

SEVENTH DAY  BAPTIST®

This Week in the Word

Forever, O LORD, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens. Ps 119:89.



Devote all to Christ
Study Scripture: Philippians 2:1-11

Lesson 9, January 26, 2019

Key Verse

Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

Philippians 2:3

INTRODUCTION

In our lesson today, Paul focuses on the church in all its several parts and here he continues the issue of unity which began in chapter 1: 27. The Apostle deals at length with the reason for unity, the enemies of unity, and what is involved if there is to be unity, for clearly he stresses that if there is no unity there is no partnership in the Gospel ministry and no possibility that the brethren are actively working to achieve the aim of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

This is an extremely serious matter and therefore the Apostle deals at length with the example of Christ, encouraging the brethren to understand that they must also walk as Jesus walked. The fact is that the brethren must follow Him. In following Him they must understand who Jesus is and what He has done. When this is understood they would be better connected to Him and with open hearts worship Him in a proper, respected, and accepted fashion. In so doing brethren would find themselves constantly devoted to Jesus as the brethren continue to marvel at His utterly amazing life.

The Apostle emphasizes that it is necessary for us to have the attitude or mindset that Christ exhibited. On the road to glory to which we are called, it is required that we adapt our self to a radically different mindset. This is why the example of Christ becomes so relevant to us,, for we know by watching Jesus that Jesus explored the world of human beings by His incarnation, “**emptying himself**” and humiliating Himself **by becoming a human being like us.**

Jesus went to the greatest possible extent to show how He loved us and since we are in Him we too should go a considerable distance to love and meet the needs of others.

We should therefore in this Study pay special attention to how the Apostle stresses the need for unity and how God showed by example the need for promote unity. Note therefore that by devoting oneself to Christ unity will emerge. So the Apostle addresses the corporate entity, the church as a whole and then he addresses the individual members.

There is really no excuse for us to say we do not like others and that we are not prepared to make sacrifices to bring others to Christ .In this remarkable passage the Apostle draws attention to the failure of the church to penetrate the unsaved community; a failure he attributes to the church's seeming ignorance of the principle behind the Incarnation. Paul strips away at our selfishness and pride and the reason for our refusal to follow Christ and devote ourselves to Him, pointing out that this devotion to Christ will make a world of difference for others.

Paul and Timothy promoted humility and unity in the church, by focusing the brethren on the example of Jesus Christ and they presented themselves as servants of Christ Jesus and models for the Philippians. Paul began this letter both to the leadership and to the members, by declaring that 'he thanked God for them' and that they were in his prayers.

He expressed his confidence that God who had begun a good work in them would carry it on to completion. He urged the Philippians to stand firm for the faith together as one, not to be afraid of persecution and to live a life worthy of the gospel of Jesus. There had to be unity under all circumstances, whether or not there was pressure from the inside or from the outside.

Pay close attention to where Paul was when he was writing this letter. The book of Philippians is one of the 'prison epistles', written while Paul was awaiting trial and chained to a Roman soldier. He was however imprisoned in his own home, under house arrest so to speak. He was not allowed to be more than a chain's length away from a soldier. Roman practice was that the guards were changed three times a day to ensure that they were always alert. We also know that during these two years of confinement, Paul had the freedom to welcome friends into the house, to teach about Jesus openly without hindrance, and to preach the Kingdom of God.

Despite his own unfortunate circumstances, Paul has written a letter showing his devotion to Christ and the work of Christ and expressing his personal concerns for the Philippians in a most tender fashion. He would certainly be remembering with fondness, the wealthy merchant woman from Philippi named Lydia that he had met at the river side after the Holy Spirit had dramatically allowed him to establish a beachhead for the gospel in Europe. He would also remember the slave girl that had been exploited both by demons and men before Paul freed her. Then there was the jailer, a Roman soldier that he had stopped from committing suicide and whom along with his entire household Paul had led to Christ. These people were always in his heart and Paul writes a very friendly, brotherly and personal letter to this church. He let them know in verse 12 of chapter 1 that despite his imprisonment, his circumstances had turned out for the greater progress of the gospel.

We do not know what the trouble was in the Philippian church, but Paul was not prepared to take this terrible sin of schism lightly, for schism is never justifiable, except on grounds of serious

doctrinal error, or a grievous inconsistency between faith and practice. So Paul deals wisely with this terrible situation that was developing.

