

Main Reading: **Philippians** 2:1-11

Paul makes his *biggest* **theological** claim in the *entire* letter. [theology: Theo = God, ology = belief about]

Sometimes, people get angry, bored, or uninterested when the word (theology) comes up.

But, that shouldn't be the case. Because everyone—*every* single person you meet—is a theologian.

Everyone has a **belief** about God...But, as Christians, we get our theology from the **Bible**.

In the Bible, God tells us *exactly* who He is and *exactly* what He **requires**.

Any belief about God that doesn't come from the Bible is man-made.

See, in life, you have to make a decision:

You can either let *man* define God by his experiences, ideas, and guesses, or...

You can let God define *Himself* in His Word. **Jeremiah** 17:5-8

Anyways, this passage, puts a *big* focus on the **Trinity** and fits well with **Christmas** time.

2) There is an increasing amount of people who do not understand these Bible verses.

Famous "pastors" have twisted Philippians 2 in a way that isn't *even* close to Christianity...

[false teaching is a **HUGE** topic in the Bible!— 26 out of the 27 books in the NT]

[Explain how false teaching can be used to teach the truth. Jesus did this technique]

[Explain Hermeneutics (so we know that we are interpreting things correctly)]

2 rules: **#1** Context, context, context. [911 sheet]

#2 Clear verses interpret unclear ones.

[v. 1-2]

Paul starts this section off with "if...if....if...if"

Sometimes when we use the word "if" we are not **sure** about something.

"If I make to Bible Study...If I have a good day today"...these are scenarios that are up in the air.

But as Paul uses *if* statements, he is **sure** about something, and he's using *if* to mean **since**.

Because the truth is: **There is a ton of encouragement in Christ.**

**an abundance of [comfort](#) from brotherly love.
plenty of [fellowship](#) with the Spirit.
a great deal of [compassion](#) and sympathy.**

God provides each Christian with *all* of these things. And I want to look at 2 of them deeper...

1. Encouragement in Christ

This Greek word for encouragement means "to come [near](#) and help"

Friends, that's *exactly* what Jesus did 2000 years ago. [[Christmas](#)]

He came down from [Heaven](#) to be near us and provide the best help.

But His encouragement doesn't stop there...

While Jesus was here, He spoke [words](#) of encouragement to His believers. [Matthew](#) 6:31-34

And Jesus sent other men out to write encouraging letters to us. Example—[Romans](#) 5:1

But there's even more... **2. Fellowship With the Spirit**

We were not around when Jesus walked the earth, but we have the [Spirit](#) of Christ working in us.

Again, God is drawing near to help us. How much closer can you get than [inside](#)?

And I want to explain what it is that makes this partnership so amazing.

It's the fact that the Holy Spirit is a [person](#).

The Holy Spirit is God—**not** a [force](#) or a [gas](#)—but *just as much* God as the Father and the Son.

See, you can't have *true* fellowship with *something*—only with *someone*.

And the Bible goes out of its way to teach that the Holy Spirit is a person.

The word for Spirit is "[pneuma](#)" (also translated as wind)—which is an "it" word.

We would say: "when the strong wind blew through the town, *it* did a lot of damage."

But Scripture gives the Holy Spirit, male pronouns; using bad [grammar](#) just to prove a point.

Plus, in the Bible, the Spirit [helps](#), guides, and makes [commands](#). [[attributes](#)]

And we are told not to [grieve](#) the Holy Spirit or sin against Him. [[Ananias + Sapphira](#)]

Bottom line: The Spirit is a **divine** person, who we can have fellowship with...But how?

First, you should know that the *entire* Christian life is *impossible* without the Holy Spirit.

In Galatians 5 and 6 alone, we are told to "**walk** by the Spirit," be "**led** by the Spirit,"

bear "the **fruit** of the Spirit," and "**live** by the Spirit."

Jude and Ephesians tell us to "**pray** in harmony with the Spirit."

And we are told to "**sow** to the Spirit." (Putting effort towards godly things)

But this partnership isn't *totally* dependent on us. Because God is doing a lot of the work too...

The Holy Spirit is the one who *actually* brings us into God's **family**.

He **convicts** us of sin, helps us live a lifestyle pleasing to God, and **comforts** us along the way.

But there are **4** things that the Spirit does for us that I want to focus on.

- He gives us a new spiritual **life**. **John** 6:63-64
- He helps us **understand** the Bible. **Ephesians** 1:16-18
- He provides us with a clear **conscience**. **Hebrews** 9:14
- And when we don't know how to pray in a situation, the Spirit helps us and **intercedes** (prays on our behalf) with prayers that are *too* deep for words. **Romans** 8:26-27 [[explain](#)]

So, there is a *real* system of **teamwork** between every Christian and God.

And if it wasn't for this fellowship, you could not survive your Christian life.

[v. 3-5]

God's will—and Paul's hope—is for Christians to work together and have *genuine* fellowship.

