

# Light Brings Salt

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## Iron Range Bible Church

*Dedicated to the Systematic Exposition of the Word of God*  
*"Sanctify them in the truth: Your word is truth."*



### *Attitudes that show Christian unity*

Pastor John Griffith

Last week we began to examine the opening paragraph of Philippians 2 and there we noted the basis for Christian unity as well as the benefits that are ours in union with Christ. Now this week with verses 2-4 we find the attitudes that are essential for Christian unity.

Our relationship with others is to be based on what Christ has done for us (2:2-4).

*2:2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.*

*2:3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself;*

*2:4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.*

The basis of the four fold exhortation here in vs:2-4 is the four fold appeal he made in 2:1 which they are based on. Before he gives us the four steps to Christian unity he very subtly slips in a another reason to motivate them in the direction they should be moving as a congregation, and it is a personal one, Paul didn't ignore his own personal feelings or happiness while ministering to others.

"...*make my joy complete*..." this is the 4th time he has mentioned his own happiness - joy/contentment. (#1 - 1:4-5; #2 - 1:18 he rejoices that Christ is preached; #3 - 1:18-19 I will continue to rejoice, for I know that through your prayers and the help given by the Spirit of Jesus Christ it will turn out for my deliverance.)

Now he adds a fourth factor that would contribute to making his joy complete, full, a continued unity and oneness in the local body of Christ at Philippi. (This first phrase here is actually the main clause for vs:1-4)

There is a direct correlation between the 4 appeals/benefits because of our relationship with

Christ in vs:1 and the 4 steps to unity given here in vs:2-4.

### **The Basis for Christian Unity**

2:1 Personal benefits:

1. Encouragement from being in Christ (salv/pos. in Christ)
2. Comfort from His love (it is continued and unconditional)
3. Fellowship with the Spirit basis for all relationships
4. Tenderness and compassion

### **The Steps to Christian Unity**

2:2-4 Doing for others based on what Christ has done for you:

1. Be like minded
2. Maintain the same love
3. Be one in spirit and purpose
4. Be unselfish and humble.

Now lets examine these four attitudes that are so necessary to Christian unity.

**#1. being of the same mind** - (φρονεω) to think the same thing; to think, to *have an opinion, have understanding*, to set one's mind on something, as having an attitude or frame of mind, to *think in such a way*. The emphasis clearly is on the content of thought not the process of thought.

This does not mean that we are ever to pursue **unity of thought at the expense of truth**. What Paul assumes is that the same mind, the same thinking is right thinking, consistent with the truth. We as believers, of all people, have the only real basis for unity in thought and action, **the Word of God**. Christ spoke of this concept, that is the importance of the Word, very dramatically in His prayer to the Father just before His death. Jn 17:14 "I have given them {disciples} your word... Jn 17:17 "Sanctify them by the truth, your word is truth."

Our vital union - our positional relationship must be constantly nurtured in the assembling together in the name of our Savior and the study of His word. Without the consistent nurturing, that is feeding on the Word, there is no spiritual growth.

One of the purposes of this unity is to maintain a convincing witness before the community, before the world to the revelation of God in Christ and for His love for them. (2:21; Jn. 13:34-35)

So as Christians we have a common message around which to build our thoughts and our life style, our pattern of life. As Christ was one with God, and we are one with Him, so we are to be one with another.

### **#2. maintaining the same love**

Because of our position in Christ He loves us continually and unconditionally, that will never change.

That's why Paul can say that "*nothing will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" Rom. 8:38-39 Paul exhorts the Philippians to love as Christ loves, not conditionally, not just in response to love from others.

Conditional love is easy, it is more difficult to love when we are rejected or being criticized. One of the greatest marks of the advancing growing believer is the love of believers expressed towards others. This is to identify and separate believers from the kosmos. (John. 13:34-35)

This love is purposeful, intelligent and the product of the empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit. Paul spells out the attitudes and actions that this love should manifest in the life of the believer in 1 Cor 13:4-7 such as: patience, kindness, concern, humility, gentleness, objectivity, fairness, honesty, and sincerity. All are readily observed when in action.

