What's On Your Mind?

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[0:00] We can turn back then to our reading in Philippians. We're going to be looking at verse 1 to 4 of chapter 2.!

It speaks about standing firm in one spirit with one mind, striving side by side. You see it in verse 2 of chapter 2.
Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love. And then you see it in verse 5. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.
The word we see repeated there is mind. It's talking about how we relate to the Lord and how we relate to one another. And so tonight, what's on your mind?
I'm sure you could say there's plenty. There's plenty maybe going on in your mind. Plenty of things that you're thinking about, that you're wondering about, that you're looking ahead to, looking back to. Our minds can be busy places.
[1:20] They can often take over. Our minds can take over our lives in many ways. But is Jesus on your mind? So in everything that you're thinking about, everything that you're doing, does Jesus come into that?

Is Jesus on your mind? Well, that's what Paul is asking about here in this section, as he's speaking to the church at Philippi. He's really trying to guide them along the way, to help them along the way, living their lives in the midst of persecution, in the midst of suffering, but in the midst of challenges among themselves as well.
And so he's trying to direct their minds. Have this mind. So that you strive with one mind side by side. So that your mind is focused.
Being in full accord of one mind. So that you're all going forward together. But it's all leading to that point in verse 5, where it says, Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus. So it's directing our minds, but focusing our minds on the Lord Jesus as well. And there are many great high points in this letter to the Philippians.
[2:34] Many great verses you can maybe pick out as wonderful encouragement, the way that they strengthen us, the way that they help us. The way Paul speaks about his own life in chapter 1, verse 21.

What does he say? It's like he has a motto for life there. As he's speaking about his own faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. He says, For me to live is Christ.
For me to live is Christ. And with Christ in mind, then he's able to say, To die is gain. So whatever he has in life, his focus is on Christ and the benefits that he gives in life and in death.
So there's many high points. You think of verse 5 onwards of chapter 2 that we've read. That mind of Christ. What did he do?
His humiliation, if you like, is coming down from God. That equality with God that he had was not something to be grasped, but he made himself nothing.
[3:33] He emptied himself. And he bore that cross. He died that death, even death on the cross. That humiliation of the cross.

But yet God highly exalted him. So there's these wonderful verses. There's other ones like in chapter 4. It speaks about doing all things through Christ who strengthens me and rejoicing in the Lord always.
There's many different verses you can go back to. There's all these high points. But these high points remind us that they are there to lift us up.
But to get there, there has to be a climb. We have to come through the valley, if you like. It's not always that sense of rejoicing or delighting or all of that, that there are times of great struggle, times when we just have to try and press on.

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We're walking through the valley. We're climbing up to these high points. And so Paul is writing in a way where he's not just talking out of context and saying, don't worry about all these things that are going on around you.
[4:40] He's very much writing to them to see how they live in light of all these challenges that they are facing. That's what he's saying there in verse 27.

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ. Let your life be worthy, lived in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.
So what he's talking here about is the reality of living in a sinful world, a fallen world, and yet keeping on living in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.
How can we do that? Not just for the people in Philippi, but for ourselves tonight. How can we live a life worthy, in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ?
Well, part of it is by thinking about our minds. Have this mind in you which is yours in Christ Jesus. Be of one mind.
[5:43] And so he focuses here on ways that we can fill our minds. Fill our minds with what is good. Have Jesus Christ on our minds at all times.

For me to live is Christ. It's a wonderful way to live. In a manner worthy of the gospel. But what are we actively doing to live that kind of life?
Are we passive? I'm just thinking it'll happen by itself. Or are we actively pursuing that? Are we actively engaging ourselves in pursuing a life worthy of the gospel?
There's a church that has membership bows. And one of them says this. Every member who comes into this church and becomes a member has to bow this.
It says that we resolve and promise in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit. That we will endeavor to live as becomes followers of Jesus Christ.
[6:49] If you had taken that vow. If you had taken that vow joining this church or whatever church. Have you honored that vow?

Have I honored that vow? In humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit. That I will endeavor to live as becomes followers of Jesus Christ.
We fail. We often do. But we rely on grace and the Holy Spirit. And endeavor to live as become. As is right. As is true.
As obedient followers of Jesus Christ. And the word of God here tells us that a day will come. When every knee will bow and every tongue confess.
That Jesus Christ is Lord. He will reign over all. But that leads to that question. Well is he reigning now? Is he reigning now in your life?
[7:45] So that your mind is filled with him. So Paul here is looking for this life worthy of the gospel. What are we filling our minds with?

