

## **THE CORE: Loving Others Sacrificially<sup>i</sup>** **Philippians 2:1-8**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Good morning, Church Family! It is so good to see you this morning. For those of you that are our guests, we are especially grateful to have you join us today. We'd love to connect with you. There are a couple of ways you can help us do that. One, feel free to text, anytime, the keyword TBCMP, which stands for Trinity Baptist Church Mt. Pleasant to the number 94-000. When you do, you'll be sent a link where you can share with us basic contact information. I will then look forward to following up with you this coming week. Or another way you can connect with us is by stopping by our information center located in the main lobby area under the banner "Hope is Here." We have a gift there for you as a way to say thanks for joining us today. It is the highlight of my week to visit with those of you that are our guests. We are thrilled you have joined us today.

### **VETERANS DAY:**

Yesterday marked Veterans Day for 2023. It is a day set aside each year to honor those who have served in our armed forces. As believers in Jesus, we are especially grateful for those that have served in our military. Personally, I am thankful for my dad as he was drafted during Vietnam. The veterans that live among us are folks that have sacrificed and fought to preserve our freedoms, the freedom to worship God. So, this morning, I'd like to take a moment and honor and celebrate the veterans that are with us today. If you have served, in any capacity, in our country's armed forces, would you please stand so that we can recognize you? Thank you for your service.

### **SERIES OVERVIEW:**

We are in the middle of a short teaching series called The Core. We are looking at the core values of our church. Core values of any organization are the things that drive the people to accomplish the mission. As a church, Jesus has given us a mission to make disciples that make disciples. We have a God-given vision to become a gospel-centered community redeeming brokenness through hope in Jesus Christ. We strategize to accomplish that vision by trusting Jesus through worship, transforming lives in community, and telling others by living on mission. So far, we have looked at the core values that drives all that being sharing the gospel relentlessly and modeling Jesus faithfully. Today, we will be looking at loving others sacrificially.

I want to invite you to take your Bibles and turn with me to Philippians chapter 2. I hope you bring your Bibles to church each week as we dive into them. If you do not have a Bible, there is a Bible located in the seat rack on a chair in front of you. Please take that Bible as yours. Those were donated to us, so we'd love to pass that along to you. We will be studying Philippians 2 and key in on verses 1 through 8 this morning. We are going to look at the encouragement to love others sacrificially, the elements, and the example. That will be our outline this morning.

### **OPENING ILLUSTRATION: Core Values Unify<sup>ii</sup>**

You know, it is important for us to talk through the core values of our church often. It is extremely unifying to do so. I brought an object illustration to kind of communicate the power of talking through such things as a church.

This is a bag of marbles. There are many different marbles with differing colors and sizes. They are all held closely together. But they are contained by the bag. If the bag is ripped or opened, the marbles spill out in all directions because there is nothing internal that holds them together.

In this bag is a magnet with bolts. When you take this out of the bag, the bolts remain connected together. That is due to the nature of the bolts and the energy that is at work in and through them.

In much the same way, understanding and operating according to our mission, vision, strategy and values, is an energizing force that unites us all together. We also have something at work within us, as believers in Christ, The Holy Spirit, that unites us in love and direction.

It has been God's desire, since the birth of the Church, to unite a diverse people around key purposes and tenants. To carry our His mission in the world. We are to love one another and love others. As a result, we must allow these values to drive everything we do. Because we all have differing preferences. But we all share the same mission, vision, strategy and values. We all share the same love that is in Jesus. And that is what unites us and drives us to see God work in and through us.

You know, sometimes loving others sacrificially is hard. Sometimes people take advantage of that kind of quality. Sometimes people take for granted that display of love. But I think we are never more like Jesus than when we love

others sacrificially. So, as a church, we are committed to loving each other and loving all people for the sake of The Gospel. Yes, we will hold unwavering to the truths of God's Word, but we are called to love people in a way that demonstrates God's great love for them. We are an extension of God's love.

### **MESSAGE:**

So, with that background, let's jump into studying our passage this morning. Let's begin by looking at...

#### **1) The Encouragement to Loving Others.**

When we talk about the encouragement to loving others, we are talking about what ought to motivate us to live out this core value. Let's look at Philippians 2, verses 1 and 2. Read along in your copy of God's Word.

***1** 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.***

#### **ILLUSTRATION: Pay it Forward**

Have you ever been the recipient of someone paying for your meal? Maybe you've been in the drive through line or getting ready to pay for your meal and the person serving you says, "Sir, your bill has been paid." It is an incredible feeling, isn't it?! You start looking around to see if you can figure out who paid for your meal. And after you collect your thoughts, you think, "Well, because of that generosity, I'm going to pay for the person behind me." It is often the kindness we receive from others that encourages us to be generous with others. That's what Paul is driving at here in these verses.

If you need any motivation to love others sacrificially, just consider what is ours in Christ. We love others sacrificially because of the love and encouragement we have first received in Christ.

