Philippians

Part 2

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[00:00:00] I want to read to you the first 11 verses, 2 Philippians, verse 1 to 11.

If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bells of mercies, fulfill ye my joy that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory, but in loneliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, [00:01:04] and was made in the likeness of men.

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient, think of that, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and hath given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

For the benefit of any that were not here last evening, I might just recap on a few points that we had before us.

Those of us that were together will remember that the apostle spoke to those that he was going to address, the Philippians, as being in Christ. [00:02:04] Not only were they in Christ, but we see afterwards that they themselves, Paul and Timothy, he speaks of them as bond slaves, or bondmen, and it was suggested that the bondmen, being in Christ, it might not be that we are bondmen.

And as we turn from that thought, we thought of them also as the saints. Then it was that he prayed for them in a very comprehensive way, praying firstly that their love might abound, because how important that love is, isn't it? How important that love might come in, and no doubt as we go through these scriptures that we read together during this week, love will have a great part in that which we have to say. Then you remember, he spoke of those things that had happened to him. That's something we mentioned, that we often speak to one another about, the things that happened to us,

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and he said concerning his conditions and his position, [00:03:05] that the things that had happened unto him had turned out to the furtherance of the Gospel. To the furtherance of the Gospel, and because of that, how he glorified God. Then we see at the end of that scripture, we just mentioned those words, that the Lord Jesus Christ said that in the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world. What wonderful words, and I think we'll start with those same words tonight. Here we speak in this next chapter concerning very different things, don't we?

Here we find just a different subject, and the Apostle begins by using a very strange word. He says, if there be any consolation in Christ.

And the Apostle is accustomed to writing like that, I feel, because if you turn to the next epistle, the Colossian epistle, [00:04:04] he says there, if ye be risen with Christ, if ye be risen.

Who was he speaking to? Was he speaking to believers? Of course he was. Was he speaking to believers here? Yes, he was. And he says, if there is therefore consolation in Christ.

I wonder whether in his mind he had any doubt whether there was or not. I don't think for a moment that he had, and I would realise that he had not, because of that consolation being something that he had appreciated.

What does this consolation really mean? Well, I could speak of it as encouragement, or on the other hand, of putting heart, of putting heart into the people of God. Doesn't the Lord say, and I mention those words again, he says to his own, in the world ye shall have tribulation, there it is before you, but be of good cheer. [00:05:01] And what wonderful words they are.

And I would say that with regard to the Apostle Paul, as he said these words, as he wrote these words to these dear ones, there was something before him that had been in his life just earlier on.

There was the time in the Acts of the Apostles, in the 23rd chapter, where there he had not testified as he might have done before the people that were set before him there to judge. I feel that on that one occasion there was a time of testimony lost, and on that occasion he says to one, I know in ignorance, God will smite thee, thou whited wall.

And then after that he set the Sadducees and the Pharisees at Variance, and how sad he must have been when he was there that night. When he went to his bed that night, if he had a bed, how sad he must have been.

But it was in that sadness that the Lord comes to him and says, [00:06:04] Be of good cheer, Paul, as thou hast testified here in Jerusalem, so shall you testify in Rome.

And how those words must have come back to him later when he came to Rome, and now that he was in Rome, and thought of the way in which he had been able to testify, how true that was, and how greatly encouraged he must have been because of the word of consolation from the Lord, because of the word of comfort, because of the word of joy that the Lord had given him at that time. And doesn't he give us that joy as well? Doesn't he put heart into us? As we think of the Apostle, he was there, and no doubt his desire was, under the Lord's hand, to put heart into these believers, if there be any consolation, if any comfort of love.

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Now when I think of the comfort of love, [00:07:01] where do I turn to find comfort, and where do I find that comfort of love? I see in one place, it doesn't come to my mind just now where it is, that we, through comfort of the Scriptures, might have hope. That's wonderful, isn't it? And as I see the Lord Jesus Christ, even down here, speaking to those that were sad, I see him coming and unfolding the Scriptures to them for their comfort, and it says, concerning those who he comforted, did not our hearts burn in us as he talked with us by the way? Is there any comfort of love? Is there any comfort of love? There is that comfort.

The Apostle Paul says, if, as a challenge to them, and there the comfort is found in the Scriptures. There the comfort of love is found in the Scriptures. It may be that he uses the Scriptures. It may be that he uses his servants, but in those two ways this comfort of love may be known.

