

"Unity Matters"

Dr. Rich Knight

July 25, 2010

Philippians 2:1-11

This summer we're studying Paul's Letter to the Church in Philippi. The Philippian Church was founded by Paul on his second missionary journey. Paul made three missionary journeys, as they're called. He planted churches all along the way in his travels. He would then write to them to keep in touch - to answer any questions they might have and to address any issues they were facing.

The Philippian Church was a special church for Paul. Strategically it was important because it represented the first Christian church in Europe. Philippi was and is in Macedonia, part of Greece. So this was an important inroad for Christianity, to make it all the way from Israel to Greece. But more than that the Philippian church was special to Paul because of the people, the relationships. This is the most tender of all his letters. There's that beautiful sentence in chapter 1 - "*I thank my God every time I remember you.*" (1:3) Paul has great affection for them. There are no rebukes from him in this letter, only praise. There is however one great concern for Paul when it comes to the Church at Philippi - unity. Paul spends most of chapters two & three talking about unity (and there are only 4 chapters in the letter!). Unity was very important for Paul. He knew it was critical for the health and vitality of his churches. He writes very strongly here and persuasively.

Let's take a look at Philippians 2:1-11.

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy

complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death- even death on a cross.