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Conduct Worthy of the Gospel

Be Like-Minded in Community

Php 2:1-4

Pre-Introduction: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. It is always an honor to preach the gospel to you.

Introduction: During my last opportunity to share with you from God's Word, I introduced the theme "Conduct Worthy of the Gospel." I argued that accepting Jesus Christ is NOT the finish line; instead, accepting Jesus Christ is the starting line because the Lord has expectations for His children! The expectation for the child of God is the gospel! Those who commit to follow the Lord Jesus Christ have a responsibility to conduct themselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ! Therefore, the Gospel has implications! This series addresses the mindset that should accompany all the peoples who have become equal heirs to God's salvation in Jesus Christ. We looked at Philippians 1:27-30 where Paul exhorted the Philippians to be united in mission, specifically in gospel ministry and in gospel hostility. I titled that message "Conduct Worthy of the Gospel: Be United in Mission." Today, we will continue the theme "Conduct Worthy of the Gospel." Please turn with me in your Bibles to Philippians 2:1-4 as we read together from the sacred text. The title of this sermon is "Conduct Worthy of the Gospel: Be Like-Minded in Community."

Sub-Introduction: The letter written by the Apostle Paul and his companion Timothy is addressed to the church at Philippi, and the most common location for its composition is in Rome around A.D. 61-63 while Paul was there in prison.¹ The most likely pattern of events are as followed: Paul planted the church in Philippi during his second mission trip in A.D. 50; he visited the church again during his third mission trip in A.D. 55; he was detained by the Romans in Jerusalem in A.D. 57; he was held in Caesarea from A.D. 57-59 where he eventually appealed to

¹Henry H. Halley, *Halley's Bible Handbook* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1959): p. 617-618.

Caesar and was transferred to Rome in A.D. 60.² During Paul's imprisonment in Rome, the Philippians sent him a gift through the hands of Epaphroditus, and Paul put this letter in hand to return to the church at Philippi (Php 2:25-30; 4:10, 14-20). Paul opens the letter with his typical greeting (Php 1:1-2), offers thanksgiving and prayer on behalf of the Philippians (Php 1:3-11), provides an update on his imprisonment (Php 1:12-18), shares his future convictions (Php 1:19-26) and exhorts them to conduct themselves worthy of the gospel (Php 1:27-2:18).

The purpose for Paul's trip to Jerusalem following his third missionary journey was to provide an offering for the saints, which was collected among the Gentile churches, and when he was seen by a mob of Jews from Asia (modern day Turkey) they accused him of teaching "men everywhere against the people, the law, and this place (referring to the temple)" and for bringing a Greek in the temple (Ac 21:28-29). As the mob attempted to kill Paul, the Roman soldiers intervened, thus saving Paul's life, and placed him in the barracks, but the commander eventually relocated Paul to Caesarea because of the Jews continual plotting to murder him (Ac 21:30 - 23:35). Paul's case was heard by Felix, the governor of Caesarea, and the Jews brought the following false charges against Paul (Ac 24:5-10): 1) Paul was a worldwide trouble maker, stirring up riots; therefore, he was a threat to Rome who desired to maintain control; 2) Paul was the ringleader of the Nazarene sect, a faith divorced from the Jewish religion and it was a new cult, which means it was illegal to practice because Roman law controlled religious practice; 3) Paul attempted to desecrate the temple (note: the Romans had given the Jews permission to execute any Gentile who went inside the barrier of the temple, Ac 21:28; nevertheless, the allegation is false because the mob only accused Paul of bringing a Gentile, Trophimus from Ephesus, inside the temple, which was also false).³ To make matters worse, the Jewish leaders reported to Felix that they seized Paul because of these alleged offenses, thus implying they took him to arrest him and judge him according to their law (Ac 24:6-9), which is

²*The King James Study Bible* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson Inc., 1988: p. 1844-1845.

³ S. D. Toussaint, "Acts," *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* 2, Ed. J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985): p. 421.

false because the mob actually sought to kill Paul before the Roman soldiers intervened (Ac 21:31-32; 26:21)!⁴ Paul argued his case before Felix, emphasizing that the chargers were false (Ac 24:10-13, 17-21): “they neither found me in the temple disputing with anyone nor inciting the crowd . . . neither can they prove the things of which they now accuse me” (Ac 24:12-13). Nevertheless, Paul remained bound without cause (Ac 24:22-23), even into the reign of Festus who replaced Felix as Governor of Caesarea (Ac 24: 26-27). Festus also heard Paul’s case before his accusers, but because he desired to do the Jews a favor he attempted to have Paul’s case heard in Jerusalem, the place where his life would be in the greatest danger (Ac 25:1-12); therefore, Paul appealed to Caesar, and Festus granted his request. Paul said,

For if I am an offender or have committed anything deserving of death, I do not object to dying, but if there is nothing in these things of which men accuse me, no one can deliver me to them. I appeal to Caesar (Ac 25:11)

King Agrippa later visited Festus and heard Paul’s case and also concluded with his wife, Bernice, and others present that Paul had done nothing worthy of death or chains and he would have been released, if he had not appealed to Caesar (Ac 25:13 - 26:32). However, Paul did not make a mistake in appealing to Caesar because the Lord was clearly orchestrating Paul’s path to Rome so that he could bear witness before Caesar (Acts 23:11, 27:23-24; Phil 1:17), and Paul knew all along that he was really on trial for the sake of the Gospel as the charges were just a cover up to murder both the apostle and the gospel he faithfully proclaimed (Ac 26:19-23).

⁴ Ibid.