And Paul says that there are 4 very specific things that serve as motivators for us to love others in a sacrificial way. Each beginning with the word "if." If you have received this, then love others.<sup>iii</sup>

Verse 1 says, "If there is any encouragement in Christ." The word translated as "encouragement" means to give assistance by offering comfort and counsel.<sup>iv</sup> It

is the picture that is painted in the parable of the Good Samaritan. You remember the story. A man was robbed, beaten, and left for dead. A priest and a Levite passed him by on the other side. But a Samaritan came upon him, bandaged the guy, took him to an inn, and paid for his stay and care.

Have you ever been the recipient of that from The Lord Jesus? When you were at your lowest, maybe even hurt, broken, or at the end of your rope. Have you ever been there? I have. And yet, in those moments, the presence of The Lord is near, an unexplainable peace comes. It's the encouragement of Christ.

Paul is saying if you've experienced that, then love others. Our experiences serve as motivation for those around us.

Secondly, Paul says, "if there is any comfort from love." The word translated as "comfort," carries the idea of speaking closely with someone.<sup>v</sup> While it is very similar to the previous word, "encouragement," it emphasizes it by saying there is a closeness of relationship that brings help in your time of need.

Listen, God is constantly showering us with His love. We ought to, in turn, shower others with the same love. Being attended and loved by God is motivation for us to love others in a sacrificial way.

Thirdly, Paul says, "if any participation in the Spirit." Is the word "Spirit" capitalized in your Bible? It is mine. This is speaking of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity. The Bible teaches that at the moment of our salvation, The Holy Spirit takes us residence in our soul. And when He comes, He guides us and leads us. As a result, our lives produce certain fruit. We become people who exhibit love, joy, peace, patience, gentleness, faithfulness and self-control.

What he is getting at is that if you need motivation to love others sacrificially, you simply need to listen to The Holy Spirit that dwells in you.

The fourth motivation to loving others comes in the phrase, "If any affection and sympathy." The word translated "affection" means to care so deeply you feel it in your bowels. Deep and emotional love and care.<sup>vi</sup>

Did you know that is exactly how much God loves you? He loves you so deeply, so profoundly and entirely that He was moved to demonstrate His love

in the cross. Taking our place, our sin, our shame. The enemy might be trying to whisper lies to you that you cannot be loved by God, but I am here today to tell you that this entire book says otherwise. There is an empty cross and tomb that is proof of God's love for you.

The point that Paul is making is that if you are so loved, so cared for, so provided for, and indwelt by The Spirit, then you and I have no choice but to love others with the same love by which we've received.

So, we see the encouragement to loving others. Second aspect we see in our passage this morning are...

## 2) The Elements of Loving Others.

When we talk about the elements of loving others, we are talking about the ways by which we express love. Paul shows us how to do this. Look at verses 3 and 4. ***3Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.*** Three ways believers are to demonstrate sacrificial love. Let me show it to you.

First, selflessness. Paul says to, ***“do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit.”*** The expression of true love is completely devoid of any gain. The idea behind the word “selfish ambition,” in the original language is the seeking of followers.<sup>vii</sup> Selfish ambition and conceit describes a person that is constantly seeking personal advantage and gain. Paul is saying that this should in no way describe the believer. To love others sacrificially, we must empty ourselves of any potential gain. Strictly motivated by a love of God and people. That's hard at times, isn't it?

But you know, it is fitting that the first way Paul mentions to show sacrificial love is being selfless. Because, when you think about it, all sin is rooted in selfishness. A desire to have what I want above what God wants for me. Isn't that the very first sin? Adam and Eve knowing that they were not to eat of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Oh, but it looked pleasing to the eye. Good for nourishment. I think I know better than God. Selfishness.

If you and I are going to become the people and the church that God desires, we must empty us of ourselves. We are to be a people marked by selflessness. It is selfishness that says that we don't have the time to minister to that person

that has all kinds of issues. It is selfishness that causes us to turn the other way when we see someone dealing with brokenness. It is selfishness that causes us hold onto financial resources that might benefit others.

But it is selflessness that causes us to make time for the hurting. Selflessness that compels us to run into the mess of people's situations. Selflessness that says that person can use this resource more than me. And that, beloved, is love in action. Paul says the first element of loving others is to be selfless.

Secondly, Paul says, ***“in humility.”*** If we are going to love people sacrificially, it goes with his previous point, that we have to humble ourselves. Humility means that we don't think too highly of ourselves. It is the opposite of pride.

Did you know that in the Bible, humility is the dominant indicator of God's people?<sup>viii</sup> In the Old Testament, Moses was a humble leader. Not the most qualified or even the most identified. But in his humility, God used Moses to be the most effective leader.

The wisest person that ever lived, Solomon, wrote a book in the Bible called Proverbs. He came to know and understand the power of humility. In Proverbs 11:2, he says, ***“2When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.”*** Proverbs 16:19, ***“19It is better to be of a lowly spirit [humble] with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud.”***

And in the New Testament, Jesus chose a group of uneducated, young, misfits that wound up turning the world upside down in the launching of the Church. To be people that love sacrificially, we must be selfless and humble.

