

Philippians 2:1-4 — Unity Through Humility

May 31, 2020

When I went to seminary, there were a number of Korean students in my class. One thing I learned was Koreans take church seriously, and because of that, occasionally Korean Christians don't get along. Unfortunately, Korean churches are notorious for splitting. The average Korean church splits every eight years. Preparing for this message, I read about one Korean church where the elders held a secret meeting where they decided to fire the pastor. When the pastor heard about the meeting, he went to a judge who filed a restraining order against the elders so they couldn't attend the church to fire the pastor. The result of this fight was a bitter church split. I don't mean anything against my Korean friends. I just mention this to show you how seriously Korean Christians take their faith. Thankfully, most American churches don't act that way.

We have a different solution to church conflict. Instead of leaving our church to start a new one, we leave our church to join a different one. At the end of the day, there isn't much difference between the Korean and American church fights, except the Koreans end up planting more churches because of them!

Conflict, misunderstanding, and hurt feelings happen at every church. Unfortunately, those hurts can lead to church ruptures, church splits or people leaving.

Thankfully, conflict doesn't always lead to a church split, it doesn't always led to people parting ways. Some churches are able to weather the storms of controversy. They work through offenses. They experience misunderstandings, missteps and sin but the people work through it. Relationships don't fall apart.

What makes the difference? Why can some churches work through relational wounds to maintain unity and harmony, while other churches blow apart like they stepped on a hand grenade when the fighting begins? This morning, we will find the answer.

We are in Philippians 2. We won't study too far into the chapter. We are only looking at the first four verses this morning.

Let's remember the relationship Paul had with this church. He was in a Roman jail awaiting either execution or release. He loved and missed the church in Philippi. It was a church he planted and loved. The Philippians were extremely kind to him. Almost all the words he spoke about them were positive. For example, in Philippians 1:27, Paul said he thanked God every time he remembered them. In Philippians 1:4, he said every time he prayed for them, he prayed with joy. In Philippians 1:8, Paul said he longed for them with all the affections of Christ.

In this letter, we see there were no doctrinal corrections Paul gave the Philippians like he gave to the Galatians. The Philippians were quality people. While many things were well in this church, there was a deadly snake in the grass; a poisonous serpent took up residence among them. This reptile was killing them from the inside out. What was this deadly snake in the grass? It was the viper of disunity. Its venom of infighting and bitterness was eating the church alive.

Paul talked about this problem multiple times in this letter.

Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in

one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel...
Philippians 1:27 (ESV)

I entreat Euodia and I entreat Syntyche to agree in the Lord. Philippians 4:2
(ESV)

In this morning's text, Paul made another heartfelt plea for unity. Let's read the text and dive in.

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:1–4 (ESV)

These verses are about church unity. We know that because in the Greek, there is one verb that controls things. It is "...being of the same mind." Paul wanted this divided church to be united.

When it came to the flow of Paul's thoughts, he had three parts. First, Paul talked about motives for unity. Second, he talked about marks of unity. Third, he talked about the means of unity. Another way to look at this is to look at these verses as an answer to three questions. First, "Why is church unity important?" Second, "What does a united church look like?" Third, "How do we become a united church?" We will develop this morning's study as answers to those three questions.

Why is unity in the church important?

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind... Philippians 2:1–2 (ESV)

Paul gave us five brief answers to the question, "Why is church unity important?" While it only occurs one time in the text, thematically all his answers

begin with the words, “If there is...”. It should read, “If there is any encouragement in Christ. If there is any comfort from love...” At first, the phrase, “If there is...” sounds like it might be a question. Maybe there is encouragement in Christ, maybe there is not encouragement in Christ. While those words might not be clear in English, they are clear in Greek. In Greek grammar, this is known as a first-class conditional clause. A first-class conditional clause is not a question of what may be true. It is a statement of fact about what we know is true. In other words, we can substitute the word “since” for the word “if.” Paul said, “Since you have encouragement from Christ, since you have comfort from his love...” Since you have experienced these things, then it demands that you must be of the same mind. You must agree with one another. Let’s examine the motives Paul gave for unity.

We have the encouragement of Christ.

...any encouragement in Christ... Philippians 2:1 (ESV)

This is the Greek word *paraklesis*. It means to come alongside someone, to help them or encourage them. It is the picture of an exhausted marathon runner that has someone run next to them for part of the race to help them when they are weak.