Sermon Points:

I. Be Like-Minded (You Think the Same) (2:1-2a)

¹ Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,
² fulfill my joy by being like-minded,

Explanation: The conjunction “Therefore” (οὖν in the Greek, conjunction = inferential and transitional in this context) links Pph 2:1-4 to Php 1:27-30 (the preceding paragraph), especially Paul’s exhortation in v. 27: “Let your conduct be worthy of the gospel.” In Php 1:27-30 Paul addresses the external opposition threatening the community, but in Php 2:1-4 he addresses the internal dangers by summoning the church to unity and mutual consideration.⁵ “Standing firm in one spirit without being frightened by non-Christian opponents (1:27) and being one in aim or direction with other members of the congregation (2:1) are two separate but concrete expressions of conduct that is worthy of the gospel (1:27).”⁶ “Paul urges believers to be one so that they will be able to endure suffering caused by those outside the church (1:27-30) and to heal divisions caused by those inside the church (2:1-4).”⁷ Paul urges the Philippians on the basis of the following “supernatural, objective realities that have already occurred in their own experience”⁸: “if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy” (2:1). “In this context, the word *if* points to realities or certainties, not possibilities or probabilities.”⁹ These are affirmative statements, true to fact realities that form the basis of Paul’s appeal in Php 2:2-4.¹⁰

⁵ P.T. O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1991): p. 164.

⁶ Ibid., 164.

⁷ G.W. Hansen, *The Pillar New Testament: The Letter to the Philippians* (Grand Rapids, MI; Nottingham, England: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2009): p. 105.

⁸ O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, p. 167.

⁹ Hansen, *The Pillar New Testament*, p. 106.

¹⁰ I.-J. Loh and E.A. Nida, *A Handbook on Paul’s Letter to the Philippians* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1995): p. 47.

“Consolation” (παράκλησις, noun, nominative, singular, feminine) means “the act of giving relief or comfort in affliction” (Logos Bible Software Sense, See 2 Co 1:3-5). The word “Consolation” (παράκλησις) is translated in its noun form as “comfort” twice and once as “consolation” in 2 Co 1:3-5: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God **of** all **comfort**,⁴ who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with **the comfort** with which we ourselves are comforted by God.⁵ For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our **consolation** also abounds through Christ.” However, in the context of Php 2:1 some scholars believe it is better translated as “encouragement in Christ.” “Comfort” (Παραμύθιον, noun, nominative, singular, neuter) refers to “the comfort you feel when consoled in times of disappointment” (LBSS). “Love” (ἀγάπη, noun, genitive, singular, feminine) refers to “a strong, non-sexual affection and regard for a person and their good as understood by God’s moral character” (LBSS). “Fellowship” (Κοινωνία, noun, nominative, singular, feminine) means “the act of sharing in the activities or privileges of an intimate association or group” (LBSS, See Php 1:5). Paul uses the same word, “Fellowship” (Κοινωνία), in Php 1:5: “for your **fellowship** in the gospel from the first day until now.” “Spirit” (πνεῦμα, noun, genitive, singular, neuter), in this context refers to Holy Spirit. Everyone who belongs to God possess the Spirit of God and hence have a share in God’s life; therefore, the Spirit distinguishes Christians from all unbelievers.¹¹ “This fellowship in the Spirit came when, as Paul explained, “in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit” (1 Corinthians 12:13).” “‘Fellowship with the Spirit’ is a result of the Spirit’s permanent indwelling ministry (cf. 1 Cor. 6:19).”¹² “Affection” (σπλάγχνον, noun, nominative, plural, neuter) means “a deeply felt compassion; characteristic of the psychological feature understood as the bowels”

¹¹ W. Arndt, F.W. Danker, & W. Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* 3, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000): p. 834.

¹² R.P. Lightner, “Philippians,” *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* 2, Ed. J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985): p. 653.

(LBSS, See Php 1:8, Ac 1:18). Also, translated as “affection” in Phil 1:8: “For God is my witness, how greatly I long for you all with the **affection** of Jesus Christ. Translated as “entrails” in Ac 1:18: “Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his **entrails** gushed out.” “Mercy” (οἰκτιρισμός, noun, nominative, plural, masculine) means “a deep awareness of and sympathy for another’s suffering” (LBSS, See 2 Co 1:3; Col 3:12). Translated as mercies in both 2 Co 1:3 and Col 3:12: “Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of **mercies** and God of all comfort” (2 Co 1:3); “Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender **mercies**, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering” (Col 3:12). Therefore, Paul is saying in these opening verses that since there is comfort in affliction in Christ or encouragement in Christ, since there is consoling comfort in times of disappointment out of a strong affection and regard for others and their good in Christ, since there is intimate sharing in the person of the Holy Spirit, since there is deeply felt compassions and sympathies for one another in sufferings, fulfill his joy by being like-minded. Here Paul appeals to their common experience of Christ. “The church had a common experience of grace, and Paul built upon that in his exhortation.”¹³

“Fulfill” (πληρώω in the Greek, verb, aorist, active, imperative, 2nd person, plural) means “to make full (with sufficient quantity) (LBSS, See Ac 2:2; Php 1:11, 4:18-19). It is used in the same sense in Ac 2:2: “And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and **it filled** the whole house where they were sitting.” Paul used the word in the same sense previously in Php 1:11: “**being filled** with the fruits of righteousness which *are* by Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.” Paul “frames his earnest appeal in such a way as to provide his readers with an additional motive for living in harmony, namely that they may ‘fill his cup of joy to the brim.’”¹⁴ Notice πληρώω (fulfill) is in the aorist tense and imperative mood, which is significant because the

¹³ R.R. Melick, *New American Commentary: Philippians, Colossians, Philemon* 32 (Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1991): p. 93.

