

Philippians 2:1-2

- A. These verses highlight a basic difference between the character of Christian life in the church and the natural way of this world.
1. Christian life is not *survival of the fittest*, a desperate clamor of self-interests which weeds out the weak.
 2. Christian life is not self-promotion by exploiting the weak or uninformed (as Scientology).
 3. Christian life is not the Intellectual elite regulating the *blind force* (as Freemasonry).
 4. Christian life is not a beehive, a compartmentalized super-efficient but ruthless society that always exalts the colony over the individual.
 5. Christian life is not greatness through mastery over others. **LUK 22:24-27.**
 6. Christian life IS likeminded humility, condescension, mercy, love and service to others, and all that in view of Jesus Christ's example. **vs. 5-7 c/w ROM 15:1-3.**
- B. Paul here sets forth a series of rhetorical propositions:
1. "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ,..."
 - a. console: To comfort in mental distress or depression; to alleviate the sorrow of (any one); to free from sense of misery.
 - b. There IS consolation in Christ!
 - c. Christ is the consolation of God's Israel. **LUK 2:25-32.**
 - d. There is consolation in coming submissively under His yoke. **MAT 11:28-30.**
 - e. By the immutability of God's counsel and oath believers have *strong* consolation. **HEB 6:17-20.**
 - (1) The certainty of God's promises provides strong relief for the sufferings of this life. **ROM 8:18; 2CO 4:16-18.**
 - (2) This consolation is only for those who find their refuge in the hope that is in heaven with Christ. **2CO 5:1.**
 - (3) Those who seek their refuge in this world miss this strong consolation. **LUK 6:24.**
 - f. This consolation is *everlasting* (**2TH 2:16**). It does not expire with the loss of wealth, friends, family, health, status, fame, life or this very world!
 2. "...if there be any comfort of love,..."
 - a. Mark that Paul does not say, "if there be any love of comfort...", as if the church or Christian life were vehicles for our pampering.
 - b. comfort: Strengthening; encouragement, incitement; aid, succour, support, countenance (appearance of favour).
 - c. love: That disposition or state of feeling with regard to a person which (arising from recognition of attractive qualities, from instincts of natural relationship, or from sympathy) manifests itself in solicitude for the welfare of the object, and usually also in delight in his presence and desire for his approval; warm affection, attachment.
 - d. To think of God thus loving us is comforting.
 - e. God loved us so much that He gave His Son to suffer and die for us that we might be His sons forever. **JOH 3:16; 1JO 4:9-10.**
 - (1) He loved us in spite of ourselves. **TIT 3:3-5.**
 - (2) He loved us though we were ungodly. **ROM 5:6.**
 - (3) He loved us while yet sinners. **ROM 5:8.**
 - (4) He loved us while we were His enemies. **ROM 5:10.**
 - (5) He loved us while we were dead. **EPH 2:4-5.**
 - (6) It is an everlasting love. **JER 31:3 c/w ROM 8:35-39.**

- (7) There is great comfort in knowing one is the object of such love.
 - f. God's love for us in Christ is the pattern for the love we show to others to comfort them. **EPH 5:25; 1JO 4:11; 3:16.**
 - (1) This comfort is experienced as we are knit together in love and unto all riches of the full assurance of understanding. **COL 2:2.**
 - (2) Being knit together suggests a tightly connected existence, of being bound together by something: love. **COL 3:14.**
 - (3) Such a church is a great comfort for the difficult seasons of life.
3. "...if any fellowship of the spirit..."
 - a. fellowship: Participation, sharing (in an action, condition, etc.); something in common, community of interest, sentiment, nature, etc.
 - b. Upon returning to heaven, Christ sent another Comforter, the Holy Spirit, to guide believers. **JOH 14:16.**
 - (1) Through the Spirit we partake of the things of Christ. **JOH 16:13-15.**
 - (2) This is how we partake of the consolation of Christ.
 - c. The Spirit sheds abroad the love of God in our hearts which provides us with our comfort. **ROM 5:5.**
 - d. The Spirit uniquely ministers gifts to baptized believers who are graft into the body of Christ, the church which He (the Spirit) indwells as the Comforter. **1CO 12:13.**
 - (1) Thus, church fellowship is a *fellowship of the Spirit*, also called *the communion of the Holy Ghost*. **2CO 13:14.**
 - (2) Only church members share in this aspect of God's Spirit.
 - (3) Having drunk of Him, He pours forth from them. **JOH 7:37-39.**
 - (4) By submitting to Christ's Headship/Kingship, they hold in common with God that Christ is Lord over all, which is the express mission of the Spirit. **COL 1:18 c/w JOH 16:14.**
 - (5) When a church's fellowship is based upon God's truth, they have fellowship through Him Who is the *Spirit of truth*. **JOH 16:13.**
 - (6) This is a fellowship which transcends earthly limitations. **COL 2:5.**
 - (7) Without the fellowship of the Spirit, the church is only a social club.
4. "...if any bowels and mercies..."
 - a. bowels: (Considered as the seat of the tender and sympathetic emotions, hence): Pity, compassion, feeling, heart. [See **1KI 3:26; JER 4:19**]
 - b. mercy: Forbearance and compassion shown by one person to another who is in his power and who has no claim to receive kindness; kind and compassionate treatment in a case where severity is merited or expected.
 - c. compassion: Suffering together with another, participation in suffering; fellow-feeling, sympathy; the feeling or emotion, when a person is moved by the suffering or distress of another, and by the desire to relieve it; pity that inclines one to spare another.
 - d. God's mercies flow to us out of His bowels or compassion. **JER 31:20; HOS 11:8-9.**
 - e. He identifies with us in our afflictions and so can have mercy upon us. **ISA 63:9; HEB 2:17-18; 4:15-16.**
 - f. Therefore, saints should also manifest bowels of mercies and compassion. **MAT 18:23-35; COL 3:12; 1JO 3:17.**
- C. When a church exercises itself according to these things, it results in them being likeminded and united. **v. 2.**
 1. When we have the same love, we will be likeminded since we will mind what we love.

2. If we are likeminded, we will be of one accord and of one mind.
3. Comforting one another, feeling for one another, showing mercy to one another in the fellowship of the Spirit is unifying by its very nature.
4. Such unity is to be coveted. **PSA 133.**
5. Such a church fulfils the joy of God's minister and glorifies God. **ROM 15:5-6.**