

To KNOW Christ and one another more deeply,
To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
- CG Mission Statement

Worship: Matthew 11:28-30

(Here is a psalm/song to help your group as you worship)

Read Matthew 11:28-30 in a few different translations as a group.

Icebreaker

Describe what happened on the best day of your last week.

Text for Discussion: Philippians 1:27-2:5

Turn in your Bibles and read this passage aloud together.

Aid for Discussion: Sermon Summary

What does a life worthy of the good news of Christ look like? It's easy to look inward when trying to tackle this question, but a worthy life isn't a solitary or private matter. While virtues like humility, gentleness and patience are part of it, the primary mark of a worthy life is a concern for community and a longing for unity in Jesus.

Unity doesn't come easily or automatically, and it's not uncommon for churches to face both internal and external conflict. We will undoubtedly be divided on important issues. But through all of this, we are called to make every effort to be united in Christ. Why? Because it is integral to God's mission. Such trials are opportunities to show we handle conflict differently because of Jesus. And we will reflect His glory through our unity and love for one another (John 13:35).

Unity in the midst of division can only come through humility. Because of Christ, we can place the interests of others ahead of our own (Phil 2:3). A humble heart recognizes our place before God as unworthy, broken people who have been graciously adopted by a loving Father. How we relate to others is therefore a gauge of how we believe God relates to us. Unity among us can only come from humility within us.

We can learn to be humble. It is a choice and a process: Learning to not take offense when others criticize us. Realizing there's nothing to boast of. Letting go of worrying about and protecting our reputation. Instead, we become amazed that God and others could think of us as well as they do and treat us as well as they do. With this mindset, we seek first to understand, then to be understood – placing the interests of others ahead of our own.

Mother Teresa offered these practical steps to help move our hearts toward humility:

Speak as little as possible of one's self.

Mind one's own business. Don't seek to manage other people's affairs.

Avoid curiosity. Curiosity is a mark of pride because it's closely related to gossip. We should be praying for others more than we are talking about them.

Accept contradictions and correction cheerfully.

Pass over the mistakes of others.

Accept insults and injuries. Accept being slighted, forgotten and disliked.

Be kind and gentle, even under provocation.

Choose always the hardest.

Never stand on one's dignity. Humility allows us to admit we may not be seeing things clearly and that we have blind spots.

Jesus models each of these practices. The overriding joy of our Savior was to bring us together into His Father's family. Unity was made possible by His humble sacrifice. And we are called to humbly live in this truth. Our Father has called us by name – out of love, not because we deserved it – and our response is to endeavor to live lives worthy of this good news.

Guiding Question of the Week

(This question is intended as a target for the whole conversation. Do not ask for responses now. It will be repeated later in the study.)

How do these verses show that to “let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ” is not a solitary or private matter?

Questions for Discussion

(Remember it is better to wrestle deeply with two good questions than gloss over many. Sub-bullets are intended for potential follow-up.)

- Compare Philippians 1:27 with Ephesians 4:1-2. How do these verses show that to “let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ” is not a solitary or private matter?
 - What message does Christian unity send to fellow believers? Non-believers? See John 13:34-35.
- What does Paul mean in verse 29, when he says that the Philippians have been granted (graced) with the privilege of not only believing in Christ but also suffering for Him?
 - What does it look like to suffer together for the sake of Christ in our American culture?
- What could the Philippians do to increase Paul's joy (2:2)?
 - Give examples on how we can complete joy in others in the same way?
- According to Phil. 2:3-4, what attitude is the opposite of “selfish ambition” and “vain conceit”?
 - What do we learn from watching the mother of a newborn about selfish ambition and vain conceit?
 - What does it mean to consider someone “better than yourself” (2:3)?
 - If we truly lived like this how would it affect our home life? workplace? social life? city?
- In Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus tells his to learn humility from Him. Define humility. How does Jesus model this for us? See Philippians 2:5-11.
- In what specific ways are you challenged and encouraged by this passage?

Prayer

This week continue to pray Philippians 1:9-11 for leaders, pastors, church staff and the persecuted Christians in the world.

Experiment of the Month

(A suggestion for engagement in following the way of Jesus this week)

Gratitude Journal - Take a few moments at the end of each day to recall where you saw God's gracious activity in your life and thank Him. This is an ancient and simple daily method of helping you call to mind what you have seen, heard, tasted, and touched of God in the day. A Gratitude Journal helps you express thanksgiving to God and increase your capacity for joy as you jot a few things down each day. (There are some gratitude journal apps you may wish to download if you prefer.)

Missional Experiment of the Month:

While at the grocery store over the next few weeks, practice the way of Jesus by thinking of others more highly than yourself, looking not only to your own interests but also the interests of others. Journal your thoughts, observations and feelings. How did this experiment cause you to grow in humility? Share results, insights and learnings with an accountability friend and your community.