

normal way.”

*(Life-study of Philippians, Msg. 9, pp. 78-80)*

Note: **Bold type** and/or underlining have been added for emphasis in the above verses and quotations.

### **Suggested Supplementary Reading**

The Holy Word for Morning Revival— Philippians: Week 2, Day 5

*Our Experience in the Church Life*

#### **“If We Cannot Love the Brothers Whom We See, How Can We Love The Brothers Whom We Cannot See?”**

“Although we acknowledge the fellowship and unity of Ephesians and Colossians before the Lord, we must remember that this kind of fellowship and unity can easily become idealistic. It is quite possible that we can advocate the unity of the Body on the one hand, yet actually be for the second kind of unity, whereby both denominations and unity are advocated at the same time, on the other hand. Before the Lord, we need to see that the unity of Christians in the Bible is not spoken of in just the Epistles to the Ephesians and Colossians but also in two other Epistles: 1 Corinthians and Philippians. The unity of Christians in these last two Epistles also refers to the unity of the Body.

“The unity spoken of in 1 Corinthians clearly does not refer to unity that is universal both in space and in time but to unity of the church in Corinth. I think this word is clear enough. There were contentions among the brothers at Corinth, not the whole Body of Christ. It only concerned a few brothers who were in Corinth. So when Paul exhorted them to be one, he was merely exhorting them to be one with the brothers in their locality. It was as if he was saying, ‘All the brothers living in Corinth are the church in Corinth; you must express the oneness of the Body in the locality of Corinth. You must not be divided in Corinth.’ ”

*(Watchman Nee, Further Talks on the Church Life, Chpt. 4, pp. 108-109)*

#### **Prayer Burdens**

1. Pray for the reconciliation, healing, mending, and knitting together of all the saints in order that there would be harmony in our present church life.
2. Pray for the Chinese-speaking gospel meetings on Nov. 11th (Hall 1 at 5:30 PM to 9:00 PM) and on Nov. 12th (Hall 2 at 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM) this coming weekend.
3. Pray for the young people's gospel meeting this coming Saturday. May the Lord continue to bless the young people's work in Toronto through the increase, both in life and in number, among the young people.

#### **Announcements:**

#### **General**

1. **LastAdam site**  
The saints are reminded that the LastAdam web site no longer carries the morning revival material. This site belongs to an individual saint and is not sanctioned by the church in Toronto.

## **The church in Toronto**

Philippians Week 8

Nov 13 - Nov 25, 2006

### **Taking Christ as the Pattern and Holding Him Forth (1) — Joined in Soul, Thinking the One Thing**

*Weekly Bible Reading:*

**Philippians 2:1-4**

*Hymns:*

**847; 840; 831; 1087**

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#### **Monday**

*Verses for Morning Revival*

#### **Philippians 2:1-2a**

- 1 If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions,
- 2 Make my joy full...

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

#### **Make My Joy Full**

“The first four verses of Philippians 2 are one long sentence. Verses 1 and 2 say, ‘If there is therefore any encouragement in Christ, if any consolation of love, if any fellowship of spirit, if any tenderheartedness and compassions, make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing.’ In verses 1 and 2 the apostle appealed to the Philippians for their encouragement and consolation. He begged them to make his joy full, if they had any encouragement in Christ, any consolation of love, any fellowship of spirit, and any tenderheartedness and compassions toward him.

“The predicate in 2:1-4 is ‘make my joy full.’ Since this book is concerned with the experience and enjoyment of Christ, which issue in joy, it is also a book filled with joy and rejoicing (1:4, 25, 18; 2:17-18, 28-29; 3:1; 4:1, 4). Among the Philippians there was dissension in their thinking (4:2), dissension which troubled the apostle. Hence, he asked them to think the same thing, even the same one thing, that they might make his joy full.

“In 2:1-4 we see the fellowship between the believers and the apostle. The traffic in Philippians 1 is one-way traffic from the apostle to the believers. Now in chapter two we see the traffic from the believers to the apostle. Fellowship requires such two-way traffic. This two-way traffic is for the experience of Christ. Because Paul was rich in the experience of Christ, he could present an account of his experience to the believers in chapter one. This was his fellowship to them. Now in chapter two he asks the believers in Philippi to return the fellowship to him.