Are we keeping Jesus as the center of our focus. And seeking to live and endeavor to become as becomes followers of Jesus Christ.
Some methods today say that in order to find peace and a place of rest. You have to empty your mind. Empty your mind of everything. But what we are being taught here is the very opposite.
To find contentment. To find peace. We are to fill our minds with what is good. And all that is Jesus Christ. And so we want to see here three things.
That we think about when it comes to our minds being focused on Jesus Christ. And what Paul is trying to put to them here. To keep them living this life worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
[8:49] We see them in verse 1 to verse 4 of chapter 2. In verse 1 it says, If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind.

What's Paul saying there? If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort, any love. He is asking about motivation. What motivates you in your mind?
What keeps you living a life worthy of the, in a manner worthy of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Am I motivated by the love of Christ?
Paul says in one of the letters to the Corinthians, I think it's in the King James Version, it uses the way of saying it, The love of Christ constrains me.
I think the ESV uses the word, the love of Christ controls me. I prefer the love of Christ constrains me. It's what keeps me going in that sense.

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[9:56] It pushes me in the right direction. It constrains me, not just in a controlling manner, but it leads me on. And that's what he's kind of saying here in the letters to the Philippians as well.

If there's any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy. He's talking about their motivation. Is it the love of Christ what motivates me?
Is it the love of Christ what fills my mind that leads us to have that one mind going forward together? And why is he writing this?
Because he knows the challenges that they face. He knows that one of the devil's greatest joys is to see the fellowship of believers turning one against the other.
He knows that there are these threats all around them, as there is among the believers to this day and will always be. The word of God tells us that there's blessing in unity.
[10:57] But what happens if that unity is lost? The blessing is lost. And in Philippi, in this place that Paul was writing to, the unity of believers was being threatened.

They were persecuted. They were suffering for the sake of the gospel. And this was happening from the outside. There were plenty of enemies all around them.
But it was also happening within. We know that because that's what he is warning against here. In verse 3, it's quite clear there.
This was among them. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. There was tensions coming in to their midst.
And so he's writing to warn them against this and to help them through this. And the way to help them through this is to focus their minds on Christ.
[11:58] So the starting point is not to say focus on your relationship with one another, but first of all to focus on your relationship with Christ.

And so the question that he would have here is, how is your relationship with Jesus Christ? That's the question for ourselves. When we look around ourselves and we think of all the different relationships that we have with one another, whether it's family, church, community, whatever it is, it's easy to start looking on the horizontal.
It's easy to start looking at one another. And we can find fault with one another quite easily. But Paul here is writing to them to instead, first of all, consider what is your relationship with Jesus? How is your focus with him before you start looking anywhere else? Because as we look at Jesus, instead of seeing the faults of others, we begin to see our own faults.
Because we realize we fall short with him so often and again and again. And then we recognize that, well, it's not all about me.
[13:18] It's all about Jesus Christ. And so our minds are then focused on him. And if it's the love of Christ that motivates us, when we look to him, we see, well, I was not worthy of his love.

And yet he loved me and gave himself for me. And if he did that for me, what am I to do for my brothers, my sisters, and the Lord? He is leading them here to have that one mind, that one spirit, that unity together.
And it's found by focusing on the Lord Jesus Christ, by being in him. If there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind and having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.
Does the love of Christ constrain us? Are we motivated by the love of Christ? Well, that asks the question first, are we in Christ?
Are we focused on him? Are we trusting in him? Some ships and oil rigs now have, instead of a lifeboat that's more gently lowered down the side, they instead have lifeboats that just launch away, either from the rig or from the ship.
[14:46] So what you do is you climb into this lifeboat, and it's often sitting at an angle. You climb in, you go into your seat, and you have to put on seatbelts to tie yourself into the seat, otherwise you'll be thrown around.

And once everybody's on board, and once the entry port is shut, then the release handle is pulled, and you just shoot off, away from the boat or away from the rig, and shoot into the water.
It can be quite a frightening thing, but yet you know that you're in a safe place. But you have to be in, and you have to be strapped in to be safe.

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That's very much the way it is with our Christian life as well. First and foremost, we have to ask, are we in Christ? Are we trusting in him?
Is it the love of Christ that constrains us, that controls us, that motivates us, that fills our mind? Look at all that there is in Christ.
[15:50] Encouragement, comfort, love, participation in the Spirit, affection, sympathy. Where does it come from? It comes from being focused, our mind fixed on the Christ.

