

# Lookout mtn.conference 1973-03 Philippians

by Stan Ford

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*The sermon explores the themes of harmony, humility, and holiness in the Christian life, modeled after the example of Christ.*

**Duration:** 39:38

**Scripture:** Matthew 6:33, Philippians 1:1-11, Philippians 2:1-11

**Topics:** "Christian Unity", "Humility In Service"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher encourages the listeners to be of one mind and to have the mind of Christ. He emphasizes the importance of unity and harmony among believers. The preacher reminds the audience that true harmony can only be found in Jesus Christ. He also shares examples of individuals who exemplified this harmony in their ministry. The sermon is based on Philippians chapter 2 and highlights the need for humility and selflessness in serving others.

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## Transcript

I'm going to try, I don't know whether I will succeed, I'm going to try to go right through the chapter today. For the sake of time, we will not read the whole chapter at this time. We will read just a few verses that all of us are so familiar with, I almost feel like asking you to quote them with me.

Philippians chapter 2. If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any vows of mercy, so willst thou ye my joy that ye be like-minded, having the same love being of one accord and of one mind. Let nothing be done to strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equaled with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in his passion as of a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, for the glory of God the Father." May the Lord just add his blessing to these wonderful words from his own precious words. You will have remembered that, in the past days, we have been considering just a little of the first chapter of this wonderful epistle.

I reminded you that first we saw Paul, the pastor, with a heart of love towards those to whom he was writing, and we thought that here was one Paul, the pastor, who was reflecting as he thought of those that he had met, his brethren and sisters in Christ in Philippi. He thought of the problems they had to face, and as he looked back over his own life and over his experience there in Philippi, he writes the glorious words that make up the 11 verses of the first chapter, or the first 11 verses of the first chapter. Then yesterday, you remember, we thought of Paul, not the pastor, but Paul the prisoner, and he was not now reflecting, but he was rejoicing.

He was crying again and again, rejoice, and again I say, rejoice. Today we're going a step further, and we're going to see not now as the pastor, or now as the prisoner, but we're going to see Paul as the preacher. And, in chapter 2, we take one of the greatest, if not the greatest, sermons that the apostle ever preached, and he associates with it so many things.

I'm going to suggest that here we find the preacher requesting, and he dares to say to those Christians there in Philippi, O fulfill ye my joy. As again he says, the outcome of my preaching shall be this, or should be this, that the mind of Christ might be in you. And so, as he, as a preacher, makes requests of those Christians in Philippi, he has so many, many things to bring before them.

I'm going to suggest that the first thing he does as a preacher, he encourages harmony among the saints. And, I've got a strong feeling that this is one of the things that every one of us that do a little preaching ought to remember. Quite frequently, and I say this with some shame, quite frequently one finds that the preacher does not encourage harmony among the saints, but it is often from the platform that strength can be stirred up.

But, here was a great preacher, and in those opening verses of this glorious chapter, from verses 1 to 4, he encouraged his harmony in the saints. And then you will notice, indeed, from verse 5 to 11, he is not now encouraging harmony among the saints, but he is exemplifying humility in the Savior. He's willing to say, I'll show you what it means to be humble, I know not how often he had spoken with Peter.

There were times when speaking with Peter, it seems almost as though there had been hard words said. I only know this, that Peter, when he wrote his letter, said, and be clothed with humility. But, when the apostle writes to the church at Colossae, he says, put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh.

And, here is one who is humble, and he exemplifies humility in the Savior. But, at first, he encourages humility, I'm sorry, encourages harmony among the saints, and exemplifies humility in the Savior. Then he goes on, and he expects holiness in the spirit.

And, there, from verse 12 to 16, he speaks of the holiness that is expected of any man to whom the message of the gospel has been given. And, as a steward of Jesus Christ, there are things expected of them, and one of the things is holiness. And, then he draws this chapter to its close, and I'm thrilled at this, make my heart rejoice.