He addressed their manner of life using a word that described the proud attitude of a citizen of this Roman colony and tied that earthly attitude to their behavior as citizens of heaven. They as believers belonged to the kingdom of Jesus Christ and the gospel. There was only one solution to the problem of schism in the church.

He urged them to do the essential things, namely, “*stand fast in one Spirit*” and next, with “*one mind strive for the faith of the gospel*”. In other words, they were told to always be completely dependent on the Spirit of God, the first essential, and secondly, nothing except serious heresy should keep them from working together to spread the gospel.

He was confident that God would complete His good work in them. So he prayed that their love would continue and be full to the brim and that they would grow in real knowledge and all discernment. He wanted their character to be so transformed, that on the day of Christ they would be found to be sincere and blameless.

Paul called the Philippians to commitment and enthusiasm for the Lord Jesus Christ and the gospel of Christ. In the verses immediately preceding our text he appealed to the Philippians to behave as Christians. He made it clear that in a world that opposed the gospel of Christ, it was an honor to stand for Jesus Christ (v.29), especially if it meant suffering.

So note very carefully that we are looking at very practical Texts, for Paul reviewed and detailed the weapons that Satan uses to pull us away from our position in Christ. Paul uses his incarceration to show the believers in Philippi that they needed not fear anything. Criticism, difficulty, suffering, rejection is necessary to enable us to grow in strength.

He begins in our Text to give us reasons and motivations for Christian behavior. Remember now that Paul is addressing a cross-section of people including the sincere but his words are also aimed at warning the insincere.

THE TEXT

Verse 1. Paul’s attention is first on the problems from within, as he deals with the issue of unity in the face of opposition. After having expressed confidence in the commitment of the brethren, Paul never doubted that they would participate with him in the work of God.

In dealing with the strategies Satan employs to damage the church, Paul uses four conditional clauses which begin with the word “if”. This is a rhetorical way of very strongly saying “since” you have such and such abilities, then certain things must follow.

Each of these conditional clauses are directed to show the brethren something that God has given them, so they are in effect being exhorted to ponder the gifts of God. He states:

“if”, or “since”

-you have encouragement in Christ

-you have comfort provided by love

-you have fellowship with the Spirit
-you have affection and mercy
...then you logically will complete my joy.

All of what the Apostle now speaks in detail is found in the believers who are devoted to Christ. Without devotion to Christ much would be lost.

The first thing that he mentions is “encouragement in Christ”, or “consolation”. This is an appeal to our gratitude for what God has done. The word “encouragement” here means exhortation, the challenge to appreciate the difficult positions of life, or suffering, as a gift. This is actually “comfort” from being in Christ.

Now when we consider this we realize that true consolation or encouragement can only be found in Christ, who came down from heaven and has returned following His resurrection. When we look around us we mourn at the difficulties we encounter because of the curse on the earth brought by sin. We wish that Adam and Eve had not sinned and brought the bodily and spiritual distresses that we experience and which brings us grief. As long as we are absent from the Lord, we cannot fully experience the delights that He has in store for us.

Until then, when we are tried and in trouble and ask for consolation, we remember that Jesus Christ became a man, suffered all that we are now suffering and more, that He understands what we are going through and is available to console us.

The manifestation of God in the flesh is of supreme importance. God chose to reveal Himself in Jesus and now reveals Himself through the godly lives of His saints. Remember that the word “**saints**” means people who are holy or separated ones. God made us in His image and we are expected to manifest Christ personally.

One writer, the famous Spurgeon, tells us some facts about the consolation or encouragement we have in Christ. He writes:

“Christ is to his people a surpassing consolation....

The consolations of Christ, from the fact of his unchanging nature, are unfailing.

The consolations of Christ are all powerful...

This consolation is everlasting consolation....

This is a consolation which is always within the believers’ reach. He is “a very present help in time of trouble”.

Next, Paul refers to the “comfort provided by love”. This is no ordinary comfort, but a comfort coming from the love of the Spirit. The Father's love for us comforts us when we suffer.

Next, he speaks of the “Fellowship of the Spirit”. The idea of fellowship means participation and communion by every true believer with the Holy Spirit. He provides strength, courage and the ability to do the will of God.

Note that this word 'comfort' gives the idea of strengthening, helping, or making strong. It is not simply a word which means soothing sympathy. We get the word 'fortitude' from the Latin word for comfort which is 'fortis'.