Paul said, “Who here has not experienced the help of Christ in our time of need?” Who among us has not experienced Jesus running beside us and encouraging us when we felt overwhelmed in life? Haven’t all of us benefited from Christ’s encouragement in our time of need? Paul said, because Christ has so consistently and faithfully come alongside us to help us and encourage us, we

should respond by giving back to Jesus what he asks of us. He asks us to be of the same mind. He asks us to be united and not let divisions tear us apart.

If the constant encouragement of Christ means anything to you, our gratitude to Christ for encouragement in our time of need should motivate us to give back to Christ the one thing he wants from us, a unified church.

You ask, “Does Jesus really want a unified church?” Yes, he does. Jesus’ great prayer to his heavenly father was for our unity. We read it in John 17.

“I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.”
John 17:20–21 (ESV)

Jesus’ prayer was for the unity of the church. His prayer was that the unity between us in the church would be so great that it would rival the unity found between the father and son. He prayed the unity between us in the church would be so spectacular that our unity would be a witness to the world around us that Jesus is among us. Jesus wants great unity. He said something similar in John 13.

“By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” John 13:35 (ESV)

Paul said since we have received such encouragement from Jesus, so much help from Jesus, and so much care from Jesus since the moment of our salvation, does that not incentivize us to give back to Jesus the one thing that is precious to his heart that he wants from us, unity between the members of his church?

When there are divisions in the church, and they are not over core doctrinal issues but over secondary matters and minor preferences, while our divisions may not break a law or violate an institution, they are breaking a heart — the heart of Jesus.

We have the comfort of Christ's love.

...any comfort from love... **Philippians 1:1 (ESV)**

Paul then moved from the comfort of Christ to the common experience we have of the love of Christ. Since we were saved, each of us has experienced the amazing comfort of God's love. No matter how many times we have failed Jesus, no matter how many times we have sinned against Jesus, Jesus still loves us. Jesus has never given up on us. Jesus never turned his back on us. Jesus has so much forgiveness, mercy, kindness, and grace that he extends to us. Isn't it a profound ingratitude on our part to not extend that same kind of love, mercy, and forgiveness to others that we have received from Jesus?

Another gem in this little phrase is the Greek word for "comfort." In Greek, it means "gentle cheering." It is used to describe someone coming close to us and whispering words of encouragement in our ears. This word is always used in a positive sense. The words whispered in our ears are never negative.

Paul said, "Haven't we benefited from Jesus gently whispering words of love and encouragement in our ears, especially when we are overwhelmed?" Since Jesus is so good to us, so gentle to us, and so tender as to whisper his love in our ears, how can we not give back to him the one thing he desperately wants from us, which is the unity of his people? How can we not swallow our

pride and let our offenses go for the sake of giving Jesus what he so desperately wants from us — that is, the genuine love of his people for one another?

I say again, when we tolerate division, when we allow wounds in the church to remain unforgiven so they fester between us, we may not be breaking a law of God but we are breaking the heart of Jesus.

We have participation in the Spirit.

...any participation in the Spirit... **Philippians 1:1 (ESV)**

Paul moved from the common experience we have of encouragement and love from Jesus, to the common experience we have of the Holy Spirit. The word “participation” is the Greek word *koinonia*. We learned that word earlier in this series. It means to be friends together working toward a common goal. The illustration of *koinonia* I gave you at that time was friends working together in a fishing business. They would partner together with the common goal of the company’s success. Paul said, as Christians, we have a common experience of the Holy Spirit in us. The Holy Spirit doesn’t just make us into new creations. He doesn’t just change our character and our desires. He also works in us, uniting us together and enabling us to work as a team for the common goal of the spread of the gospel in this world. This is why the Holy Spirit gives each of us different gifts. The Holy Spirit wants us to work together for God’s glory. All of us have different but important roles to play on the gospel team.

Let me ask you. Do you think the Holy Spirit, who is gifting us and uniting us to work together as a team, wants unity in the church? Absolutely!

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:13 (ESV)

Remember that division and disunity in the church is not as much breaking a law, it is grieving a person. It grieves Jesus and the Holy Spirit, who want to draw us together and unite us into a well-oiled team for the gospel.

We have affection and sympathy from the Holy Spirit.