[00:08:05] And then, if any fellowship of the Spirit, and as I see those wonderful words, my mind goes back to Old Testament times, and do you remember on that occasion when Moses went into the mount, he was told how to build the tabernacle, and there he was told that the boards were to be placed around the tabernacle. There were 48 of those boards, and as they were placed, however were they going to stand up and be bound together? Because, you know, on one occasion we read concerning that tabernacle, it was the church in the wilderness, and it is typical to us of the church here on earth. And as I think of those boards, each one of them there, so great, 17 feet 6 tall and 31 and a half inches wide, how thick they were I do not know, but that which bound them together was the center bar that went through, [00:09:03] I don't know whether it went through the center of the boards, that's a point that is debatable, but it went in an unseen way through the boards and round, holding them together.

Fellowship of the Spirit. When we think of how the Spirit works with us, how much that bond holds us together, doesn't it? If any bells and mercies, if any bells and mercies, any tenderheartedness and compassion, that was found in the Lord Jesus Christ, wasn't it, when he was here? And don't you think that it's found now in him?

You think of that wonderful word that was used in his life when he says, I have compassion on the multitude, and yet we look into the Old Testament Scripture and so often as we read those words, we would realize that they are not only for the people to whom they were written, [00:10:01] but to us as well, his compassions fail not.

How wonderful to think that his compassions fail not toward each one of us that are here. Hasn't he that wonderful compassion and tenderheartedness toward us?

Now I feel that we need that at times, don't you? And I feel that these poor Philippians at this time, they did need it in the fact that they, in common with us, are those that sometimes go astray, are those that sometimes are disappointed and perplexed, and how it is then that his tenderness and his compassion is toward us.

I think of his compassion upon those dear ones that were upon the lake in the 21st chapter of John.

Don't you remember there they were? They'd gone away, they were not told to go out fishing, but there he told them to go to the place where he would meet them at Galilee. There will I meet with thee, and those poor disciples went out fishing. [00:11:04] And as they went out fishing on that night, they came back disappointed. They came back empty-handed and no doubt they were frustrated in

what they'd done. And there was Jesus standing on the shore, and don't you think that just at that moment his heart was filled with compassion toward them. And isn't it wonderful if we think of the Lord Jesus Christ coming in with that tender compassion at that time, having a fire of coals, and having the food ready at hand for them in their coldness and in their disappointment. Don't you think that he's the same today? Don't you think that in our lives he has this compassion for us today? Yes, as I see these wonderful things, are they true? He says, if. Are they true? The Apostle Paul says, if these things are true, well there ought to be a change in your outlook. There ought to be something about you that ought to give me joy in yourselves. [00:12:05] Don't you think that as well, as we think of these things, and as no doubt we could ponder over them so long, don't you think that there ought to be a great change seen in our lives? That there ought to be a change in the lives of these Philippians because of the fact.

There ought to be the change because of the fact of what has happened. Yes, and there should be a change in them because of what people were doing just at that moment. They were doing just as people are doing with ourselves today. People were looking on.

And because of that there should be a change in ourselves. And there should be a change, there must be a change in their lives and there must be a change in their lives when we know that the Lord desires to use us and he desires to use us together.

Now I know that the Lord uses one here and one there but don't you think that he uses us very often as an assembly? [00:13:04] Don't you think that he uses us in that great way so that we work together? Don't you think that also in every way he desires us to be one together? And therefore the beginning of this scripture speaks of our relationships, the one with another.

If these things are true concerning the love and concerning the joy that the Lord Jesus Christ gives us, if these things are true of us who have that bond uniting us in the Spirit of God, if we have that tender heartedness and compassion towards us well there ought to be a unity with us. There ought to be a positive relationship between us as people of God. Now as I say these things it doesn't mean to say tonight that I'm standing and saying to you that you ought to have a positive relationship between yourselves. There ought to be and everyone is concerned in this [00:14:01] and it must be that everyone is concerned in this. As we think of ourselves we very often think of a little part of the assembly but everyone should be concerned in this relationship and therefore as we read this scripture he says let nothing be done through strife or vain glory.

As I think of those words he's going to soon speak concerning the Lord Jesus Christ and as I think of the Lord Jesus how humble he was we are going into that in a minute but with regard to ourselves let us in no way put ourselves into the forefront. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory. Let it not be with regard to us as brothers or sisters that we seek a place of preeminence or push ourselves into a position in this way so that self is before us.

Do you remember poor old Jacob in his life [00:15:02] how this came in his life so often and so long?

Don't you remember that there in his life his life was that which he lived for himself even till that time when the Lord strove with him and when the Lord brought him into a position so that he could call him a prince with God. He was striving beforehand for himself and he strove very successfully for himself and yet he didn't receive a blessing from the Lord.

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But in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves and when I read that although it's quite easy to read it takes some thinking out doesn't it? But in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves and who could I turn to in the scripture to give you an illustration with regard to that apart from the Lord Jesus Christ.

