



**PRESTON
MEADOW**
LUTHERAN CHURCH

Sunday Morning Grow Groups

September 27, 2020

God Supplies Sermon Series

- Good day and welcome! We continue to express our gratitude for your joyful generosity in this time. The extra giving by the congregation has allowed us to do many exciting things for those in need in our community -- from buying items for teachers from their back to school wish lists to helping feed families in Haiti suffering from extreme poverty. You are making a big difference in this time! Thank you!
 - Lots of things continue to happen around the church. Make sure you are receiving Pastor Paul's weekly email by emailing communications@pmlc.org to get on the list!
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Getting to Know You

(spend about 10 minutes here)

Building personal connections is a key component of Grow Groups, and these questions will help foster deeper connections.

- *The weather is turning cooler, and the daylight is shortening -- what is one of your favorite traditions to celebrate the arrival of fall? Are you a pumpkin spice person? Searching for new soup/chili recipes to make? (Pastor Paul has an award winning one to share with you :) Getting the fall decorations out?*
 - *What's a favorite Christian hymn/song of yours that brings you comfort?*
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Theme: Humble yourselves

We are in week three of our fall sermon series, "God Supplies." It's an in-depth look at the Letter to the Philippians, one of the most encouraging pieces of correspondence in the New Testament. We take our theme from Phil 4:19, "My God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus."

In last week's sermon, Pastor Kate helped us understand that living in a manner worthy of the gospel involved "showing up" for one another. Just as Jesus shows up for us, so we show up for those in need in our lives.

Today we start chapter two of Philippians, and we see the Apostle Paul develop a theme that he reinforces a few different ways. As he continues encouraging the Philippians he begins to focus on the theme of *unity within the community*.

He was acutely aware that different personalities with different backgrounds were mixing within the new community called the church, and this called for special attention on helping them see how they could best function as a group together. Whenever two or three gather, there's always a need to recognize dynamics of power at play. Jews and Greeks, women and men, rich and poor were uniting around the news that Jesus was raised and God's kingdom was coming. He saw how other newly formed Christian communities were struggling with how to be unified in mission. Even in the church in Jerusalem, there was disagreement about who could belong (did you have to be circumcised or not?)

The key to finding unity for the Apostle Paul was to consider the needs of others before yours, just as Jesus did.

DIVING INTO THE TEXT

(Reading today is from the Common English Bible)

Philippians 2:1-11

Background: The Apostle Paul continues to develop his theme of unity within the community here. He appeals to people to adopt the same "mind" as Christ, or the "same way of thinking." He uses a special term in verse 7 ... KENOSIS, which means an emptying of oneself, of laying aside your ego and agenda and being fully open to other possibilities beyond yourself. The Apostle Paul believes that Christ was the first person to show us how to be empty of one's will and full of God's will in our lives.

Verses 6-11 read as poetry here, and many scholars believe they were words to an ancient hymn that the early church used. It's interesting to note that Paul pulls this hymn in to make his point about unifying as a community by following the example of Christ.

+++ (Choose a person to read the following passage) +++

1 Therefore, if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort in love, any sharing in the Spirit, any sympathy, **2** complete my joy by thinking the same way, having the same love, being united, and agreeing with each other. **3** Don't do anything for selfish purposes, but with humility think of others as better than yourselves. **4** Instead of each person watching out for their own good, watch out for what is better for others. **5** Adopt the attitude that was in Christ Jesus:

6 Though he was in the form of God,
he did not consider being equal with God something to exploit.

7 But he emptied himself
by taking the form of a slave
and by becoming like human beings.

When he found himself in the form of a human,
even death on a cross.

- 9** Therefore, God highly honored him
and gave him a name above all names,
10 so that at the name of Jesus everyone
in heaven, on earth, and under the earth might bow
that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
11 and every tongue confess
that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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- When you think about our greater culture, how would you rate our ability to be of the same mind? To agree with each other? To be united?
 - What do you think is the cause behind your rating?

- Humility has been described as “thinking of yourself less rather than thinking less of yourself.” What’s the difference?

- Who do you think of when you think of a person who is humble?
 - What traits/qualities do they possess? What lessons did they teach you about life?

- What is the opposite of humble and what might those pitfalls be?
 - Can you be truly humble in our “dog eat dog” world and survive?
 - How was Jesus humble? How does he help you with humility in life?

- What does it mean to think with the “same mind” in a church?
 - Are you allowed to disagree with each other? Can there be “healthy disagreement?”
 - What does unity look like for a church?
 - How are unity and uniformity different?

- This passage gives us some insight at what worship looked like for the early church with the use of this “Christ Hymn” in verses 6-11.
 - What stands out to you from this hymn?
 - How is it similar/different from what we use in our worship today?

- Part of the Protestant Reformation started by Luther and others was a total makeover of our worship life. Luther and several others penned a number of hymns in order to help teach everyone the basics of faith along with deep theological truths about life. They set these words to catchy tunes, like songs you’d sing in a bar at the time.
 - What is a favorite hymn/song of yours and how does it help nurture your faith?

Special Request: *Who would like to facilitate this group next week?*

Closing Prayer.

Spend a few minutes collecting any special prayer requests from participants.

Most gracious God,
 You have made us in your image
 And given us over to one another’s care.
 Hear the prayers of your people,
 That unity may overcome division,
 Hope vanquish despair,
 And joy conquer sorrow;
 Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Connect to Christ!