...any affection and sympathy... Philippians 1:1 (ESV)

The word affection is the Greek word *splanchna*. It means guts, bowels. It has to do with feelings. In America, if we love someone, we say, "I love you with all of my heart." We consider the heart to be the seat of emotions. In the ancient world, people considered the gut to be the seat emotions. They would say, "I love you with all of my gut." In the Septuagint, which is the Greek translation of the Hebrew Old Testament, this word for affection is used to describe the kind of longing feelings a husband has for his wife. Paul said, "Have you not experienced the longing affections God has for you?" God is not a machine. He is a person. He desperately, deeply, and emotionally loves you. God loves us with far greater emotional affection than a newly married husband has for his wife.

Paul said, when you know how much loving affection God has for you, how can you not get along with your brothers and sisters in Christ? How can you persist in fighting and bickering? It is like a parent who deeply loves his or her children. When the children are in a bitter and spiteful argument, it breaks the heart of mom and dad, who love both of them! Paul said, that is the way God feels about us. He deeply love us, with an emotional love straight from the gut. We break his heart when we refuse to get along with our brothers and sisters in

the family of God. We break his heart when we refuse to let go of the hurts and wounds from the past.

Then Paul added the word sympathy. It is the Greek word *oiktirmos*. Sometimes this word is translated as the “tender mercies of God.” It means God has been incredibly kind to us. He has given us far more than we deserve. Let’s face it, hasn’t God been incredibly kind and good to each of us? God saved us from the just eternal damnation that was ours on account of our sin, an eternal damnation that would land us in the lake of fire. He saved us from hell at the great cost of his son. That is amazing, but God gave us so much more. He also adopted us into his family, making us the younger brothers and sisters of Jesus, the most exalted beings in the universe. In addition, we will spend eternity resembling the risen Jesus and in the presence of the risen Jesus. Remember that Jesus is the source of all joy in the universe. He radiates joy like the sun radiates heat and light. We will spend eternity in the presence of the one who radiates joy. Jesus is the ultimate anti-depressant! Just as it would be impossible for us to stand on the surface of the sun because of the blistering light and heat radiating from that ball of fire, it would be impossible for us to stand in the presence of Jesus because of the incredible amounts of joy flowing from his person. Were it not for the indestructible resurrection bodies God will give us, we could not handle the amount of joy that will be ours from our closeness to Jesus for all eternity.

Hasn’t God been good to us? Hasn’t he given us far more than we deserve? There is no more blessed being in the universe and no more joy-filled

being in the universe than you and me because of what God has done for us through Jesus.

God is not just good to us in the future, but he is good to us now. Look at your life. Hasn't God rescued you many times? Hasn't God blessed you with much more than you deserve? How many times has God saved you through his kind providence from disasters? Paul said, after all the kindness God has shown to us, how can we be so ungrateful to God and stir up fighting and bickering in Christ's church? Disunity and bickering is a profound act of ingratitude to a God who has given us so much.

A leader's joy is the unity of the people.

...complete my joy by being of the same mind... Philippians 2:2 (ESV)

Paul said, "If you can't get in touch with your intimate relationship with Jesus and you can't get in touch with what Jesus has done for you and what the Holy Spirit is doing in you, then do it for me. Put away your bickering and fighting for me." Nothing grieves a pastor's heart more than to see the people he loves in the church arguing. One of a pastor's great joys is the relational health and harmony of those under his care. It is a joy to serve a church where offenses are forgiven just as Jesus has forgiven us.

In this letter, we learned that Paul was in jail. Even though he was in prison, he was filled with joy. The gospel was making progress in the most unexpected ways even though he is chained and confined. The unexpected progress of the gospel filled Paul with joy. Now Paul said, "If you want to make me really happy, if you want to complete my joy, forgive one another and get along with one another." Unity in the church brings great joy to the leaders of the

church. As a pastor who has sat through many long meetings with fighting Christians, I can give Paul's words a hearty, "Amen." The unity of the people is the joy of the pastor. Please get along. Do it for me.

This reminds me of words from the writer of Hebrews.

Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you. Hebrews 13:17 (ESV)

Euodia and Synteche, put away your feud. Writing those cutting blog posts and sending hurtful emails are not helping. Each attack is beating a sister in Christ with a verbal hammer. Your words bruise those around you as they are caught in the cross fire. They are battering your pastor. Just stop it! Get along. If for no other reason, do it because you love your pastor.

