

SCRIPTURES FOR 7/8/07 LIFEGROUP LESSON

Philippians 2:1-11

1If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

5Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death –

even death on a cross! 9Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Galatians 5:19-21

The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.

NOTE TO LEADER: There is a lot of material here. Familiarize yourself with it so you know which stuff you are most comfortable with and what you will cut if you get short on time. Try to keep the lesson/discussion 20-30 minutes in length. Good luck and let me know if you have any questions. - Ed



JOY In the Journey: Not For the Weak

Jeff Browning

NOTE TO LEADERS: All items in *italics* are for your information and not designed to be read aloud.

OPENING:

ICEBREAKER or GET YA THINKIN' QUESTION: _____

OPENING PRAYER NOTES: _____

INTRODUCTION:

Charles Sheldon once wrote a book called, *In His Steps*, from which was derived the slogan, "What Would Jesus Do?" or "WWJD?" In it, an entire church decided to predicate all of their actions with WWJD, and revival followed.

Q: What would be the biggest challenge in this situation? (*agreeing on the answer, following through, etc.*)

Q: If WCC made that same commitment, do you think this would tend to unify or divide us?

APPLICATION:

(*have someone read Philippians 2:1-4*) Paul says his joy will be complete when the church is unified, but outlines four "ifs" that should motivate us to seek that unity.

Q: What are the four if's? (*encouragement in Christ, comfort from His love, fellowship with the Spirit, tenderness / compassion*)

Q: Why should these four if's lead us to desire unity? (*if WE received these from Christ, we should be eager to share*)

When we move toward this unity, we become more and more like Sheldon's church in *In His Steps*.

Q: From v. 2, Jeff delineated four marks of this movement; what were they? (*one mind, one love, one spirit, one purpose*)

Q: What, if anything, is the danger in seeking "one mind" or being "likeminded?" (*groupthink, mass deception ala Hitler or Koresh*)

Q: How do we avoid that danger and still seek unity? (*contend for the faith*)

Being likeminded LEADS TO one love (give the same love you receive), one spirit (selfless harmony), and one purpose (that is above all others, namely, glorifying God).

Verses three and four define the right means to move toward unity, namely avoiding selfish ambition and vain conceit, striving for humility, and subjugating personal interests. It is significant that Galatians 5:19-21 bundles selfish ambition, envy, and jealousy with sexual immorality, fits of rage, and orgies. Apparently, He means it. This is further indicated when Jesus washes the apostles' feet and Peter protests, "No, you shall never wash my feet," but Jesus responds, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." (*have someone read vv. 6-11*)

First, Paul shares how Jesus set the example - not grasping His position, making Himself nothing, and humbling Himself - then he describes God's response - exalting Jesus to the highest place, giving Him a name above all names.

Q: What can we learn from Jesus example in these verses? (*if Jesus was willing to forsake His place in heaven, maybe we shouldn't worry about our personal preferences so much; Christianity is about subjugating our will and relinquishing our rights; reaching our goals should spring from our submission, because if we never submit, we're on our own*)

CONCLUSION:

Humility is hard. Jeff suggests that God can teach you humility the same way He teaches patience - by inserting you into a situation that requires it. Peter, who previously, pridefully refused to let Jesus wash his feet, says in 1 Peter 5:6, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Which do you want to be?

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

GROUP NEEDS: _____ SHUT-IN MINISTRY: _____

WHO'S LEADING...

THIS WEEK: WORSHIP: _____ PRAYER: _____

NEXT WEEK: WORSHIP: _____ PRAYER: _____