From Jesus' obedience to the Philippians (2:12-18):** Matt 26:53-54, 13:47-50, Rev 20:1-15

- 4) Commendation of Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-30):** Phil 1:25, Col 4:7-14
2 Tim 4:6-8, Rom 16:1-2