

Sermon Based Small Group: Philippians 2:1-11

UN-limited: It's Not About Your Love Language

Introduction

- Folk wisdom distills brilliance into a few words, “When the wheat’s high, you can’t see the fences.” What is your favorite bit of folk wisdom? Why?

Reviewing the Teaching

- What stood out to you as a potentially significant takeaway in this week’s teaching?
 - Why did it stand out?
 - How does it relate to you in your life situation now?
- Today, the challenge is to think. What does phroneo mean?
- Pastor Mel had an interesting outline for his sermon this week.
 - What makes the fences higher, more prominent, than they need to be?
 - How can we allow the wheat to grow higher, more dominant and beautiful, than the fences?
- What is the difference between religion and Jesus?
- What is the difference between a self-referenced and serving-others person? Who raises the height of the fences, or the wheat?
- Discuss Mel’s line “Love and humility begin when someone else’s needs are more important than your own”
- Replacement Therapy
 - Love begins when someone else’s needs are more important than my own
 - “What makes the fences higher than they are ... or need to be? **Me**. And what can I do about it? Replacement therapy ... selfish ambition ... “**What’s in it for me?**” to love; vain conceit ... “What about me?” to “**What is God’s best for you?**”
- How do we follow the pattern of Jesus? What is it? How does thinking (phroneo) fit into this?
- How did you learn about love languages? There are two ways people approach this. This is how to love me or this is how I need to love you. How are you going to love?

Digging Deeper

- Philippians 2 is about the “kenosis”, a greek word for empty. Paul uses two words in this passage to emphasize his point, empty (kenosis) and glory (doxia).
- First he puts the two words together in verse 3. This is translated as “empty conceit” or “vain conceit.” It is literally empty glory. Think about what Paul meant when he put these words together.
- We see this again in verse 7. Look at a couple of words that Paul uses here:
 - Verse 6: equality
 - Verse 6: “to be grasped”, for “His own advantage.”
 - Verse 7: servant
 - Verse 7: made in the likeness of man.
 - How did Jesus empty Himself? What about His glory?
 - Compare this to verse 3.
 - How far did Jesus go when it came to giving up His rights and privileges? How much was enough?
- Where do we see words like glory (exalt) used again (v. 9)? How is this different than empty glory? Who gives glory? Who else is glorified (v. 11)? Some people think that the point of life is to glorify God. Is that true?
- What happens when you give up your rights and privileges? Does Paul suggest that this is a good idea?
- When you put empty and glory together, sin happens. When God separates them, the Gospel happens. Think (phroneo) about that.

Applying it to Life

- People say, “I have enough problems, stress, in my life. Why would I go to church to get more?” What are some reasons that people feel this way?
- Pastor Mel identified two responses:
 - Christians are judgmental and mean.
 - People who go to church are disruptive and negative.
 - Was this true at the church at Philippi? Have you seen examples of it? Are you guilty?
- How can we disagree in a way that isn’t disrespectful?
- Paul’s response to this comes in two verses: Philippians 1:27 and 2:4, 5. Read these again.
 - How does “me thinking” impact this? What words does Paul use that point to “me thinking”?
 - “What’s in it for me?” “I have my rights.” Is thinking like this valid?
 - When you think of love language, do you think of how you want people to love you or how you love people? What does verse 4 say about this?
- Consider making a commitment this week. On three days, read through this passage and journal, write down, what God is saying to you. Think about thinking? Come back and share this next week. There are many ways to change our behaviour. One is to try harder. Another is to let God change the way we think. This exercise is to let God change the way we think (Romans 12:1, 2).
- One more thing to consider. In the church, and in life, if we truly put others ahead of ourselves, who cares for and loves me, or us? How did God care for His Son? What might this look like?

Prayer

- Think about it. Literally, ask God to change the way you think.
- A simple description of love is to look out for other people’s best interests. Pick one, and only one, person and pray that you could love them this week.
- Pray for I cubed. Ask God to direct you to INVITE, INCLUDE or INVEST.