And when we think of him in his [00:16:03] I was going to say in his greatness however can I use a word to speak of the Lord Jesus Christ in all his greatness but as I think of him in his greatness how selfless he was.

In the whole of his pathway we see him so selfless don't we? Even to the end when there were those that would have apprehended him and then he says if you seek me let these my disciples go their way what a wonderful thought he had and how selfless he was.

Then he says let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus.

Have for your mind the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ have for your mind the mind of the Lord Jesus Christ and as we think of that mind how can we have it before we see those things [00:17:01] that are in these previous verses.

He says fulfill ye my joy that ye be like-minded having the same love being of one accord and of one mind.

How could that be possible that we have the mind of the Lord Jesus before those things are before us that we be like-minded so that our minds as an assembly might be one.

Now I feel that here the apostle is going to speak to these disciples these servants in this assembly these that are in Christ and as he speaks to them he would realise that there are older and younger there are those in different walks of life there are those in different positions of life and yet he would say to them that if there is to be any blessing in their midst that they have to have this same mind it is that they have that single-mindedness first. [00:18:02] Now this is so different from what our nature would have us to be isn't it so that as I see him speaking here he says it because of what has gone before and because of what's going after and yet he says in this same verse having the same love if the mind is to be one it will not be a mind of unity apart from the fact that there's a heart of love as I think of the people of the Lord as they gather together they might act as one but that which prompts the acting should be the heart therefore with each one of us there should be that throbbing of our hearts together so that as we work in that singleness of mind it is because our hearts are in unity the one with another and in love toward the Lord Jesus so it is being of one accord.

That's wonderful isn't it [00:19:01] and that would be don't you think the perfect assembly if we could see it in that way how wonderful to think that we have this word of exhortation to us to be single-minded and having our hearts knit the one to another so that there might be that unity between us and I say again what a wonderful assembly it will be if it is worked out in that way but don't you think that as we look into this as we look into this epistle and as we look into other epistles the apostle has this so much before him the unity of believers don't you think that it is something that we shall see in these chapters as we go through them doesn't he say later on in one of the chapters to say the same things unto you to write the same things unto you for me is not grievous but for you it is safe and isn't it that as we go through these scriptures we shall see time and time and time again their love is mentioned their unity is mentioned [00:20:03] and why is that don't you think that he'd seen in his

history among those churches don't you think he'd seen where there had been disunity and what a wreck it had made of the church where it was as he'd seen that disunity in Corinth he could never forget that which had happened there and therefore we see he stresses more and more the singleness of mind and the singleness of heart that there might be also the singleness of soul their one accord among the believers and that's something that we would covet today and then he says and let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus have him for your mind who being in the form of God and as I think of those words I think of people that come round to the houses now and as they speak of him they speak in a very derogatory way [00:21:02] as I see the Lord Jesus Christ spoken of here as being in the form of God I see him as God co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit I see as I turn to the scriptures that the Lord possessed me in the beginning of his way before his works of old I see in the Genesis it says let us make man in our own image after our own likeness and then I go to that book that wonderful book of epistle to the Hebrews and I see there God the Father speaking and he says but unto the Son he saith thy throne O God is for ever and ever a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God thought the Godhead not something to be grasped at isn't it that today there are those that grasp for high positions isn't it that those two dear people [00:22:02] that were found in the garden of Eden were those that grasped for a position as Satan came in on that occasion putting before them the very fact that they would be as gods knowing good and evil wasn't it that they fell into sin because of the fact that they wanted position as we see the Lord Jesus Christ here the Godhead was not a thing to be grasped at because he is God he was God he ever will be God he is co-equal and co-eternal with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit and yet I was I had a book placed into my hands once and it was said by the person who gave it to me I hope you'll read that and give me your comments on it and the book was on the Gospel of John and therefore I was interested in that book and as I read at the beginning I thought that there would be much there that would help me but then the man started commenting [00:23:01] on the first verse of that chapter after a long introduction and he said in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was a God and there I left the book and handed it back to the person and said this book is not worth reading it doesn't give the Lord Jesus Christ his position he is God and let's ever remember and let's ever maintain that he is God in his pathway during the whole of his pathway while here he always maintained the fact till the end that he was the Son of God he was God you remember right at the end when Pilate says to him art thou the Son of God? thou sayest there were those times in his life when he would not maintain who he was as man it was that when they witnessed against him he allowed them to witness against him and he did not vindicate himself as a man but he ever maintained [00:24:02] in every place and among different groups of people the fact that he was God he was the Son of God the scripture then says but he made himself of no reputation or he emptied himself and as I see the Lord Jesus Christ coming down into this world he must empty himself to come here but how did he empty himself? because as I think of man in the flesh there is so much that he has to empty and how often we ourselves have to empty ourselves don't we? because there's one thing that characterises every one of us and that is pride and we must be humble we must be emptied of pride mustn't we? as we think of the Lord Jesus Christ coming down here in this world it says that he emptied himself and therefore what would it be do you think that he emptied himself of? [00:25:01] it wasn't that he emptied himself of his deity we must never think of that because when we see him in his pathway there are glimpses of the very fact that he was God as we see him in his pathway we see him on occasion that glory shining from him and therefore he did not empty himself of his deity and what was it then? don't you think that he veiled his glory while he was here and there was good reason why he should veil his glory while he was here because however could he have tabernacled with man in this world apart from veiling that glory I feel that we have little conception of the glory of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ when we think of those few glimpses

