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Welcome. Hey, my name is Ryan and I'm one of the pastors around here. We are continuing in our series *Good News*. I've been loving this series. I want you to know it only gets better from here.

Next Sunday our lead pastor, Aaron Brockett, is going to be back to preach. I know I'm excited, and I know he is watching right now. And if you just started with us over the past few weeks, next weekend is one you do not want to miss. He is one of the greatest preachers on the planet, so make sure you get back for that one.

But as far as today goes, this series is *Good News*. In this series we've been looking at what we call a book of the Bible, but it's actually a letter. It's a letter from a guy named Paul to a church in Philippi. It's a personal letter. We're reading someone's mail. To take it a step further, we're actually reading prison mail. This is a letter from Paul while he is in prison to a church in the city of Philippi.

I just want to take a second and talk about how wild that is. This is a part of the Bible. This is God's inspired Word. He could have put it on anything. He could have put it on sheets of gold. It could have been this thing that fell from heaven, but God chose to use a letter from a guy in prison.

I just think that says something about who God is, and the kinds of people he uses, and how God shows up. That's what we're taking on in chapter 2 of this letter. And what we're looking at, what's the wild thing here, is that Paul is in prison. He is facing death, execution, but he is writing an encouragement letter.

He is writing to other people to let them know, "I know what you're thinking. This thing is slowing down. Don't mind these shackles. God is at work and he is doing something. I want to encourage you."

That's what we're going to pick up with in chapter 2 starting in verse 1. Look at what Paul said:

*"Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose."*

So, Paul starts off here in chapter 2 jumping right off into it with what seems like an odd question. Is there any encouragement to follow Jesus? What he is doing, he is not implying that there might not be any encouragement. Instead, he is saying, "If you grant the premise that because you follow Jesus you do receive some things, that there are some benefits from following God, then your life should change."

But, what encouragement is he talking about here? What do they have, and what do we have? Well for starters, we've all been saved regardless of our background, regardless of our family tree, regardless of our criminal ties, regardless if we are a man or a woman, regardless of where we come from or what we've done, he says this:

“The encouragement you have in Jesus,” remember this, “that God met you right where you are and saved you by grace.” Meaning, it had nothing to do with you and everything to do with God. He said, “We can start there.” That’s the encouragement.

Just a side note. If you’re looking for the difference between Christianity and everything else, it is right there. It’s that we are met with grace, with grace. That before we do anything we are loved and encouraged. And our lives are a response to that.

Everything else says, “If you do this, then maybe one day this could be true.”

But God says, “No, no, no be encouraged. Your life is changed because I met you with my lifechanging love and grace.”

So, that’s the way Paul kicks things off, with these rhetorical questions of, “Is there? And if there is, your life should change right where you are.” He kind of gives us a few things. If this is true, if Jesus has changed your life, then these things will be true about you. He lists a few of them. And I just want to grab two:

He says, “You’ll have fellowship together in the Spirit, and you will have one mind.”

Now, these two things, if you have them together, they create a beautiful culture. They create the type of community that the world has never seen. It is irresistible, like the closeness, the love, and the encouragement. If you have these two things, fellowship together with the Spirit and one mind.

But let’s break it down here because these are kind of big phrases. You may be like, “I don’t even know what that means,” and that is completely okay. First he says, “We have fellowship together in the Spirit.”

So, what does that mean? What he is saying here is we have one Spirit, that same Spirit that saved us no matter where we were, it brought us together. Now that we have that, it creates the bedrock and is the foundation for us to have the best and closest relationships.

Because, maybe you know this, I know this, making friends is pretty hard. Especially the older you get. You often get pushed into a room and sit next to someone, or maybe your wife pushes you into a relationship with another guy because you have a shared interest.

“You guys both like sports. You’ll be best friends.” So, they just kind of scoot you into a room together and you are just standing there like, “How is it going, man?”

“Good.”

“Do you like sports?”

“Yeah. You?”