Next, he speaks of affection or mercy. In view of the encouragement or consolation in Christ, the love from God, the fellowship from the Spirit, we would of necessity be full of compassion and mercy toward one another. There should be no strained relationship in the church.

Note the strategy of the enemy, suggested by Paul's analysis. Paul attacks negative thinking and a critical attitude, pointing out that there are available resources in Christ to correct all these problems. The presence of Christ, His consolation, the comfort of God's love, the guidance of the Spirit and the example of Christ, allow the Christian to love even the unlovely. These blessings allow the Christian to participate and encourage others to do the work of God, even when they are doing it from envy or from an intention to increase our affliction.

Verse 2. Paul is pleading with the brethren to do the right, so that it would be a comfort to him. It was a personal joy for him to see people being like-minded and living in love. Paul's joy would be complete when the brethren:

- are thinking the same thing
- having the same love
- being united in soul
- driven by one thing, namely, the gospel of Christ.

This is clearly an advocacy for unity. We know that Paul used this or similar phrases to teach the same thing in other passages such as Romans 12: 16, 15:5; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Philippians 4:2. This is the key phrase.

He defines this by the succeeding three items listed. Having the same mind does not however mean that everybody has exactly the same opinion on every issue. Paul stresses harmony and in several passages indicates that there can be diversity. Paul combines the phrases to indicate the need for genuine unity. This argues against preferential treatment to some over others, for their attitude of impartiality comes from the love they have received from God and from the control of the Spirit. Everything is guided by the commandments of God and preaching of the one gospel.

What God wants to see in our lives is the Rich and fulfilling joy that He offers. This joy will exist because we are living in love given our devotion to Christ.

Verse 3. Some practical directions are given here to promote the unity that comes when we are devoted to Christ. Therefore Paul condemns selfishness and seeking one's interest through strife as being totally opposite to his idea of unity. We should not do things out of a desire for advancement or promotion, apart from the direction of Christ.

The word used for selfish ambition is a term which points to an ugly attitude and it describes someone who is always engaged in 'base self seeking'. There is no concern for others but a hatred for fellow men, and a desire to rule, whether or not there is capability or honesty. Elsewhere Paul

lists selfish ambition sins such as sexual immorality, anger, jealousy, slander, conceit and general licentiousness. The sins apparently travel together and are found in persons with selfish ambition.

Note that there is good ambition. This aims at glorifying God and serving Him with everything we have.

Selfish ambition is connected to vanity. This is literally 'empty glory'. The specific word used, which occurs only here in the New Testament, apparently is connected with making physical idols and idolatry. So those with selfish ambition have elevated themselves almost to the position of an idol, a replacement of God.

Paul however points out that there is another way and it is totally opposite to the attitude of the world. Greeks considered this 'other way' to be a fault not a virtue. To them manhood meant self-assertiveness, imposing one's will on others and lording it over the next person.

Paul instead speaks of humility and the desire to focus on other people and serving them. This is a rebuke to the world's concept of self-esteem, for the Bible knows of no such term. One author comments:

“The Bible knows nothing of the idea that we should-and must-carry with us an attitude of confident superiority in every situation, and that this is the foundation for a healthy human personality.

While we recognize the intrinsic value of every human life, we can't deny that the low self-esteem of some is justified and based in reality. When we are in rebellion against God, it is fitting for us to have a low self-esteem.”

So as we live in humility, we are to be committed to each other and this affects how we think, how we act and reflects our underlying attitude.

We are to focus on other people and regard them as being more important than ourselves. We should understand that all bear the divine image. This attitude will help us do what is right.

Verse 4. Paul commands that we reject pride, selfishness and conceit; these are elements of the 'flesh'. We should seek to give advantage to others and not just to our selves. We should be asking ourselves how much we can help someone else and give aid.

Paul is not telling us that we should not look after our own interest, he is simply telling us we should not **only** look out for our interest. We should not be self absorbed as that behavior is contrary to unity.

God knows that we will look after our own interests, so when He tells us to love our neighbor as ourselves, it is not commanding us to love ourselves. We do that naturally. God wants to change the selfish kind of thinking and reminds us that he will meet our needs and that certainty will free us all to meet the needs of others.

Verse 5. Paul moves on to use the example of Christ and he summarizes his message in this verse. To ensure that his readers understand his message, he goes on to describe the mind of Christ.