For, then, he exhibits helpfulness in the servants, and he shows us the story, first of his own experience, and then of Timothy, and then of Ephesus, and over all their ministry, he dares to say, tell me, is not this the very core of our ministry, that we are helpful to the faith? Firstly, then, he encourages harmony, and what glorious harmony it is. He dares to remind us that there can never be real harmony among God's people, until we understand that the source of harmony is in Jesus Christ Himself. It seems to me that, in

verses 1 and 2, he reminds us that everything we need is found in Christ.

Why, he dares to say, if there be therefore, and that's not the if of doubt. Let's remember that. If there be therefore, and it is not the if of doubt, it is the if of argument.

He says, if there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any communion, fellowship of the Spirit, if any care, if any vows of mercy, he dares to say that, as we think of Jesus Christ, all that you and I must express to others is found in Him. If there be any consolation, what may I change it for? It is not the if of doubt, it is the if of argument. As there is consolation in Christ, as there is comfort of love, as there is communion, fellowship of the Spirit, as there is care, vows of mercy, it's all found in Jesus Christ.

Brethren, sisters, if there is one thing I am absolutely confident that whatever the Bible desires of me, I can always see it in Jesus Christ. A long time ago at the Bristol conference, as we were going through those opening verses of the first chapter of Acts, and we were thinking of He who began both to do and to teach, I passed a comment like this. As we were thinking of the blessedness of the Saviour, I dare to say that when I think of Him, is it not true that there was no crossness in His life? There was no complaint on His lips.

There was no change in His loyalty. And the more we think of Him, the more we realize that what the Shumanitish woman said long ago is true. He's altogether love us.

And there is not a man or a woman who knows Jesus Christ who has an excuse at all for everything that we need, for harmony among God's people, we find it available in Jesus. Consolation in Christ. Come now, what if your brother or sister says something harsh of you? Is it not a joy for your heart to realize when they said things harsh about my Saviour? Isn't it? And He comforted them large? Oh brethren, when sometimes we feel in the cold, when sometimes you go to a service and you walk out and you find yourself almost alone, is there not, oh brethren, is there not comforting love when we realize that He loves us? Because I'm not always prepared to accept excuses like that, you know.

Folks say, well I went in and no one talked to me. I went home years ago, I learned all sorts of lessons from my wife, you know. I learned lessons when she intends to teach me.

But I learned lessons in just an ordinary way, as all married men do. And I returned some years ago now, after being out of prayer, I returned home, my wife was preparing for the children and so she wasn't with me. And I walked in and she said, well, did you enjoy it? I said, enjoy it? You know, it wasn't anyone's business.

Did you hear what she said? She sized me up, although I was this high, although she's much bigger herself. She says, oh, you didn't shake hands with us always. Cut two ways, isn't it? Cut two ways.

So don't let's be over-concerned when sometimes we feel in the cold, but let's find our blessed comfort in the love of Christ, that he loves us. Communion, fellowship of the spirit. Well, some of the greatest saints I've ever met have been brethren and sisters that have been isolated from others.

I may reference, was it yesterday or the day before, to dear Patti Beaton. It's hardly a day when one is going through the missionary list. And by the way, I hope you brethren and sisters were praying for the missionaries this morning.

Let's see, it was the end of Korea and China and Japan today, wasn't it? I didn't read his missionary list this morning, though. But nevertheless, as we were praying for the missionaries today, and I couldn't help but think again of the folks that I've met in different parts of the mission field. And I thought of that little girl away there in the heart of Angkor, amongst thousands, if not millions of Africans, lovely folks, but of a different social strata, of a different background.

And they have one great girl, with no one to commune with. If there was not such a thing as the communion of the spirit, what is there? Praise God, it's there, it's available for us. Everything's found in Christ.

