

JESUS STRONG IN GOSPEL UNITY

Part 4 of Jesus Strong. Philippians 1:27-2:11.
Peter Foxwell. Cornerstone Church. October 13, 2024.

JESUS STRONG

Why the title for this series of studies in Philippians?

- The letter is focused on Jesus.
- When we align with Jesus in practical ways, he strengthens us to honor him in those ways.

PHILIPPIANS 1:27-2:11

Read from the Bible

- We have loaner Bibles at the doors to the auditorium.
- The Bible is available in the free Bible app available in your phone or tablets app store.
- We read from the Christian Standard Bible (CSB), which is known for its accuracy and readability.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF UNITY - 1:27a

Why does unity among Christians matter?

Philippians 1:27a (CSB) Just one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ.

- We are citizens of an alternative city - heaven.
- Which means we live by a code that was not written by the godless world.

We live by the standards of the gospel of Christ - his teachings and redeeming work.

- In Christ, we are:
 - One new humanity
 - One body
 - Grafted into one vine
 - United with one Savior
 - Baptized in the Name of one Lord
 - Worshipping one God
- Unity is our default.
- Division dishonors the Lord who makes us one.

THE SIGNS OF UNITY - 1:27b-30

Sign One: a healthy church looks like soldiers in formation.

- We stand firm in one accord. This is a military term.
- Soldiers must be united in order to survive and win the battle.

Sign Two: A healthy church looks like athletes striving to win.

- We contend together for the faith of the gospel. This is an athletic term.
- The win for the church or Christian is to bring honor to Jesus, advance the gospel, and grow strong in Christ.
- We can only achieve the win when we are united.
- When we take our eyes off the prize and do our own thing, the result is division and conflict that distracts from the mission.

Ask yourself:

- Am I striving to maintain the unity of the Cornerstone Church?
- Am I known as a unifier?
- Am I healing divisions, bringing people together, bridging gaps?

THE SOURCES OF UNITY - 2:1-4

Source One: The presence of Jesus - 2:1.

- Jesus is present in his church.
- He is present to encourage and love us. His Spirit is fellowshiping with us and pouring his affection and mercy into us.
- Jesus is present in us. Do you want to fight Jesus?
- We are loved and encouraged by Jesus. This should remove the drive to fight, scheme, or manipulate to get our own way.

Source Two: The daily decision to be a unifier - 2:2-4.

- We decide how we think about the church family - verse 2. Same mission.
- We decide how we think about ourselves - verse 3. Humility.
- We decide how we think about others - verse 4. Look to their interests.

THE SAVIOR AND UNITY - 2:5-8

Jesus is the ultimate model of the humility that unites a church.

- His humble attitude is described in this ancient hymn.
- God took on flesh to be truly God and truly human. This is the theological doctrine of the incarnation.
- God the Son became incarnate in order to die for us - to atone for sins and restore us to God.
- The biblical God is humble and self-sacrificing.
- As followers of Jesus, we should imitate his humility and keep the unity of the church for which he died.

SMALL GROUP GUIDE

Review

- Review the October 13 study guide (<https://www.famousgod.com/teaching-notes>)
- What were the highlights of the passage or Peter's teaching?
- What questions do you have about the passage or Peter's teaching?
- Use the S.P.E.C.K. method to reflect on and apply the teaching:
 - S: Sins to confess
 - P: Promises to claim
 - E: Examples to follow
 - C: Commands to obey or Christ to rest in
 - K: Knowledge or insights to consider

Discuss

- What does Paul mean by "making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" in Ephesians 4:3? What practical ways have you used to keep unity or repair division in the church?
- What are the signs and sources of unity in Ephesians 4:1-6? How do these relate to Philippians 1:27-2:11? Why is unity a sign of walking worthy of our calling (Ephesians 4:1; Philippians 1:27)?
- What advice would you give to someone caught up in church conflict?

Prayers

- Pray for revival in the American Church and national spiritual awakening.
- Pray for the Cornerstone Church - people, volunteers, staff, leaders.
- Pray for your group.
- Pray for whatever the Lord puts on your mind.