

Philippians 2:12-13

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[0 : 00] Lord, thank you so much for this opportunity to come together as your church. People from all sorts of different backgrounds, people coming from different countries, people speaking different languages, people that are older or younger or taller or shorter, men and women.

Lord, thank you that you have drawn us all together. And as we open your word, help us to not just hear it, but inwardly just grasp it.

Lord, I pray by your Holy Spirit, you'll open our eyes to your truth and help us to live out this way that you've called us to live. I pray all these things in Jesus' name.

Amen. So in 2006, you know, I'm not a big soccer fan. I love watching basketball. I really love watching basketball.

But the first World Cup I ever watched was in 2006. And it was France and Italy in the finals. And it was in Germany.

[1 : 02] So it was what time? What's the difference? Like six hours or something like that. So the game was around two o'clock, three o'clock, kind of the early afternoon. And I remember I fell asleep.

Not because it was boring, but because that's what I do in big, momentous type of things. I've fallen asleep at NBA finals, and I love basketball. I've fallen asleep in movies.

I've fallen asleep at the wheel. Like it's just, I'm not the greatest at staying awake. And people that know me, they get a big kick that, you know, around nine o'clock, this kind of glaze hits my eyes.

And I'm basically dead to the world. Like I'm useless. But it's interesting. I get a big kick out of soccer fans because for a few weeks, every fourth year, every fourth summer, Canadians who, I mean, when it's the gold medal game of the Olympics for hockey, I mean, this place bleeds red and white.

Everybody is like the proudest Canadian. But when the World Cup comes, people claim, you know, their step great aunt's Italian heritage for them cheering for Italy.

[2 : 13] Or all of a sudden, like the Ottawa's like hidden, quiet Brazilian diaspora comes alive and swells to 10 times as big as it, you know, is during the year.

People from France, they just go crazy. Anyways, nationalism, just like it spikes. I think it's hilarious. I get a big kick out of it. And by the way, I think there's nothing wrong with that.

It's just a comment. This hyper nationalism just takes over. And this is what we're in today. So, I mean, I, like yesterday or the day before, I saw German flags on the side of this car.

We have a neighbor who has a German flag up. And it's just a sweet time, you know, it brings people together. But it's this hyper nationalism, this hyper allegiance that has totally overtaken Canadian patriotism for a few weeks every fourth summer.

In ancient Philippi, we have one of the leading cities in Eastern, in the Eastern European section of the Roman Empire.

[3 : 18] So, around modern day Macedonia. And it was populated by many people who were extremely patriotic to Rome. Very patriotic to Rome. Apparently, a lot of retired soldiers, that's where they would end up living, is in Philippi.

So, Roman patriotism, it wasn't kind of like Canadian patriotism. It was a bit of a mix between this hyper nationalism and this cult-like religion around Caesar.

So, to be a good Roman citizen, it wasn't that you swore allegiance to Rome. It's that you actually swore allegiance to Caesar as divine.

So, you can have your own gods. You might have a family god. You have little shrines set up that your family worships. But, that's fine. But, if it gets in the way of worshipping Caesar, this is no go.

Caesar takes prominence for Roman citizens. Interesting, there was a Roman poet about 300 or so years after Paul.

[4 : 20] So, about 1700 years ago. And, this is a translation from the Latin. But, this is what it says to be a Roman citizen. Rome, Rome alone has found the spell to charm the tribes that fell beneath her conquering arm.

Has given one name to the whole human race and clasped and sheltered them in fond embrace. Rome took over the known world. Conquering tons of different people. Different languages. Different tribes. And, in the end, you could be a Roman citizen. You had to swear allegiance to Caesar. So, before Christianity became the state religion in the Roman Empire, around 300, they were this tiny sect, this religion that was spreading, that said, actually, we're not going to give ultimate authority to Caesar.

We have our God, but he's not Caesar. Obviously, this flew in the face of what it meant to be a Roman citizen. This hyper-patriotism was just non-existent within the Christian sect.

And, ultimately, it led to Christians being persecuted and killed. Thrown in jail. Dissidents of the cultic Roman patriotism would be thrown in prison.

[5 : 43] And, eventually, they would be beaten and executed. Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians in jail. In prison.

