

It becomes clear that factions and divisions within the church not only hinder fellowship, but ruin our ministry.

I. THE CHURCH'S NEED FOR ONENESS IN ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORLD (Phil. 1:27-30).

First of all there is the need for . . .

A. Proper conduct. Cf. Phil. 27a. Note: "Only..."

Our translations have not conveyed the proper idea in 1:27 or in 3:20 (although it is better in the latter passage. It means to live as citizens).

Philippi was a Roman colony. Cf. Acts 16:12. The comparison between Roman citizenship and heavenly citizenship seems obvious.

If you have some living like they were citizens of heaven and others not, it spreads confusion. We do not pattern our lives after the world, but after "the gospel of Christ."

B. Persistent conflict (Phil. 1:27b).

Our ministry is really a warfare. It is both defensive as well as offensive.

One who stands fast does not waver, but persists, is stable. That is the defense.

But there is also that "striving together for the faith of the gospel," i.e., seeking to get others to believe the gospel. *PERHAPS 1:15A, 17 PROMPTED THIS.*

To do this we need:

- 1) "In one spirit"--probably a reference to the Holy Spirit. Cf. 2:1.
- 2) "With one mind," or soul. It all must be inward if it is to be real.

C. Peaceful composure (Phil. 1:28).

The figure of speech that is used here points to frightened animals, like a horse, or a flock of sheep. The church's lack of panic in the face of the "adversaries" is one of the mightiest forms of witness.

Cf. the same emphasis in 2 Cor. 2:14-17.

D. An explanation (Phil. 1:29, 30).

Whether in Rome or in Philippi, the conflict is all a part of the same great battle.

From that emphasis outwardly Paul then turns at the beginning of ch. 2 to what this will all mean inwardly, i.e., among the believers themselves.

II. THE CHURCH'S NEED FOR ONENESS IN ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH ITSELF (Phil. 2:1-4).

A. The resources (Phil. 2:1).

Here are four conditional statements, probably falling into two groups with two each, all are what grammarians call, first class conditions, which means that they are assumed to be true.

Therefore, we could translate the if's, since.

1. The resources in Christ (v. 1a).

We have two things:

- 1) The encouragement and exhortation of Christ.
- 2) Love referred to as being personified and speaking to provide motivation.

2. The resources in the Holy Spirit (v. 1b).

"Fellowship" involves participation. Paul does not teach what the believer's relationship to the Holy Spirit was. Evidently he did not need to. He only points out that we can draw from the resources we have in the Spirit--primarily "a heart in which mercy resides" and "a heart in which compassion resides" (Thayer, pp. 585, 442).

B. The command (Phil. 2:2).

What a strange person Paul was! Look at what it was going to take to make his joy complete. (Think of his circumstances as you read this verse.)

To be likeminded speaks of agreement, of harmony.

That likemindedness would only be attained through:

- 1) "Having the same love"--loving each other in the same way so as not to give room for cliques.
- 2) "Of one accord"--like with one mind in 1:27. And this means, in turn, "of one mind"--just concerned about the same things, one in their objectives.

C. The conditions for such a relationship (Phil. 2:3,4)

Note that both vv. 3, 4 begin negatively and end positively.

V. 3 has to do with our attitude toward others; v. 4, with our interest in others.

"Strife" (party spirit) and "vainglory" are out-- always out!

"Lowliness of mind" has been called the container for all of the graces of the Christian life. It means to put a true value on ourselves, seeing ourselves as nothing, and then to consider others as being better.

Looking here means gazing so intently at something that everything else is excluded. Note the word, "also."

Concl: Do you begin to see all that enters into true spiritual unity?

- 1) A heavenly life.
- 2) An evangelistic fervor and work.
- 3) An understanding of the conflict.
- 4) A knowledge of the resources we have.
- 5) The need for harmony.
- 6) A humbling of ourselves.
- 7) The joyful concern we should have for others.

Cf. Psa. 133.