



3/31/26

It is the week of Easter. If I were to go back in time and see what happened each day leading up to Jesus' arrest, His crucifixion, and His resurrection, I would see that He rode into Jerusalem on the prophesied donkey on Sunday. Monday was the day He flipped the tables of the money changers in the temple. Today would have been the day Jesus went to the Mount of Olives and spoke to the withering fig tree... that it would cease to ever bear fruit because it was fruitless. I can't imagine what that week must have been like for Him... knowing that this was the end. His cross means our freedom. That's just amazing.

*Blessings,
Jonna*

Philippians 2:1-13 ~

In Philippians 1, the Apostle Paul spoke of his imprisonment with shockingly little concern for his own comfort. He didn't even mind that some people were preaching the gospel just to make things worse for him. He was just happy that the gospel was being preached! His only concern was that "Christ will be honored in my body whether by life or by death." What causes a man to be so willing to face suffering as a privilege? The gospel. Jesus suffered for me so that any suffering I face does not even compare with what He endured for me, and the hope of eternity I have waiting for me.

The gospel is not only meant to give me eternal life. It's meant to change the way I live my life here on earth... the way I view this life and the people in it. Paul's words in Philippians 2:1-13 give me that gospel mindset.

Vs. 1-2 ~ "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."

"So"... otherwise known as "therefore." What is this referring to? The fact that it has been "granted to me not only to believe in Christ but ALSO to suffer for His sake." That's hard.

What do I need in order to view suffering like that? I need His encouragement. Romans 15:5 says that He is "the God of encouragement." Jesus gave so much encouragement in His three years of ministry. "Come to Me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest... Come to Me, everyone who is thirsty, and out of your heart will flow streams of living water... This is My body, broken for you." I HAVE His encouragement.

I need the comfort of His love. Do I have it? Yes. I don't think I could even count all the scriptures that speak of His comfort... His compassion... His affection for me... His love. Psalm 103 alone speaks over and over of His absolute, undying love. John 3:16 says He loves me so much that He sent His Son to die for me. Romans 8 tells me nothing can separate me from His love. I HAVE the comfort of His love.

I need fellowship with the Holy Spirit. He's the one who transforms me and leads me into all truth. He's the one who gives me freedom. He's the one who gives me the power to walk in truth. He's the one who helps me overcome my own flesh that is hostile to God. Do I have fellowship with the Spirit? Absolutely yes... at all times. Ephesians 1:13-14 tells me that I have been sealed by the Holy Spirit as a guarantee that I belong to Jesus and the Father. The Holy Spirit is ALWAYS reminding my spirit that I've been adopted, and I belong to the Father as His child now. He is ALWAYS helping me in my weakness. I HAVE fellowship with the Holy Spirit!

I need God's affection and compassion. Do I have it? Absolutely yes. Even in Hosea 2 when God spoke of the adultery of a woman named Gomer who sold herself into prostitution and God used her as an example of the adultery of His people, God said in Hosea 2:14, "Therefore, behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness, and speak tenderly to her." God is tender in calling back those who rebel against Him! I don't think I could count all the scriptures that speak of His compassion. He even says in Hebrews 4:15 that He sympathizes with my weaknesses. I HAVE His affection and compassion.

In light of all I have from Him, what does He ask of me? He wants me to think like He thinks... with His mindset... His love... not just toward Him but toward all the other believers in Christ. The genuineness of my gratitude for the gospel and my love for God will be displayed in how I treat other people... whether they're a stranger, a friend, someone who's opposed to me, a family member, or even my husband. Is the gospel important enough to me that I'll let it change my view of God, myself, and others to align with the way God thinks? O Lord, please make it so!

Vs. 3-4 ~ "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."

Well... how far does this unity of mind go toward others? It affects my motivation. My motivation cannot be about my own self worth, self protection, self satisfaction, self rule, SELF. God calls me to lay down selfish ambition and arrogance. Unity cannot exist if I'm all

about self and if I'm stuck in pride... or shame. Arrogance and shame are two sides of the same coin of pride. Arrogance says, "I'm awesome." Shame says, "I SHOULD be awesome and I'm not." In both cases the focus is on ME. God calls me to humility, even to the point that I put the welfare of others before my own. That kind of thinking is foreign to the culture of this world. But it is very much the thinking of my Savior who has all rights to be arrogant but isn't.

Vs. 5-8 ~ "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

What is the mindset of Jesus? Humility. Actually, that's His heart, too. Jesus only described His heart in one place, Matthew 11:29. He said, "I am gentle and humble in heart." If Jesus, who holds the universe together by the word of His power, who created the heavens and the earth, who had the power to rise from the dead, is humble... how could I possibly think that I have any reason to be proud? I am breathing because He gives me breath.

Jesus EMPTIED Himself. He was on His throne in heaven. Before the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit created the world, they knew we would choose self over Him. So they put the plan in place that Jesus would leave His throne in heaven where He was worshiped without interruption... and give up His majesty and glory and beauty, and humble Himself to the point of death... and not just any death... but the lowest, most humiliating form of death at that time... the cross.