Note, Paul is not telling us something about Christ which we should only admire. He is telling us about something with which we must have intimate association and into which we must enter. We have to have that same mind as Christ. Paul will show us how Jesus behaved and thereby we can learn how the mind of God operates, so that we can be in sync with that mind.

Verse 6. Paul begins by describing someone who existed outside of our history. He had to take a journey so that He could come into our history and in our lives.

This Jesus Christ we are told is in His very nature God, or literally “*in the form of God*”. This expression “form of God” refers to the outward manifestation of something which corresponds exactly with what a thing is in its essence. There are essential attributes that it possesses without which it would not be what it is.

The word “being” is from an ancient Greek verb which...

“describes that which a man is in his very essence and which cannot be changed. It describes that part of a man which, in any circumstances, remains the same.” (Barclay)

The word used for “form” is also an ancient Greek word which...

“always signifies a form which truly and fully expresses the being which underlies it... the words mean ‘the being on an equality with God’...”

The differences in the meaning of some words will help us clarify the force of Paul's argument.

“Morphe is the essential form which never alters: schema is the outward form which changes from time to time and from circumstance to circumstance.” (Barclay)

So the use of these words mean that Christ was equal with God and yet distinct from Him.

Christ always possessed this equality but now we are told that He never “grasped” or as is sometimes translated “exploited” this to His own advantage. He was not like Adam and Eve who grasped for equality with God.

He had the full orb'd power, privileges and status of God, yet He did not consider that, that should prevent Him from doing what was necessary to show the love of God for His creation.

This pre-incarnate Christ did not cling to the prerogatives of deity. He chose not to cling to it though it was His already.

So we are now dealing with the “mystery of godliness”, how God came in the flesh and was seen among men.

Let it be clear that Jesus did not give up His rights, for He could not do that and still be God. He simply gave up the right to enjoy the rights that were His by right. So he was successful and performed as Kinsman- Redeemer perfectly as was required by God in His life. As God He could commit no sin and as man He overcame all temptations that were thrown at Him. We can therefore say with certainty that He understands everything about us and what we undergo for He underwent the maximum possible temptation to let love temptation that human beings could never understand) and He was triumphant and was exhausted by the Father.

We should exercise caution when we talk about equality with God the Father and the equality among the members of the Trinity, for those human words do not quite express the exact relationship in the Godhead. We do know that all the members of the Trinity have the nature and essence of God and exist in the exact form of God.

Part of our problem is language, for when we talk about “form”, the idea of shape comes immediately to mind. So we think that Jesus manifested the shape of God. That is not what the word means. The word ‘form’ expresses ‘essential nature’ so there is no way anyone can honestly say that Jesus was not God. That is quite clear.

The Bible insists that Jesus did not look on these things in such a way that He must hold onto them all, irrespective of everything else. He could not ‘empty’ Himself of His deity and give up all His rights as God, but He did the next best thing and became a man, to show us what we should be like, to show us how God thinks, His priorities, and His style. He lived in total dependence upon His indwelling Father. The lesson for us is that we should aim living completely under the direction of the Holy Spirit. If we do we will please God. Even if we are not totally 100% successful and we do sin sometimes God has provided the intercessory and advocacy Work of the Lord Jesus Christ. So as the Apostle John tells us in 1 John 1, when we sin all you have to do is to confess our sins, and He is faithful and just to forgive us of our sins and keep on cleansing us from all righteousness. Such is the amazing provision that God has made to keep His children.

Verse 7. Jesus took a journey. He poured Himself into the cause by taking the very nature of a servant. He existed in the ‘form’ of God and now He also took on the ‘form’ of a servant. He not only looked as a human, as the phrase “made in the likeness of men” indicates, but he clearly was in the “form” of a servant, a real man.

The word ‘likeness’ also indicates that He was more than human. Remember Paul said in Romans 8:3 that He was made in the ‘likeness’ of sinful man, but without sin. So the word ‘likeness’ is actually used by Paul to reinforce the meaning of the word ‘form’ but to show us that there was more to Jesus than Him being a mere man, even though He was in every respect as human as we are.

Jesus “emptied” Himself by not only taking human form but took on the form of a servant. He did not come as a King but as a slave with no status, no power and no privileges.

His master was God the Father and He was totally obedient to Him.

