



Sermon Notes from 12 May

The Hope of Unbreakable Unity (*Philippians 1:27-2:4*)

by Pastor Too Teh Hsin

Both joy and unity are essential for the advancement of the gospel. Unity is an important hallmark for Christians. It is an outward sign of hearts transformed by the power of the gospel. Paul tells us that the gospel is the power source of our unity.

3 Aspects of Christian Unity

1) Unity in Citizenship (Ph. 1:27a)

v27a – Paul emphasizes that this is the most important thing among everything else: living a life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

Philippi was a colony of Rome (a powerful nation at the time). This made the Philippians proud of their nationality. Paul reminded the Philippians of their identity in Christ. They were not just citizens of Rome, but first and foremost citizens of Heaven. They are governed by the laws of Heaven, have special privileges ordained by God and have protection far superior to what Rome offers to them. We too are citizens of Heaven who need to possess a genuine love for Jesus that overflows with sacrificial love to people around us. Citizens of Heaven are agents of unity, transforming wherever we are into “little Heaven”. This is one way we can live in a manner worthy of the gospel!

2) Unity Against Opposition (Ph. 1:27b-28)

The Bible tells us that as Christians, we should not be surprised or discouraged by opposition; we should expect it. The Philippians were facing frightening opposition (v28a).

v27b – Paul exhorts them to unite as one people in the face of opposition for the gospel. He describes two groups of people (v28b):

#1 Those who oppose the gospel – they will do so to their destruction, passing over the free gift of salvation.

#2 Those who defend the gospel – their willingness to suffer and endure conflict is a clear sign of their citizenship of Heaven. The goal in the battle for the gospel is salvation even for our opponents. Citizens of Heaven are willing to pay the price for the sake of Christ (Ac. 5:40-41). Because we belong to Christ, we can face opposition without fear and with joy! Citizens of Heaven stand firm in unity against opposition for the sake of Christ.

3) Unity in Christ (Ph. 2:1-4)

v1 – Paul reminds us of the sure and certain benefits of being in Christ.

v2 – He tells the Philippians his joy will not be complete until there is unity among them. That’s how essential unity is for Christians. We glorify and please God when we are united.

v3 – We can do this by fighting against our selfish ambitions and pursuing humility, counting others more significant than ourselves.

v4 – Christians are not to be self-centered, but Jesus-centered and others-centered. Do not completely forget about your own interest; instead also consider others’ as well. Citizens of Heaven unite through Agape love.

Self-centeredness is the hammer that shatters relationships. Agape love is the glue that puts the broken pieces back together. Because of sin, our relationship with God was like shattered glass. He sent Jesus Christ His Son to pursue us, not to defeat or destroy but to save us, and reconcile us back to God. Because of Him, our relationship with God is secure forever in Christ! Nothing can break that (Ro. 8:38-39)! Unity is a gift from God to us through the salvation of Jesus. Lay down your hammers and glue the broken pieces back together through Agape love!