Precisely because of this. Because he said, Caesar is fine, but Caesar isn't God. There's only one God, and it's Jesus. So, Paul's social credibility wasn't very high.

Kind of low. He wasn't, you don't really garner a lot of respect in the city that you're in by giving a big middle finger, at least to the Roman citizens, in their view, to Caesar.

You just don't do that. So, Paul here is writing this letter in prison, and he's at a pretty low spot. The church that he is writing to, that he is nurturing in Philippi, is facing pressures from these hyper-patriotic people that are saying, listen, worship whatever God you want to worship, but you have to swear allegiance to Caesar.

Not only that, there seems to be, within the text, we see these false teachers, or at least it's alluded to, these false teachers are in the church, and what's happening with these false teachers, they are saying, well, hold on a second.

[7 : 06] The Christian life is the exalted life. If you're a Christian, I mean, you are, there is no issue with you, there's no suffering, there's no pain.

To live the Christian life is to live the exalted life. And all of a sudden, we see these factions, that are starting in the Philippian church, that Paul addresses. So we have pressures from outside of the Philippian church, from the citizenry of Philippi, and then we have pressures inside of the Philippian church.

And all of a sudden, this unity that Paul has been advocating for, within the church, is starting to splinter. It's starting to break apart. And Paul here is writing a letter to address this.

So how does Paul address this? He does this by not only defending his imprisonment, because, by the way, like if you're, if you're in this church, and you have people saying, the exalted, the Christian life is an exalted Christian life, it's an exalted life, no suffering, how is the, the planter of your church, the leader of your faith, this guy named Paul, why would he be in prison?

That's a stain on our reputation. We're supposed to be, really, well to do people, and yet our leader, is stuck in a Roman prison? So Paul, he is addressing this, this fracturing, this disunity, by defending his own imprisonment, as actually being God's will, for the furthering of the gospel, but he also, constantly is exhorting the people, to unity, to be together.

[8 : 50] But not just a unity, for the sake of unity, not like everybody, you have to hold hands, to put on a show, for anybody who sees you in public. No, no, no, it's a unity in Christ.

It's a unity, that is rooted, in shared values, even deeper than that, shared faith, in one God. And at the core of this, isn't this exalted life, but it's actually a life, that has suffering, as a key component of it.

So, Paul calls the Christians, in Philippi, to be united in four ways.

You want to throw up the first slide, Andrew? Okay. Four ways, he calls the Christians, to be unified.

By a shared doctrine, to be humble, and to have affection, for one another. To be under the rule, of Christ, the risen Christ.

[9 : 53] To grow, in their faith, empowered by God, to live God's way. And finally, to bring, a blessing, to all the world. He is calling, the Christians, to a higher life.

Not a life, of exaltation, at least not yet. A life, of suffering. So, slide two. The first point. Christians are unified, by a shared doctrine, humility, and affection, for one another.

This is how, Paul opens up. Paul doesn't mince words, right off the bat. The church of Philippi, is to live, a life, a collective life, in a manner, that is befitting, of Jesus himself.

Paul opens up, by saying this. Only, verse 27, only let your manner, of life, be worthy, of the gospel, of Christ. This idea, Paul is saying, let your life, we don't really see it.

We're very, removed from, the ancient Roman world. But Paul here, is leveraging, this idea, of what it means, to be a good Roman citizen. See, these people would know, what it means, to be a good Roman citizen.

[10 : 59] And this phrase, live your life, as a good citizen, you know, followed by, do this, do this, do this, do this, it was fairly known. So, Paul is leveraging this, and he's saying, listen, live your life, in a way worthy, of the gospel of Christ.

Being a good Roman citizen, would be, I mean, everywhere, in Philippi. Everybody would know, what it is. Paul here, is not actually condemning, being a Roman citizen. He, in fact, is one.

In the book of Acts, later on, he's getting persecuted. He actually appeals, all the way to Caesar, and, and he's entitled to do that, because he is a Roman citizen.

So, there's nothing against being a Roman citizen here. But what Paul is doing, is putting everything, in its rightful place. Being a Roman citizen, isn't the highest, level of humanity.

Knowing Christ, coming under, the lordship of Christ, that is what is at the highest. And this is what Paul is saying. It is a call to maintain, a courageous witness, together as a church.

