**Round Top Church Christian Fellowship**

**Sermon**

***The Joy of Encouragement***

**Philippians 2:1-8**

*Pastor ~ Matthew Diehl*

February 27th In the Year of Our Lord - (Anno Domini A.D.) 2022

(Unless otherwise noted, NAS is quoted – New American Standard Bible)

Read and/or print sermon notes from our website – roundtopchurch.org

 In the previous verses, Paul challenged the Philippian saints that if he lived and was delivered from his imprisonment. . . then he called upon them to “Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ (1:27).” With this in mind, and in continuation of Paul’s instructions, he elaborated more on the God-driven life they were to pursue and live. Paul was specific as God’s Holy Spirit directed him to write in **Philippians 2:**

1 Therefore,

if there is any encouragement in Christ,

if there is any consolation of love,

if there is any fellowship of the Spirit,

if any affection and compassion,

 Obviously, and for good reason, the focal point of the Gospel of God is God. . . for our own good. In Paul’s writing, we can see that he presented God’s nature in three presentations. . . Christ’s, God’s, and Spirit’s. Paul groups:

 “Encouragement with Christ”

“Consolation with love”

“Fellowship with Spirit”

All of these produce “affection” and “compassion”. The first three are representations of the Triune God with the knowledge that God is love (1 John 4:8). It is beneficial to understand the Greek meaning of these words.

Encouragement [ Greek = παράκλησις paraklesis ]

‘emboldening for facing or carrying out a responsibility or task’,

Consolation [ Greek = παραμύθιον paramuthion ]

as persuasive power that points to a basis for hope and provides incentive

Fellowship [ Greek = κοινωνία koinonia ]

‘close association in shared interest’ or ‘shared community life’

Affection [ Greek = σπλάγχνα splanchna ]

the inner seat of the emotions, from the heart

Compassion [ Greek = oἰκτιρμόi oiktirmoi ]

‘tender concern for one in trying conditions or distress’

Taking the liberty to convey the nuances in the Greek language with additional words, we can paraphrase Paul’s words in Philippians 1:1.

Since you are to conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ, you are charged with and emboldened with the responsibility of Christ’s commission. Being in fellowship with Christ, you have received His spiritual incentive of love. . . that is the persuasive power at work in your inner being generating compassion for those in distress.

In verse 1, Paul paints a spiritual picture of a godly person and community. In grade-school, we learned to describe a person or event applying the five “W’s” + “H”. In a Biblical reality, these are behavioral applications to the Christian life. How people act is a direct reflection on who they are.

**Who we are?** God’s Believers

**What we are?** Witnesses for God (Martus)

 Believers are automatic witnesses for God.

We may not be ready on the first day, but we are in constant preparation to improve our ability to witness faith in God.

**When to act?** In general, we are acting as God’s believing witnesses all

the time. Specifically, we are sensitive to God’s Spiritual prompting and direction to respond to opportunities presented to us on a daily basis (situational).

**Where to act?** Anywhere. We use our God-given common sense to use

opportunities in personal situations that are presented to us.

**Why are we the way we are?** Christ resides in our hearts. Our God-

driven hearts live with the goal to have people see Christ in us. Paul writes to the Galatians . . . *“I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me;* (Galatians 2:20).

**How to act (be**)? Believers wholly depend on God’s Holy Spirit in how to

act as a person. This is why God empowers us to apply our spiritual gifts (1 Corinthians 12) with the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23). How we act is Spirit-driven.

**Make My Joy Complete**

Paul made a personal plea from his imprisonment when he called upon the Philippians to “bring joy” to his life by fulfilling the maturity of the Gospel in them. To accomplish this task, Paul saw that they needed to be of the same mind, love, spirit, and purpose. This is true for any organization to achieve their common goals. Obviously, this application to the local church is pivotal for them to acquire the goals set by Christ. Remember that one of the things God hates is one who spreads strife among people (Proverbs 6:19). A house divided will not stand (Matthew 12:25, Mark 3:25, Luke 11:17).

**Philippians 2:2** make my joy complete by being

of the same mind,

 maintaining the same love,

united in spirit,

intent on one purpose.

So, with the direction outlined in verses 1 and 2, Paul provides a “Do” and “Don’t” to teach the Truth.

**Selfishness - verses - humility**

**Personal interest – verses – interest of others**

 **3** **Do** nothing from selfishness or empty conceit,

but with humility of mind

regard one another as more important than yourselves;

 **4** **do not** merely look out for your own personal interests,

But also for the interests of others.

**Christ’s Attitude** – **empty yourself for others**

**Do not make yourself your own god to whom others should bow down.**

**5** Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

**On-line quotes about attitude I found.**

I don’t have an attitude problem.

You have a problem with my attitude, and that’s not my problem.

A bad attitude is like a flat tire,

you can’t go anywhere until you change it.

The first goal of God’s incarnation was to go to the Cross and pay the price for our sins. Secondarily, God incarnated Himself to be one of us in order to demonstrate to us, in the flesh, how to be the person He planned. God’s primary plan called for us not to place our interests over His interest. This is for our own good. Adam was charged with this choice (Genesis 2:17). We all know that Adam chose his interest over God’s (Genesis 3). Adam was not willing to be God’s servant and humble himself to God.

