Freedom – Freedom from Me
10/25/26
Philippians 2:1–11

There's an old story about a cranky granddad who laid down to take a nap. While asleep, his grandsons played a trick on him by rubbing a piece of Limburger cheese on his mustache. A little while later, Grandpa woke up, sniffed the air and said, "This room stinks!" He then walked into the hallway and said, "This whole house stinks!" Then he walked onto the porch, took a deep breath, and shouted, "The whole world stinks!"

Of course, the problem wasn't the room, the house, or the world. The problem was right under his nose.

I wonder how often this is true of us. After all, how often are we convinced the problem is somebody else. *If my spouse would change. If my boss would change. If my kids would change. If people would just do things the way I think they ought to be done.* But what if before changing the people around us, we started w/ the (3) amigos of **Me**, **Myself**, and **I**?

Thru-out our **Freedom** series, we've been exploring what it means to have freedom from religion, from sin, and freedom to follow Jesus. Now, in **Philippians 2**, Paul introduces another kind of freedom – the **freedom from ME**. Freedom from always needing my way, winning the argument, or getting the credit. B/c one of life's greatest prisons is the prison of self.

If there is any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but w/ humility consider others as more important than yourselves; don't only look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ…

Out of the gate, Paul offers a simple, yet powerful truth – ***if Jesus is in you then He should show thru you***.

B/c we're now – **<u>in Christ</u>** – as a result of receiving God's grace thru faith and having the H.S. live w/in us – *we're to be of the same mind, expressing the same love, following the same Spirit* – to accomplish the sole purpose of helping others meet/experience Jesus.

<u>In essence</u>, Paul was saying – for this to occur, we have to stop living for **ME** and start living for **THEE**.

<u>But</u> – this isn't as easy as it sounds as too often instead of singing – *I exalt thee*; we sing – ***I exalt me***. Instead of – *It's all about you*; we sing – ***It's all about me***.

<u>LBH</u> – we all have a gravitational pull toward self. We naturally see life thru the lens of what we ***want***, what we ***need***, what we ***prefer***, what we think we ***deserve***, and how something affects us.

<u>SEE</u> – when Jesus saves us, He doesn't immediately take us to heaven. He leaves us here for a reason. And the reason is for every Jesus follower to portray the life/love of Jesus to everyone around them.

<u>WTM</u> – in **Philippians 2,** Paul is going to show us (2) areas where our faith must become visible: (1) in how we see our **purpose**; and (2) in how we see **people**.

I True Faith Shows How We See Our **<u>PURPOSE</u>**

If there is any encouragement in Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

Don't miss the order here. Christianity never begins w/ what we do for God, but w/ what God has done for us. Grace always comes before responsibility. **IOW** – we don't manufacture the Jesus life; we surrender to it so that Jesus in us can live thru us.

DYK – the second we come to Christ, we receive (4) remarkable blessings: [1]encouragement in Christ, [2]comfort from His love, [3]fellowship w/ the H.S., and genuine [4]affection/compassion.

encouragement (*paraklesis*) refers to Jesus walking alongside us to strengthen and build us up.

comfort (*paramuthion*) is the tender reassuring influence that God will never leave us or forsake us.

fellowship (*koinonia*) is the reality that the H.S. is in us to partner w/ us to live intimately for God w/ others.

affection | **compassion** is God's mercy/grace towards us that moves us to care for others.

Bottomline – b/c we've received these blessings in receiving Jesus, we're now capable of living the Jesus life that seeks to extend these same blessings to others.

Meaning – what we've received **vertically** – we're to give away **horizontally**.

This means that we don't love others b/c everyone is lovable. We love them b/c we've been loved. We don't forgive b/c everyone deserves forgiveness. We forgive b/c we've been forgiven.

This is our purpose. God didn't just save us to get us out of hell and into heaven. He saved us so that b/w our salvation and the moment He takes us home, the life and love of Jesus might be seen thru us.

As such, our life priority isn't about where we make money; it's about where we portray Jesus. Whether at the office, in the classroom, at the ballfield, grocery store, restaurant, gym, or church, these are places where Jesus intends to be seen in us – thru us.

WHY – God didn't leave us here just to build a life; He left us here to portray the love/grace of Jesus.

So, instead of asking when you get up in the AM – *what do I need to accomplish today?* Maybe start asking – *who needs to see Jesus in me today?*

NOW – once we understand our purpose, inevitably, it should change the way we see people.

II True Faith Shows How We See **PEOPLE**

> *Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but w/ humility consider others as more important than yourselves; don't only look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

Notice where Paul redirects our attention – **away from ourselves and toward others**. He says, don't be driven by selfish ambition or live for empty glory – but consider others instead. Look to the interests of others. Why? B/c ***no one can portray the life and love of Jesus while making everything about themselves.***

empty conceit (*kenodoxia*) combines *kenos* (empty) w/ *doxa* (glory) to mean – empty glory. It's living to get noticed, to build your platform, protect your image, and make a name for yourself.

