



new life fellowship

Sermon Title: Choosing Joy: Joyful Unity

Speaker: Richard Villodas, Lead Pastor

Scripture: Philippians 2:1-5

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.

Philippians 2:1-5 (NIV)

Sermon Outline:

As we continue reading in the book of Philippians, we see that Paul continues writing from prison to a church that has been incredibly generous to him. Paul is generally pleased with this church, but he recognizes there are certain things he needs to call their attention to in order that they have a greater faithfulness to Jesus Christ. He is appealing to them that they be unified because he knows they are experiencing deep pain and suffering.

Paul's word to us is to work for the unity of God's people. God rejoices and finds great joy when he sees his people are in unity. Humility + Unity = Joy. The fruit of humble unity is joy. Humanity doesn't always play nice. We lack joy in our relationships because we are not humbly unified. We struggle to live life by unity, by love.

The task of the Church is to serve as the best example of what God can do with human community. - Stanley Hauerwas

Paul mention being united six times at the beginning of this chapter of Philippians. **Unity does not mean uniformity.** We can have different opinions but have the same mindset as Jesus Christ. Although we are not able to agree on many things, we can still be working towards unity. We are a divided people – everywhere you look you see division and polarization – in our country, in our families and in our churches. The problem is not that we don't see eye to eye, the problem is that we don't have the mindset of Jesus Christ.

New Life community is particularly vulnerable to disunity because of our diversity. Our church is comprised of people from over 70 different nationalities with very different opinions – pro Trump people, never Trump people, people involved in racial equality and justice and those who don't understand the problem of racial inequality. The call to Christian unity is a call to identifying the forces within us that makes unity so difficult.

To practice unity, you must look at the interest of others. We have a problem with unity because of the internal forces that tell us we need to be right all the time, we need to come out on top or we need to have the last word. As the people of God, we are to value others above ourselves. We are to reject the idea of doing things out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.

Two questions sum up what it means to be a follower of Christ: where are you and where is your brother?

God is other-oriented. God has always gone to great lengths to be united with his people. Jesus Christ made himself nothing and takes on the heart of a servant. God longs to be united with you even though you may be sinning like Satan, haven't been praying or spending time in silence with God. Despite all this and with our good days and our bad days, God is with us.

The invitation for you is to recognize what God has done for us and that He can't get enough of you.

Sermon Summary:

This Sunday, Lead Pastor Richard Villodas, continue in our series through the book of Philippians. Today Pastor Rich will focus on the joy that comes with unity of the mind and spirit.

Sermon Questions:

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, what did community look like? Other family, friends? Or was it isolated? Looking back who in your community could you be thankful for?
3. In your family of origin, what brought people together? What drew them apart?
4. What passages come to mind when thinking about the mindset of Christ? What description does Paul give in this passage?
5. What situations, topics, people in your life steer you away from the mindset of Christ?
6. What would it look like this week to take a day and put aside your wants and desires and focus on someone else? At the same time what does it look like to focus on being united with God this week?
7. ***GoFundMe*** mentioned during the sermon <https://www.gofundme.com/f/tech-for-100-families>