

Paul started this chapter speaking to the believers in Philip asking them to have fellowship with him. His encouraging words that their salvation obtained from their relationship with Christ resulted in fruits of salvation. He requested that they make his joy full by having the same mind as Christ. Instructions to the Philippians were to be united with Christ which entailed that they walk in unity, that the power of Christian love would keep them in unity, that they should be kept from disunity since they had the Holy Spirit, their compassion for others should keep them from disunity and Paul would not be in happiness if he found disunity in the church.

Paul acknowledged and understood that his friends were suffering yet he wanted to encourage them to stand united firmly in the faith contending for the gospel. They are to follow Christ as their example in thought and deed. Paul said let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus. This statement is very powerful to me because it shows that the humbleness of God that came in the image of man. He humbled himself as man and emptied himself out as God and became obedient even to his death on a cross. According to Fee, the cross was not used as a symbol of their faith in Philippi. That was considered by Jewish culture to be a curse the worst form of humiliation. *The New Testament Recovery Version* stated that the Lord's humiliation involved seven steps: 1) emptying Himself; 2) taking the form of a slave; 3) becoming in the likeness of men; 4) humbling Himself; 5) becoming obedient; 6) being obedient even unto death and 7) being obedient even to death on a cross. Jesus humbled himself to the maximum and God exalted Him to the highest.

So Paul continues to encourage them that no matter what they should encounter continue to stand in the faith and work out their own soul salvation with fear and trembling. Just as we have received the salvation of God through the work of Jesus Christ, believers will also be exalted in

Sandra Royal
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glory as Jesus was exalted. Because salvation is received by faith, we must be obedient to carry it out by being genuine in our soul. As we walk daily, we are to do things in a Christ-like manner which is the inward manner, and it will be displayed by our outward acts. Things are to be done without complaining and grumbling. Paul knew that those two applications would create disunity because the focus and result would be self-centered. As children of God their conduct had to be blameless and pure.

Paul was unable to go to Philippi himself and was hoping to send Timothy so he would hear a good report and that would bring cheer to Paul. Since Timothy was also concerned about the well-being of the Philippians. Paul was very satisfied with the work Timothy had done in ministry with him therefore he was chosen as the representative. Paul also felt the need to send his brother and fellow worker Epaphroditus who the Philippians had heard was ill. Although Paul was in prison, he was making it easy for Epaphroditus to return home. It was not clear what his sickness was however it was recorded that he had almost died for the work of the gospel. He was sent to back to Philippi his home.