The ‘Servant Songs’ of Isaiah portray the coming Messiah as the Father’s obedient servant, who not only served the Father, but also came to serve humanity. See Isaiah 42 and other passages.

In this “humiliation” look at what Jesus did. He knew who He was and what abilities He had. He knew what Judas was about to do, and yet he would never use His power to stop Him. Instead,

He began to do the demeaning work of a slave, washing the feet of Judas and **His** disciples.

This was obedience. He did nothing except what His Father wanted Him to do. He did not complain about the injury, the hurts, the indignities and the rejection of His unbelieving people. He could have refused to give up His life, but He voluntarily gave up His life and became obedient unto death in order to save man.

Talk about humiliation. His family misunderstood and opposed Him. His brothers thought He was mad. People around Him insinuated that He was illegitimate. He had to live with disciples that were not so sharp in understanding, though they have no excuse for this dullness. This is the kind of shadow that He lived under while He was on earth.

When His ministry was almost at an end His friends deserted Him after one of His own disciples betrayed Him. The Romans scourged Him terribly, spat on Him, mocked Him, stripped Him naked and nailed Him to a cross to die as an outcast of society, a common criminal.

One writer comments that Jesus’ humiliation began at His birth and carried through to the end.

“He left Heaven. He set out for earth. The first part of his journey takes him to the most vulnerable place on earth: the womb. He enters the world as a human embryo in the womb of a woman, whose pregnancy at first causes her fiancé to conclude that she's been fooling around. She is a Jewish woman in a Roman world, the decree of which else her to make the arduous journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem. The place of Christ's birth is a manger for animals, not an inn for humans. He's born in the land of a wicked tyrant, King Herod, who is so intent on destroying him that he slew all the boys in Bethlehem who were less than two years old. A more vulnerable entry into the world could hardly be imagined.”

Verse 8. So Jesus took the lowest and not the highest place and at God's final command went to His death.

Isaiah 50:5-6 records in Jesus' words what it means by Jesus humbling Himself: ...*“The Sovereign Lord has opened my ears, and I have not been rebellious; I have not drawn back. I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheek to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from mocking and spitting.”*

We are told later that after Isaiah delivered his prophecy, Jesus was in fact put to a shameful death. Crucifixion was a form of execution that Rome reserved for slaves, people at the very bottom of the social ladder and non-citizens. So the obedient Jesus suffered a mangling, disfiguring, form of torture and was so deformed by his suffering that Isaiah 52:14 describes him thus: *“His appearance was so disfigured beyond that of any man and his form marred beyond human likeness”.*

That is how the Obedient Servant of the Lord served men. Isaiah 53:5-6 tells us:

“But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all”.

We like to be independent, self-made, proud and disobedient. Obedience is not something that is prized but it is demanded by God .

So what is God like? What do we know about Him? What is His nature? What are His virtues?

Some people think of God as a power-hungry tyrant, just like the rulers of the earth. Some think He is a remote, uncaring landlord just like those on earth.

This King put on the clothes of a beggar and renounced His throne in order to win us to Him. He did not just become human, He became a slave, neither did He come to just die, but came to die on a cross.

So we know why He came.

“He saw that there was no one, he was appalled that there was no one to intervene; so his own arm work salvation for him, and his own righteousness sustained him.” Isaiah 59:16.

And 2 Corinthians 8:9

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.”

This is what is meant by the humiliation of Christ.

We know that He could have called 10,000 angels to help Him at any point in His life to destroy His enemies, but He loved us so deeply that He would not do that. He would suffer and die for our salvation.

So, what does devotion of all we have to Christ means? It means that we should give up all pride and foolishness and be humbled and committed to do His ministry.

Simply understand therefore that the only worth that you have is the worth that you have in Christ. Devote all to Christ. If you do not remember that there exists the Lake of fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Do not go there.

Verse 9. These verses describe how God the Father ‘super-exalted’ Jesus. Jesus now has not only the divine name Jehovah, but it is now declared openly that the character of Jesus is superior to that of any other being and He truly reflects His superiority to all for He is now the unique God-Man..

Jesus came in a journey of humiliation and because of that God exalted Him. He was an obedient servant and He deserved to be exalted. Without deviation He obeyed the voice of His Father.

Note, Jesus’ example is to be the pattern of our lives.