“Paul appealed to the Philippians that if there was any encouragement in Christ,

any consolation of love, any fellowship of spirit, any tenderheartedness and compassions toward him, they would make his joy full. Paul could rejoice over the Philippians, but something about them kept him from rejoicing in a full way. Paul could say, 'Philippians, I have joy concerning you, but my joy is not full. There is something among you which hinders me from rejoicing in a full way. I beg you to make my joy full.' "

*(Witness Lee, Life-study of Philippians, Msg. 9, pp. 73-74)*

## **Tuesday & Wednesday**

*Verses for Morning Revival*

### **Philippians 2:2a**

**2** Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love...

### **Philippians 4:2**

**2** I exhort Euodias, and I exhort Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord.

### **Romans 12:16a**

**16** Be of the same mind toward one another...

### **1 Corinthians 12:24b-25**

**24** ...God has blended the body together...

**25** That there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same care for one another.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

### **Thinking the Same Thing, the One Thing — “Christ, and Christ Alone”**

“The way the Philippians could make Paul's joy full was to think the same thing, even the one thing (2:2). According to the context of the entire book, the one thing must refer to the subjective knowledge of Christ and experience of Christ (1:20-21; 2:5; 3:7-9; 4:13). Christ, and Christ alone, should be the centrality and universality of our entire being. Our thinking should be focused on the excellency of the knowledge of Christ and the experience of Christ. Anything else causes us to think differently and thus creates dissensions among us.

“What troubled Paul in his imprisonment was the dissension among the Philippians. The saints in Philippi were good, and the church in that city had been well established. However, there was dissension among them. Although they were one in spirit, they were not striving together with one soul. Although they all loved the Lord, they were not thinking the same thing. This caused Paul's heart to be heavy. Out of heaviness of heart, he appealed to the Philippians to make his joy full by being joined in soul and by thinking the same thing.”

*(ibid., p. 75)*

### **Thinking the Same Thing in the Church God Has Placed Us**

“In the book of Philippians Paul also exhorted the brothers to be one: ‘For your fellowship [oneness] unto the furtherance of the gospel from the first day until now’ (1:5). Later, Paul spoke of another aspect in verses 15 and 17: ‘Some preach Christ even because of envy and strife....others announce Christ out of

altogether normal. To some extent at least, it was abnormal.

“If we consider the book of Philippians as a whole, we shall realize that the experience of Christ involves mutuality. It is definitely not a one-sided matter. However, many of today's Christians are subject to the mistaken teaching that the experience of Christ is one-sided. But it is a fact that we cannot have a normal experience of Christ if we are individualistic. The experience of Christ is a Body matter. Whatever is in the Body and of the Body involves mutual fellowship. The experience of Christ thus requires mutuality. If the apostle did not have proper fellowship with the saints, his experience of Christ would not have been normal. Likewise, if the believers were not in fellowship with the apostle, their experience of Christ would not be normal. This indicates that whether or not our experience of Christ is normal depends on our attitude toward the apostle. Concerning this, we shall be tested. If our attitude toward the apostle is not proper, our experience of Christ will be abnormal. In the same principle, if the apostle is out of line concerning his attitude toward the believers, his experience of Christ will be abnormal.

“In the book of Philippians we have a picture of the proper fellowship between the believers and the apostle for the normal experience of Christ. Although the Philippian believers loved the Lord and were in the church, their experience of Christ was abnormal. One reason for this abnormality was that there was dissension among themselves. Another reason was that their attitude toward the apostle might not have been absolute. If their attitude toward Paul was absolute, they would receive his word to think the same thing, to have the same love, to be joined in soul, to think the one thing, not to do anything by way of rivalry or vainglory, to count others more excellent than themselves, and to regard the virtues and qualities of others. If the believers took Paul's word and acted on it, they would become balanced and normal in experiencing Christ.

“In Philippians, a book on the experience of Christ and enjoyment of Christ, we see that the enjoyment of Christ must be a Body matter, a matter of mutuality in fellowship. If our attitude toward the apostle is wrong, we shall also be wrong in our attitude toward one another. Hence, our attitude toward the apostle is a test of our condition. If our attitude toward him is wrong, our situation must be abnormal. In such a case, our experience of Christ will be abnormal also. “Among Christians today there is virtually no normal experience of Christ. On the contrary, the condition among Christians is abnormal. The proper fellowship between the apostles and the believers has been damaged to the extreme. In the Lord's recovery we need to be enlightened from the book of Philippians and receive mercy and grace from the Lord to have the proper mutuality between the believers and the apostles.

“We have pointed out that in Philippians we see Paul's attitude and spirit toward the believers. Paul's appeal was that the believers would show a proper attitude and spirit toward him so that the fellowship between them would be normal. The proper fellowship between the believers and the apostle is a safeguard to the normal experience of Christ. If our attitude toward the apostle is proper and our fellowship with him is right, we shall know that we are experiencing Christ in a

Instead, in lowliness of mind, count others more excellent than yourselves.’  
“It is not easy to get rid of rivalry and vainglory, for we have a natural tendency to compete with others. In certain countries children are encouraged strongly to compete. In society competitiveness is found everywhere. However, we should not compete in the church life. Instead of competing with one another, we should count others more excellent than ourselves.