“Yeah, I like sports.”

“Do you like ESPN?”

“Yeah. I like ESPN.”

“Do you like ESPN2?”

There is nowhere to go. It just feels like you are trying to create friendship out of nothing. But Paul says, “Because of the fellowship we have together in the Spirit, there becomes this

connector that is stronger than anything else.” Because there is something that becomes truer than anything else.

More than your background. More than your ethnicity. More than where you were raised. More than any of that. Because you were saved by grace, now, the truest thing about you is that you are son of God. You are a daughter of God.

Because of that, that will create relationships more than anything else can. That will bring people together from all over the place, together in a place where nothing can separate these relationships. Because this fellowship we have, it not only creates relationships but the Spirit within us fights for unity. It begins to work in such a way that we can't live the way we used to. Relationships matter just too much.

You see this come up all the time, especially with people who recently started following God. They will come in, and they'll be celebrating from the weekend. “Hey, this is crazy. This week I was about to explode. I got triggered and was about to haul off on somebody. And then, it was like I felt this conviction come over me. I went from being angry to I had this peace. I didn't respond the way that I once would have responded. I was slower. It is almost like an out-of-body experience.”

What is that? That is the Spirit of God bringing unity to relationships.

Or maybe you're pulling up your phone and you are about to fire off a text message. Those three dots are just rolling, and you are about to destroy them. As you are working through that, you start reading what you are saying and feel this deep conviction come over you. And those three dots disappear.

Instead, you send a message and say, “Hey, can we just sit down and talk?”

What is that? That's the fellowship in the Spirit. It is bringing all people together, and it is keeping them there. We would be united in this Spirit.

And then he says, “And you'll have one mind. You'll have one mind.”

What is that? This line of thinking isn't new to Paul. It's actually a line that comes from a different part of the Bible in 1 Chronicles. He is re-using it. Rappers, we call this recycling. He is taking a line and using it again.

So, where did this line come from? To have one mind? We see it back in 1 Chronicles with David. David, he was not king yet, but all of the people were coming together to make David king. They had one mind to see David become king. That's what they were all locked in on. That's what they were all trying to do, to make sure it happened.

Now, here and with us, we have the same thing. But our one mind is connected to something a little bit different. Our one mind, our deepest desire, our one desire, is to make Jesus king.

The desire to make Jesus King.

The desire for him to be not only the king over my life, but for him to be known, and for him to be the king of everyone else around me. We have this one mind.

So, in these few quick things, Paul answers the question of who we are, our identity, that the most true thing about us is that we are sons and daughters of God. That brings us together. And that we actually have one mind. Our deepest desire, the thing that's uniting us and keeping us rowing in the same direction, is this desire to make Jesus King.

And because you have this love, because you have this encouragement, your heart should be tender. It should be compassionate. You should have unity with everyone. And no one should be able to steal what God has created.

What happens when that is true? What happens when we have fellowship together with the Spirit? What happens when we have one mind? We begin to see Jesus in everyone.

God, let me see you in everyone.

Think about this. If we are waking up with fellowship in the Spirit, every day we are reminded of how we got there. We are reminded that we are connected to God because we are saved by grace, meaning he had to die for me to have this relationship.

And that immediately brings me to the space where he died for all of humanity. So, now when I look out I don't see people as what they can do for me, or how they are hurting me, or how they are slowing me down. But the first thing I see about them is they are a son of God, that they are a daughter of God.

So, when I am in the line getting my coffee, when I see the barista, is the first thought I have, "They are really slowing me down today. They are making me five minutes late. I wish they would move a little bit faster."

No, the first thing I see about them is they are a loved child of God and are worth dying for. That immediately changes how I approach them. That immediately changes how we interact.

When I go to work, when I go home, the homeless person I walk by on the street—now, everyone is seen through a different lens because of this fellowship in the Spirit, because of this one mind.

I just want to give us a prayer we can wake up with every single day. This is a prayer God will answer.