Paul gave us motivation to pursue unity. Disunity in the church grieves Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Church conflict is a profound act of ingratitude to Jesus after all he has done for us. Now we move to our second point.

What does a united church look like?

Before we get into this section, let me give you the point Paul made. Unity in the church is beautiful. It is incredibly beautiful, both to God and to everyone else who experiences it firsthand. God wants us to be a beautiful church, a unified church.

It is a church where people have the mind of Christ about things.

...by being of the same mind... Philippians 2:2 (ESV)

The Greek word for mind is the Greek word *phroneo*. It means to think the same way about something. Ten of the 23 uses of this verb occur in the four

short chapters of Philippians. Apparently not having unity of mind was a major problem for this church.

What does it mean to be of the same mind? Does it mean everyone needs to have the same favorite color? Does it mean everyone needs to like the same music? Does it mean everyone needs to own the same style of furniture? Absolutely not! This is talking about a higher unity than personal preferences. This is talking about taking our feet out of our shoes and our little world, then putting them in Jesus' shoes and looking at the church from his world. When we are able to look at the church from the perspective of Jesus and the mindset of Jesus, many of our petty disagreements fade away as unity of mind is born.

An example of this is the church of Corinth. It was not a one-minded church. It was a church broken into little factions. Some congregants were following Paul, others following Apollos, and others following Peter. They were divided amongst themselves because they were busy looking at the church wearing their own shoes, not looking at the church from the higher mindset of wearing Jesus' shoes. Look how Paul pleaded with this church to be united, to give up its petty divisions and see itself as a church from the viewpoint of Jesus.

I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment. For it has been reported to me by Chloe's people that there is quarreling among you, my brothers. What I mean is that each one of you says, "I follow Paul," or "I follow Apollos," or "I follow Cephas," or "I follow Christ." 1 Corinthians 1:10–12 (ESV)

Being of one mind, looking at church from the mindset of Jesus, not from our little group, is what Paul called for the Philippians, for the Corinthians, and he calls for us to do. We must not allow ourselves to descend into petty divisions as

we champion our favorite ministries and friends. Unity is found when all of us look at the church like Jesus looks at the church, with a higher mindset of unity.

Maybe the best way to summarize this is to go to Philippians 2:5.

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus... Philippians 2:5 (ESV)

Unity comes when we look at everyone else in the church with the mindset of Jesus. When we have a church of people that can see beyond themselves and beyond their little world, to see the whole church as Jesus sees the church, there is unity in the church. That is a beautiful thing.

It is a church where people love others as Jesus loves them.

...having the same love... Philippians 2:2 (ESV)

What does it mean to be a church that has the same love? In Philippians 2:5, we saw that we are to have the mind of Christ for the church. This is telling us to have the same love as Christ does for his church. This is a mark of unity, when Christians love one another in the way Christ loves them. This is a church where the rich are not favored and the poor are not ignored. This is a church where the old are not a clique and the young adults only talk to people their own age.

This is not talking about an emotional love for one another. It is talking about a volitional love for one another. It is a church where people choose to love one another with the same kind of love that Jesus has for them. It is choosing to love the hard-to-love people, not just the easy-to-love people. When God sees a church of people that have chosen to genuinely love one another like he has chosen to love us, it is a beautiful thing. When people come to a church where

the love people have for one another is genuine, it is a beautiful thing. It makes the church incredibly attractive.

Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Romans 12:10 (ESV)

But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. 1 John 3:17–18 (ESV)

If we love some people less than others, that will introduce division into the church. If we love all people like Jesus loves them, that maintains unity in the church, which is a beautiful thing.

It is a church where people have their souls knit together.

...being in full accord... Philipians 2:2 (ESV)

This is the Greek word *sumpsuchos*. It is used only one time in the New Testament. It means having one soul. Today, we would say people in this kind of relationship are soul-brothers. They are deeply knit together in the heart. In a unified church, people genuinely care about one another like Christ genuinely cares about them. In a unified church, people are so bonded in their hearts that when one person in the church family hurts, everyone else feels that hurt with him or her.

In a unified church where people are knit together at the heart, when a prayer request is e-mailed to the church family, people don't delete it. They stop what they are doing and pray for it. They experience a feeling of genuine love and concern for their brother or sister in Christ in his or her time of need, not a passive indifference to his or her plight.