¹⁴ O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, p. 176.

aorist imperative generally denotes an urgent command without regard to its continuation or frequency, while the present imperative generally denotes a command for repeated action.¹⁵ Additionally, the aorist imperative serves to indicate *that* something is to be done, whereas the present imperative specifies *how* or *when* something is to be done.¹⁶ Another important distinction between the present and the aorist imperative is the difference between general precepts (a moral regulation that is broadly applied) and a specific command (a request for action to be done in a particular situation), general precepts employ the *present* imperative while specific commands the *aorist* imperative.¹⁷ Therefore, by the use of the aorist imperative of the verb “fulfill” Paul is making a specific and urgent command to the Philippians to think the same. The apostle is making a direct demand upon their will, which is the only command found in Phil 2:1-4. The command is also in the active voice, which means the subject (the Philippians) are to carry out the action. Joy (χαρά, noun, accusative, singular, feminine) refers to “the emotion of great happiness and pleasure” (LBSS, See Phil 1:4, 1:25, 2:29, and 4:1). The word is also translated as “joy” (χαρά) in the opening remarks of the letter in Php 1:4: “always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with **joy**.” “The joy Paul is seeking is the joy of knowing that the Philippian Christians are living in harmony and unity of spirit.”¹⁸ The Philippians are already a source of joy to him (1:4–5; cf. 4:1), but his joy is incomplete because of disputes among the members of the church, Euodia and Syntyche, two women who once labored with him in the gospel, but currently find themselves at odds (Php 4:1-3).¹⁹

“Being like-minded” (ὁμοφρονέω in the Greek, verb, present, active, subjunctive, 2nd person, plural, when reviewing the Greek text it is more strictly translated as “you think the same.”) means “to dispose the mind in a certain way” (LBSS, See 1 Co 13:11; Php 1:7, 2:5, 3:15, 3:19, & 4:2). This word is found throughout the letter to the Philippians:

¹⁵ Black, D. A. (2009). *Learn to Read New Testament Greek 3* (Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 2009): p. 185.

¹⁶ Ibid., 186.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ J.H. Greenlee, *An Exegetical Summary of Philippians 2* (Dallas: SIL International, 2008): p. 86.

¹⁹ Loh & Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, p. 50.

- Php 1:7: ⁷ just as it is right for me **to think** this of you all,
- Php 2:5 ⁵ **Let** this **mind be** in you which was also in Christ Jesus
- Php 3:15: ¹⁵ Therefore **let us**, as many as are mature, **have** this **mind**
- Php 3:19: ¹⁹ whose end *is* destruction, whose god *is* *their* belly, and whose glory *is* in their shame—who **set** their **mind** on earthly things.
- Php 4:2: ² I implore Euodia and I implore Syntyche **to be of** the same **mind** in the Lord.

Therefore, Paul has a lot to say about how to dispose the mind because thinking affects behavior. “Being like-minded” is found in the *subjunctive* mood Php 2:2, which expresses a thought or wish rather than an actual fact so, the subjunctive is the *mood of contingency*, expressing action that is possible but not necessarily occurring; therefore, by the nature of the case the subjunctive is related to the future (i.e., what may be (present) or what may have been (aorist)) and the English future indicative is often used to convey the idea of the Greek subjunctive (whether present or aorist).²⁰ Also, *φρονέω* is in the present tense subjunctive, which expresses imperfective action.²¹ It is the hope of the apostle that the Philippians will be like-minded continuously. Lastly, the subjunctive is in the subordinate clause in this verse, and it is a *purposeful clause* (indicating the purpose or intent of the action of the main verb (fulfill or *πληρόω*)) and purposeful clauses are most frequently introduced by “*ἵνα*” or “*ὅπως*”, both of which may be rendered “in order that” or “that”, and here “*ἵνα*” is used.²² However, instead of seeing this in its normal fashion as a purposeful clause as indicated by “*ἵνα*” some have applied an exegetical limitation (the addition of a word to explain a preceding word or sentence) on the verb *πληρόω* (fulfill) and indicate the method by which the action denoted by the verb is achieved; therefore, the means by which Paul’s joy is to be made full is by the readers being like-minded, having the same love,

²⁰ Black, “Learn to Read New Testament Greek”, p. 178–179.

²¹ Ibid., p. 177.

²² Ibid., p. 180.

being united in spirit and intent on one purpose.²³ To insist on making ἵνα always mean purpose is to ignore the usage of later Greek, it is not the purpose but the means which is being expressed.²⁴

Parallel Text:

Jn 17:22: And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one:

Eph 4:1-3: I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, ² with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, ³ endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

1 Co 10:10: Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and *that* there be no divisions among you, but *that* you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

1 Pe 3:8: Finally, all *of you be* of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, *be* tenderhearted, *be* courteous;

Application: If you are not a follower of Christ, I want you to know that God loves you and He has made provision for the forgiveness of your sin and the gift of righteousness through the death, burial and resurrection of His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. If you turn from your sin today and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ when I extend the invitation in a moment, then you can enter into a relationship with God, receive the promise of eternal life, the gift of the Holy Spirit, and membership into the family of God called the universal church, the body of Christ. The universal church is the company of those who have been regenerated (born again, given new life) via their repentance from sin and their acceptance of Christ's redemptive work on the cross, which is also called the body of Christ because it is the organism through which He gives spiritual life and manifests the fullness of His power and grace.²⁵ Following your conversion, it will be important for you to select

²³ O'Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, p. 177.

²⁴ Greenlee, *An Exegetical Summary of Philippians*, p. 87.

²⁵ A. H. Strong, *Systematic Theology* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Publication Society, 1907): p. 888.

under the guidance of the Holy Spirit a local church to join, a place where you can become a like-minded member in the community of faith. The local church consists of a smaller company of regenerate persons from the body of Christ within a local community who voluntarily unite themselves under Christ's authority, the Head of the church, and in accordance with the Word of God for the purpose of expanding His kingdom in themselves and in the world.²⁶ Once you repent and believe the Gospel, then as the Lord leads you can make First Baptist Church of Woodstock your local church family today when I give the invitation in a moment.

If you are a follower of Christ, then you must work toward being a like-minded member in the local church for the sake of the Gospel. It is God's will for the local church to dwell in unity, and this does not mean that everyone must have the same thoughts or opinions on every issue in their common life and their relationship to the world; instead, it means that every member of the local church must work toward the same end as a community of people who have been transformed by the power of the Gospel. This can only occur as each member dies daily to self and allows Christ to reign in their hearts. When the church of the Lord Jesus Christ is united, the transforming power of the Gospel is put on display to the unbelieving world. This means you have a responsibility to gather and be actively involved in a local church. Your born again experience gave you automatic membership in the body of Christ, the universal church, but it did not give you automatic membership in a local church. You must select a local church to unite with under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. It is not possible to be united with a local church in which you have no connection.