*God, let me see you in everyone. God, let me see you in everyone.*

Let me tell you, this is a life-changing prayer. I think a lot of times we get caught up in asking for different things or wanting this or wanting to change a circumstance. The point of prayer is not to get a list of things we want, it's to align our hearts, align our one mind to the mind of God. To give us the eyes of God.

"God, let me see you in everyone. From the time I wake up to when I close these eyes, let me see everyone as someone you died for."

You see, what this prayer does is it immediately embeds humility into our lives. It immediately brings me to this spot of humility, knowing God had to die for me, and that God died for everyone. That I needed grace, and everyone needs grace. So, it starts you in a place of humility.

And this is what Paul is after here. He is trying to get us to this place to humble ourselves. I love what he does next, in the next few verses. He says, "You have all this encouragement. You have all this love." And what now? How do I practically live like that is true?

So, in the next few verses he follows the same pattern. He'll say, "Hey, don't do this, instead do this. Don't do this, instead do this." Take a look at this in verse 3:

*"Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too."*

So, Paul kicks things off here, and he says, "Don't be selfish." I love the way he sets this up, because he throws it out there. And if you've read that or heard that before you are like, "Don't be selfish," cool. That's not me. I'm not a selfish person. I'm pretty generous.

And we can slide past that jab, but then I feel like he comes over the top with a haymaker. He says, "Don't try to impress others." I don't know about you, but if you met me you might not say, "Ryan is a selfish person," but I do struggle with trying to impress other people.

And actually, trying to impress other people allows me to camouflage my desires. It allows me to still make myself feel good and to be selfish at the same time. That's why I love the beauty in this. He's like, "Don't be selfish, and don't try to impress others." Anyone else struggle with this?

I know for me, I can still remember my first date with my now wife. The first date was a blind date situation. I got there first, it was a group of us coming together. I'm standing there and I'm nervous and worried. "What am I going to say?"

And, then I see something. I see something that's going to change the night for me. I just found something that's going to give me the edge. It's going to give me a leg up. It's right over there on the corner. It's a pop-a-shot basketball game. Alright?

Maybe you know what I'm talking about. This is a game for children where the balls come down and you try to make as many as you can in a short amount of time.

Now, I will say this, I am ridiculously good at this game. So, I see my opportunity, I walk over to the machine, I put my money in, and I start playing. I'm in the zone. I'm shooting my shot.

And then, my buddy comes up to me and says, "Hey, they just got here. She is walking through the door." Now, in this moment any normal adult would have said, "I'm going to stop playing this children's game and turn and meet this beautiful woman."

I did neither of those things. I kept playing. In my mind I thought, “If she walks in and she can see me in motion, if she can see me getting 100 points in this game that doesn’t matter, I will impress her.” And somehow, I would seal the deal before the night even got started. She would want to be with me forever, if she could only see me play this game.

Now, was that true? No. What really happened? I kept playing, she walked over, and I left her there standing uncomfortable. I didn’t acknowledge her. I did what was best for me, even at the expense of her. I wanted to impress her, though.

This idea, this wanting to impress other people, is built into our culture. This achievement mindset, that I have to outdo the other person, that I have to perform so other people will think I’m worthy.

It’s all in our culture. I’ve been a part of it. Where you have to grab the spotlight. You have to put it on me. You have to beat your chest and say, “This is why I am the best. This is why I am a leader. This is why I’m a beast. And this is why I will push you off the ladder just so I can climb to get to the top.”

But what Paul says here is, “Don’t live like that. Don’t live to be selfish. Don’t live to try to impress other people.” Do you see how they are connected? That being selfish and trying to impress others are both fueled by pride to the point that even the good things we do, being done for the wrong reasons, will never bring us fulfillment.

If doing what’s best for me will never leave me fulfilled, what is there? It’s hard, like I said, because it’s reinforced in our culture.