I remember when my mother was dying of cancer. So many of you were incredibly kind. You brought us meals. You sent us cards. Just so you know, the meals were appreciated, but what was better than your meals was the look of care and concern on your faces when you dropped them off at our home. The fact that you could feel our pain spoke volumes to our souls. That is what a unified church does. That kind of church is beautiful to Jesus.

It is a church that operates as one.

...and of one mind... **Philippians 2:2 (ESV)**

Paul began by saying the sign of a unified church is the people of the church have the same mind, the mind of Christ. Here he went one step further. He said a unified church literally operates with one mind. When that happens, there is no room for petty differences.

How do we get unity in the church?

Do nothing from selfishness or conceit.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit... Philippians 2:3 (ESV)

We have seen the motives for unity. Disunity grieves Jesus. It grieves the Holy Spirit. It expresses profound ingratitude to God after all he has done for us. We have seen what a unified church looks like. A unified church is an incredibly beautiful thing. Now Paul moved to how we can become a unified church.

Paul said we must eliminate self-promotion and selfish ambition from our motives. This is the word *erithion*. It is promoting ourselves and our interests at the expense of others or over others. Aristotle used this word to describe what a politician does when he or she runs for political office. I thought that was funny

because that is an appropriate description of most American politicians. They run for political office to get their way in this world, not to represent the people.

If there is to be unity in the church, we must not be about promoting our way, our desires, and our wants. The church is not to be a place where I try to make sure everything is just the way “I” want it. If everybody in the church was committed to promoting his or her desires at the expense of other people’s desires, the church would be a divided and broken place ruined by people insistent on always having their way.

Paul also told us to do nothing with conceit. This is the Greek word *kenodoxia*. It means empty glory. It is only used here in the New Testament. While selfish ambition described an action, conceit describes an attitude. It is a state of mind where you think you are a big shot. You think of yourself as better than other people and as more important than other people. You look down on others because you see yourself as better. Paul said this is all empty glory. In reality, we are no more significant than other people. We have no right to look down on people and to think of ourselves as superior to them or above them. Whenever you have people who think of themselves as better than others, or as more important than others, you will have division as they run people over like a bulldozer plowing through a crowd.

In humility, we consider others more significant than ourselves.

...but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Philippians 2:3 (ESV)

In place of self-promotion and conceit, Paul told us to put on humility. Humility in the ancient world was not admired. It was looked down upon. In the

ancient world, people were about self-promotion and assertiveness. The more power you exerted over others, the better you were. The ancient world considered humility to be something reserved for slaves.

It is only when we turn to the Old Testament that we see humility given to us as a virtue. It was also through Jesus and his apostles that humility was given to us as a virtue to be admired, not a weakness to be disdained. So Paul told us the key to unity in the church, and in any relationship, will be humility. The only way to unity is through humility.

Lest we misunderstand what humility looks like, let me take a moment to give you a biblical definition of the word.

Humility is not thinking less of yourself. It is thinking of yourself less.

Paul just told us to get rid of conceit, literally thinking of ourselves as better than other people and looking down on other people. Paul told us to replace considering ourselves better than other people with considering other people more significant than ourselves! Humble people come into a room and don't act like they are the most important people in the room. They go out of their way to treat others like they are the most important people in the room! That is what it means to replace conceit with humility.

How can we do this in a practical way? An easy application is to consider the way we speak to other people. Let's face it, our favorite topic of conversation is ourselves. We like to talk about ourselves. When we consistently talk about ourselves and take no interest in others and their lives, we are conceited. Instead of talking about ourselves, we should focus on listening to other people and

taking an interest in their world, instead of always talking about our world. This is a practical way to consider others more significant than ourselves.

In two weeks, we will look at Jesus as the great example of humility. He existed in glory with his father but he humbled himself and put our needs first. The only way for us to be saved from our sin was for Jesus to come and take on a human body to die for our sin. Jesus didn't look down on us with conceit acting like he was the most important person in the universe — even though he is. He considered us more significant than himself and was willing to go through the unfathomable agony of the cross to save us. That is humility in action. That is the kind of humility we want to imitate. That is the kind of humility in us that leads to unity among us.

In humility, we don't just look out for our interests but for the interests of others.

