

Paul begins this passage with four “if” statements, that are really affirmations of the Christians in Philippi

If in any way I have given you encouragement in Christ...

If in any way my love has consoled you...

If in any way you have enjoyed the fellowship created by the Spirit...

If in any way you have experienced the tenderness and compassion of God in Christ...

Then make my joy complete...

Think alike

Love alike

Be of one soul

Be of one mind

Don't be selfish or conceited...

Be humble and gracious to others

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus

Paul is calling them to a spirit of unity, not one of uniformity

To think alike involves more than the intellect... it includes emotions, attitudes, and will

It is a unity of spirit in which powerful tensions are held together by loyalty to one another

These bonds of loyalty are stronger than the tension that would pull us apart without love

Humility allows us to credit others with good intentions and to see the good in them

But many times the church has made too much of putting self in last place and seeing others as better

Don't take this beyond healthy limits and use it as a mandate to put yourself down

Early in life I learned that joy can be an acronym for Jesus, Others, and You... in that order

But just like the oxygen masks on the plane that they say to put on yourself before a child

If I always put myself last, I cannot do good for others – there is a healthy balance

Humility and seeing the good in others aren't meant to be a denial of who I am and my personhood

The verses from Philippians 2:5-11 were an early Christian hymn about Jesus, lifted up as our example

Jesus was equal with God, yet he took on the full human condition when he came to earth

Jesus didn't try to get out of being human when life got tough – either at the beginning or end

He submitted to the worst that humanity could do when he was executed on the cross

But it was God who lifted him up, giving him life and breaking the power of sin

God gave him the name that is above every name

It is at this name of Jesus that every knee shall bow, and everyone say that Jesus is Lord

This is reminiscent of the actions, words, and teachings of Jesus that we find in the Gospels...

Jesus washed the feet of the disciples and asks them to do the same for each other

Having done the work of a slave, he reminds them that he is Teacher and Lord (John 13)

“If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross

and follow me.” (Mark 8:34)

“Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.” (Mark 9:35)

How do we have the mind of Christ in us? How is it that we live into the truth of God/Jesus indwelling?

First, we already have the mind of Christ in us according to 1 Corinthians 2:16 – *Accept that truth!*

Giving up our “rights” to be first and the best so we can work for the good of the whole

By being willing to remain in the tension of unity even when it is uncomfortable, trusting Jesus

By doing life Jesus' way, following the teachings of Jesus without trying to skip the hard parts

Allow Jesus to transform and renew our minds to be more like his (Romans 12:1-2)