

“The Joy of Self-Emptying” | Rev. Tim Frickenschmidt | January 23, 2022

**Old Testament Reading: [Isaiah 45:18-23](#)**

For thus says the LORD,  
who created the heavens  
(he is God!),  
who formed the earth and made it  
(he established it;  
he did not create it empty,  
he formed it to be inhabited!):  
“I am the LORD, and there is no other.  
19 I did not speak in secret,  
in a land of darkness;  
I did not say to the offspring of Jacob,  
‘Seek me in vain.’

I the LORD speak the truth;  
I declare what is right.  
20 “Assemble yourselves and come;  
draw near together,  
you survivors of the nations!  
They have no knowledge  
who carry about their wooden idols,  
and keep on praying to a god  
that cannot save.  
21 Declare and present your case;  
let them take counsel together!  
Who told this long ago?  
Who declared it of old?  
Was it not I, the LORD?  
And there is no other god besides me,  
a righteous God and a Savior;  
there is none besides me.

22 “Turn to me and be saved,  
all the ends of the earth!  
For I am God, and there is no other.  
23 By myself I have sworn;  
from my mouth has gone out in  
righteousness  
a word that shall not return:  
‘To me every knee shall bow,  
every tongue shall swear allegiance.’

**Epistle Reading: [Philippians 2:1-11, 17-18](#)**

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that

**Introduction**

A theme in Philippians is joy. This joy is found in unity and in emptying ourselves for others.

**Background**

1. Unity

- a. Paul says, “[C]omplete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind” ([Philippians 2:2](#)).
- b. If people don’t commit themselves to something greater than any one individual or group of individuals, unity is not possible.
- c. We tend to pull attention and focus onto ourselves. There’s no joy in that.

2. Vanity

- a. Glory is weightiness, worth, beauty; vainglory is empty glory. The best this life has to offer, by itself, is empty: all is vanity ([Ecclesiastes 1:2](#)).
- b. Vain people want to be regarded as the best even if they aren’t. To the vainglorious, people don’t matter except as they provide praise or pleasure.
- c. The power of sin in this world creates a lust for empty glory, devolving us into relational mercenaries, which makes shared life impossible.

3. Emptying

- a. Jesus’ self-emptying did not mean he ceased to be God, the one true God at whose name “every knee shall bow” ([Isaiah 45:23](#), [Philippians 2:10](#)).
- b. Jesus revealed what it is to be divine. Unlike us in our sin, brokenness, rivalry, and conceit, he sacrificed himself. He gave up prerogatives and praise and came as a slave ([Mark 10:44-45](#)). “[F]or the joy that was set before him [he] endured the cross” ([Hebrews 12:2](#)).
- c. Jesus emptied himself to take our death, the death empty glory-seekers deserve. He did so that beyond being forgiven we might be transformed—that this divine glory and humility might be ours ([2 Corinthians 3:18](#)). Jesus emptied himself to fill us up.

**Discuss**

1. Do you know joy in your relationships? Do any of your relationships lack joy?
2. How can we as a church be united and unafraid?
3. What is a relational mercenary like? What is it like to be one?
4. What would happen in your life (marriage, parenting, job, etc.) if you emptied yourself and waited?

**Conclusion/Application**

Those emptying themselves for others are those who can know joy. As Jesus emptied himself for us, so we should do so for others. Treat others as more significant than yourselves, and you will know joy.

**Prayer**

Dear Father,  
Please make us people who know joy by serving others; let us taste of your divine humility, that we may bless those around us, and in doing so bring praise and worship to you. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father....

17 Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. 18 Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

**Gospel Reading:** [Mark 10:42-45](#)

And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. 43 But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, 44 and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. 45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

By Kyle and Heather Highful