[12 : 06] And I'll just pause real quickly. So often, we read the scriptures, and rightfully so, we want to apply everything, we read to our lives. And this is good. But sometimes we forget, that these are letters, written to congregations.

And some of the charges, that Paul makes, the encouragements, the exhortations that he makes, they're for communities. And Paul is doing, exactly this. He is calling, the community, to a courageous witness, of Jesus.

Calling them, together to live, as citizens, of Christ, in a way, that is worthy, of Christ. That's why Paul, repeatedly calls, a congregation, to stand firm, in one spirit, one mind, strive side by side.

That's in verse 28. Verse 27, and in verse 28. Their unity, like I mentioned, isn't this, hand holding, unity for the sake of unity, hey, we're all friends, let's go for a drink, type of unity.

All okay, by the way. But that's not what he's calling, calling these people to. He's calling them to, a unity that is rooted, in Jesus Christ, in the gospel, and it's a costly unity.

[13 : 17] Remember, again, false teachers, right? They are, at work, creating factions, and divisions, within, the congregation. Paul flips this whole idea, of this exalted life, the Christian shouldn't suffer, he flips it on its head.

And he says, suffering isn't just permissible, for the Christian, it's actually a gift, that means, we get to suffer, for Christ. It's a gift. Verse 29 and 30, this is what it says.

For it has been granted, to you, that for the sake of Christ, you should not only believe in him, but also suffer, for his sake. Engaged in the same conflict, that you saw I had, and now, hear that I still have.

Listen, what I am in prison for, the life I am living, it does not seem legitimate, at all. I'm probably facing death. I mean, to the Roman world, I am refused.

But actually, this is the life, that everybody is called to. That's what Paul's saying. Verse 30, I'll read it again. Engaged in the same conflict, that you saw I had, and now, hear that I still have.

[14 : 29] Suffering for Christ. I don't want to suffer. I don't want to suffer at all. The idea of suffering, actually, I really struggle with it, these days.

I don't know if it's because, I have a child now, and I've just become, even more soft, than I was before, and I was pretty soft, before that. But suffering, I just, I don't like the idea of suffering.

I mean, even on the physical part, you know, I'm trying to get in shape, so, you know, I'm not eating as much, and my belly rumbles, and it's like, oh, I'm suffering. Like, I don't like this right now.

I don't like the feeling. Like, there's nothing about suffering that I'm kind of gravitating towards, ever. And Paul's saying, listen, it's not suffering's a good thing, it's actually a gift. I was visiting a missionary that we support, here at Church of the Messiah, last week, and he wanted to show, he

was taking me around the old city in Jerusalem, and he was wanting to show me a little known, Holocaust Museum, that's in the old city.

There's a big one, it's called Yad Vashem, it's huge, but there's this little one, that apparently nobody's heard of, and I'd never heard of it. And he goes, you want to check it out? He's like, I'll warn you, and then he kind of shared a bit of the things that he saw, and it's just, he described great suffering.

[15:52] And I was like, you know what, I don't know if I'm up for this. And as we walk closer, there's this bronze statue of a little girl holding a teddy bear, and I was like, I'm okay. I can't do it, my heart's too heavy. I don't want to experience this suffering.

Is this the suffering Paul's talking about? Because heartache is a hard thing, and he's calling us to suffer. Paul actually, and we'll, he'll elaborate it, elaborate on it a bit later on, but the suffering he's calling us to, he's calling the Philippian church to, isn't quite that type of suffering, although I'm sure aspects of it are contained in the suffering he's talking about.

He's talking about a vicarious suffering, a suffering on behalf of other people, a suffering that takes the blows so other people don't have to. Paul is in prison, and he's saying earlier in the, in chapter one, he's saying, the suffering that I'm going through, it's actually for your benefit.

Paul's, he says, you know, to, to live is, is Christ, and to die is gain. And he says, and I'm paraphrasing, like, I'd rather die and be with Christ, but for your sake, I think I'm going to keep living for the sake of the gospel.

And he's suffering for other people. And this is what Paul is getting at right here when he's talking about suffering. Paul sees his imprisonment as something entirely obedient to Jesus.

[17:16] And in fact, something that is an act of service and devotion to Christ, both personally, and in this case, as a united people. We, not just individually, but we as a congregation are called to suffer for the gospel.