In summary this love always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

This expression of unconditional love creates the environment of true Christian unity. If there is no unity of thought under the ministry of the Holy Spirit there is no possibility of exhibiting the same characteristics of Christian love as listed by Paul and demonstrated by Christ.

### **#3. united in spirit, intent on one purpose.**

The emphasis here is on being harmonious or of the same spirit. While being *intent on one purpose* once again places the emphasis on being one in thinking φροῦεω which is translated one in purpose. If we're one in thinking then we should be one in purpose.

If we have "like-mindedness" (#1), and we have "loving attitudes and actions" (#2) then only one result can flow from that, a oneness in the body of Christ, that is within the Local Church, local body of gathered believers, who are the visible microcosm of the body of Christ.

This is true fellowship (κοινωνία) with the Spirit. We must recognize that this is something that does not happen overnight, it takes time. As we all grow in knowledge and wisdom and discernment then this unity of spirit and oneness of purpose becomes a reality.

The only way our position can be reflected in our life, is through our thinking, attitudes and actions, which is what Paul is dealing with here. This is the oneness in spirit and purpose that Paul had in mind.

### **#4. Be unselfish and humble in all relationships - or we are to reflect true humility.**

Here we have to examine vs:3-4 to see the practical application in the life of the believer or how this same thinking and having the same love, this unity of spirit and oneness of purpose is to manifest itself in the life of the committed believer in Jesus Christ in our service to and relationship with one another.

Next time we'll pick up and analyze these two verses.

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## MY MEETING (ALMOST) WITH OBAMA

Here's an email about Senator Obama's visit to a base in a combat zone from an impeccable source - the first two paragraphs are redacted to protect the author (a 23 year vet of more than one branch of the military):

<...>

I had a first hand view of Barrack Obama's "fact finding" mission, when he passed through this base.

While I can't name it, it's one of the largest air bases in the region, with up to 8000 troops (depending on influxes and transients in mobilization/demobilization status), mostly Airmen and Soldiers, but some Marines, Sailors, Koreans, Japanese, Aussies, Brits, US Civil Service, contractors including KBR, Blackwater and Halliburton, among others in the news. The overwhelming majority of all of

these are professional, courteous and disciplined. Problems are rare.

Casualties are also rare. This base has a large hospital for evacuation—twenty plus beds. I have yet to see a casualty in one, though I am told there are about three evacuations a week through this region, of which two on average are things like sports injuries, vehicle accidents or duty related falls and such. You can tell from the news that the war is going well. The ghouls are now focusing on Afghanistan, since there is no blood to type with here.

This oped is of course subjective and limited, but I will try to present the facts as I saw them. I wasn't able to see much, which makes a point all by itself.

When his plane arrived (also containing Senators Reed and Hagel, but the news has hardly mentioned them), there was a "ramp freeze." This means if you are on the flight line, and not directly involved with the event in question, you stay where you are and don't move. For a combat flight arriving or departing, this takes about ten minutes, and involves the active runway and crossing taxiways only. For Obama's flight, this took 90 minutes, during which time a variety of military missions came grinding to a halt. Obviously, this visit was important, right?

95% of base wanted nothing to do with him. I have met three troops who support him, and literally hundreds who regard him as a buffoon, a charlatan, a hindrance to their mission or a flat out enemy of progress. Even when the rumors were publicly admitted, almost no one left their duty sections to try to see him, unless they were officers whose presence was officially required.

Mister Obama's motorcade drove up from the flight line and entered the dining hall toward the end of lunch time. Diners were chased out and told to make other arrangements for food, in the middle of the duty day.

Now, there are close to 8000 troops on the base and its nearby satellites. No one came up from the Army side (except perhaps a few ranking officers). The airbase resumed

operation, once he cleared the flightline, as if nothing had happened. The dining hall holds about 300 people and was not full. The troops did not want to meet him and the feeling was apparently mutual. In attendance, besides the Official Entourage, were the base's senior officers, some support personnel, and a very few carefully vetted supporters who'd made special arrangements. No photos were allowed. No question and answer with the troops. No real acknowledgment that the troops existed.