 God, as Jesus Christ, demonstrated the humility to which He calls all of us. Granted, the Cross is the extreme act of humility. We see Jesus act-out this humility in the Garden of Gethsemane with the words, “*yet not as I will, but as You will."* (Matthew 26:39). So, God’s great love accomplished for all of us at the Cross “substitutionary atonement”. God’s love did not call for us to go to a cross to pay the price for our sins. To be clear, no one has ever been called by God to die to pay the price for sin. God’s love took care of this sacrifice Himself (John 3:16; Romans 3:21-25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2, 4:10).

God worked through Abraham to demonstrate this point. God never intended to have Abraham sacrifice Isaac. God provided a substitution for Isaac. . . that being a ram (Genesis 22:13). It should be obvious to all. . . that the Cross of Christ, being “substitutionary atonement”, points back to Abraham and Isaac. God did not call for Abraham to sacrifice a person like many of the pagan cult religions did and do.

**What do I mean, “do” . . . as in present tense?**

Islam practices human sacrifice today with parents offering their children to grow-up to be suicide bombers and jihadists sacrificing their own bodies to allah in order to secure a path to heaven. This is one reason that proves Muslims do not worship or pray to THE GOD of the Bible. God, our Creator, the God of love demonstrated at the Cross the exact opposite to what Islam teaches. God does not call for us to die for our sins.

Here are the four passages of Scripture detailing “substitutionary atonement” and “propitiation”. (John 3:16; Romans 3:21-25; Hebrews 2:17; 1 John 2:2, 4:10).

**Romans 3:21-25**

21 But now apart from the Law the righteousness of God has been manifested, [ Strong’s 5319 Greek = φανερόω phaneroo “*to make visible*” ] being witnessed by the Law and the Prophets,

 22 even the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all those who believe; for there is no distinction; 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

24 being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;

25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed;

**Hebrews 2:17** Therefore, He **[Jesus Christ]** had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.

**1 John 2:2** and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.

**1 John 4:10** In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

**Philippians 2:6-8**

 6 who, although He existed in the form of God,

did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

7 but emptied Himself,

taking the form of a bond-servant,

 and being made in the likeness of men.

 8 Being found in appearance as a man,

He humbled Himself

by becoming obedient to the point of death,

even death on a cross.

So, in order for God to demonstrate to fallen humanity that in our fallen state we can still possess the power to be that person God planned for us to be, he emptied (ἐκένωσεν = ekenosen / verse 7) himself of a few abilities. . . in order to be human and, at the same time, retained His God attributes. Some theologians note that during the incarnation God emptied Himself of being Ever-present, All-knowing, and All-powerful (Omnipresent ~ Omniscient ~ Omnipotent). There is a lengthy study to be made to arrive at this conclusion. We will not take the time this morning as I am sure you would become **discombobulated** from the original topic. It is a sufficient observation that **God as Jesus took the presence of full humanity while retaining His core nature of eternal Deity.**

**Why is this important?**

**Answer:** To demonstrate to us mere mortals, depraved as we are, that it is possible to have a saving relationship with God, with His Spirit indwelling us and guiding our lives. . . therefore, elevating us to live a victorious life over sin and death. I know, nobody wants to think of themselves as “depraved”. However, with God guiding our lives, we are led through a spiritual transformation called “sanctification”. . . in which, we are constantly advancing to a more mature spiritual state of being. This truth is taught when Paul writes “*work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure”* to the Philippian saints (Philippians 2:12). The contextual use of the word “fear” is “reverence”. There is not any fear in the love of the Lord (1John 4:18). I am in awe when there are achievements in my life that I know would not have been accomplished without me being guided by God and His Word. Many of us can relate to this statement because we have been with a family member who has died. I relied upon God to carry me through those times in my life. If I would have relied upon myself, I would have failed.

**John 14:1** "Do not let your heart be troubled; believe in God, believe also in Me.

 **2** "In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were not so, I would have told you; for I go to prepare a place for you.

 **3** "If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also.

So, in summation, it is God at work in the hearts and minds of Believers. Remember, we do not merit our salvation (Ephesians 2:8), and it is not our merit at work in us in the sanctification process. . . but God’s. These truths are detailed in . . .

**1 John 4:14-21**

14 We have seen and testify

 that the Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

 15 Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God,

God abides in him, and he in God.

 16 We have come to know

and have believed the love which God has for us.

God is love,

and the one who abides in love abides in God,

and God abides in him.

 17 By this, love is perfected with us,

so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment;

because as He is, so also are we in this world.

 18 There is no fear in love;

but perfect love casts out fear,

because fear involves punishment,

and the one who fears is not perfected in love.

We are justified to God at salvation, then mature through sanctification to our final state of glorification. . . when we graduate from this temporal life to reside in Heaven with God.

7 For God has not called us for the purpose of impurity, but in sanctification. 8 So, he who rejects this is not rejecting man but the God who gives His Holy Spirit to you (1 Thessalonians. 4:7-8). **AMEN**