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that we have of his glory in his life the Apostle Peter speaks of the glory when they were with him on the Holy Mount and how glorious he was at that time but then we must remember [00:26:01] that he was there as man as God but as we think of the Lord Jesus Christ in his glory as we think of him as he is now we would not be able to gaze upon him at this moment because of that glory that excelleth because of that glory that's his and therefore we see that he lays aside or he veils the glory he made himself of no reputation and then the wonderful thought is that he took upon him the form of a servant and as I think of the Lord Jesus Christ coming down into this world my mind goes back immediately to those words in Isaiah 44, 42 Behold my servant whom I uphold wonderful words and yet there's so much in those words isn't there? Behold my servant whom I uphold I know mine elect in whom my soul delighteth but my servant whom I uphold meaning to me [00:27:01] that when the Lord Jesus Christ came down into this world and as he worked among men it wasn't in the power of him being son of God that he worked it was that he was here as servant and you remember that as we were reading the first chapter last night that we spoke of Paul and Timothy being bondmen and the same word is found here with regard to the Lord Jesus Christ he's a bondman he's come as a bondman he's come so differently from those of us that have been servants since and servants previous to his coming because as I see him as a servant in this world God delighted in him, didn't he? and he says Behold my servant whom I uphold mine elect in whom my soul delighteth there we see the delight of God was in him and why was that? it was in him because of the fact that he was a perfect servant [00:28:02] as before men and as before God so that as he begins his pathway we see the service the public service firstly beginning at the age of 12 what does he say? Wish ye not that I must be about my father's business and then constantly and consistently from that time forward to the time when there he's offered up to God during that time there he is as found as the servant right the way through to the last what a perfect servant he was upheld by his God I must dwell on that a little longer because of the fact that we here are left and the scripture says that he has left us an example that we should follow his steps and as I see that he's left us that example that we should follow his steps let's remember that it is as a servant as a man down here he would not be able to leave an example for me [00:29:01] were he to act as the son of God but as he was acting here as a servant upheld by God I know that I can have that same upholding in my life he drew from resources that I can draw from because every one of us should be as I mentioned last evening the bond slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ and therefore we need resources in our pathway and therefore we have the same resources to draw on that he drew on but it says that he was he took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and was made in the likeness of men and as I see the Lord Jesus Christ down in this world and as I see him as a man I see the heavens opened upon him and God from heaven [00:30:01] saying those wonderful words this is my beloved son I'm well pleased with him wasn't it wonderful for God whose delight was the Lord Jesus Christ to be able to look down into this world and to see a man that was doing his will does not the scripture say that he said lo I come to do thy will oh my God and as we see the Lord Jesus Christ down here from the very day that he began that ministry to the time of the end of his life we see him doing the will of God his father I will say with regard to him he had the limits of men but he had not their errors I say that because of the fact that as I see the Lord Jesus Christ living in this world he had his limitations as a man and as we see him in that pathway in the gospels we see those limits are seen in his life [00:31:01] and well for me that they are seen I see him in the fourth chapter of John and it says concerning him Jesus being wearied with his journey sat thus on the well as I see him there in his weariness I realise what it meant to him to tread the weary paths of earth as I see him in the 11th chapter of the gospel of John there a weeping by the grave of Lazarus I know that he was weeping because of the consequences of sin but let's remember also that he did weep with those that wept he had that sadness in his life he was that lonely pilgrim in his life he was the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief and as we see him down here he was a man he was a perfect man

