

When Jesus Wins

by

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So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. (Philippians 2:1-2 ESV)

Don't you find it interesting that the Apostle Paul tells the church in Philippi to have the "same mind" and be of "one mind" in the same sentence? The question begs to be asked if Paul was being redundant, or is there similarity, but a different application of the words. Let's explore his exhortation to this church and then make application of truths with the Body of Christ at large, and most of all to a local congregation or a ministry such as Influencers. Let's begin with Paul's lead in with his words, "*if there is any encouragement in Christ.*"

To me Paul's lead in seals the deal, for he made an early connection with a thought I would ask you and me to consider. If Jesus allowed Himself to be beaten and crucified for me, does this make a difference in the way I live my life? If Christ has given me comfort and encouragement and joy, does this make any difference in my perspective with being a comforter and encourager to others? If Jesus has asked me to join Him and other believers with building up His family, His Church, does His sacrifice and humble leadership make any difference in the way I relate with other believers in building up His Bride, the Church? It should make a difference. It should help us see life in a different way. It should help us become an agent of healing and cooperation and godliness rather than wrath and divisiveness. It should make a world of difference with the way we work with each other in God's family to get things done. I believe this was Paul's point with why he led in with his exhortation as he did. He set the stage for delivering next what the church needed to hear about working together and loving each other. This is where the "two minds" are presented.

To understand the "two mind" thought Paul is presenting, I think it would be good to consider a homespun parable. Consider if you will that a family decides to build a house together. They have the manpower and the resources, provided they can work together. But they will become dysfunctional in their efforts if they cannot work together in agreement. They must be of *one mind*. However, before they begin building the house, they must first agree on the design of the house, the timetable for building it, and its cost. They come together and discuss it, and they come into an agreement with their agenda. Through this process they have the *same mind*, in that they start with an agreement of the house they plan to build. As the house begins to

grow out of the ground, being *one minded* is essential to complete the work, or the plan will be derailed.

What if once the project began, a person in the family changed his mind about the design and the process? He would then have a choice, which would be to stay the course and trust the original plan and be faithful to it, or leave the project and build his own house. As with families who grow up and leave their parent's house to build their own, it is the same with a church where members are raised up, develop a different insight on a form of church they would like to develop, and they then branch out to plant new churches. This is good, healthy, and an organic growth of the Body of Christ. But, it is not good or healthy in a church for a member to try and reshape a church's direction by infighting or behind the scenes politicizing. This is why Paul made a "two mind" distinction. The church needed to be of *one mind*.

"Having the same love" were words sandwiched between the reminders of what Jesus had done for the Church of Philippi in Paul's opening remark and his exhortation that they be unified by being of *one mind*. What love was Paul referencing? I believe it was to love each other as Christ loves them. There it is again. Paul is connecting the way we treat others with the love Christ has for us. If His love for us doesn't help us see others in a different light and treat them accordingly, I doubt that we really understand Jesus' love for us, but even more I doubt we have any real love for Him. Although Paul didn't put it that way, I think that this is the truth being conveyed.

This past week I saw two different cases at work of people who are publicly identified with Christ. With one case, I saw a beautiful example of a healthy discussion that resolved a concern that the original design of a ministry might be moving off course. No one had any wrong intentions. On the contrary, it was because of Christ's love that a desire developed to make a difference with a family in need. The only problem is that a strong pursuit in this area could inadvertently redirect the ministry's design, or mission. After a gracious and humble discussion by all parties involved, there was an obvious *same mind and one mind* dynamic seen. Both directions could be pursued, if done in a way that encourages one without hurting the other. It required a "branching out" to accomplish this. But being of one mind and allowing the love of Christ to be shown to each side worked everything out. This is when Jesus gets a win on the Church's scoreboard against the enemy who would try to divide God's family. This is what we want to do for Christ. We want to mark up wins for Him.

The other case involves a loss for Christ where a very ugly, and obvious disruption in the unity and oneness between some professing believers has occurred. It is obvious to the observer that the love Christ has shown to them has been left out of the equation. As I look at the circumstances surrounding the case, I see the very thing Paul asked the Church to consider up front before any action is taken, was not considered. *"If there is any encouragement in Christ"*, should have been asked and considered first, and if so, I believe that it would

have made a difference with the way things were handled. They could have had the *same mind and one mind* dynamic that would have helped. In this case, instead of following the council of Paul, Jesus' love was not considered. Instead, an ugly, reactive, angry, self-protectionism took ruthless aim on an innocent, humble man who was simply doing his job in an ethical manner. Instead of thanking the man, or at least as a fellow believer helping him understand why they didn't agree with his action, they struck out in vengeance, and division was created.

What a shame for all of these people, including the innocent fall-out victims who will come from it. I have seen how things like this turn out. I have been both a culprit and victim myself in times past. I know how I was disciplined by the Lord and came to see my mistakes as a culprit. It was painful to be under God's discipline. But it was good. I have also seen when I was innocent that God defended me when no one else would. I have seen God's work in both cases, as He defends and comforts, but as well as He disciplines. So, the story is not complete in this last case. I believe that God will protect the innocent man and he will be blessed through the pain of what was done to him. But I also believe the work of the evil man will be exposed to the people who followed him, and those who did follow his leading will find themselves in a very bad place. I believe the story is not over with this case, and I am praying that all these people, victims and culprits alike will come to understand what is truly at stake. Right now no one is winning, and worst of all it appears that Jesus' work on the cross for these people is not even a relevant consideration. What a sad shame for God's family.

Our job as Christ's Church is to bring Him honor. As a church, it is our job that Christ be the winner in our life, and that we make Him famous. We do this by being of the *same mind and one mind* with fellow believers as we build up His Church, rather than tear it down. So please consider if Christ has made a difference in your life before you dishonor His family in any way, for it comes down to this: "*If there is any encouragement in Christ*" then it's got to make a difference in the way you treat others.