But what Paul is saying is, “For you? Because you’ve been loved, because you’re worth dying for, you can start in a different place. You can start in a place of humility. So, for you, be humble. Don’t look to the interest of just yourself. Look to the interest of others.”

Here is something to hold onto, kind of a filter to put things through as you go through your days.

If I live to Impress others—the benefit is mine.

If I live for the Interests of others—the benefit is ours.

Here’s what I mean by that. If I live to impress others—the benefit is mine. If I live to impress others, it’s a treadmill I can never get off of. It’s only going to go faster and faster. I’m only going to feel like I have to work harder and do better and be smarter to impress the other people.

And when I don’t get the affirmation from them, it will bring me down. The thing I am looking at to fulfill me is the thing that destroys and steals all of my joy and love.



But, if I live for the interest of others—the benefit is ours. Meaning, I not only benefit from living for the interest of others, but obviously the people I'm looking to, that I'm placing their needs and wants above my own, they benefit as well.

If we want to live for the interest of others, for them to be directly benefited, we will constantly look and say, "How can I serve? How can I bring the spotlight off me?"

Here is the thing. It benefits us. We don't serve because it's the nice thing to do. We don't just place people's interest above our own because it's the nice thing or the good thing to do. It's because we are called to do it, because in doing so it provides the best life possible.

Scripture is filled with it. For us to help others actually creates the best life for us. It's what makes us look more like Jesus. It's better for us to give than to receive. That those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

The Bible even goes as far as to say, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." He gives grace to the humble. And being humble not only brings us to this place where we have a better relationship with God, but we have a better relationship with one another.

You see, God doesn't need us to be a super hero. God doesn't need us to be super-talented to use us. What God needs is for us to be humble, to start our day with, "God, show yourself in every single situation, in the everyday, the ordinary rhythms of my life. God, help me to place the interest of others before my own."

God will answer that prayer.

And we've had so many people in this season do just that. To step outside of themselves and look to the interest of others. Like Kathy, Kathy recently asked her group to provide lunches for Wheeler Mission.

And Sarah, a woman in her group, said this about Kathy. She said, "Kathy wasn't afraid to help. And she wasn't afraid to ask others to help. She encouraged us in a gentle, loving way to stand up in faith and to serve during a scary time. This brought our group together and blessed our families by creating an avenue for us to serve."

This is incredible. Look at that last line. What did it do? Kathy putting the interest of others before her own obviously helped the people at Wheeler Mission. But look at that line. "It brought our group together. It brought unity with in our group. And it blessed our families." It blessed our families. The benefits were ours. When we started at this place of humility, the benefit just kept going.

Kathy, can we celebrate you right now? Thank you for modeling humility. Thank you for not being afraid to serve. Thank you for stepping outside of yourself.

Celebrating is the best, isn't it? I love celebrating. I love being a part of celebrations. I love getting to see celebrations. And my favorite celebration, hands down, is the celebration that happens during a basketball game with the players on the bench.

Maybe you know what I'm talking about, maybe you don't. You can google it later. You can spend easily three hours of your life watching it. But, you have these people who are on the bench, who are not getting into the game unless something goes horribly wrong, unless they are up by 50, or everyone fouls out. Something has to happen for them to get in the game.

And yet, they are the most energetic. They are celebrating the people on the court. They are singing, dancing, eating fake bowls of cereal. They are having the time of their life in a spot where they could easily be sitting down with a towel over their heads thinking of how messed up this is. Thinking they should be the ones in the game. Thinking they are better than the ones out there.

And yet, they found it in themselves, they have the humility to stand up and celebrate other people. I think there is something really powerful there for all of us. Even when we don't have a move to make, we can always stand in humility. Even when we don't have a move to make, we can always stand in humility.

A lot of times we spend our lives waiting, trying to impress others so our name can be called. So, we can check in and get to the season we want to be in. But instead, we can be in this spot and say, "I'm stationed here. God, show me who you are. Show yourself in everyone and every interaction. I am here in humility. I am going to celebrate everyone who comes my way."

