

**Community the Jesus way
Philippians 2 vs 1-8 (slide)**

We would love to see everyone who calls this their home becoming a part of a community life group. If you are not part of a group please join us for three weeks in October as we give some orientation into what it is about. Next week we will, after each service, have a place out in the atrium where you can explore becoming a part of a community life group

We are in a series about how to be an authentic Jesus community. What a beautiful picture Buster painted for us last week as we watched Jesus inviting the lost and rejected to become part of His small group. That moment when he says to the women “you are not free but you can be...come and follow come and join.” That invitation still stands today. We would love for you to join us as we follow Jesus together. Today we want to look at how we actually live in this authentic space with each other.

Philippians Ch 2 vs 1-8 (slide)

2 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind.³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God,

did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing

by taking the very nature of a servant,

being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,

he humbled himself

by becoming obedient to death—

even death on a cross! (slide)

The Philippian church was strong, very strong. What happens when a church is strong? There will be vision, action, busyness, planning and strategizing to take the gospel. New programs and ministries are birthed. What comes with this?

Difference of opinion, strong characters, vision, desires, concerns, interest. What is more important---recipe for division right?

What is Paul after here? The stronger the church and the more the activity, the more attention needs to be paid to UNITY. So, Paul is going after unity and he has some sound advice on how unity is maintained.

Steps to unity in community (slide)

1. Founded on my experience of Christ (slide)

if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion

...again it comes from what I have **experienced** in Christ

Encouragement in Him' (He is for me)

Comfort in His love (Agape)

Fellowship with His Spirit (compassion tenderness)

IE rooted and established in Him (Core longings). This is foundation on which we build unity.

How do I experience Christ in this way? I accept His invitation to join and follow Him. Have you honestly taken up His invitation, have you tasted all of this and seen that He is good, not in your head but in your heart?

"I am alive and encouraged by Him

I am comforted by His deep love

I am in constant fellowship with His Spirit

I am wrapped up in His tenderness and compassion" (slide)

This is what you get when you accept His invitation. Paul just assumes it.

If this is your experience then are you ready for the mind-blowing challenge. If you have not experienced Jesus in these ways then the challenge he is about to give is impossible because what Paul is saying is

“If you have had this experience in Jesus then apply the very same experience to your relationships with each other – like minded, same love, same spirit and purpose”

Imagine if we all operated out of AGAPE? When someone is wrong and deserves punishment we as church members sacrifice and give ourselves for them. Is this crazy? Yet Jesus says, “have the same love for each other”. A few weeks ago, we talked about loving the Samaritan, here we are talking about each other. If we are honest we, many times, Agape the Samaritan more than each other. Smallest offense and I become bitter, angry, resentful. We somehow put different expectations on each other. (Experience in UZ). Number one reason for leaving the field? Teammates.

Unity is so important. Founded on an experiential love relationship with Jesus. This is how we have unity in community.

John 17 vs 20-23 (slide)

²⁰ “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— ²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

Jesus prayer. If we can't get it right here we have no message to give the world—the gospel loses its power in the eyes of the world? Can we say, “come and see” or do we hide the truth. We are the community of the redeemed. When we are ONE in Him the world will know. Look in Acts as folk saw the believers together. The Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

So, I need to get my own experience with Jesus sorted because the way I treat you in community flows from that.

2. Humility (vs 3-4) (slide)

Building on my experience of Jesus Paul takes it to the next level practically by showing us how this works. He brings in a quality that is championed by Jesus's small group.

So, what is the key to conflict resolution. The key to marital bliss

VS3 (slide)

³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

imagine I woke up every day and lived this out and my wife did the same. What would happen to the divorce rate?

Right? So, we all agree and none of us would admit that we get up planning to be selfish, vain and excessively proud. We normally put that on each other. So, what do I need to help me in this space? Self-awareness. This is where I need my inner circle, my authentic community

Matthew 7 vs 3-5 (SLIDE)

³**“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.**

It is so easy to see the plank in your eye then the speck in mine.

It self-awareness first (your plank). This is regarding others better than self so that when I want to correct or point something out it comes from a place of humility rather than “better than you” “holier than thou” which is where judgement belongs. Judgement is not mine to give. It belongs with God.

Notice that Jesus tells us to go after the speck. Don’t leave it in.

Speaking the truth in love from a place of humility and regarding you better than me is entirely different. This is the place where we have struggled the most as community of faith. SO many times we have needed to speak openly and honestly for the other person’s good but we don’t want to offend or we are concerned how they will respond. Everyone else can see it but I can’t. I need you to tell me (picking my nose)

Something hugely helpful in trying to be authentic.

Johari window (SLIDES)

1. **Open** – public
2. **Blind** – Can’t see others can
3. **Hidden** – I know others don’t
4. **Unknown** – I don’t Others don’t – only God

Blind – show me my speck. Permission. Can I be personally offended if I am secure and healthy? If it’s true I thank you for blessing me. If it’s not I do not get offended by something that is not true. Who have you given permission to? Home, work?

Hidden – unlock shame, nothing to hide –authentic community helps me with this

Authenticity is when it’s all open

The journey to humility starts with my own plank, my admission of self-centeredness and this takes courage. It then moves me to lose myself in the cause of Christ

3. The example of Jesus (vs 5-8) (slide)

As Paul introduces us to humility he then goes on to explain what it is.

If I am to understand the true meaning of humility I need to study the life of Christ
What was Jesus' example?

⁵**In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:**
Paul has just raised the bar radically. Jesus is our model and standard in how we are towards each other.

⁶**Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;**
He was fully God from the beginning

⁷**rather, he made himself nothing**

“He emptied himself of the honors and glories of the upper world, and His former appearance, to clothe Himself with the rags of human nature” (M Henry)

**by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.**

The one we are to serve – served us, love- loved us, adore- adored us, minister to- ministers to us, seek- sought us

⁸**And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!**

Prince becomes the pauper ---Humbles Himself and....

Died a humiliating death

Laid aside His glory to die

Suffered rejection, denial, cursing, abuse, torture- by the ones He had come to save

Became sin

Wrath of God

This is a model for leadership

This is for me the mark of spirituality. It is what I look for in any person I want to follow.

If I don't see it I choose not to follow. If you don't see it in me don't follow me.

Character must always trump gifting.

In a strong church that only way for it to remain strong and blessed is when His people walk in a spirit of humility. And the picture of that humility is found in Christ. Our attitude towards each other should be the same as Christ

Conclusion

This series we are inviting you to join Jesus' small group. Come and join us as we journey together, seeking authenticity as we in humility regard each other as better than ourselves.

The first step in the journey is where we started in the passage. It's an invitation to an authentic experience with Jesus, do you want to come.

Jesus, I accept your invitation and choose this day to follow you.

I choose to turn from my sinful ways and ask you to come and live in me. (SLIDE)

Dead to self and alive in Him

How appropriate that we are doing baptisms this weekend.

If this is your commitment then the most obvious next step is baptism which is a symbolic, public declaration of what you have done.

Romans 6 vs 4 (SLIDE)

⁴We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

Colossians 2 vs 12 (SLIDE)

¹²having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through your faith in the working of God, who raised him from the dead.

As these folks go through the waters it is a symbol that they have been buried with Him and raised to new life. The old has gone the new has come. I no longer live but Christ lives in me.

Peter said, "repent and be baptized". The only prerequisite to baptism is repentance and now you are telling the world. If you haven't been baptized you are welcome today. If you have made this declaration today you are welcome

There are folks waiting for you to respond. This is your day. We want to give you a moment.