The third element of loving others is to be others focused. Paul says, ***“Count others more significant than yourselves. Look not only to your interest, but to the interest of others.”*** The words that are translated “more significant,” literally mean, “to consider superior.”<sup>ix</sup> Loving others sacrificially means that we have in our minds that other people are superior to us. Now, this is not some devaluing of ourselves or lessening our own self-esteem. It is just placing others in a position of value to the extent that you see them as important.

And listen, this is not natural, is it? If we are honest, we play the comparison game all the time. At least I'm not as bad as so-and-so. We have it more together than them. But that is not a loving attitude toward others.

One way you and I can see others as more important is to think about your own struggles more than the struggles of others. Man, I know I am a sinner. If you knew what went through my mind 90% of the time, you'd ask me to no longer be your Pastor. Admitting that all the sudden makes others seem the same as me, right?

So, we've talked about the encouragement, the motivation to love others sacrificially. And we've talked about the elements, the ways, we can love others sacrificially. Now, let's look at...

### 3) The Example of Loving Others.

After Paul shares the motivation to love others and how to love others, he then puts an exclamation mark on his urging to love people sacrificially. He gives us the ultimate example of loving others, Jesus.

We've talked about the specific ways we can love others. So, as we look at verses 5-8 of Philippians 2, I want you to pay attention to the ways Paul shows that Jesus has modeled this for us. As I read the verses, I encourage you to underline or circle the clues you see in Jesus' example. Verse 5. ***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.***

Now, this passage of Scripture is full of doctrine. The Christology of Paul's writing here is rich. And we are going to dig into this in greater detail in our Christmas series next month. But the point is that Jesus is our example for loving others sacrificially. Paul wants us to be like Jesus. A couple things that I do want to highlight in these verses.

First, we are to have this mind, or attitude. Which mind, what attitude are we to have? That which is ours in Christ Jesus. When we come to faith in Jesus as the Lord of our lives, we surrender not only our hearts, but also our minds to Him. We are to think like He thinks. We are to see people the way He sees people. We are to live the way Jesus lived. And when we allow the mind of Christ to fill our thoughts, we can't help but love the way Jesus loved.

Let's go back to the elements of loving others and see how Jesus embodied each one. First, the idea of selflessness.

Verses 6 says, ***though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.*** Jesus never used His power or authority for a personal advantage. The word translated, "grasped," refers to cling to. Jesus had every right to cling to His equal standing as God, but He didn't. He was selfless. Jesus demonstrated sacrificial love by giving of Himself by loosening the grip on His glory to be able to demonstrate God's love for us.

The second element of sacrificial love is humility. Paul says in verse 7 and the first part of verse 8, "[Jesus] ***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.*** Jesus temporarily emptied Himself of His divine rights. In other words, He gave up the glory that was His in Heaven so that He could suffer in our place on the cross. Talk about humility! The God of the Universe, in flesh, hung on a cross, half-naked, for all the world to see. But that's the greatest display of love.

Paul said that he took on the form of a servant. This would be better translated as a slave. A slave in Paul's day owned nothing, had to perform the worst of tasks, and was required to carry other people's burdens. Jesus, who owns the Universe, worthy of being praised, stepped down to serve. It is summed up in Jesus' own words in Matthew 20:28, ***the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.***

And the third element is to be others focused. Jesus was certainly that. Verse 8 says that, "[Jesus became] ***obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.***" The most others centered act was to purchase our salvation by taking our place on the cross. The cross was what we deserve for our sin. However, Jesus died in our place. For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life.

We have the motivation to love sacrificially. We know how to love sacrificially. And Jesus is our example to follow.

### **CONCLUSION**

As we close this morning...

## ENDNOTES:

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<sup>i</sup> Works consulted in preparation for this message: John MacArthur, “The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Philippians,” Moody Press: Chicago, 2001; Frank Thielman, “The NIV Application Commentary: Philippians,” Zondervan: Grand Rapids, 1995; Skip Heitzig, “Christ Jesus Our Lord,” sermon preached at Calvary Albuquerque, Sunday, August 30, 2020, accessed online: <https://calvarynm.church/connectwithskip/teachings/#/series/308/sermon/4498>; Calvin Wittman, “Sermon: Jesus Wants Humble Service – Philippians 2,” published by Lifeway, January 1, 2014, accessed online: <https://www.lifeway.com/en/articles/sermon-what-jesus-wants-humble-service-philippians-2#>; Chip Ingram, “I Choose Love: Love Serves,” sermon published by Living on the Edge with Chip Ingram, accessed online: <https://livingontheedge.org/product/i-choose-love-mp3/>.

<sup>ii</sup> Illustration adapted from John MacArthur.

<sup>iii</sup> Pointed out by John MacArthur.

<sup>iv</sup> Strong’s Concordance 3874, παρακλῆσις.

<sup>v</sup> John MacArthur, page 104.

<sup>vi</sup> Strong’s Concordance, 4698, σπλαγχνῶν.

<sup>vii</sup> John MacArthur, page 110.

<sup>viii</sup> Pointed out by John MacArthur.

<sup>ix</sup> Strong’s Concordance 2233 and 5242.