This week I just want to challenge us with that. I want to challenge us every day. To wake up with that prayer. God, help me to see you in everyone. Here is the challenge:

Clap for other people

Here is what I mean by that. Celebrate other people. Don't let a day go by this week without celebrating someone. I'm telling you, if you wake up praying asking God to show you, asking God to humble you, you will have an opportunity to celebrate people left and right.

What would it look like if that was the place where we started? And I know that's going to be harder for some of us than others. Maybe your tendency is more on the other side.

For example, when we just read the story of Kathy and how she was serving other people, how she was making lunches for people at Wheeler Mission, maybe, I don't know, maybe the first thought you had was, "Must be nice, Kathy. It must be nice to have time on your hands to make lunches for people. I wish I could, but I'm not like Kathy." And immediately your heart began to change.

But what if, in that moment, instead of, "It must be nice," it shifted to, "Kathy, let me celebrate you. Kathy, what you are doing is incredible. Let me send you a message and let you know that you inspire me."

It's limitless. It's not like by celebrating someone else it somehow points out what we're not doing. No. That when we celebrate someone, it actually brings encouragement their way, love their way. And we can do this non-stop.



This week, when you go to work, just go in a place that, “I’m going to celebrate. I’m going to be clapping for people,” and you will find a reason. Show up. Just show up and you get the email. Just fire back, “Jerome, stop it. That excel spreadsheet was incredible. You are a beast.”

Or after a meeting go up to Monica and be like, “Oh my gosh, the way you led that meeting, you inspired me, you moved me. I love when you do this.”

You can find a reason to celebrate. You can find a reason to clap for other people. Even for Eric, who sits in the cubicle behind you who does who knows what? Find a reason to celebrate him, “Eric, I love how you spin in your chair like that. I love the way you take an extra 15…” No, I’m just kidding.

But, as we go through our days we can find a reason to celebrate people. On social media, the place that has created and is a natural place for comparison, you begin to see things and your immediate thought is, “It must be nice.” But we could end the comparison game with humility.

When we see something, even if, and especially if, in that moment our heart goes, “I don’t like that,” to stop and say, “No. I’m going to celebrate that. That’s incredible that they get a family vacation. That’s incredible that they are serving the way they are. That’s incredible that their daughter got straight A’s. I’m going to let them know, I’m going to clap for them.”

At the dinner table, to sit down this week and, not prompted, just to look at your friends, your family, your kids, and just say what’s on your heart. To look for a reason to celebrate them, “I love when you do this.” “I love the way you did that.” “I love the way you treat him.”

You see, I’ve lived long enough to know that very rarely do we share what is on our heart. Very rarely do we let people hear those words. I just don’t want to be in a place where I’m sharing my encouragement at a funeral. Use those words while they can still hear them. Send those flowers while they can still smell them.

Right now, as we go through our lives, we get to create this environment. We get to go, and everywhere we go we get to celebrate people, to clap for them. To infuse this irresistible culture. You know the Bible actually calls us to outdo one another in this. To actually make this a competition out of this. Every day we should be looking for opportunities to outdo one another and honor.

This is what Philippians 2 is all about, to create a culture of love, to create a culture of encouragement, to have fellowship, friendship. To have one mind and to be unified. To not look out for ourselves, but to look out for others. Not to impress them, but to make an impact on them for their benefit and not just ours.

We get to create that.

We get to create it. I recently heard an interview with a musician. They were asking him, “How did he begin to create his music?” and I thought his answer was so profound. He said, “I had a sound in my mind that I longed to hear. Everywhere I looked, I looked into the current music, I

looked at old music, and I couldn't hear it anywhere. So, I sat down and began to create the music I longed to hear."

You see, this is the same thing for us. We get to create a culture of humility. We get to create a culture of love, compassion, and unity. We get to create it by stepping in and looking to the interest of others, by stepping in and celebrating other people, by stepping in and being the people we always needed when we were younger. By stepping in and being the people we need right now.