let's ever remember that and being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself who? [00:32:01] the Lord of life and glory the one who had been the brightness of the eternal glory the one who God had possessed in the beginning of his way the one who said let us make man in our own image after our own likeness the one of whom it was said thy throne O God is forever and ever humbling himself and yet we don't like to do that thing do we? and yet it says with regard to him he humbled himself and became obedient have you ever thought of the fact that with regard to people in this world everybody is obedient to somebody it is that with regard to every one of us that are here tonight there has to be obedience in our lives and we are obedient to somebody but here was a person the Lord Jesus Christ who had never been obedient and there was no need because of who he was of being obedient and yet just at this time although there was not the necessity he voluntarily places himself [00:33:02] in the position to be obedient to be obedient and that was obedient to the will of God his father in every way and did not he rejoice in doing those things in which he was obedient because he delighted to do the will of God his father and did not he say on occasion not my will but thine be done and don't we see in the whole of his pathway how obedient he was as I think of him going to the various places where we see him isn't it that as he goes he goes in obedience to his father's will as we think of the time that I've mentioned in the 11th chapter of the Gospel of John where the Lord hears the word he whom thou lovest is sick it appears to be that his ear is closed but his ear is open to the will of God his father and he's obedient to him and he says this sickness is not unto death but it's for the glory of God [00:34:02] and therefore we see him stay just where he is till the time when God gives him the word to go forth and then he is obedient to that word but here it says he became obedient even to the death of the cross as I think of those words words almost fail me to speak concerning that which is before me just at this moment he became obedient unto death even the death of the cross as we see him being obedient to his father's will we see him obedient right to the end and when we think of those things that he said in his pathway how much they show his obedience in the 12th chapter of John the words come from his lips now is my soul troubled and what shall I say shall I say father save me from this hour but for this cause came I unto this hour [00:35:02] father glorify thy name and he knew that for the father to glorify his name would be that he would go into death later when apprehended in the garden we see that with regard to him he said the cup that my father has given me to drink shall I not drink it as we look into his sufferings in the books of the Old Testament how we find that subjection to the will of God his father, how we find that he is obedient unto death even the death of the cross so obedient so that we see that the scripture says that he could say prophetically thou wilt not leave my soul in the grave neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption was not it in his pathway that the Lord Jesus had said I have power to lay my life down I have power to take it again [00:36:02] this commandment have I received of my father and therefore we see wherefore God also hath highly exalted him and given him a name which is above every name God has exalted him and as I see God exalting him here it means to me that as the Lord Jesus Christ was obedient to death and went into that death the death of the cross it was that God raised him out gloriously from the dead as I see him there I see that God is satisfied with that wonderful work and as we gather together those of us that are here tonight as we gather and as we think of that death that was on our account do not we see in that death and do not we see afterwards in what God did do not we see that he was satisfied with what Christ had done we see on the one hand the fragrance of that obedience to God we see on the other hand [00:37:02] that now that work being completed he's raised by the glory of the father and he's given that glory wherefore God also hath highly exalted him you know how wonderful that is isn't it to think that he's exalted and hath given him a name which is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and I would suggest to you that this name is this and he's given him the name the name which is above every name and what a wonderful name it is the Lord Jesus Christ our saviour and our lord has the greatest name and what a wonderful name that is it is the name not just given him a name given him

the name that at the name of Jesus of things in heaven and things in earth and of things under the earth and that every tongue should confess Jesus Christ as lord to the glory of God the father [00:38:02] what wonderful words they are but just let's think of them a moment I think of the Lord Jesus Christ in those three and a half years down here and as I think of him treading those weary paths of earth I see him in all humility do I not I see him humble I see him meek and I see him treading those paths in that humility right the way through to the end I see that they can spit on his blessed face I see that they pluck the hair from his cheeks I see that they crown him with a crown of thorns and then I glory in the fact that there's a time coming when every knee is going to bow to him you know I feel that with regard to ourselves so often we have before us a vision of the Lord at the rapture and how well it is that we do as we think of ourselves there's one thing that we're looking for and that is the time when the Lord Jesus Christ comes for us to take us to be forever with himself and how joyous we will be [00:39:02] because of that which will happen to us just then but have you ever thought of it in this way the joy will come to us on that occasion but when the Lord Jesus Christ is manifest in his saints and when he has his rightful place in this world the glory will come to him and that is the day that I would look forward to and isn't it that in the epistles the apostle Paul so much has before him not so much the rapture but the appearing of the Lord Jesus Christ because of the fact that every knee is going to bow to him at that time and he's going to be in that place of glory how wondrous this is but let's remember that the apostle Paul was writing these words to remind them that they should be found in this humbleness of mind so as we get back to the thought that we had previously it is the thought that this mind should be in us this mind of humility should be in us [00:40:02] and if that mind is in us and if we gather and our heart and our mind are in accord and we gather in this way what a joyous assembly we will be won't we?

So let us just ponder over those words