His exaltation is described as an exaltation to the highest place. Why was this necessary? Remember that Jesus who was God had taken on humanity to Himself and now since the highest place is reserved for God Himself, God would have to show that after Jesus’ obedience even unto

the death of the cross, He rightfully, after being humbled to the lowest possible degree, should be exalted to the highest possible degree. He was King and He had proved to every being that only God could have shown obedience in the way He had and only God can do what Jesus has done. So God the Father's words of Isaiah 52:13 came to pass:

“See, my servant will act wisely; he will be raised and lifted up and highly exalted.”

So Jesus returns to where He came from as God and now also as man and so He is exalted and given a name that is above every name.

What else could the Father do but share His name publicly with Christ, so that the world would know who he was and what He is like. The name He shared with Jesus was LORD, Yahweh, the God of Israel, the name that was above every name.

Verses 10-11. So Paul again goes back to Isaiah 45, pulls out verse 23 and reminds us of what the Father said:

“By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before me every knee will bow; by me every tongue will swear.”

The Father now applies these words spoken about Himself to Christ, and there is absolutely no doubt that Jesus Christ is Yahweh in the flesh.

Jesus is now to be acknowledged as the ultimate authority. This acknowledgment applies to everyone and everything. Every knee will bow. This is total submission. It is also universal submission. Earthly beings as well as heavenly beings, both good and wicked, both seen and unseen, will bow.

Not only that but actions must be supported by the words. Every being referred to previously will confess that Jesus Christ is LORD. Confession means full and exact agreement with what God says.

By this confession God will be glorified. Everyone will know what the love of God the Father means. Every being will praise the Father.

CONCLUSION

Devote yourself therefore to Christ. Devote all you have to Christ.

The rulers of earth like to exercise authority and like to exalt themselves, but one day they all will confess that they are nothing, and that Jesus is everything.

The beings created by God seem to love praise, but that is not the way to go. The correct way is to be a servant, not to exalt ourselves, not to seek your own interests but to as it were wash each other's feet.

This is the way of obedience and the way to exaltation by God. This is not the way of the world. We should be different. We should be like Jesus. We should have the mind of Christ. We should behave as Christ behaved.

If you find yourself with any other mind set and do not have the radical mind set which allows you to be comfortable on the floor as well as on the stage, something is wrong. Your life must be dedicated to the glory of God and to His glory alone. Jesus is the only Master, Creator, Lord, Authority.

Confessing the Lordship of Christ will bring glory to God but we must also walk the walk. Anything else is hypocrisy.

Paul is confident that the brethren in Philippi were on the whole genuine brethren. He called them to unity and to follow the path of Christ. He even prayed for the envious and disobedient ones among them.

He was confident that God had begun a good work in them and that He would complete it. May we think similarly of all of our brethren and work with God at His leading, so that none of us will be lost.

We tend to take our behaviour and position lightly. But note that disunity in the church is not primarily a matter of being in disunity in a secular organization. It is really a sin against our intimate, personal relationship to Christ. It is a direct act of ingratitude to One who unceasingly poured out both encouragement and comfort into our lives. This ingratitude does not only apply to the sin of disunity. So the Psalmist said:

“Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight”. Psalm 51:4.

This is how we must regard every sin, as being against God.

Believers have received the encouragement of Christ, the consolation of His love, the Fellowship of His Spirit, the deep longings, affection and compassion and sympathy of His Holy Spirit and we should reciprocate for such constant grace and kindness by devoting all to Christ.

We must strive to eliminate selfishness, the personal ambition that ties us to our little piece of turf. Believers should eliminate empty conceit, that driving passion to see our name exalted and ourself elevated. The cure is to look at others as superior to ourselves and that will allow us to give them more attention than we give ourselves. Our lives should not be consumed only with our own affairs and interests.

We have the model of Christ and we are called to pattern our lives after Him.

A truism of Scripture which is seen in our Text is that the one who humbled himself and the one who is devoted to Christ is the one whom God exalts. One writer notes:

“In the divine economy of things it is by giving that a person receives, it is by serving that a person is served. It is by losing one's life that one finds it. It is by dying to self that one lives. It is by humbling oneself that one is exalted. Self-sacrifice and humility is rewarded by God”.

The church needs unity. We want to have that unity that maintains the same love, that has one soul and is intent on one purpose. This will only happen through devotion to Christ and that involves humility. Our example of all that is good is found in Jesus Christ. So let us devote all to Christ.