Secondly, this means you must value, cherish, and love the same thing, which is the Lord Jesus Christ and His gospel because of its power to save! If the common love for Christ and the beauty and power of the Gospel remains central, then surely hearts and minds will be united! This love can only be kindled through your growth in intimacy with Jesus. Therefore, it is essential for you to have regular times of personal

²⁶ Ibid., 887, 888, & 890.

study and prayer so that the Lord can be your chief affection in life and His desires can be formed in your heart as you are transformed further into His image. It is in these moments, where the Lord teaches and helps us to exchange our selfish ambitions for his others centered ambitions, a passion to Go and Make Disciples!

Furthermore, this means you must be an ambassador for unity in the church. Promote unity when people attempt to lure you into gossip by refusing to participate (Pr 10:18; 11:13; 18:18; 20:19), promote unity when there is conflict between members by encouraging them to resolve their differences (Mt 18:15-17), promote unity by interceding for your church and seeking solutions when you catch wind of issues, and promote unity by embracing the Lord's mission for the church. You must assist in quickly eliminating discord, dissension, and rivalry when it attempts to show its ugly head by promoting peace. Division can never be an option, we are the family of God, a people who have been redeemed by the shed blood of Jesus Christ and we are to display the glory of God in the midst of a dark world by being like-minded. Eliminate anything that would arise to distract or cause us to drift from this vision to make disciples. This is being like-minded! This is how we are to think the same!

A. Be Like-Minded In Love v. 2

² having the same love,

Explanation: “Having” (ἔχων in the Greek, verb, present, active, participle, plural, nominative, masculine) is a participle, which is a grammatical hybrid. As its name implies, the participle shares (“takes part” or “participates”) in the nature of both a verb and an adjective.²⁷ It in this case, the verb “having” (ἔχων) is a participle, and used adverbially to indicate some circumstance under which the action of the main verb (φρονέω = “being like-minded” or “(that) you think the same”) takes place. The fact that the verb is anarthrous and stands in the predicate position is an indicator that

²⁷ Black, *Learn to Read New Testament Greek*, p. 142.

it is an adverbial participle.²⁸ The tense of the participle is present for ἔχων and the present participle most frequently denotes *contemporaneous* action, that is, action taking place at the *same time* as the action of the main verb.²⁹ Therefore, the action here, “having (the same love)” is contemporaneous with “being like-minded” (or “(that) you think the same”). Paul uses the same word for love (ἀγαπε, noun, accusative, singular, feminine) as he did in Php 2:1; however, here it is the direct object of the verb “Having.” “Having the same love” entails turning their attention from themselves toward others in the congregation and their needs just as Christ did for them.³⁰ It means to have mutual love.³¹ Paul prayed that the Philippians *love may abound more and more* (1:9), and also expanded upon his wish for them to think the same (be likeminded) by *having the same love*. There is a balance here between Paul’s dependence on God to work in the community so that love will increase and his direct call to the work of love for the community.³²

Parallel Text:

Jn 13:34-35: A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another.³⁵ By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for one another.”

1 Co 13:4-8: Love suffers long *and* is kind; love does not envy; love does not parade itself, is not puffed up; ⁵ does not behave rudely, does not seek its own, is not provoked, thinks no evil; ⁶ does not rejoice in iniquity, but rejoices in the truth; ⁷ bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. ⁸ Love never fails.

Col 3:12-14: Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;

²⁸ Ibid., 150.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ O’Brien, *The Epistle to the Philippians*, p. 178.

³¹ Greenlee, *An Exegetical Summary of Philippians*, p. 88.

³² Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, p. 112.

¹³ bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also *must do*. ¹⁴ But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.

Illustration:

“Christian love rises above human differences to show itself in absolute loyalty to others in their need. Christian love looks on other persons through the eyes and with the heart of God. Christian love respects others as persons who are objects of God’s love.”³³

“In one of his seminary class lectures in New Testament, Dr. A. T. Robertson noted that in heaven all of God’s children will love one another. Then he remarked, “Since that is true, we should practice loving each other here on earth.”³⁴

Application: If you are not a follower of Christ, I want you to know that God wants you to experience His love and care through the hands of the family of God, the body of Christ. He deeply loves you as demonstrated through the offering up of His Son Jesus Christ to die for your sin and the local church is a vehicle through which He desires to grow you into the image of Christ through a personal relationship with Himself, and He desires you to experience his loving and tender care through the believers who make up the local church. God desires for you to have to meaningful community, He does not want you to do life in isolation. This is available to you today, if you will trust in Jesus Christ. Friend, respond to Jesus today during the invitation in a moment.

If you are a follower of Christ, then you must possess a mutual love for God and for others (Mt 22:37-39). Jesus said the second and greatest commandment is to love our neighbor as ourselves (Mt 22:39). Furthermore, the Apostle John said that we know that we have passed from death to life, if we have love for one another

³³ H.H. Hobbs, *My Favorite Illustrations* (Nashville: Broadman Press, 1990): p. 171.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 172.