And there's 3 things that need to happen before we can have true fellowship:

1. Do **nothing** out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.

Don't be self-centered or think more highly of yourself than you should.

2. Count others as more important than yourself.

Count—the Greek word is **calculate**—it's a math term.

The amount that we love and take care of ourselves should not **add** up to more than how much we love and take care of others.

3. Put the needs of others before your own.

Now, sometimes it can be very hard to put ourselves aside for the sake of unity and fellowship.

But look to the example of Jesus—God Himself.

He is the one person who *deserves* **honor** and **glory**,

but He came to earth in the most **humble** way imaginable to live among us.

QUESTION: What's one way that you can consider others more than yourself in a church context?

[v. 6-8] [Hymn in the Early Church]

Here's where people start to twist things...Several teachers today will say:

"Jesus emptied Himself means that He quit being God."

This idea runs into **2** huge problems: 1) **Hebrews** 13:8 2) **Acts** 20:28 | When did God bleed?

Bill Johnson (Bethel Music) says that "*Jesus was just a normal Christian*"

A "televangelist," named Kenneth Copeland, claims that Jesus came to Him and said:

"I never claimed to be God. I'm a man just like you."

Now, hopefully, you're thinking: "why on earth would someone try to **demote** Jesus like that?!"

And I also want to make it clear that we cannot have unity or fellowship with that idea...

Jesus says in John 17 that Christian fellowship *must* be built on the Truth...

But here's why people teach things that are so obviously wrong.

It goes back to the very first **temptation**... **Genesis** 3:5 People want to be *like* God.

But these false teachers *also* know that people will *never* make it to God's level.

So, instead of elevating people to His level, they try to bring Jesus **down** to ours...

Once these false teachers have convinced people that Jesus is on their level,

they sell **curriculums** about how to **walk** on water, control the weather, and phase through walls.

Friends, these people saying that Jesus was “just a man” is the *biggest lie* you will ever hear.

Jesus never came close to sinning, but you and I can’t make it an *hour* without sinning.

And even the *good* things that a human being can do are still *stained* by sin.

Apart from Jesus, we can do *nothing*—we have *no* power within ourselves.

But *Jesus* has *all* authority on Heaven & Earth.

So, if Jesus was your equal, then you’d have no *Savior*.

That being said...Jesus did *empty* Himself....But the question is: “of what?”...Let’s break it *all* down.

Jesus Christ is in the “form” of God—the Greek word there means “*nature*.”

Jesus and God the Father have the *same* nature and attributes. *Hebrews* 1:3

Jesus was God. He is God. And He always will be God.

But He didn’t view His God status as something to be *grasped* or achieved.

To Jesus, being God isn’t something to achieve because He *already* was God.

You don’t have to pick up something that is *already* in your hand.

On the other hand, to *Lucifer*, being God was something desirable..

that would have been a *big* promotion for him.

And, to Jesus, being God wasn’t something that He had to *cling* to and be careful not to lose.

He didn’t say “I’m God and there’s *no* way I’m coming to earth to be with you sinners!”

Instead, He *willingly* came here and took on a *normal* human body.

He wasn’t *attractive*...He didn’t glow or have a halo. He looked like everyone else. *Isaiah* 53:2

Jesus went from the highest position in the universe to the lowest: a *baby*.

He *cried* like every other baby, and He had to *learn* like every other child, and He got *hungry*, He

felt pain and sadness, and eventually He gave up His life; *killed* by the very people He created.

To summarize: “Jesus emptied himself” is a phrase that really echoes Jesus’ *humility*.

He gave up His **glory** & honor, His **privileges** & rights, and *even* some of His **knowledge** [explain].
But the *biggest* thing He gave up was His "face-to-face" **relationship** with God the Father. [John 17]

On earth, Jesus *always* operated on the Father's **timeline** and
submitted the Father's **plan**—even the part about dying on a **cross**...

But you must remember that Jesus *never* became less than God—that is His nature.

[v. 9-11]

Here, we see Jesus being rewarded for His humility.

God the Father gives Jesus the **highest** position.

Think about it: Most of the ways that we understand God, we get through knowing Jesus.

Jesus is who we think of when God comes to mind.

When we finish praying, we say: "in Jesus' name, Amen!"

According to the Bible, The role of the Holy Spirit is to point us to Jesus.

So, why does Jesus—the Son—get all of the attention?

Because God *always* lifts up people who are **humble**, and He humbles those with **pride**.

Since Jesus displayed the *most* humility possible, He is given His glory back—and then some!

This verse *perfectly* describes what is going on here: **Psalm** 110:1

Right now, there are a lot of people who *refuse* to say "Jesus is Lord"

But one day, that will not be the case...

And so, if you have not made that **confession**, I want you to know that it is much better

for you to say "Jesus is Lord" *now*, and *keep* saying it **forever**...

than to deny him now and have to say it later.

QUESTION: Which truth about Jesus from tonight's reading motivates you to worship Him the most?