We'll get into that. Don't start, you know, biting your fingernails here. It's not doom and gloom.

There's a lot of wonderful bits to this. Remember, it is a, it is a privilege to suffer.

This is what Paul is saying. So back to the text. So how does a community remain united, unified amidst a cultural current that flows in the opposite direction?

You know, Rome is, is like I mentioned, is saying, do whatever you want. You know, there's plurality as long as you worship Caesar. We have a culture that is fairly tolerant, is allowing of just about anything you want to do.

But if you cross boundaries that say truth is, is not relative or, you know, your worldview and belief system actually leads to destruction and not life.

[18:28] that is the line that we ought not to cross in our culture. So how do we as a congregation stand for the gospel and the truth that the gospel proclaims in the midst of just the weightiness and the heaviness of the culture?

Well, look with me in chapter two, verse one. This is what Paul says. So if there's any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy in being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord of one mind.

Paul says through the encouragement in Jesus, comfort, comforting each other in love, having deep spiritual fellowship together, and affection and sympathy for each other.

These are all things that we as a community, as church of the Messiah, I'm not talking in a general sense in the church, even though sure, I'm talking about us. That when we embrace these things, we will be able to withstand anything the world throws at us.

Not because there's anything inherent in us. Actually, I mean, some of you guys might have your lives put together, but, you know, we are, in the end, a bunch of, we're ruffraff.

[19:55] Like, we are people coming and going. We have tons of baggage, some more than others, but we all have our baggage. And God uses us to, and empowers us, to be his hands and feet.

Together, communally, this is how we stand steadfast. We have a deeper love for one another. This will result in a deeper love for one another, a deeper love for Christ. So when I say that, that the church that Paul is, is, is pushing for, is advocating for, that they are unified in doctrine, I think a big part of that is a love for God, understanding what it means to truly love God, and to truly love each other, and love God according to who he is, and according to what he says love is, or what he

says he is, his nature, and how to love one another, that we are unified in this.

And the thing is, this type of attitude, it will suck the life out of factions and disunity, because all of a sudden, and we'll see in a bit, in a few other verses, Paul is calling us, to love each other, more than we love ourselves.

He is echoing the very words of Jesus. In verse 3, this is what Paul says, do nothing from rivalry, or conceit, but in humility, count others more significant, than yourselves.

[21 : 24] So, he says, do nothing out of rivalry, or conceit. Well, now, if we embrace this unity in the gospel, rivalry, and conceit, they will be destroyed.

Interestingly, other translations say, rivalry is selfishness, and that, this idea of conceit, is vain glory. Remember, the Philippians are dealing with these factions of people, that are saying that, the real Christian life, is the exalted Christian life, and we believe in the exalted Christian life, but the way we understand it, and the way the Bible teaches it, is that, we get saved, and then in this life, we go through a process called sanctification, where we grow, we grow, in our knowledge of Christ, we put away sin, we stop sinning, but we're constantly subjected, to sin.

But, when we die, and go to heaven, or, if Jesus comes back, that we are glorified, that we are no longer, able to sin.

These people are saying, that's the life we have now. It's interesting that, other translations call it, vain glory. Therefore, to claim, that, that it's possible, to live in this exalted, glorified state, now, is to say, by virtue of your own goodness, that you have obtained perfection, on earth.

Not, in heaven, but on earth. You put up the second slide. Christians are unified, under the rule, of the risen Christ Jesus.

[23 : 09] So, after calling the Philippians, to consider others, others greater than themselves, Paul takes the next few verses, to masterfully display, the humiliation, suffering, and exaltation of Christ.

Interestingly, and I mean, I am, by no means, a literary critic, but, this next, few verses, verses 6 to 11, it's more of a hymn, than it is, a letter that Paul has written.

It's, he injects something, that is, is, not quite like the letter, but it is, it is a hymn, that encompasses, Jesus, and his ministry. This is what it says.

Starting in verse 5. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, through, though he was, in the form of God, did not count equality with God, a thing to be grasped, but made himself, nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself, by becoming obedient, to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Therefore, God has highly exalted him, and bestowed on him, the name that is above every name, so that in the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God, the Father.

[24 : 36] It's in English, right? It's not in Greek. We don't get kind of the oomph, of the original language, but this is, this is something wonderful, that Paul has inserted, into this letter to the Philippians.

