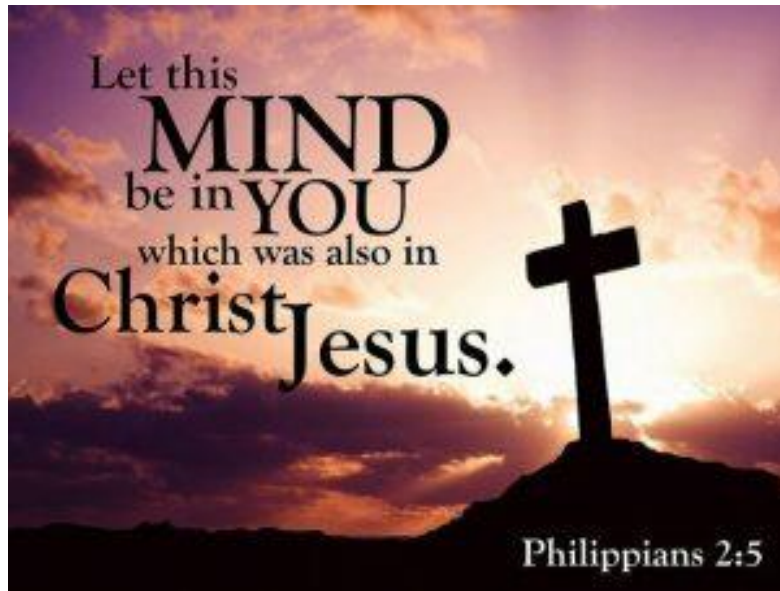


Philippians 2 Study notes



Opening Prayer:

Loving and Gracious God,
We thank you that we are able to come together freely, in this place to discuss your Holy Word. We ask that you would open our eyes, ears and hearts to receive your message. Help us to discover ways to apply your Word in our daily lives. Grant us courage and strength to faithfully do your will and follow your teaching in our conversations and discussions that we will engage in during our time together and reaching out to others.
In Jesus' name we pray, Amen

Just a minute:

Each person is to take 1 minute to note how last week's study engaged them. Did anyone take up the challenge of a diary of Joy or writing a testimony of a time when God impacted your life, brought help or answered a prayer? (one or two short ones could be shared)

CARMEN CHRISTI (have this read by someone)

The composition of the hymn to Christ in Phil. 2:6-11 has been viewed in three ways: (1) Paul is the author; (2) Paul is quoting a hymn already in existence; or (3) the hymn is not of Paul and a later interpolation. Without getting into any detailed analysis, it is a common position that the second view is substantially correct. Neither the terms or the theological formulation fits nicely into a view of Paul being the author. However, what is interesting is that two lines in the hymn disrupt the meter—and it is precisely these two lines which do fit Paul's forms of expression. Our suggestion is that Paul incorporated this hymn, with some modifications, into his letter to the Philippians. It can be viewed like to contemporary version of Amazing Grace which includes a chorus that starts "My chains are gone...")

Read (have this read by someone)

Philippians 2

Take 10

Discuss the sermon and the readings. What was new, a surprise or a challenge?

Take 2 mins

Reflect on Epaphroditus and his leaving to serve Paul and then his return. Whilst away he nearly died but has a heart yearning to return.

Now Share

What is it like to be like Epaphroditus and leave on a mission trip or even on an extended work trip and then return to the church community?

Serving without Grumbles

V 1-4 has Paul reminding them of humble servanthood and unity. V 12-18 he addresses being a servant without grumbling but finding Joy even when the seasons are hard. How do we as a church recognise and change this culture if it is in our church?

Society and Culture

Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfil his good purpose.

Why has Paul used the words *fear* and *trembling* in regard to working out your salvation? What type of fear or trembling would this be?

Church

Do everything without grumbling or arguing, so that you may become blameless and pure, “children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation.” Then you will shine among them like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life.

Does the modern day church seek to live an engaged, semi engaged or a disengaged lifestyle from that of the society. How and where can we shine in our society and how does this affect people’s view on the church?

Extension:

Love the Lord you God with your heart soul mind and strength and the second is like it... you shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these hang all the law and prophets. When we read through this passage we can see the interplay in Paul’s words between unity in Christ and being humble servants.

Unity and humility can seem vastly different and yet Paul sees these as intertwined in this reading as he dances from one to the next and back again.

Unity is always sought by God’s people in all places, however, when mixed with humility it puts the onus right back onto each one of us as individuals.

What other themes in the scriptures do we like to use and try and keep at an arm’s length? Why do you think we do this?

E.g. Sending mission workers overseas and not into our local community; miraculous signs and wonders in other churches not ours.

Encouragement

In V12-13 Paul talks of God with us as we work out our faith and in spite of our failings continues to work through us. How could you better pray for those in your group or church that they could be encouraged?

For the week ahead

Diary of Joy – Take a moment each day to think of times when God has brought you reconciliation and unity in the past. As you reflect on these times spend time in prayer telling God of what could have been your fears, failures, triumphs and celebrations for these times of challenge. Thank God for being faithful.

Write a short testimony on a time when God / scriptures / sermons challenged you about grumbling in the church / Christianity. How could this bring hope to others and change church culture?

Read: Philippians 3

Prayer

Gracious and Merciful God,

We thank you for this precious time of growth and renewal, while we were gathered here in your name. We give you thanks and praise for the opportunity to meet and look at Philippians together. We bring before you all of the groups that are meeting, may they be filled with excitement as they discover and engage what it means to be stewards of your Gospel. Grant all your peace and strength at this time.

You remind us in 2 Timothy 1:7 that you did not give us a spirit of fear and timidity, but a spirit of power and self-discipline to extend to ourselves and those we care about and meet in our daily lives.

In the name of our Lord Jesus Christ,

Amen