Obama left around 1530, during the Muslim Call to Prayer, so he's not a practicing Muslim. He was in a convoy guarded by (so I'm told) both State Department and Secret Service Personnel.

Less than three hours...

Within 48 hours he was in Afghanistan. It takes most troops longer than that to in-process and get cleared on safety, threats, policies and such. Yet he somehow made a strategic summary by not talking to anyone and not seeing anything.

Twenty-four hours after that, he was in Kuwait, back here, and then home, so fast we didn't even know he arrived the second time at this base.

I can't imagine any officer of the few he met told him anything other than what they tell the troops, and what their own leadership at the Pentagon tell them—we're winning. Our troops are stomping the guts out of the insurgency. The surge worked and is working. If the insurgents have to divert to Afghanistan, it means they can't fight in Iraq anymore. We should not change the rules and retreat with the enemy on the ropes as we did in Vietnam. We should finish kicking their teeth in. The Iraqi government now controls 10 of 18 provinces, with US assistance in the rest. Let us win the war. 90% of the troops I know, even those opposed to the war, say that is the way to win. Victory comes from winning, not from "change." In fact, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs is on record as opposing Obama's strategic theory.

Since he obviously knew in advance that's what they'd tell him, and since he didn't care to talk to the troops (we're told by the Left that the troops are horrified, shocked, forced to commit atrocities with tears in their eyes, distraught, burned out, fed up with losing, etc) and find out how they feel, and was barely in country long enough to need a shower and a change of clothes, we can only call this for what it is.

A disgraceful PR stunt, using the troops as a platform for his ego and campaign.

In comparison, I've seen four star generals and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff on this base. They each held an all ranks call, met with and briefed the personnel, and took questions on every subject from tour length to uniform design to rules of engagement to weapon choice to long term policy, from the newest airmen to the senior NCO with TEN 120-180 day tours since Sep 11. It's very clear they want to know what the troops think, and to keep them informed of events. It's equally clear mister Obama does not.

From here we must move to my opinion part of the oped.

Obama clearly doesn't care about the troops, doesn't care about America, doesn't care about anything except hearing his own voice and the chance to sit at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue...From where he'll bring us the proven Democratic wartime leadership of Bosnia and the Balkans (US forces still there), Somalia (US forces prevailed despite being ill equipped by executive order, and taking heavy casualties), Haiti (what were we doing there again?), Desert One (oops?), Vietnam (where we snatched defeat from the jaws of victory), Korea (still there), WWI, and the fluke success of WWII won by such wonderful liberal notions as concentration camps for Japanese Americans, nukes, FBI investigations of waitresses who dated soldiers in case they were "morally corrupt" and the (valid) occupation of and continued presence in Italy, Japan and Germany for 60 years, which they are conveniently pretending won't happen with Iraq.

That's not "change." That's "failure we can do without."

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## The Brain's Master Clock

*Daniel 2:21*

"It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings; He gives wisdom to wise men And knowledge to men of understanding.

Our bodies have many different rhythms. For example, your body temperature and your blood pressure cycle throughout the 24-hour day. Other body rhythms complete their cycle in 7 days or 28 days and so on.

Some bodily rhythms are controlled through the hypothalamus, some by the pituitary gland but there are other glands that control the rhythms of other organs. This arrangement sounds sort of like standing in a room with hundreds of clocks ticking away. And to make matters worse, each clock goes off on its own time - none are set to the same time. It could be a confusing mess.

But now it has been learned that the brain has one master clock that coordinates all the other clocks in the body. This master clock goes by the initials SCN. It was once thought that the hypothalamus did this work. But the hypothalamus is just an assistant to the SCN. Together they turn out a bewildering array of chemical signals for the rest of the body so that everything keeps humming along in fine order.

So here we have one more example of the intricate and wise design of our loving Creator, and how He leaves no detail of life to chance. If He can do this, He certainly wants you to bring all the details of your life to Him as well.