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MY BROTHER'S KEEPER?

(Philippians 2:1-11)

Series: "Philippians: The Joyful Letter" (Part 10)

...It is so interesting to study the Bible and discover God's amazing, wonderful Word. There is nothing like it in all the universe. Have you ever noticed the first question ever posed in Scripture? God speaks to Adam, "Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9) (How appropriate) The first question recorded from the lips of man was Cain asking the Lord, "Am I my brother's keeper?" (Genesis 4:9)

...God's ultimate and final answer to that last question was given in the sending of His only Son to die a horrible death in laying down His life for us. God not only answered verbally, but more He gave sacrificially for us.

...Paul in writing to the beloved Philippian church continues with his second exhortation calling them to live self-denying lives caring for others. Paul was concerned that division within the body had fractured the young church. God's answer: Like Jesus, we are to live not only caring for our own needs, but also for others.

THREE CHARACTERISTICS THAT OUGHT TO BE IN YOUR LIFE AS BELIEVERS UNITED IN THOUGHT... CARING FOR OTHERS.

...Jesus illustrated this for us in providing for our greatest need.

...Paul provided incentive for this with four realities: "Since"... We have encouragement, comfort in His love, fellowship with the Spirit, and because we experience the mercies of God. (vv.1-4)

I. Thinking Of Others, Not Just Of Yourself. (vv.5-6)

- A. Paul tells that our attitude, thinking, needs to be the same as Jesus exhibited.
...Outlook determines outcome. If the outlook is selfish, the actions will be divisive.
- B. These verses take us to eternity past. Jesus was "In the form of God." Not physical, but spirit.
 1. The word "form" means the outward expression of an inward nature.
 2. This means that in eternity past, Jesus was God. (See John 1:1-4; Hebrews 1:1-3)
- C. Certainly as God, Jesus did not need anything. He had all the glory and praise of heaven. With the Father and the Spirit He reigned over the universe.
- D. Yet, Philippians 2:6 tells that Jesus did not consider equality with God as something selfishly to be held on to. Jesus did not think of Himself. He thought of others. He thought of you!!!!
...Jesus' outlook was unselfish concern for others, for us.
- E. For us to have this mindset means I cannot keep my privileges for myself. I must use them for others, and to do so I will gladly lay them aside and pay whatever price is necessary. Others!!!
- F. The contrast to Jesus is Lucifer who yearned to be God. "I will" "I will"... (Isaiah 14:12-15)
...Lucifer was not satisfied to be a creature; he sought to be the Creator. Jesus was the Creator yet He willingly became man. Christ's humility is a rebuke to Satan's pride.

II. Serving Others, Do More Than Merely Think Of Others...Do Something. (v.7)

- A. Jesus thought of others, and became a servant. Paul traced the steps of His humiliation:
 1. He emptied Himself of the form (glory) of God and took on the form of a servant.
 2. Jesus permanently became a human, in a sinless human body.
 3. He used that body to be a servant.
 4. He took that body to the cross and willingly died.
- B. What grace!!! From glory to shame, from Master to servant, from life to death, "even the death of the cross." He willingly humbled Himself that He might lift us up.
- C. Study the 4 Gospels and you will see that Jesus is always serving others, not others serving Him. Remember John 13, no one would wash the feet, so He stooped and washed all their feet.

- D. You, as a Christian, are called "servants of Jesus Christ" and so we are. A servant serves, that is what we do. Are you serving Him by caring for those who need you?

III. Sacrificing For Others, Be Willing To Give All...Doing So Glorifies God. (vv.8-11)

- A. Many are willing to serve if it does not cost them anything. Jesus became "obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross." He willingly laid down His life for the sins of the world.
- B. One man wrote, "Ministry that costs nothing accomplishes nothing." If there is to be blessing, there must be some "bleeding." Illustration: "Cheap crosses."
- C. One of the paradoxes of the Christian life: The more we give, the more we receive, the more we sacrifice, the more God blesses. Sacrificial giving gives great joy, it makes us more like Him.
- D. The ultimate end of your salvation does not end with you, but glorifies God. (vv.9-11) (Ephesians 1:6)

SO WHAT? WHAT DIFFERENCE SHOULD THIS MAKE IN YOUR LIFE?

1. If you know Christ as your Savior and Lord then He is working within you to conform you to His likeness. This means that you are increasingly His hands, feet, mouth, mind, in humbly caring for those He has placed near you. You are your brother's keeper.
2. If your life has very little involvement with others, and you find your thoughts and focus dealing mainly with "me, myself, and I," then you are disobedient and not where you ought to be. Confess your selfishness and pride to the Lord and repent. Ask the Lord to use your life to be His blessing to others. He will forgive you and use you for His purpose. This is the only way to live...live to give...they go together.
3. When is the last time you sacrificed your privileges? When you gave a sacrificial gift for His ministry? When you gave precious time to someone who really needed it? Jesus gave it all, and we ought to have the same mindset if He asks us to do so.
4. Jesus is calling you this morning if you have never received Him as your Savior and Lord. Consider your terrible situation, you are bound for hell, come to see the love of God in providing the only way of escape, and bow before Him today. "Who ever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Life Group Questions

1. What is true humility? How would you rate yourself in this area? What can you do practically to become more humble in your everyday life?
2. Do you agree that pride is the great enemy of the Christian Life? If so, what is it about pride that is so destructive?
3. For the Christian, living and giving go together. Jesus told, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." Why is this so? Can you tell of the reality of this in your own life when you experienced joy by giving? One has said, if you want more joy in your life...then give, give and give. This seems so contrary to our culture.
4. A servant does not have rights. How do you handle the thought that you ought to demand your rights? How do you work this out in your life?