

Authentic, Unafraid and Unified (Philippians 1:27-2:4)

We live in an age of skepticism, cynicism and disunity. How many times have we been let down by people who say one thing but do another? It seems every direction we look individuals are taking sides and writing off those who don't agree with them. As a result our culture has turned radically inward. But the way of Jesus leads to authentic, unafraid and unified lives. At the heart of it all is an others first humility – behavior that only makes sense in light of what we've received and who we've become.

1. Behavior that reflects (Philippians 1:27)

"let your manner of life" = "only behave as a citizen" Philippians 3:20; Ephesians 2:19-20

Paul's saying, *"You have a responsibility to live in a way (in the midst of opposition and conflict) that reflects your new found citizenship. That shows you are bowing your life to King Jesus. This isn't a head nod, it's a life bowed."* Ephesians 4:1; Colossians 1:10

2. Unity that proves (Philippians 1:27-30)

V27 "stand firm in one spirit, (NIV contend as one man!) side by side for the faith of the gospel."

Like a sports team working together. Like Roman spearmen who fought side by side.

V28 "not frightened" = "startled into a panic." It's easy to feel intimidated.

This unity becomes a sign (proof) to anyone opposing you.

3. Humility that grows (Philippians 2:1-4)

"IF you have any encouragement "in Christ" (being united with Christ)! IF any Comfort from his love, IF any participation (fellowship with) in the Spirit. IF any affection and sympathy..." 1 John 4:7-12; 19-21

The unity we're invited to walk in will grow out of these benefits.

VV3-4 At the heart of it all is an "others first" humility.

The heart of the gospel is the humility of Jesus who gave his life for you and me.

Tim Keller in "The Freedom of Self-forgetfulness" quotes CS Lewis saying, *"If we were to meet a truly humble person, Lewis says, we would never come away from meeting them thinking they were humble. They would not be always telling us they were a nobody (because a person who keeps saying they are a nobody is actually a self-obsessed person!). The thing we would remember from meeting a truly gospel-humbled person is how much they seemed to be totally interested in us. Because the essence of gospel-humility is not thinking more of myself or thinking less of myself, it is thinking of myself less."*

QUESTIONS (Pray, read the passage and pick 4-5 questions to discuss. Trust the Holy Spirit to guide.)

1. Read Philippians 1:27-2:4. Why is it important for Christians' public behavior to match up with the gospel? What are examples of behavior that does and does not match up with the gospel?
2. Philippi was proud of being a Roman colony. It came with status, the privilege of citizenship and more. How do you think remembering their new "heavenly" citizenship would have helped shape their behavior in everyday life? Philippians 3:20; Ephesians 2:19-20; 4:1; Colossians 1:10.
3. Striving (contending) side by side is athletic imagery. Like a sports team working together with one single goal or like Roman spearmen who fought side by side. What kind of "sign" or proof is this kind of unity to any and every opponent of the gospel?
4. Walk through the abbreviated list of benefits that belong to those who place their faith in Jesus found in Philippians 2:1. Why does Paul mention these benefits here?
5. At the heart of it all is an "others first" humility because at the heart of the gospel story is the humility of Jesus who gave his life for you and me. Read Philippians 2:3-4. What are some practical ways to regard others more important than you are?
6. How can you look after someone else's best interest this week?

Others first humility is behavior that only makes sense in light of what we've received and who we've become in Christ Jesus. Pray we would be a church humbled by the truths found in Philippians 2:1. Ask The Spirit of God to lift us out of selfish and inward patterns of behavior. Ask him to give us a growing interest in others - that we would live authentic, unafraid and unified lives.