Jesus took the form of a servant, a man. That's what I am... a servant. I am not ever in control or on a throne. I may be deceived into believing I have control or authority or power, but that's just a lie. I am either a servant of the Lord or of the evil one. That is indisputable and will be proven to all who choose not to acknowledge the truth. Jesus became a servant so that the Father could "deliver me from the domain of darkness and transfer me to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom I have redemption, the forgiveness of sins" Colossians 1:13-14). By HIS wounds, I am healed.

Is that a good enough reason to think like He thinks? O Lord, it is! But there's more reason even still!

Vs. 9-11 ~ "Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Jesus IS alive! He is on His throne. His kingdom rules over all. James 4:10 says, "Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you." I only have to look at Jesus as my example to see that this is true. Jesus humbled Himself to death... THEREFORE... God highly exalted Him. His name IS above every name. And at His name EVERY knee will bow... EVERY knee... not

just the knees who choose to. In heaven and on earth and under earth there will be one confession... JESUS CHRIST IS LORD. Some will confess in absolute worship and some will confess in absolute resentment. But ALL will confess. This is what glorifies the Father... to see His Son worshiped.

The unity and oneness that God wants with His people is simply an extension of the unity He has within the Godhead... Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Three distinct persons, but one God. I think in the physical so much that this hard to grasp. But Father, Son, and Spirit are so unified that they don't disagree in even one teeny tiny issue. There's never a time they peacefully argue. They are absolute love, absolute righteousness, absolute holiness, absolute truth. How can there be any disagreement among the Godhead that together is absolutely wise and absolutely merciful and absolutely gracious and absolutely understanding of all facets of all things? This is the oneness He wants His image bearers to have. How do I do that??? I won't do it perfectly this side of heaven, but the more I center my life on Him, the more I will pursue unity and peace with others REGARDLESS OF HOW THEY TREAT ME. I will love them BECAUSE JESUS LOVES ME.

Instead of being resentful or angry when someone isn't following God's plan, I will grieve and pray for them. Instead of lashing out and self protecting, I will be gentle and kind. I can't MAKE this to be true in myself. HOW does this happen? Vs. 12-13 tell me how.

Vs. 12-13 ~ "Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure."

I love how Paul calls these believers "my beloved". John, James, and Peter do as well. This is what happens when believers have the mind of Christ. Over any other view, we see our brothers and sisters in Christ as beloved. O Lord, please grow my heart to be like Yours!!!

Therefore, in light of who Jesus is and what He's done for me... work out my own salvation with fear and trembling. How do I do that? First of all, it doesn't say "Work FOR your salvation", it says "Work OUT your salvation." Work toward the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus... to have the mindset of Christ.

Now, do this with fear and trembling. What is opposite of that? In this context, it's pride and indifference. I won't do anything about my salvation if I'm proud and indifferent. I'm called to work out my salvation... to have the mindset of Jesus that humbly pursues unity and peace with others... in reverence and awe of a God who would sacrifice Himself for my salvation. Don't be arrogant as though God owes me. He doesn't. That's "fear." What's trembling? It's understanding that I do NOT have the power to make any of this happen in my own strength. That should cause me to tremble. The truth is, if I'm NOT allowing God to do this work in my life, I'm a sitting duck for the schemes of the devil. He is not afraid of me, but he is TERRIFIED of my Father, my Savior, and my Sanctifier. Stay close to God in reverent worship (that's what the fear of the Lord is) with my eyes confidently and firmly fixed on Jesus.

For... because... it is GOD who works IN me. I work OUT my salvation as I obediently keep my eyes fixed on Jesus... and while I do that, He works IN me to transform me to be like Jesus. As God works IN me because of my dependence on Him, His desires become my desires. His will becomes my will. This is what pleases Him. Why? Because it is when His will becomes my will that I am more and more holy, full of joy and peace and hope, and completely one with Him and the body of Christ.

The deception of my flesh is to make me think that being about SELF is what will satisfy me. It never will. It makes me falsely believe I have power while it crushes me to the core. Every good and perfect gift is from God alone (James 1:16-17).

So Lord, I will fix my eyes on You. I will remember the gospel. Let my heart be like the words of the poem written by Amy Carmichael...

"And shall I pray Thee change THY will, my Father,

Until it be according to MINE?

But, NO, Lord, NO, that shall NEVER be, rather

I pray Thee blend my human will with Thine.

O Lord, not My will be done... YOUR will be done... and let my will be ONLY to obey Yours.

I pray Romans 15:5-6 will be my heart's desire and prayer every day of my life... This is my life's prayer first for my marriage, and then for all other relationships in Christ...

"May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." Why? Because YOU are my encouragement. YOU are my comfort of love. YOU have given me fellowship with the Spirit. YOUR affection and compassion for me never end. I love you and others, and humbly pursue unity, because You first loved and humbly pursued me. Praise Your name.