(1 John 3:14). This is an unconditional love, a love that lacks conditions and this love can only be displayed through your death to self and your surrender to Jesus Christ, thus allowing Him to love through you. The love of God has been shed abroad in your heart and you have to allow Christ in you to put that love on display (Ro 5:5). Only then will you be able to love and treat others how you **desire** to be treated and NOT how others **in reality** love and treat you (Lk 6:31). Only Christ in you can give you an unrestricted and unconditional strong affection for others and a regard for others and their good. Mutual love entails you being in community with the family and building meaningful Christ-centered, Gospel-driven, and Grace-oriented relationships. Doing life together, gathering for meaningful fellowship beyond the Sunday worship service, sharing in the Word together, praying with one another, and serving with one another. Mutual love entails you praying for members in your church family. Praying for Christ to be formed in their hearts, praying for God's plan to be fulfilled in their lives, and praying for them in time of crisis or difficulty. Mutual love means weeping with those who weep and rejoicing with those who rejoice in the body of Christ (Ro 12:15; 1 Co 12:26). Rejoicing with them in how God is using them to make a difference for the Kingdom, rejoicing with them when their family and friends come to faith in Christ, rejoicing with them when God opens doors for new ministry opportunities, and rejoicing with them when they experience victories in their walk with Christ. Weeping with them during tough ministry seasons, weeping with them during the deaths of family and close friends, weeping with them in personal and family tragedy. Mutual love means caring for members in your church in difficult seasons. Comforting in affliction by visiting them in the hospital or during a death in the family, helping them with practical matters and decisions for a season while in their grief (i.e., funeral arrangements, cooking, home maintenance, transportation, etc.), and encouraging them in difficulty (i.e., sending a card or text to someone, listening to them and being present). Mutual love entails

loving accountability checking in on your brothers and sisters when they are absent (wayward or backslidden). Calling, writing, emailing, texting, or personally visiting their residence to check-in on them. Mutual love means forbearing with others whom you might find it challenging to get along with (i.e., difficult personalities in the church, Sunday school class, etc.). Going out of your way to deal pleasantly with them and doing all you can to work toward peaceable relations. Mutual love means forgiving your brother or sister when they hurt you just as the Lord has forgiven you. Remembering that your brother and sister in Christ still has a sin nature just as you do, and they are imperfect and in the middle of their own sanctification just as you are; therefore, they are not always going to get it right so do not judge them and do not condemn them, but rather extend mercy and pardon them (Lk 6:37). This is having the same love! This is being like-minded in love!

B. Be Like-Minded In Purpose v. 2

² being of one accord, of one mind

Explanation: “Being of one accord” (σύμψυχος in the Greek, adjective, nominative, feminine, plural; only appears 1 x in Greek NT) means “Being united in the same character, affections and especially mindset as another” (LBSS). This adjective (σύμψυχος) appears to be functioning as a noun in this occurrence and could be translated “united people in spirit” or “one accord people.” The Greek word comes from συν (with) and ψυχη (souls), harmonious in soul, souls that beat together, in tune with Christ and with each other.³⁵ “Mind” is (φρονέω in the Greek, verb, present, active, participle, plural, nominative, masculine) used twice in this verse. The latter occurrence is either stronger and serves to reinforce Paul’s exhortation or used to further define the first occurrence.³⁶ Previously, Paul said “being like-minded” (or “you think the

³⁵ A.T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1933): Php 2:2.

³⁶ Greenlee, *An Exegetical Summary of Philippians*, p. 87.

same”) and now he says, “of one mind” (or “while thinking the one thing”). However, in this second occurrence, “mind” φρονέω is a present participle and it is used adverbially to represent some circumstance under which the action of the main verb (φρονέω = “(that) you think the same”) takes place as indicated by it being anarthrous and standing in the predicate position. Therefore, the action “of one mind” (or “while thinking the one thing”) is contemporaneous with “being of one mind” (or “(that) you think the same”). Therefore, the Philippians are to be a united people in spirit while thinking the one thing. In other words, they are to be united while focusing one common goal or concentrating on one common objective. The Philippians are to be “thinking the one thing” like clocks that strike at the same moment.³⁷ Although not explicitly stated at this point, the one thing is clearly Jesus Christ as Paul later explains when he calls his readers to “let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus” (2:5) and then discloses the mind of Christ Jesus in the narrative of the incarnation, humiliation, and exaltation of Christ (2:6–11).³⁸ Paul uses the word “mind” (φρονέω in the Greek) for the third time in Php 2:5. “The entire letter to the Philippians asserts that Christ is the one common Subject that unites and binds believers together.”³⁹

Parallel Text:

Ro 15:5-6: ⁵ Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, ⁶ that you may with one mind *and* one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Co. 13:11: ¹¹ Finally, brethren, farewell. Become complete. Be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you.

³⁷ Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Php 2:2.

³⁸ Hansen, *The Letter to the Philippians*, p. 113.

³⁹ Ibid.

Illustration: “We must distinguish between *unity* and *uniformity*. The former is voluntary; the latter is compelled. The former is an inner condition; the latter is outward form. Unity must be the condition created in us by the Holy Spirit as we follow him in a common goal and purpose—to make effective God’s redeeming work in Christ to the ends of the earth and until he comes again.”⁴⁰

Application: If you are not a follower of Christ, if you do not have a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ, then please listen closely to what I am about to say. God does not send preachers to declare His reign in order to constrain your submission to Him by raw act of authority because the only submission that fully reflects God’s worth and glory is your glad submission to Him, “begrudging submission berates the King” (25).⁴¹ Therefore, I am calling you in a moment when I give the invitation to gladly submit to His reign over your life and to gladly unite in spirit with the local church while thinking the one thing, which is Jesus Christ!

If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, then never forget that God is calling you to gladly unite with the local church while thinking the one thing, which is Jesus Christ. This means you must avoid the real temptation to become preoccupied with your personal agenda because it can pull the church in different directions and split the church into separate interest groups. Christ is the Head of the church, not you! Therefore, you must put away your own egocentric priorities in order to eliminate the potential for the church to be disunited; instead, set your mind on the one thing that will unite the people of God, which is Jesus Christ! In all your undertakings within the context of the local church, think Jesus Christ! As you work with the children in preschool and elementary, think Jesus Christ! As you work with the students in middle school in high school, think Jesus Christ! As you lead your Sunday school classes, as you park cars, as you direct traffic, as

⁴⁰ Hobbs, *My Favorite Illustrations*, p. 73.

