

# Small Group Guide

## Philippians 2:1-18 -- The Mind of Christ: Unity, Humility, and Shining as Light

### Opening Question

Think about a time when you were part of a team, family, or community that was genuinely unified and working well together. What did that feel like, and what made it work?

### Key Takeaways from the Sermon

These are the central truths the message drew out of Philippians 2:1-18. Review them together before diving into discussion.

1. Unity in the body of Christ is not accidental – it requires intentional humility, active love, and a willingness to esteem others above ourselves.
2. Selfish ambition and conceit are the enemy's primary tools for creating division within a church. Recognizing them in ourselves is the first step to resisting them.
3. Jesus is the ultimate model of humility. He left the full glory of heaven, took on human flesh, and died on the cross – not because he had to, but because he chose to, for our benefit; because of His great love for each of us.
4. Working out our salvation means actively and consistently exercising our faith – through prayer, Scripture, service, and community – so that we are progressively transformed to look more like Christ.
5. When we stop complaining and disputing and instead hold fast to the Word of life, we shine as lights in a dark world.
6. One Day every knee will one day bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The question is not whether that will happen, but whether we have chosen him now, while we still can.

## **Discussion Questions**

Work through as many of these as time allows. The questions move from personal reflection to group application.

### **Section 1: Experiencing Grace and Extending It (Philippians 2:1-2)**

1. The sermon opened with a list of "ifs" – consolation in Christ, comfort of love, fellowship of the Spirit, affection and mercy. Which of these have you personally experienced most powerfully? Share a specific moment if you are comfortable doing so.
2. Paul says that if we have received these things, our actions toward others should reflect them. Where is the gap between what you have received from God and what you regularly extend to others?
3. What does it practically look like to be "of one mind" and "of one accord" without expecting everyone to agree on everything?

### **Section 2: The Danger of Selfish Ambition and Conceit (Philippians 2:3)**

4. The message described selfish ambition as "self-pleasing or self-promoting" and noted that it often sounds spiritual on the surface. Can you think of ways selfish ambition disguises itself in a church setting without looking obviously wrong?
5. The pastor pointed out that a legitimate grievance is one we are willing to bring directly and humbly to the person involved, rather than recruiting others to our side. How does this standard challenge the way you typically handle conflict or disagreement?
6. Conceit was described as "an excessively favorable opinion of one's own ability or importance." In what areas of your spiritual life are you most tempted toward conceit?

### **Section 3: Esteeming Others and Looking Out for Their Interests (Philippians 2:3-4)**

7. The message suggested practical questions we can ask others: "What can I do to help you today?" "How can I pray for you?" "What can I take off your plate?" Which of these feels most natural to you, and which feels most uncomfortable?

Why?

8. Pastor Jerry encouraged the congregation to intentionally meet one new person every Sunday. What is one specific, concrete step you could take this week to invest in someone in the church body you do not know well?
9. The sermon noted that we often cannot see the real struggles someone is carrying, even when they say everything is fine. How can this group create an environment where people feel safe enough to be honest about what they are actually going through?

#### **Section 4: The Mind of Christ and the Incarnation (Philippians 2:5-8)**

10. The message described Jesus setting aside his position in heaven – not his divinity, but all the glory, worship, and fellowship that came with it – in order to come to earth for us. Sit with that for a moment. What part of that picture is hardest for you to fully absorb?
11. Meekness was defined as "power under control" – having the right or reason to say something but restraining it until the proper time and the proper way. Where in your life right now do you need to practice that kind of restraint?
12. The sermon contrasted the culture's pressure to be a "type A aggressor" with the biblical call to humility. Where do you feel that cultural pressure most acutely, and how does the example of Christ reframe it for you?

#### **Section 5: Working Out Our Salvation (Philippians 2:12-13)**

13. The pastor described working out our salvation as a "salvation workout" – not earning salvation, but consistently exercising faith so it grows stronger. What does your current spiritual workout routine actually look like? Where are the weak spots?
14. Philippians 2:13 describes God working in us both to will and to do for his good pleasure. Have you experienced a season where your desire to serve and obey grew as you were more active in faith? What did that look like?
15. The sermon acknowledged that the desire to read Scripture daily or pray consistently for others does not appear automatically – it grows as we do it. What

habit, if you built it consistently over the next 30 days, do you think would most strengthen your faith?

## **Section 6: Shining as Lights Without Complaining or Disputing (Philippians 2:14-16)**

16. The message compared the church's tendency to complain to the Israelites in the wilderness – noting that their complaints often sounded reasonable but reflected a deeper distrust of God. Where in your life right now might your complaints be masking a deeper distrust of God's leadership?
17. The pastor said, "We make ourselves sound real spiritual when we do it" – referring to how complaining and disputing can be dressed up as passive-aggressive comments or sarcasm. Be honest: in what situations are you most prone to doing this?
18. The image of light in darkness is striking – darkness can never overtake the light. What would it look like for this group specifically to shine as that kind of contrast in your neighborhood, workplace, or school?

## **Key Verse for Memorization This Week**

Philippians 2:3-4 – In this passage, Paul instructs believers to do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility to regard others as more important than themselves, and to look not only to their own interests but also to the interests of others.

Write it out. Carry it with you. Return to it when your old nature pushes back.

## **Practical Applications**

Choose at least one of the following to put into practice before your group meets again.

### **Individual**

- Identify one person in your life who is carrying a burden you have been aware of but have not addressed. Reach out this week with one of the questions from the sermon: "How can I pray for you?" or "What can I take off your plate?"
- Spend time this week reading Philippians 2 in full, slowly. Write down one verse that convicts you and one that encourages you, and bring both to share with the group.

- Examine your week for moments when you complained or disputed in a way that may have caused division or discouragement. Bring that honestly to God in prayer and ask him to replace that pattern with the mind of Christ.

### **As a Group**

- Commit to praying together for the women going into Pulaski State Women's Prison. Ask Leslie White how you can be part of the prayer vigil and sign up as a group.
- Challenge one another to intentionally meet someone new at church this Sunday and report back next week on what you learned about that person.
- As a group, discuss one area of church life or community where you could collectively serve in a way that puts others first. Make a plan and follow through.

### **Closing Reflection**

The sermon ended with this image: Paul saying that even if he was poured out as a drink offering and lost his life, he would rejoice – because God used him to bring the gospel to the Philippians.

Close your time together by asking each person to answer this question quietly or aloud:

If your life were the only evidence someone had of the gospel, what would they conclude about Jesus?