That is where we are to begin. So is that our motivation? Is the love of Christ what motivates us first in our minds?
The second thing we see here is, what is my desire? Am I seeking my way or the Lord's way? And again, it's seen clearly here how that relates to our relationship with Christ as well.
It's by putting this into practice, what is it going to look like? People need to look and fix their eyes on Jesus.
Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord, and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit.
[17:00] There was tensions in their midst. People who think they know everything are a great annoyance to those of us who do.

It's a quote from a man called Isaac Asimov. A professor of science and a writer of science fiction. But can we not relate to it ourselves in some ways as well?
People who know everything are a great annoyance to those of us who do. That's the kind of attitude that we can so easily have. That's the kind of attitude that Paul was seeing here as well. That's why he's saying do nothing out from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. But many would see Paul here as almost having that kind of attitude. That people who think they know everything are annoyance to him because he does. That's the way Paul is often portrayed. As if he couldn't be turned in any different direction, that he knew it all.
[18:04] But as you're reading through Paul's letters and as you're reading about his life, what is it that controls him? It is the love of Christ.

And his desire is to live for him. First and foremost, he goes on in this letter to talk about everything else he counts as done compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus as my Lord. That was what motivated him. That's what his desire was. To live for Christ in everything. So he's saying there, make my joy complete by being like-minded.
The same love will accord one mind. All of these things. That's what he is talking about here. His desire is that they live as one.
Going in the same direction. He's talking here about their attitude. Not everyone would think the same way. But they would have the same goal in mind.
[19:16] Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. He's focusing their minds on going forward with the same goal in mind.

The same focus on the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul was one who throughout this letter speaks of joy. Of rejoicing.
And what makes him rejoice is that they are going on in faith. He's writing here from prison. But what he longs to hear is the mindset of the Philippians.
That is towards Christ. Towards loving him. Towards serving him. Towards the spread of the gospel. I have the same mind here.
He's talking about think in the same way on these things. That are so precious. That are so important. It's not that we see every matter in exactly the same way.
[20:18] And agree in every little detail. But that we have that same mind. That our desire, our longing is for Christ to be made known.

Not setting aside truth. That's what he's mentioned in verse 27 here. Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.
So that whether I come and see you or are absent. I may hear that you are standing firm in one spirit with one mind. Striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.
Our minds are geared towards serving Christ. And our desires in our mind are that Christ be glorified. Christ be preached.
Christ be proclaimed that sinners be saved. That is what his longing is. Is that yours? Is that mine? As we seek to serve him in every way we can.

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[21:21] Is it our desire that Christ be made known? We see that need all around us. We see opportunity all around us.

We see a people all around us. A people who need Christ. A people whose minds are full of everything else that this world has to offer.
Minds cluttered with ideas and thoughts and all kinds of things that take them away from Christ. But here Paul is asking that they strive side by side with one mind for the gospel of Jesus Christ.
Christ. And so is that our desire. Are we putting others before ourselves?
Christ. Just as it's asking of us here. Have this mind among yourselves. Sorry. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit. But in humility count others more significant than yourselves.
[22:29] Christ. Christ. Christ. Christ. Christ. So precious. So important. And the cause of Christ being our desire. Our longing.

Filling our minds with Christ. Can help us overcome anything else that fills our minds. And clutters our minds and distracts our minds in so many different ways.
But to focus on the Lord Jesus Christ. That should be our desire. And the third thing and the final thing we see here is.
What do I put first? What do I put first? When you look at these verses. In verse 4 it says.
Let each of you look not only to his own interests. But also to the interests of others. What do we put first? Who do we put first?
[23:31] The common question that we can often ask is. What's in it for me? That's the kind of world that we live in. What's in it for me? If I am going to do something.

If I am going to do a job. Or whatever it is. What's in it for me? Seldom is it. What am I offering to others? What am I offering to Christ?
But what's in it for me? Well in contrast to these ways of the world. Paul is saying that Christians must do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit.
But instead humility. Lowliness of mind. To have our focus. Our minds fixed on Jesus. Let each of you look not only to his own interests.
But also to the interests of others. What occupies your mind? What motivates you? What's your desires? What are we putting first?
[24:31] Our minds can so easily be cluttered in different ways. So that our attentions are drawn into one place and everything else suffers.

Think for example of a man called Paul Mershon. He's a retired footballer. Now a pundit on television. But if you've heard anything of his story.
It's not just about a football career. It's about the struggles that he had in life. The struggle of addiction. And not just one. Drink.
Drugs. Gambling. They all consumed him. So his mind was just focused on that. His next bet.
His next drink. His next hit. Whatever it was. His mind was just consumed. His family life deteriorated. His career spiraled in so many different ways.
[25:27] He was just consumed. His mind was consumed by these things. They took over. Now we don't have to end up in that situation.