And the language Paul uses, and this is where I think, it gets really interesting, and it's really applicable for us. The language that Paul uses, is that Jesus is God, but unlike, say the beginning of John, if you remember, I guess a few months back now, George preaching on John 1, talking about, in the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.

It's very explicit, about Jesus being God. Paul here is, is explicitly saying, Jesus is God as well, but he is saying, something a bit different. He says that Jesus, is being in the form of God.

Jesus always existed, we believe he's, he is, he is pre-incarnate, he existed before, he came to earth, in the form of a baby, we always, that he has always existed, but, but here Paul is saying, that he is in the form of God, and what Paul is doing, is he's, for his, for his people, for his audience, that are familiar, with the scriptures, he is hearkening back, to the opening chapters, of Genesis, where God makes Adam, in his own image, in his own likeness, and Paul here, among other things he's doing, he is comparing, Adam, to Jesus, elsewhere in scripture, in Romans 5, in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul actually says, that Jesus is the new Adam, and he expounds, on what it, this, this, this comparison, that he makes, between Adam, in Genesis 3, 2 and 3, and then, and then Jesus.

Adam, if you guys know the story, if you guys don't know the story, Adam, he is made, in the image of God, he has everything, at his disposal, and at the height of everything, that he has, at his kind of disposal, or at it, that he's privileged to, is this, this communion with God, and the only thing God says, is don't eat of the tree, of knowledge of good and evil, don't eat of the tree, of life, but it's of

this tree, of knowledge of good and evil, that he ends up getting, totally duped, into eating this fruit, because he wanted, to be like God, it's interesting, because, Adam, instead of trying, to glorify God, instead of Adam, coming under, the authority, of God's rule, he wants to become, his own authority, he wants to become, his own God, he wants to, you know, knock God off, of the seat, and take his rightful place, it was never, his rightful place, and what ended up happening, he ended up getting, kicked out from the garden, and sin entered, mankind, and this whole idea, of trying to, get away from,

[27 : 37] God's rule, and rule, as ourselves, these autonomous people, that has plagued, the human race, since the beginning, of the human race, and for all the differences, of culture, and of food, and of language, it seems that this is, a pretty big common denominator, maybe the biggest, in scripture, in theology, in Christianity, we call this, original sin, that it has left, no man, or woman, untouched, Adam tried, to rob God, of his glory, he tried, to assert himself, in the very place, of God, but it was never, his to take, contrast this, with Jesus, Paul says, Jesus was fully God, with all of the entitlements, except that he chose, instead to humble himself, to the father's plan, of redemption, condescending from heaven, condescending from heaven, coming to earth, and suffering, for the sins, of many people, he did not have to, this was not his, his lot in life, in the sense of, that he was bound, to suffer, because he deserved it, he did it, of his own free will, to come to earth, to satisfy God's plan, the father's plan, because of love, because he loved us,

John 3, 16, is the most quoted verse, and rightfully so, because it communicates, to us that, God came to earth, in the form of his son, because of love, so he came to earth, suffered for the sins, of many, and as a result, God exalted him, to his rightful place, as king overall, so we have Adam, who is pretty, living this exalted life, in the garden, without sin, he tries to become God, he tries to exalt himself, even more, and he gets totally humiliated, God himself, the son of God, comes to earth, in the most humble way, suffers the most humiliating, suffering, somebody could, could go through, dies on the cross, and then is elevated, and this is what Paul says, I'll read it again, he says, therefore God has highly exalted him, and bestowed on him, the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth, and under the earth, and every tongue confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, and he is elevated, to the highest place, in everything, everything comes under, his lordship, in Jesus, we come under, his leadership, are empowered by his spirit, and we walk, in his example, and if you are, a Christian, or not a Christian, but this idea, of coming under, leadership, kind of being a subject, to somebody, makes you feel uncomfortable,

I get it, I feel a bit uncomfortable, as well, I want to be my own man, I really do, I don't really, I don't really, I don't really appreciate traffic, traffic signs, or traffic lights, I don't really want to obey them, I don't really want to obey, rules in general, I mean, I'm not like, going around, like breaking windows, and popping car tires, like, I'm not a rebel like that, but my heart is rebellious, I don't want to be under, the rule of anything, or anybody, I really don't, yet, we have to understand this, that we are made, to come under, the headship, and rule, God himself, and because of sin, we have constantly, tried to, rule, in his stead, and the reality is, is that, we can never be rulers, of ourselves, we're always going to be, ruled by something, everything we do, has a, as a tinge, of, of trying to assert ourselves, in the place of God,

