

Pastor Nathan Schultz
Upper Thames Missionary Church
6th Sunday of Easter

Take Care of Each Other:
A Mother's Day Message
Philippians 2:1-18

INTRO:

The theme this week is "Take Care of Each other" -- all of us are certainly called to do that!

1-4

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, **2** complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. **3** Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. **4** Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

I. UP – The Source of our Unity

Paul is talking about spiritual family here – or what he often calls “being IN CHRIST” – is essentially about the new identity each of us have together when we believe in Jesus and begin living *for* him, in the power of *His Spirit*.

Like any family – a healthy spiritual family must be united – and this looks like “Caring for the interests of others”

Verse 1a

1. It all begins with “Being rooted together in Christ” -

We can fill our lives up with so many goals and projects and activities that it can be hard to focus on one thing. Paul isn't just talking here about one small nuclear family – he's talking about the HUGE family of the church – how much easier is it for all of us to have different focuses, goals, and ideas? This makes having one fixed object, one absolute centre even more important. The scripture is clear here – it begins with Jesus.

Verse 1b

2. Paul knows there is more, though – we are to be “Filled with the love of God” – the love which comforts us all can be nothing other than God's own love – for what love is greater than the love that he had for the world that he would send his only Son?

While we can strive to build up a loving home – we must all recognize that the only love that will truly last in a home is a love that comes from outside in - love that comes from God.

Verse 1c

3. We can all take part in this kind of loving family as we have “fellowship in the Spirit”
This is not an individual effort, but a corporate reality.

We all try to unify our families, make our homes a loving place, and keep everyone held together... but we can't do any of it on our own

-Resisting the Spirit will take you out of unity with your spiritual family

- Walking in the Spirit, submitting to His leading, will bring you into a deeper unity with others than your efforts ever will.

The **Trinity** at work!

Let me show you:

In 2 Cor 14:13 Paul says: 14 May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

-Here he follows essentially the same thought – Christ first (Being in Christ), Love second (Love comes from God- God is love!), The Holy Spirit's fellowship 3rd – commentators notice this and believe it could be one of Paul's common teaching concepts about the triune God that works its way into blessings, lessons, and letters.

– Unity comes from the one God

- consider the perfect unity of the triune God and how He alone can bring us up into perfect Unity, too.

Verse 1d

4. Lastly, All that results in mutual affection and compassion for one another and ultimately – “the bond of unity”:

Unity expressed as being humble and taking care of the needs of others even before your own needs.

Theologian Robert Johnstone: "the unregenerate person, whether simply indifferent to the faith or following a false faith, is proud. Their essence is arrogance against God and also against other people."

-All of us who follow Christ should be careful that we are not living in pride – lest we represent him poorly to those who need to meet him.

while mothers are often a great example of this kind of love in our lives, there is one example that all of us are to look to together: CHRIST!

As Paul points out in the poem/song/creed of vv.5-11

II. IN- Centred on Christ

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,[a] 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,[b] 7 but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant,[c] being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- In this hymn we are reminded of Christ's LOVE in action: he humbled himself to serve and sacrifice himself "for me" and "for you".
- His example is more than just a pattern shown to us – it is a power **given** to us. Because of what he did, we have power to live differently through the Spirit

How should we live, then? This is how Paul re-affirms his call to unity and imitation of Jesus:

Do all things **without grumbling or disputing**,¹⁵ that you may be **blameless and innocent, children** of God without blemish in the *midst of a crooked and twisted generation*, among whom you *shine as lights in the world*,¹⁶ holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.¹⁷ Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all.¹⁸ Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

III. OUT – Living as Lights

- All of us, men and women, young and old, are called to be heavenly lights out there for everyone– anywhere and everywhere - in the dark and ugly places of the world.
- Yet we are called to be more than just a little spot of light –we are to be signs, or beacons of NEW LIFE in a world that is full of death.
- everyone who is in Christ, you and I, are to be signposts of New Creation bound for life - ETERNAL LIFE!

-Paul can rejoice, as he concludes, even in suffering, because it is suffering with purpose. It is showing the glory of God and bringing a benefit to the Philippians and the people around him in prison.

We must remember, that “joy in suffering” in vv. 17-18 is not "delight in feeling badly," rather Paul is saying that that it is an **unshakable confidence that flows from the work Jesus Christ has already done**, as laid out in vv. 5-11.

We can all be confident that no matter how things turn out for us in life, no matter what trials may come our way, we know that Christ has and will be magnified – come what may.