That we get to humbly step into all these relationships and infuse this heavenly culture, that we can have one mind, and that we can have fellowship together in the Spirit—this is the Good News.

We have fellowship in the Spirit. This not only connects us to one another, like we were talking about. It not only creates the best friendships we could ever ask for, it not only fights for unity, but fellowship with the Spirit connects us to God. It connects us to Jesus, the ultimate example of humility.

Look at verse 5:

*"You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."*

In this moment right now, can we get all our clapping hands ready for all the celebrating we're going to do this week with other people? Can we celebrate Jesus, the most humble example we have?

Jesus, who left heaven, humbled himself to earth, that he would go through a human experience, live perfectly, and then go to a cross, die a criminal's death, for whom? For us. For our benefit.

But he would go as far as to say it was not just for our benefit. He benefited from it, because he wanted us. To die for us, to take away our sins, to save us through grace, that was the only way he could have us for eternity. So, that's exactly what he did.

So, right now, wherever you're watching from, every nation, every tongue, everyone, can we celebrate that Jesus is King? Us coming together with one mind, making that true. One mind, saying that out loud. That this is what we live for, this is why we are humble.

And then here it is, what is so powerful here, it says, "We must have the same mindset as Christ Jesus." And what this is, this is so much more than WWJD— what would Jesus do? No,

no, it says, “What we must have, in the Good News, is that Jesus, the same Spirit who unites us together; the same Spirit who fights for unity, this same Spirit is the same Spirit who raised Jesus from the grave.” It is a powerful Spirit.

It’s the Spirit that allows us to put to death our selfish nature. It’s the power. It’s the mindset that allows us to see others as more important than ourselves. It’s the power within us that allows us to celebrate other people even when it’s hard.

That we have all of this, the same power that raised Jesus from the grave is the same power that lives in you. This is the fellowship of the Spirit, that we can go in love, that we can create a community, we can have relationships that are truly life-changing, we can be encouraging.

We can have tender and compassionate hearts so that we can be in a place with people and share the most loving thing we can possibly share about this king, this King Jesus, who humbled himself and gave up everything, and says you’re worth dying for, “He places you as a son or daughter. He’s someone who has a plan for your life, someone who would do anything so he could have you for all of eternity.” This is the most loving thing we can do.

And God says if we have faith through grace, we get that power, and we live our lives with that desire, to make him king, to share his gospel, to share the Good News, look at what it says in verse 15:

*“For God is working in you...”* right now, even if you don’t feel like it, right now, even if you’re in a tough season as all of us are, God is working in you. Giving you what? *“Giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases Him.”*

If we can humble ourselves to come to this place to make our lives about furthering his kingdom, about making his name known, then he will give us the desires of our heart. Then he will give us a power that cannot be shaken.

That’s what I want to do right now—pray. Pray that our minds could be locked in, that we would be of one mind, that we could have friendship with the Spirit and we could go from here and infuse that into everywhere we go.

So, right now, wherever you are, will you pray that with me? That through his Spirit we would have power and one mind.

God, we thank you so much for today. God, we thank you for the unity we have in your Spirit. We thank you for the relationships, the strength. God, we thank you for the humility.

God, we just pray right now, give us one mind. Take away any idea that we are the king, or that we are the queen, or that we are living to impress others or build our own kingdom.

God, right now, we ask to come together under your Spirit with one mind for unity, for your glory, for your benefit. God, let us go from here, and as we go I pray right now for the empowerment of your Spirit.

Give us the power, the same power that raised Jesus from the grave. Give us that. The desire, the same desire, that would make Jesus leave heaven, go to a cross, and humbly die a criminal's death. God, give us those desires. Take away everything else.

God, we look to you in everything and we see you in everything. Let that be what shakes us as we learn to follow you better.

God, it's in your perfect name we pray. Amen.