I mean, listen, we get dressed, not just to cover our unmentionables, we get dressed, you know, we keep style, in the forefront, we want to look a certain way, why?

because it communicates something, about ourselves, a little bit of bravado, we don't just, eat, for the sake of sustenance, it's not like, we eat just bread, and drink water, we create food, and food becomes an extension, of our, of our affluence, and, and, for those that enjoy cooking, it's a way of expressing, your artisticness, it's communicating to people, that, hey, I'm, I'm a bit better than, just what you see, I'm, you know, I can handle life, in a great way, how we spend money, how we don't spend money, all these things, that communicate, I mean, people don't just buy, a little box, to sleep in, if they, unless they, you know, they have no money, they buy a place, and they decorate it, and they make it look nice, and by the way, I'm not saying, I'm not condemning, all you people, for wearing nice clothes, or brushing your teeth, or, putting paint, on the walls, and just in case, you think, I'm condemning you, for hanging up, new curtains, in your house, actually, we hung up, new curtains, last week, and they look nice,

[32 : 54] Christine picked them out, and our house didn't immediately turn into, kind of like, the gateway of hell, because, you know, we are selfish people, taking over, you know, the rightful place

of God, but, you know, in the end, we need to consider, where our priorities are, and coming under the leadership, of Jesus, is freedom, because coming under the leadership, of money, is slavery, it's bondage, coming under the leadership, of your reputation, and how people see you, I mean, that will, that will strip you of dignity, coming under the leadership, of your stomach, not just what you eat, but, just your eyes, wanting to consume, and have, that will leave you, broke, and stripped down, to nothing, coming under the leadership, of family, of families, of the upper, most priority, in your life, although it seems noble, you will put your family, in a place, that they can't bear, the weight of, and there will be disappointment, we are made to be ruled, but under God, and it's perfect freedom, and this is what,

Paul is calling, the Philippian church to, communally, together, and that's what he's calling us to, communally, and together, so this is our calling, to follow after, the risen Christ, to come under his headship, and direction, but remember that, Paul again, is calling for unity, in the church, so although we are to come, under Christ's rule, as individuals, can we, come under Christ's unity, Christ's rule, as a community, united in doctrine, and affection, this leads to the third point, if you can put it up, thanks, and this is, the key verse, that, we're to memorize, try your best to memorize, memorizing can be hard, put it to a jingle, you might remember it better that way, but these are the, the key verses for this week, verses 12, and 13, got carried away, and lost my spot, verses, chapter 2, verses 12, and 13, okay, therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only in my presence, but much more in my absence, work out your salvation, your own salvation, with fear and trembling, for it is God, who works in you, both to will, and to work, for his good pleasure, we have finally gotten, to the key verses, and these verses, actually act, as a key for application, for, verses 5 to 11, we just read, so I've grown up, in the church, and, this idea, of working out your salvation, with fear and trembling, this, was, like, the, the big encouragement, for, young people, to get serious, about their faith, to not have, your faith, to be just your parents faith, or, not just to go to church, because there's, good looking guys, or good looking girls, not to go to, you know, church, because, you know, it's, it's, some kind of good reputation, standing, but to get serious, about your faith, and to do it, in a kind of humble way, and you know what,

I think that's a legitimate reading, of chapter, 2, verses 12 and 13, but again, remember, Paul is talking to a church, a community, so what, does it mean, for Paul, to say, work out your salvation, with fear and trembling, as a community, what does it mean, to think about salvation, in the way, of a community, I think to really answer this, we'll go back to, chapter 1, verse 27 and 28, this is what Paul says, only let your manner of life, be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come, and see you, or am absent, I may hear of you, that you are standing firm, in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side, for the faith of the gospel, and not frightened, in anything, by your opponents, this is a clear sign, to them, of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God, you know,