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:4 (ESV)

A moment ago, Paul told us to get rid of selfish ambition, the idea of promoting our desires above others, often at the expense of others. Now he tells us to replace promoting our own interests with looking out for other people's interests. In humility, we are to take care of promoting other people's interests, not just our own interests. That is what humility looks like in action. It is not just thinking about ourselves but thinking about others and what is best for them.

Isn't Jesus our model of humility in this area? Jesus thought about us and our needs, not just his desires and his needs. He humbled himself to leave glory, take on a body, be born in a stable, live in poverty, face the temptations of Satan,

die on a cross, and absorb our sin. He did this all because he was thinking about us and our salvation, not just the comforts of his glory. That was true humility. That is the model that is held out to us to follow in the church. We are not to be people that think only about our interests but we are to think about others' interests and care for them like we care for ourselves.

We began by talking about unity. Why is it some churches are able to stay together while others blow apart with in the face of conflicts and difficulties? The answer is humility. Christians that focus on being humble like Jesus and replacing their conceit with thinking about others as more significant than themselves make it through relational storms. Christians that focus on being humble like Jesus and replacing their selfish ambitions with looking out for the interests of others are not sunk by tidal waves of conflict.

How do we apply what we have learned?

Application

1. **The only way to have unity in the church is to have humility in church.**

We need to consider the needs of other people and other ministries not just our own interests and desires. This is the central message of the text.

We must take a posture of humility toward others to weather relational storms. As we do that, we must consider the needs of other ministries and other people as more important than our own.

2. **The only way to have unity in a multi-site church is to have humility.**

Each campus considers the needs of the other before its own. When we began exploring multi-site ministry for CrossWinds, I heard many stories of conflict between campuses when it came to resources. That turned me off. As

we put together our multi-site model, from day one we decided to make Philippians 2 our theme verse. In humility, we consider the other campuses better than ourselves. We trust God will take care of our needs as we take that posture. That stance goes both ways. That approach to the multi-site relationship has kept our campuses together when we faced disagreements and misunderstandings.

- 3. The only way to have unity in marriage is to have humility. We put the needs and desires of our spouses before our own in marriage.** Today, many marriages end in divorce. After 25 years of marriage counseling, I have seen the way most marriages disintegrate. This passage speaks to that topic. As soon as one spouse becomes conceited and starts thinking of himself or herself as better or more righteous than his or her partner, the marriage will begin to disintegrate. It is only when both spouses take a posture of humility and treat one another as more significant than themselves that their marriage will heal and thrive. As long as someone's attitude in the marriage relationship is one of conceit so he or she arrogantly looks down on his or her mate, instead of treasuring his or her mate, the marriage will be on the rocks. In the same way, when a spouse is consumed with selfish ambition, a marriage will struggle. When one spouse always has to have things a certain way, that will choke the life and vitality out of the marriage. The only way to solve it is to adopt a posture of humility and consider the interests of your spouse, not just your own, when decisions are made.

4. The only way to have unity during COVID-19 is to have humility.

We need to be willing to be inconvenienced as we consider the needs of others while we return to normal. On June 14, we are returning to in-person services on both campuses. I need to prepare you. Things will not be just like they were. There will be less singing. There will be more venues. There will be greater social distance. That is the world we live in right now. I have read social media. I know what some people are thinking and feeling about restrictions. A number of people are angry at the inconvenience. They say that if you do not feel safe, you can stay home. "Give me back my life just the way I had it before this virus. How dare you inconvenience me?" To that attitude, I give you Philippians 2. May we be a church that humbly treats others as better than ourselves as we come out of this pandemic. May we not be a conceited and arrogant church but a humble church that considers the needs of others, not just our own.

We saw that unity in the church pleases Jesus and the Holy Spirit. Division is an act of ingratitude that grieves the God who gave us his son to knit us together. We also saw that a unified church is a beautiful thing, both to God and to man. How do we achieve unity as a church family? The secret of unity is humility. It is considering others as more significant than ourselves and looking out for their interests, not just our own, that creates and sustains unity in all relationships. May CrossWinds be a unified church because we are a church that pursues humility like Jesus, our savior and master.



Dr. Kurt Trucksess is ordained in the Evangelical Free Church of America. He enjoys reading, writing, and time with his family. Feel free to contact him at www.Christ2RCulture.com (www.c2rc.com)

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