⁴¹ John Piper, *The Supremacy of God in Preaching* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1990), 25.

you greet people who enter the doors, as you sing in the choir, as you give to those in need, as you work behind the scenes in planning and preparation, and as you handle the video and sound, THINK JESUS CHRIST! LET US ALL THINK THE ONE THING IN ALL OF OUR UNDERTAKINGS, JESUS CHRST AND HIM CRUCIFIED! This local church gathers under the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to Worship God, Love Others, Serve God, and Invite Others. I guarantee that if everyone allows themselves to be consumed with the one thing, the person of Jesus Christ and His commission to the church, then there will be unity! Unity not uniformity is the natural result of the Spirit-filled church! This is being like-minded in purpose!

C. Be Like-Minded In Humility vs. 3

³ *Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

Explanation: Paul says “*Let nothing be done* through selfish ambition or conceit” (strict Greek translation: nothing according to selfish ambition, nothing according to empty conceit). No verb appears in this first clause in the Greek text, yet the context supports the participle ‘thinking’ (φρονέω) being supplied from the preceding phrase in 2:2 because “‘thinking’ fits better in the train of thought, which pertains to moral attitudes rather than to actions.”⁴² Therefore, better translated as: “Thinking nothing according to selfish-ambition, thinking nothing according to empty conceit.” Both “Selfish ambition” (ἐριθεία) and “Conceit” (Κενοδοξία) are in the accusative case, which means they are direct objects. Both nouns are preceded by μηδὲ κατὰ (nothing according to) in the Greek text and the repetition is designed for emphasis. Let nothing be done THROUGH selfish ambition or conceit, through = means. Nothing be done through the means of selfish ambition or conceit. “Selfish ambition” (ἐριθεία in the

⁴² Greenlee, *An Exegetical Summary of Philippians*, p. 89.

Greek, noun, accusative, singular, feminine) means “a strong drive for personal success without moral inhibitions” (LBSS, see Ga 5:20, Php 1:16; Jas 3:16). “The meaning of this word is self-seeking to secure preeminence, inordinately seeking the advantage for one’s own group, to have no interest in pleasing others.”⁴³ “*Selfish ambition* may be expressed as ‘simply because you want things for yourselves,’ or ‘because of what you yourselves desire.’”⁴⁴ “Selfish ambition” (ἐριθεία) can be found in Paul’s sins list in Ga 5:20: ²⁰ idolatry, sorcery, hatred, contentions, jealousies, outbursts of wrath, selfish ambitions, dissensions, heresies. . . Paul also used the word in Php 1:16 in referring to the preachers who had improper motives: “The former preach Christ from **selfish ambition**, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains.” Lastly, James uses the same word in his letter in Jas 3:16: For where envy and **self-seeking** exist, confusion and every evil thing are there.” “Conceit” (Κενοδοξία in the Greek, noun, accusative, singular, feminine; only appears 1 x in Greek NT) means “the trait of being unduly vain and conceited” (LBSS). “The meaning is the (mistaken) insistence that one’s own ideas are always best, boastful pride, a conceited claim of deserving honor, groundless conceit, to be too anxious to please others.”⁴⁵ It could be translated as ‘simply because you wish to show off,’ “because you are so proud of yourselves,’ or ‘because you want people to know how great you think you are.’”⁴⁶

“But” is a conjunction here that serves as a contrast between what precedes and what follows. Therefore, nothing according to selfish ambition, nothing according to empty conceit, BUT in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. “Lowliness of mind” (ταπεινοφροσύνη, noun, dative, singular, feminine) means “the disposition of valuing or assessing oneself appropriately; especially in light of one’s sinfulness or creatureliness” (LBSS,

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Loh & Nida, *A Handbook on Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, p. 51–52.

⁴⁵ Greenlee, *An Exegetical Summary of Philippians*, p. 89.

⁴⁶ Loh & Nida, *A Handbook on Paul’s Letter to the Philippians*, p. 52.

See Eph 4:2; Col 3:12). This is humility before God, a recognition of one's utter dependence on him, leads to humility in one's relations with his fellowmen.⁴⁷ The word is translated in the same way in Eph 4:2: "with all **lowliness** and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love." In Col 3:12 it is translated as humility: ¹² Therefore, as *the* elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, **humility**, meekness, longsuffering." Esteem (ἡγέομαι in the Greek, verb, present, middle, participle, plural, nominative, masculine) means to regard or consider (LBSS, Php 2:6, 25, 3:7-8). "Esteem" (ἡγέομαι) is a verb that is in the true middle voice and it also a present participle that is being used adverbially to represent some circumstance under which the action of the main verb (φρονέω = "being like-minded" or "(that) you think the same") takes place as indicated by it being anarthrous and standing in the predicate position. The middle voice, represents the subject as acting in its own interest or in such a way as to participate in the results of the action of the verb.⁴⁸ *Self-involvement is being emphasized here with ἡγέομαι* (Esteem), thus describing a processes that the subject alone can experience.⁴⁹ Therefore, the action here, "esteem (others)" is contemporaneous with "being of one mind" (or "(that) you think the same"). Therefore, the Philippians are to "esteem others", Paul is emphasizing self-involvement, a process the subjects alone can experience, they are to participate in the action, participate in esteeming one another. "Better than" (ὑπερέχω, verb, present, active, participle, plural, accusative, masculine) means "to be or become of greater quality or value" (LBSS, see Php 3:8, 4:7). "Better than" (ὑπερέχω) is translated as "excellence" in Php 3:8: Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the **excellence** of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ." "Better than" (ὑπερέχω) is a present active participle, that

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ Black, *Learn to Read New Testament Greek*, p. 86.

⁴⁹ Ibid., p. 89.

is being used adverbially to represent some circumstance under which the action of the main verb (φρονέω = “being like-minded” or “(that) you think the same”) takes place as indicated by it being anarthrous and standing in the predicate position. Paul uses two verbs, “esteem” and “surpassing” together in order to drive home one point. Therefore, the action here, both “esteem” and “surpassing” are also contemporaneous with “(that) you think the same” or “being of one mind”. The Philippians are to be “esteem” others as “surpassing” themselves.

