

Slaves of Christ – Part 3

Costly Unity

Jerry Cisar — October 7, 2018

C. How to Achieve Unity in the Face of Opposition (3-5)

- i. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit.
 - a) Selfish-ambition is clinging to powers that are not ours.
 - Genesis 3:5
 - b) “Conceit” referred to people with “an inflated sense of themselves, projecting an image but lacking its substance” (Marcus Bockmuehl).
- ii. The Spirit of Christ in us becomes for us the mind of Christ.
 - a) Therefore we too can do the opposite of Adam.
 - b) We are called to the humility of Christ.

Opposition drives division through fear; costly humility stops it in its tracks.

LIVE THE STORY

*The Gospel is intended to be learned and lived in community.
The following questions are designed for use in our Community Groups as an
aid to growth in the Gospel and Community.*

- If Christ is the artist and the church His work of art, what does the church reveal about her Lord? In what ways is the church a masterpiece? ... a cheap reproduction?
- What do you think of Bonhoeffer's contrast between “cheap grace” and “costly grace”? What is the difference between cheap *unity* and costly *unity*? How does our text call us to a costly unity?
- What kinds of opponents did the Philippian church face? What kind do we face today?
- How might external opposition push us toward division and strife? How does our text speak to this?
- Discuss the following rendering of 1:27a: “Only live for the sake of this new, heavenly community in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ...”.
- What has been granted (given) to us according to 1:29-30? How does this reveal that if we hold fast to the gospel, a sure deliverance?
- Instead of clinging to what we want in self-ambition or vain-conceit, what does 2:3-5 call us to?

Text: Philippians 1:27–2:5

Introduction

Dietrich Bonhoeffer: “Cheap grace is the mortal enemy of the church. Our struggle today is for *costly* grace. Cheap grace means grace as bargain-basement good, cut-rate forgiveness, cut-rate comfort.... *Costly* grace ... is *costly* because it calls to discipleship; it is *grace* because it calls us to follow Jesus Christ. It is *costly*, because it costs people their lives; it is *grace*, because it thereby makes them live. ... Above all, grace is costly, because it was costly to God.... Above all, it is grace because because the life of God's Son was not too costly for God to give in order to make us live.... Costly grace is the incarnation of God.”

Dwelling with Philippians: “Nineteen centuries earlier, the Apostle Paul warned against cheap unity—the deadly enemy of Christian identity and mission. Cheap unity is a form of free association around a slogan or an ideology among people who claim identity with Christ, even community under the name of Christ, but without the personal sacrifice required for Christ-like living.”

I. Conduct Yourselves (1:27a)

- A. “Whatever happens...”
- B. Conduct yourselves...
 - i. Philippians 3:20 Citizens of a Heavenly Community
 - ii. 1:27: “Only live for the sake of this new, heavenly community in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ...”

- ii. This fearlessness is not based on positive mental attitude, or even on ignoring the possibilities of danger and death.

II. Contend Together (1:27b-30)

- A. The gospel has real enemies in Philippi.
 - i. Paul's key concern is that they remain unified in their wrestling for the gospel.

 - ii. Paul knows that if they become divided, the gospel's advance will stop!
- B. Believers face opposition on two fronts:
 - i. We face human opposition.
 - a) Acts 16:20-21

 - b) As a Roman colony, the unwillingness of Christians to participate in activities which were part of emperor worship, would have caused both government officials and family members to view them as bad citizens.

 - ii. We face spiritual opposition (Eph. 6:10-13).
 - a) The "rulers, the authorities, the world rulers of this darkness," could be earthly rulers who carry out the will of "spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places."

 - b) The opposition that the Philippians faced likely involved both human and spiritual rulers, authorities, or powers.
- C. Without being frightened (28).
 - i. Fear motivates people to do things they would never otherwise have been willing to do.

- D. Why does our not being frightened demonstrate our deliverance and our opponents destruction? (29-30)
 - i. Because the gift of grace that we've been given.

 - ii. Being crucified with Christ always ends in being raised with Him!

A church divided against itself cannot stand, but a church united in Christ-mindedness cannot be defeated.

III. Consider One Another (2:1-5)

- A. "If there is any encouragement from being joined with Christ in His suffering, if there is any comfort from this love which He showed, if there is a shared life because of the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion then..."

- B. Make my joy complete!
 - i. What would make Paul's joy complete?

 - ii. The best weapon against enemy opposition to the gospel is a church that walks out the humility of Christ in our relationships with one another.
 - a) In the face of opposition, don't be anxious! (Phil. 4:6-9)

 - b) Gospel opposition may bring you anxiety, but take those anxieties to God in prayer. This will lead to peace.