#### **Lowliness of Mind — Considering One Another More Excellent**

“In 2:3 Paul speaks of lowliness of mind. Lowliness is versus both rivalry and vainglory. The kind of lowliness Paul speaks of is not our natural lowliness; it is the lowliness of Christ, as illustrated in verses 7 and 8.

“Notice that Paul refers to ‘lowliness of mind.’ Paul’s use of the word mind here is another indication that the problem of dissension among the Philippians was a matter of their untransformed mind. They needed to have the mind which was in Christ (2:5).

“In 2:4 Paul says, ‘Not regarding each his own things, but each the things of others also.’ The things here refer to virtues and qualities. We should not regard only our virtues and qualities, but also the virtues and qualities of others.”

*(Life-study of Philippians, Msg. 9, pp. 76-78)*

### **Saturday**

*Verses for Morning Revival*

#### **Philippians 2:5**

**5** Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus,

#### **Matthew 11:29b**

**29** ...I am meek and lowly in heart...  
**b**

#### **Matthew 12:18-21**

**18** “Behold, My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul has found delight. I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will announce justice to the Gentiles.

**19** He will not strive nor cry out, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets.

**20** A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench until He brings forth justice unto victory.

**21** And in His name will the Gentiles hope.”

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

#### **The Normal Experience of Christ**

“We have pointed out emphatically that Philippians is concerned with the experience of Christ. According to this book, the experience of Christ is a matter of mutuality between the apostle and the believers. As we read this Epistle, we see that Paul carried on fellowship with the saints in a proper way. In every aspect and from every angle, his fellowship with them was right. The Philippians, by contrast, were not proper in all respects in their fellowship with the apostle. Therefore, on the apostle’s side, the experience of Christ was normal. But on the side of the Philippian saints, the experience of Christ was not

selfish ambition.’ This was not a universal condition of the church but a local matter in Philippi. Some brothers preached Christ in oneness, while some preached Christ out of envy, saying, ‘If you can preach, I can too. If you can do it, why cannot I?’ So they also preached.

“In Philippians 2:2 Paul exhorted, ‘Think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing.’ I would like to point out the phrase that you think the same thing. This does not refer to the universal church. Although the universal church can learn from this instance, this word especially refers to the Philippians, since Paul wrote the letter to the Philippians. The Christians, the brothers, in Philippi needed to think the same thing. It is useless for them to think the same thing as the brothers in the church in Shanghai or the brothers in the church in Lanchow. They have to think the same thing as the brothers in Philippi. This is the commandment of the Bible. Thinking the same thing must have locality as its minimum requirement. If this is lacking, all doctrines are idealistic and imaginary. It is amazing that many brothers are very spiritual in the heavens, but fleshly on earth. Their idea is very spiritual but their practice is fleshly.

“Following this, Paul said that if they thought the same thing, had the same love, were joined in soul, and thought the one thing, his joy would be made full.”

*(Watchman Nee, Further Talks on the Church Life, Chpt. 4, pp. 115-116)*

#### **Having the Same Love for All the Saints**

“Thinking the same thing is related to having the same love. Paul’s word in verse 2 about ‘having the same love’ indicates that, because of their dissenting thinking, the Philippian believers had different levels of love. They did not have the same love toward all the saints for the keeping of oneness.

“It is possible that we in the church life today may not have the same love for all the saints. Instead, our love may be on different levels. We may love a certain brother much more than we love another brother. Because we may love a particular brother only to a small degree, we may not be inclined to render much service to him. But because we love another brother to a very high degree, we may serve him too much and even spoil him by our love. It is possible in the church life to have different levels of love for different saints. If this is our situation, our love is not the love with one soul. We have one kind of soul when we love one brother, but a different kind of soul when we love another brother. As a result, instead of practical oneness, there will be dissension.

“In 2:2 Paul also speaks of being joined in soul. This indicates that the dissension among the Philippians was due to their not being joined in soul, not thinking the one thing in their mind, the leading part of the soul. Their problem was not with their spirit, but with their soul, especially with their mind. They had Christ in their spirit through regeneration, but they did not have Christ fully in their soul through transformation. Only by having Christ saturate and occupy their entire soul could they be made one in soul.

“The Philippians had been joined in spirit, but they had not been fully joined in soul. To have different levels of love is a sign that we have not been joined in soul. If we have been joined in soul, we shall have the same love for all the

saints.”

*(Life-study of Philippians, Msg. 9, pp. 75-76)*

## Thursday & Friday

*Verses for Morning Revival*

### Philippians 2:2-4

- 2 Make my joy full, that you think the same thing, having the same love, joined in soul, thinking the one thing,
- 3 Doing nothing by way of selfish ambition nor by way of vainglory, but in lowliness of mind considering one another more excellent than yourselves;
- 4 Not regarding each his own virtues, but each the virtues of others also.