“The meaning is to consider others superior in their abilities and in their rights [Bg] to the extent to which the facts will permit [Blm]. With the variety of gifts which God gives believers, there is always something in other people which can be appreciated [NIC]. It does not mean to consider others as better than ourselves even though we know many are not better; it means to defer to others and to give honor to others above ourselves [Lns], the recognition of our unworthiness and a willingness to rejoice in the good qualities in others [MNTC].”⁵⁰

“Considering each other better than yourselves is not of course a matter of condescending to offer the occasional polite compliment to one’s fellow Christian while continuing to bask in the untroubled assurance of one’s own superiority. Nor, on the other hand, is it to grovel in a perpetually self-doubting or self-despising inferiority complex. It means to think and speak more highly of others than of oneself, to value their needs and their achievements before one’s own; to give preference to each other without distinction—not only to the good, the strong or the beautiful (cf. K. Barth).”⁵¹

Parallel Text:

⁵⁰ Greenlee, *An Exegetical Summary of Philippians*, p. 90.

⁵¹ M. Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Continuum, 1997): p. 112.

Ro 12:10: “*Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;*”

Illustration: NBA star Kevin Durant received the Most Valuable Player award on May 6, 2014. He led the Oklahoma Thunder to second best NBA record at 59-23. Durant average 32 points, 7.4 rebounds, and 5.5 assists. He captured his fourth scoring title, joining the company of Michael Jordan, Wilt Chamberlain, Allen Iverson, and George Gervin (The Iceman) as the only players in league annuals to win atleast four scoring titles. During the MVP award ceremony Durant looked at his mother, who raised him and his siblings as a single mother, as she sat in the audience and he began to thank her for waking him up as young boy to run hills during the summer, for coaching him from the stands at his basketball games as a youngster, for keeping him off the streets, for providing clothing and food for their family, and for making sacrifices (at times she went to sleep hungry so her kids could eat). Durant then said to his mother, “You are the real MVP” and the crowd gave a thunderous standing ovation for his mother. Durant deferred to his mother and gave honor to her because he recognized his unworthiness in light of the sacrifices his mother made for him to be in a position to receive such an honor, he rejoiced in her good qualities, in humility he esteemed his mother as surpassing himself. In the same way, as followers of Christ, in humility, acknowledging our unworthiness without Christ, we must esteem others in the body of Christ who surpass ourselves by deferring to and honoring others and rejoicing in their good qualities.

Application: If you are a follower of Christ, then it is the Lord’s will for you to walk in humility by deferring to and honoring others and rejoicing in their good qualities; instead of rejoicing in your own gifting. You should esteem those who surpass yourself. This means you must always assess yourself through the lens of Jesus Christ, understanding that you could do nothing without Christ’s unmerited grace upon you. Additionally, being

completely honest by acknowledging and honoring the individuals who surpass you, rejoicing in their good qualities. In the context of my life and church there are many people who come to mind, I often think of Josh Lanford and his family in Indonesia, Ludie Creech and his family in Ireland, and Fred Campbell and his family here in Woodstock, GA. Each of these families have made significant sacrifices for the sake of the Gospel of Christ, leaving behind lucrative careers and comfortable lifestyles to “Go and Make Disciples.” In humility, I esteem these men as surpassing me. I defer and give honor to these men. I rejoice in their good qualities! I also think of our senior pastor, Dr. Johnny Hunt, and our executive pastor, Dr. Jim Law. The Bible says, “Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine” (1 Ti. 5:17). Pastor Johnny has been pastoring for 41 years and 31 of those years have been here at First Baptist Church Woodstock. He has led each of the four churches that he has pastored over his career toward significant growth, he has served as the president of our convention, he has trained over 10,000 leaders through his Timothy Barnabas school, he has cared for hundreds of ministry families through his City of Refuge ministry, he has mentored over 30 young pastors through his mentee program, he is a highly recognized international preacher of the Gospel, he is a great husband and family man, and he has kept an impeccable testimony through the grace of God. In humility, I esteem Pastor Johnny as a man who surpasses me, I defer and give honor to him. I rejoice in his good qualities! Jim Law has faithfully served as an executive pastor here at First Baptist Church Woodstock for over 25 years, he has faithfully led from the second chair, thus leading this church through many of Pastor Johnny’s initiatives, building projects, programs, and more, and he is a godly man and prayer warrior who has held-up Pastor Johnny’s arms with greatly loyalty for nearly 3 decades. He faithfully manages the day-to-day operations of the church so pastor can be freed up to preach the gospel around the world. In humility, I esteem Jim Law as surpassing me. I defer

and give honor to him. I rejoice in his good qualities! Mike Gwinn and John Pope, men of humble disposition who faithfully visit and care for our members when they are in the hospital, nursing home, or in grief over the passing of loved ones. They assist the families with funeral arrangements and more so that they do not have to be cumbered with plans while also in the midst of grief. I have gone out with these men as they make their rounds to hospitals and nursing homes all over Atlanta and observed them as they care for our people, give them a word of encouragement, and pray for them. In humility, I esteem John Pope and Mike Gwinn as men who surpasses me, I defer and give honor to them. I rejoice in their good qualities! Guess what? You can do likewise, let me help you for a moment just in case you may be struggling. You could defer and give honor to both your small group leader, who in addition to working a regular 40 plus hour job per week and managing a family, prepares Bible lessons, makes care contacts to absent class members, follows-up on prospects, assists with member crisis, and teaches lessons each Sunday. In humility, esteem them as surpassing you, defer and give honor to them. Rejoice in their good qualities! You could defer and give honor to our hospitality team, they arrive early on Sunday's, greet us as we come through the doors, park the cars of our mothers with small children, direct traffic, and give us a lift to our cars each Sunday via the trolley! In humility, esteem them as surpassing you, defer and give honor to them. Rejoice in their good qualities! You could defer and give honor to the members of the body of Christ who forsake all to take the Gospel to some of the hardest places in the world, thus risking their life for the gospel. In humility, esteem them as surpassing you, defer and give honor to them. Rejoice in their good qualities! The opportunities are endless for you to honor others in the family of God! This is being like-minded in humility!