But we know how easily it is for our minds to be filled with the wrong things. So it takes us away from what is right and what is good. It takes us away from our focus on the Lord Jesus.
But what's interesting with Paul Mershon is that for the last seven years he's been doing well. And he speaks about what helped change him. Going to places like AAs and things like that helped him.
But he also speaks about recognizing a higher power. That there is a God. And he speaks about prayer. And a need for faith.
Now I don't know where he is. But I know his mind has been changed in so many ways. And that's what he needed. A mind that was so focused on everything that was wrong and just consumed by self and his own addictions.
[26:36] That only a greater power could help him overcome. And so as Paul is writing here. He's saying we can so easily be consumed by everything else in this world.

Our minds can be filled. And sometimes it's with what is right. We have to consider things. But it's asking the question. How are we with the Lord Jesus in it all?
Are we putting him first? Are we the most important thing in life? Or are others and above all a relationship with the Lord?

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And so to find ourselves in that right place is to come to that point where we see that we have to be in Christ.
Because when you look at verse 5 here. Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus. We see where our thoughts are taken. Away from self and unto him.
[27:38] Who though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a theme to be grasped but made himself nothing taking the form of a servant.

And so it goes on. Is that our desire? Is that what our minds are filled with?
That desire to serve the Lord Jesus in humility and in every way. Somebody once put it like this. Let the mind of the master be the master of your mind.
Let the mind of the master be the master of your mind. And that's really what Paul is saying here. Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus.
The mind of the master be the master of your mind. Our minds can be so cluttered in so many different ways. Busy in different directions.
[28:43] But may our minds become more and more focused on the Lord Jesus. So that he is front and central in everything that we are doing. That we are putting him first and foremost.

So tonight and in the days ahead. What's on your mind? What are you filling your mind with?
Is it your motivation? The love of Christ? Is your desire to see his name glorified? And you're putting him first in all things.
That's what Paul is asking of us here. What's on your mind? We need to be active in living a life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.
Not just by sitting back. But by pressing on. By looking to God's word. By drawing near to him. By calling upon him in prayer. By seeking his glory and his presence with us in all things.
[29:51] That we might be in Christ. And that Christ may be in us. Fixing our minds on him. And serving him for his glory.

Let us pray. Lord our gracious God. We thank you that you can transform the minds and hearts of so many people.
And even ourselves. That you can take all the things that are wrong within us. And that you can fill us with what is right and what is good. So often Lord we fill our minds with so much that distracts us and takes us away from you.
But let our minds be in one accord with you and with one another. Let us serve you in humility and serve others in humility as well. That we would find ourselves with that longing.
That desire. To the love of Christ constraining us and motivating us. For his glory. And for his good in our midst and all around us.
[30:54] Lord hear our prayers and continue with us. Pardoning us in all our sin as we confess anew before you. And all for his sake and for his glory. We ask it in Jesus name.

Amen. Amen. We're going to conclude by singing together in Psalm 63. The Scottish Psalter version.
Psalm 63. We'll sing verse 1 to 4. Three stanzas. The tune is Weatherby. Lord thee my God I'll early seek. My soul doth thirst for thee.
My flesh longs in a dry parched land wherein no waters be. That I thy power may behold and brightness of thy face. As I have seen thee heretofore within thy holy place.
We'll sing verse 1 to 4 to God's praise. Lord thee my Lord. The Lord is here.
[32:04] My soul doth thirst for thee. My flesh longs in a dry parched land. My flesh longs in a dry parched land.

My flesh longs in a dry parched land. May no waters be.
My soul doth excitied the Lord. My soul dothleiche. My soul doth tend to make me more to know. My soul doth wish. My soul doth drink. My soul doth near you. My soul doth ans with my faith. My soul doth history. My soul doth billed in a dry parched land.
My soul doth■■■ in a dry parched land. My soul doth tempered in a dry parched land. My soul dothole not remember. My soul doth trip to my dead. My soul doth alive and grace. My soul doth bear in a dry parched land. My soul doth bun right. My soul dothlie down. My soul doth bear in a dry land. My soul doth guard in a dry land. My soul doth bomb like me. As I must hear thee here to go, Where there my holy place.
Since better is thy love from high, My mercy grace shall give.
[33:25] I am, I am, I lift my hands, And bless thee while I am left.

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After the benediction, I'll go to the door to my left. We'll close the benediction. Now may grace, mercy and peace from God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit rest upon and abide with you all now and forevermore.
Amen. Good night.
Good night. Good night. Good night. Good night.
Thank you.

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