Paul here, isn't talking about, we need to work our salvation, as a community, and somehow, become saved, by good works, Paul here, is talking about, this idea that, number one, the Philippians, he's already addressing them, as people that are saved, he opens up here, in verse 12, by calling them beloved, he addresses them, as Christians, but what he's talking about, is this progressive, growth, in your faith, so in verse 27, when he says, that, that you're standing, you're to stand firm, in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side, for the faith, these are words of growth, and he's saying, these people, that are trying to divide you, you know, that's only going to give you, reason to band closer together, and it's going to end, in their destruction, and ultimately, in your salvation, in your continued growth, and just in case, we see this as an impossible task, Paul says in verse 13, that, for it is God, who works in you, both to will, and to work, for your good, for his good pleasure, that God, he commands us, to walk as a community, united in him, united in the gospel, it seems like, an impossible task, but he gives us the desire, and the abilities to do so, he desires us, to be united, he desires us, to be conformed, and informed, and grow in our salvation, grow in our faith together, and he gives us, the ability to do that, and what does it result in, the next, and last point Andrew, a blessing to the world, verse 14, this is what it says, do all things, without grumbling, or questioning, that you may be blameless, and innocent children of God, without blemish, in the midst of a crooked, and twisted generation, among whom you shine, as light in the world, the call of God's people, has always been, to be light in darkness, to be water in a desert, to bring blessing, and this is our call, as a community, the reality is this,

[39 : 52] Jesus, the second member, of the Trinity, broke unity with the Father, broke unity with the Trinity, to suffer and die for us, not so we could, simply go to heaven, when we die, but to unify us, as a family, and this family, is eternal, it's God's family, remember what I read, at the beginning, this Roman poet, he says, that Rome conquers, that's how Rome unifies, its people, Rome conquers, what does our God do, he is conquered, not forever, but he's conquered, by death, for three days, dying in our place, but doesn't stay conquered, he rises again, and he's exalted, to the highest place, why, so that our sins, aren't counted against us, and we are unified, in a family, of people, that look nothing like us, or look exactly like us, or tall, or young, our age doesn't matter, we come from, different walks of life, and he unifies us, in an eternal family, and for people, that have a real tough, family situation, that is really good news, and for people, that have a great family, that's great news as well, that you are belonging, to something bigger, than yourself, something that, eventually, will lead to your perfection, that will give glory to God, and that will bless the world, so as people, at Church of the Messiah, let us grow, in our salvation, let us work out our salvation, with fear and trembling, knowing that God, will give us that desire, to grow, and the ability, to grow together, let's find ways, to outdo one another, in showing love, to one another, very practical ways, with our words, very practical ways, with our actions, treating people better, than we expect, to be treated, and just, we'll just watch, what will happen, and you know what, we do a good job of this, it's not a big, you know, a message of, condemnation, about kind of, our lack of unity, we do great things, as a congregation,

I see a lot of, behind the scenes things, being an intern, and I'm pretty blown away, there's some great stuff, going on, but I'd encourage you guys, let's continue in this, let's be light, in the darkness, together, walking side by side, unified, in the gospel, and I think, we will see, some wonderful things, as God works, through us, listen, if you're not a Christian, we're inviting you, to join the family, today, don't wait, you know, till next week, things might not be here, next week, we don't know, you might not be here, next week, we don't know, if you're not a Christian, and you're like, yeah, my sins are grievous, I have been trying, to rule my own life, and kind of, come under my own authority, and I am a slave, I want to be under Christ's, authority, his freedom, then I, I'd encourage you guys, after the service, find myself, there's, find somebody around you, and ask them, talk to them, ask them what it means, to be Christian, how they can become a Christian, and for us that are Christians, guys, like I mentioned, let's just, let's just outdo one another, and showing love, knowing that we're doing this, not just for each other, but we're doing this for Jesus himself, and that we'll be able to withstand, any suffering, and persecution that may come, whether subtle, or much greater, let's pray,

Lord, thank you so much, for this time together, thank you for your word, thank you that, it reveals blind spots, in our lives, reveals spots, at least in my life, where I am, exercising lordship, over myself, but really, I am a slave, to all sorts, of different things, Lord, help me, help us, as a congregation, to come under your lordship, under your headship, to experience, that perfect freedom, to be united, in Christ, to be united, in love, and help us, to be a blessing, to our neighborhoods, and to our boroughs, and to our city, pray all these things, in Jesus name, Amen.