

“THINK ON THESE THINGS”

Philippians 4:8

Assembling Together (Part 2)

By Micky Galloway

Philippians 2:1-4, *“If there is therefore any exhortation in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions, make full my joy, that ye be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind; (doing) nothing through faction or through vainglory, but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself; not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.”*

The apostle had already expressed in Philippians 1:27-28, *“Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together (synathleæ) for the faith of the gospel; in no way alarmed by your opponents ...”* (NASU). Note the wording of the ESV, *“with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.”* If they were to be successful in their stand against their opponents, **they must stand together!** *Synathleæ* means to fight **together**, to assist in battle. “The gospel itself leads its witnesses into this battle, since it elicits both opposition and persecution; it thus requires of believers **mutual assistance**, steadfastness, and willingness to suffer; (cf. 2 Tim 2:5; Heb 10:32f)” (*Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament*, William B. Eerdman). In Philippians 2:1-4 the apostle tells us how.

The grounds of Paul’s appeal. If your relationship in Christ means anything to you; *“If there is therefore any exhortation (or encouragement) in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any tender mercies and compassions,”* then show it by working and worshipping **together!**

How do we do that?

- **Philippians 2:2**, *“be of the same mind, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.”* To be of *“one accord”* (*súmpsuchos*); literally means to be “joined together in soul or sentiment, unanimous” (*The Complete Word Study Dictionary*). Robertson’s Word Pictures defines this as “harmonious in soul, souls that beat together, in tune with Christ and with each other.” Anything else is sinful! *“Now I beseech you, brethren, through the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing and (that) there be no divisions among you; but (that) ye be perfected together in the same mind and in the same judgment”* (1 Cor. 1:10). In the list of sins of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21, we find *“factions, divisions, parties.”* These sins hold eternal consequences! *“They who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”* The peace and progress of God’s people, and our eternal salvation, depends upon our desire and ability to avoid these evil works and seek the truth.
- **Philippians 2:3**, *“(doing) nothing through faction or through vainglory.”* Self-interest, (vainglory or conceit) is contrasted with humility. Unity cannot prevail among brethren where men think more highly of themselves than they ought to think (Rom. 12:3). Christians who act in this way are concerned with their own well-being, not that of others. James describes this as *“earthly, sensual devilish”* as opposed to *“the fruit of righteousness,”* which is *“sown in peace for them that make peace”* (Jas. 3:15-18).
- **Philippians 2:3**, *“but in lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself.”* Genuine humility must be the fundamental attitude of Christians if we are to be of one mind. It stands over against any attitude of selfishness and conceit, which disrupts and destroys the togetherness of the church. From sources outside the Bible, this view of lowliness was unacceptable in the Pagan world, because it was the attitude of a slave. Jesus taught His disciples that He did not come to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45). Is it any

wonder that Jesus demonstrated His humility by performing the acts of a slave, washing their feet (Jn. 13:2-17)? In this text, Paul affirms that Jesus **“emptied himself, taking the form of a servant ...”** (Phil. 2:7). It is impossible for Christians to be of the same mind without humility.

- **Philippians 2:4**, **“not looking each of you to his own things, but each of you also to the things of others.”** This is not the way the world thinks; however, it is not rocket science. This way of thinking about others is the result of thinking properly about self! Humility demands that the feelings, interests, needs, and concerns of our brethren are to be put above our own. Paul commanded, **“In love of the brethren be tenderly affectioned one to another; in honor preferring one another”** (Rom. 12:10).

The highest example that could be furnished, that would illustrate and confirm all the apostle had said about humility is the example of Jesus. **“Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, existing in the form of God, counted not the being on an equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, becoming obedient (even) unto death, yea, the death of the cross”** (Phil. 2:5-8). Aren't you glad He was not selfish? He left the state of inexpressible glory and took upon Himself the humblest form of humanity, and offered Himself in the lowliest kind of death, that He might benefit us.

Could any thought be more important as we think about **our worship together**? **“And let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works; not forsaking our own assembling together, as the custom of some is, but exhorting (one another); and so much the more, as ye see the day drawing nigh”** (Heb. 10:24-25). Brethren, we need each other! Being a Christian is still a **together thing!** — *Fifth Street East Church of Christ Bulletin*, May 9, 2021. ■

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“Greet One Another”

By Greg Gwin

“Greet one another with a holy kiss.” So instructed the apostles Peter and Paul (1 Pet. 5:14; 1 Cor. 16:20). We wonder if we are, in this post-COVID time, still doing this effectively.

Mask wearing and social distancing have brought about some significant changes in personal conduct. People have been afraid to **“greet one another”** in any meaningful way. Certainly a **“holy kiss”** would be inconceivable to most folks at this time. Even giving a **“right hand of fellowship”** (Gal. 2:9) has been diligently avoided by lots of people during the height of the pandemic. With faces covered in surgical fashion, it's hard to even see a friendly smile. Unfortunately, all of this has led to heads lowered, eye contact avoided, and personal interaction brought to a near standstill.

We are not criticizing those who are at risk for taking reasonable precautions. Certainly not. But at the same time, we all must remember our obligation to demonstrate our love and affection for our brethren. COVID or not, we are a spiritual family and we need to express our devotion to one another.

Paul never failed to greet his brethren, often by name, in his epistles. Even in some of his so-called “prison epistles” he sent his salutations. Think of that: any such open communication might have been used against him in his impending trial. But, never mind that, Paul reached out to his brothers and sisters. How you greet others may be modified by the times we are now experiencing, but the obligation to do so still remains. We have a special relationship and bond. Show that you value this. **“Greet one another.”** Find a way! Think! — *Collegeville church of Christ Bulletin*, April 18, 2021. ■

EDITOR’S NOTE: The two articles in this edition of our bulletin are timely. Have you given thought to the fact that if you **forsake “the assembling of ourselves together”** that it is impossible to **“greet one another”** and to greet any visitors face to face if we are privileged to have them? **“Think on these things.”** ■

Service Times - Sunday: 9:00 & 10:00 AM; 6:00 PM - Wednesday: 7:00 PM

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