### Acts 4:32a

- 32 And the heart and soul of the multitude of those who had believed was one...

### Romans 12:16

- 16 Be of the same mind toward one another, not setting your mind on the high things but going along with the lowly; do not be wise in yourselves.

*Readings for Inspiration and Truth*

### Experiencing Being ‘Joined in Soul’

“‘Doing nothing by way of selfish ambition’ (v. 3a). This word was spoken to the Philippians. The Philippians should not have done anything by way of selfish ambition. Paul brought out the reason for doing things by selfish ambition: Some covet vainglory. These seekers of vainglory are easily separated from the brothers. Those who desire to have glory before man get into trouble with others. Some are proud and esteem themselves highly; they are unable to be one with others. ‘But in lowliness of mind considering one another more excellent than yourselves’ (v. 3b). This will enable us to be one with others. Some care only for their own things and are very selfish; so it is also easy for them to cause trouble. Paul continued, ‘Not regarding each his own virtues, but each the virtues of others also’ (v. 4). This is the reason that many people cannot think the same thing, cannot have the same love, cannot be joined in soul, cannot be one with others. Some care only for themselves, some are proud, some seek glory and desire others to applaud them. These kinds of people can never be one with others. We must learn to be humble, not seeking glory from man, and we must learn to take care of others. Then we can be one with other children of God. This is the scriptural principle, and we need to follow it accordingly.

“Paul praised the Philippians for their fellowship (oneness) in preaching the gospel, but in fact, they had contentions. This made the exhortation in chapter two necessary. There were contentions in Philippi not only among the brothers but also among the sisters. In chapter four Paul especially mentioned two sisters: ‘I exhort Euodias, and I exhort Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord’ (v. 2). These two names are feminine. We do not know how much of a story lies behind this word; Paul did not reveal this to us. He only said, ‘I exhort

Euodias, and I exhort Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord.’ This correction shows us on the one hand that there was strife in Philippi, and on the other hand that this strife was limited to this locality because of the names he mentioned. By now I think we should see at least one thing: The unity of the Body or the unity of the Holy Spirit in the Bible refers to the unity in locality. Unity apart from locality is entirely vain. We cannot say that we are able to be one everywhere except in our own locality.”

*(Watchman Nee, Further Talks on the Church Life, Chpt. 4, pp. 116-117)*

### Rivalry and Vainglory

“...Paul's word about rivalry and vainglory may indicate that the dissenting Philippians were doing things out of rivalry or vainglory, both of which cause dissension among believers. Rivalry and vainglory may lie hidden among us. Even when we testify in the church meetings, there may be rivalry. Perhaps when you share, not many saints say amen. But when someone else shares, the saints are very responsive, and there are many amens. Disappointed by the situation, you may decide never to share again in the meetings. Thus, in giving testimonies there may be rivalry. Even when we share our experiences of Christ, a feeling of rivalry may be hidden within us.

“Some brothers have advised the saints to say amen to the weaker ones in order to encourage them, but not to say amen as much to the strong ones. This kind of encouragement simply feeds the flesh and strengthens the soul.

“I say once again that in the church life it is possible to have rivalry among the saints. Suppose a number of brothers come into the church life close to the same time. Later, one among them is appointed to be an elder. The others may be displeased and ask why that particular brother was made an elder, when he has not been in the church any longer than the others. Such a word may not be uttered, but this thought may be in the heart of those brothers.

“Rivalry and vainglory are often found together. Where there is rivalry, there is usually vainglory. Why are you unhappy when the saints do not say amen to your testimony? Because of vainglory. Why do the brothers not feel pleased when a certain brother is appointed an elder and they are not? Also because of vainglory.

“In 4:2 Paul says, ‘I beseech Euodias, and I beseech Syntyche, to think the same thing in the Lord.’ I believe that there was rivalry between these two sisters, perhaps competition over who would be the leading one. As a result, they were doing things in the way of rivalry and vainglory.

“If there had not been rivalry and vainglory among the Philippian believers, Paul would not have mentioned these things in 2:3. Here Paul seems to be saying, ‘I ask you not to do anything by way of rivalry or vainglory. This will help to make my joy full. Brothers, I am troubled by the fact that some among you are doing things in the way of rivalry. I am happy that you love the Lord and that you are standing there in Philippi for the Lord's testimony. I rejoice, but my rejoicing is not yet full. It cannot be full as long as rivalry exists among you. Furthermore, some of you are seeking vainglory. If you have any consolation of love toward me, please make my joy full by not doing anything by way of rivalry or vainglory.