D. Be Like-Minded In Interests

⁴ Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Explanation: Paul says, “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others” (Strict Greek translation: each looking out not for yourselves, but also each others). “Let . . . look out” (σκοπέω, verb, present, active, participle, plural, nominative, masculine depending on which Greek text is used in translation; some manuscripts list it as a verb, present, active, imperative, second person, plural, but Greek New Testament does not mention these alternatives; therefore, participle heavily favored) means “to turn one’s interests or expectations towards something and respond accordingly” (LBSS). The context favors present, active, participle, which appears to be used adverbially to represent some circumstance under which the action of the main verb (φρονέω = “being like-minded” or (that) you think the same”) takes place as indicated by it being anarthrous and standing in the predicate position. Therefore, the action here, “looking out (not)” is contemporaneous with “being of one mind” (or “(that) you think the same”). The Philippians are to be “looking out” not only for themselves, but also others. The idea here is, “Be sure to protect the interests of others, and not just your own.”⁵² Paul is not forbidding taking proper care of their own affairs, instead this is an exhortation to unselfishness, to modesty or humility, thus enabling the readers to do more effectively what Paul has exhorted them to do in Php 2:2-3.⁵³ Paul is an excellent model of looking out for the interests of others and not just his own. Paul has been offering thanksgiving and interceding in prayer for the Philippians (1:3-11) during his own imprisonment so his focus remains on others. Further, Paul earlier acknowledged that it would be better to depart and be with Christ, but it is more necessary for the Philippians sakes that he remains so, he was willing to continue with them for their progress and joy of faith,

⁵² Loh & Nida, *A Handbook on Paul's Letter to the Philippians*, p. 54.

⁵³ Greenlee, *An Exegetical Summary of Philippians*, p. 92.

thus putting his own desires on hold (Phil 1:24), his focus remained on others.

Parallel Text:

1 Co 10:24: “Let no one seek his own, but each one the other’s well-being.”

1 Co 12:25: “that there should be no schism in the body, but *that* the members should have the same care for one another.”

Illustration: Ruth Blackney, Pastor Johnny’s former ministry assistant, said the following in a book written in honor of Johnny and Janet Hunt called “Others: A Shepherds Legacy”:

“One of the greatest passions of Pastor Johnny’s heart is young pastors. Nothing in the world brings him greater joy than to pour his life into these young men. He is never more than a phone call away when they are facing challenges and need his counsel. His phone constantly rings, both day and night, with a pastor that’s maybe in a crisis situation asking, “What do I do?” He is never too busy to take their calls and it is not uncommon for him to spend hours on the phone answering their questions, encouraging them not to give up, offering advice in handling sticky staff situations, or any trial they might be going through. . . . I think his legacy will be how he poured his life into counseling and helping encourage these men to go on with the work that God has called them to.”⁵⁴

Ruth is spot on, I have witnessed this first hand in Pastor Johnny’s life, and I am also a recipient of his interests in others. He does all this while being a loving and caring husband, father, grandfather, and pastor of First Baptist Church Woodstock. He is a great example of how followers of Christ are called to not only lookout for their own interests, but also the interest of others.

Application: If you are not a follower of Christ, I want you to know that the Lord Jesus Christ had your interests in mind when He went to the cross. He was born to die, He literally came from

⁵⁴ Lee, Star (Ed.). (2006). *Others: A Shepherd’s Legacy* (9. 29-30). Minneapolis: www.bioprint.com.

heaven to earth to die on the cross for your sins only to be raised from the dead three days later for your justification. He looked out for your interests, He absorbed the wrath of God in your place so that you can go free and receive the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life. Today, I urge you to accept His offer of eternal life and forgiveness of sin in the person of Jesus Christ. When you make that decision today, the Lord is going to begin shifting you from an unending process of being self-centered to becoming others-centered. The Lord is going to use you as a vehicle to help others, not just materially, but also spiritually. He can make you into an instrument that He uses to invest into the lives of others.

If you are a follower of Christ, you must consider the interests of others and not just your own, both spiritual and material interests. Through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, you can become an investment tool into the lives of others. Again, you must die to self and allow Christ to reign in your heart as you surrender to Christ's Lordship, then your interests will naturally shift toward caring for others and not just yourself. Often the greatest care you can provide is to pray for a fellow brother or sister in Christ. You could request for the church prayer page to be sent to you so that you can pray for fellow members who are facing health issues, or grieving over the death of a loved one, or mission teams heading to the field. You could request for your pastor's ministry calendar to be emailed to you so that you can regularly pray for him as he ministers all over the world. You could financially support a fellow-brother/ sister raising support for their mission trip and use your influence with others to leverage additional support for them. If you are a seasoned follower of Christ, you could mentor younger siblings in Christ, we need the older and median generation to reach back and pour wisdom into the younger generation coming behind us. Encourage your fellow church members via text, email, or post card. Support your fellow church members, sacrifice a Sunday to work in the preschool ministry,

children's ministry, or Thrive, sacrifice a Sunday to work in the valet parking ministry to help mothers park their cars, babysit for young couples in our church so they can get a date night to enrich their marriage. Your small group could develop and lead a LoveLoud project to care for single moms and widows, refugees and foreigners, or the orphan and unborn. Your small group could start a meal train for families who are physically limited for a season. Your family could donate toys, clothing, etc. to the clothing closet to support families in need. Your family could go and visit a fellow member in the hospital and care for them through prayer. There are so many practical ways for you to aim to look out for the interests of others. If you are only on the receiving end here at the church, then you are only looking out for yourself, but when you cross over into the giving end here at the church, now you are looking out for others. This is being like-minded in interests!

Conclusion: You must hold fast to the proposition to conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel, to be like-minded in community, to be like-minded in love, to be like-minded in purpose, to be like-minded in humility, and to be like-minded in interests. Together as a body of believers, Christ followers, you must be like minded in community, thus displaying the transforming power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world! I lovingly encourage you all to respond to this appeal to the glory of God. Amen!