Yet, Paul calls us live in such a way to bring glory to God and blessings to others but this requires humility.

in humility think of others as more important
than yourself

TBS – *true humility doesn't mean thinking less of yourself, it means thinking of yourself less*. Paul isn't advocating for self-hatred – but for self-forgetfulness.

Humility is reaching the place where we don't always have to go first, win the argument, get the credit, or have the last word b/c we know whose we are in God.

And here's one of the great paradoxes of the Christian life: The more secure we become in who we are in Christ, the less we have to make life about ourselves. So – **how do we do it**?

A Look **OUTWARD** Instead of Inward

Don't only look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Notice Paul doesn't say we can't have interests or care for ourselves or our families. Just don't ONLY look at yourself or look at yourself first.

look – to deliberately fix your attention on something.

This is why we can have a **compassion** problem. It's b/c we have an **attention** problem. We're so consumed w/ our schedules, problems, and responsibilities – we can't see the people God has put around us.

Yet every person we encounter is created in God's image, loved by God, and someone for whom Jesus died. When we see people as Jesus does, interruptions and disruptions become opportunities for ministry.

This means the greatest tests of humility aren't how we act at church, but when we're inconvenienced.

Think about driving. Someone cuts you off, and suddenly you're convinced it's your God-given duty to teach them a lesson! So, you become a self-appointed traffic police – complete w/ a horn/flashing headlights! But what if the person who just cut you off was having the worst day of their life? What if they're carrying a burden you know nothing about?

Enter humility – it's giving people grace instead of demanding justice for ourselves b/c oftentimes, the most Christlike thing we can do is let someone merge!

Instead – **look outward**. Ask: Who's hurting? Who's lonely? Who needs someone to listen? Who needs forgiveness, encouragement or patience? And most importantly, who needs to see what Jesus is like?

Freedom is reaching the place where I no longer need every room I enter to revolve around me.

B Look **UP** Instead of Down

Have this attitude in you which was also in Christ…

Everything Paul commanded in vs. 1–4, Jesus demonstrated in vs. 5–11. Don't act from selfish ambition? Look to Jesus. Don't chase empty glory? Look to Jesus. Consider others more important than yourself? Look to Jesus. **WHY** – b/c Jesus didn't just teach humility – He embodied it.

Although He existed in the form of God, He did not regard equality w/ God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant.

Theologians call this the ***kenosis*** or self-emptying of Jesus. While Jesus didn't empty Himself of His deity in that He never stopped being God, He did humble Himself by becoming a human. **TAI** – the Sovereign became a flesh w/out ever ceasing to be Sovereign to seek and to save the lost.

Think about it. Jesus possessed everything we spend our lives chasing – *position*, *power*, *authority*, *glory*, and *recognition* – yet He didn't use any of it to elevate Himself. ***He didn't use His power to protect His privilege; He used His power to serve you and me.***

Instead – the Creator stepped into His creation. The King of Heaven was laid in a manger. The One who commanded angels picked up a towel to wash feet.

And He went lower still. *Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross.*

Notice the progression. Heaven to earth. Glory to flesh. Flesh to servanthood. Servanthood to death. And death to a cross. Every step downward. Every step voluntary. Why? **For you. For me. And for others.**

Yet the cross wasn't only where Jesus paid for our sins; it's where He provided the pattern for our lives.

The world says – *climb.* Jesus says – *serve.* The world says – *promote yourself.* Jesus says – *humble yourself.* The world says – *demand your rights.* Jesus says – *put others first.* The world asks – *what do I deserve?* Jesus asks – *what can I give?*

This is the mind of Christ. And Paul doesn't tell us to **admire** it. He tells us to **adopt** it.

> *For this reason, God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that's above every name.*

Jesus humbled Himself, and God exalted Him. Jesus became a servant and God gave Him the highest place.

Principle – we're to take care of our **obedience** and allow God to take care of the **outcome**.

As such – we don't have to promote ourselves, prove ourselves, win every argument, or receive all the credit. Instead, we can humble ourselves, serve others, and trust God to will and to work as He sees fit.

This is freedom – when we stop building our kingdom b/c we've become more consumed w/ His kingdom.

So, instead of asking – *what's best for me?* Maybe we should ask – *what would Jesus do if He were living His life thru me*? *How would He treat my spouse*? *Respond to that difficult coworker*? *Handle being overlooked*? *Serve His church*? B/c following Jesus isn't just asking Jesus to improve our lives – it's about surrendering our lives so He can live His life thru us.

So, like Grandpa's cheese problem, what if the stench is closer to us than we think? What if what's standing b/w us and freedom is **ME** – my pride, my preferences, and my insistence on getting my way? B/c the freest person in the room isn't the person who can do whatever he wants. ***The freest person is the one who no longer has to make everything about himself***.

Question – where is ME getting in the way of Jesus? And what would change if we stopped demanding our way to start demonstrating His way?

Listen – the Christian life isn't about getting people to notice us. It's about living in such a way that when people see our lives – they see Jesus. B/c if Jesus is in you, He should show thru you.