I say as we go further, and he speaks of vows of mercy, he speaks of the heart of mercy, the care that's come from Christ, the day by day he cares for us. This is what he's daring to say to you and me. Brethren, sisters, we must have harmony among the saints, because everything that's necessary is found in Jesus.

Our consolation, our comfort, our communion, our care, it's all found in him. Having spoken of the fact that everything's found in Christ, then he dares to say, and every one of us should be like Christ. Verses two and four.

Be like-minded, he says. Love him. Do nothing to strife and gain glory.

Oh, I say, here are two things we miss. Strife, not the Bertrandine group. Vain glory cuts them up.

And God dares to say, don't you do anything for the sake of strife or vain glory. He dares to say that we should be loving and of like mind. He dares to say that we should be selfless and sympathetic.

He says, why, in lowliness of mind, let ye to steal other better than themselves. Selfless. Oh, brethren, how difficult it is.

Sympathetic. Look not every man on his own things, but on the things of others. It isn't a matter of just esteeming other better than ourselves, but it's looking on other people's things as well.

It is not only being selfless, but it is being sympathetic. And this is the way harmony comes in the church, isn't it? And brethren, sisters, when you and I came to know Jesus Christ, well, I can't speak for you, let me speak for myself. When I bowed my knee and took Christ as my saviour, I didn't realise the claims Christ was going to have on my life.

Like most of us, I expect, I just wanted to get rid of the consciousness of sin. I understood so little, I just bowed my knee and cried, God have a sinner save me. But as the days have slipped by, one has learned it, that our good friend Brother Harry has been emphasising so ably, day by day, that it isn't just what we know, but what we do.

He dares to put his hand upon us and say, esteem other better than self. Oh, how difficult it is to do that. But when there is harmony among the saints, then he exemplifies humility in the saviour.

Now you will, all of you, read, quoted, preach from, listen to sermons on the next verses that are contained here in the second chapter. As he speaks of the blessed saviour who being in the form of God, I found out in every country I visited, and it's been my joy in less than some thirty more countries to have told of Christ, I have found that of the Lord's Day Morning, there are three portions of the Word of God which I use, maybe more than any other. The fifty-third of Isaiah, the second chapter of Paul's letter to the church

at Philippi, and, as we saw, Lord's Day Morning, the fifth chapter of Revelation.

I have heard them read in a dozen and more different languages. And, upon God's people, let of the spirit drawn to Christ. And, if the spirit of God, as he has, produced these verses so frequently, why, surely, this morning our hearts will be attracted to this man who died.

But, again, we look at them. I have nothing new to say about them. You wouldn't expect me to have anything new to say about them.

I trust they may come, though, with a very freshness of the spirit, as we see humility exemplified in Christ. Would you notice, first of all, that here is the Saviour on the throne, he's concerned. On the earth, he's controlled.

On the cross, he's consistent. But, on the throne again, he's compensated. On the throne, he's concerned.

Hearken to the words of Holy Rich, who, being in the form of God, taught it not a thing to make grasp that to be equal with God. As we were thinking a little in the sixth chapter of Isaiah, of the one who is none other than the divine Son of God, as we were pondering together again something of the wonders of the Trinity, does it not thrill our hearts to realize that the one of whom we're speaking is the one who is none other than God of all blessing forever? Unto the Son, he said, thy throne, O God, is forever and ever. Yet, as we look back in the eternity that's passed, of all found worshiped by angelic beings, the upholder of all things, yet he was concerned with you and me.

I will let God look down to see if there were any that did understand, before a world doomed and damned, and pass on its way to the caverns of endless remorse. Yet, there was one who could say, O I come in the volume of the book it is written of me. I shall like to do thy will, O my God.

Oh, the wonder of it all that he ever could look down the avenue of time and see you and me, and be concerned with us. Oh God, help me to appreciate that. And, he didn't think it's a thing to be grasped at, to be held on to, to be equal with us.

But, if we see him on the throne, concerned on the earth, we see him controlled. And, this is mystery of mystery, that he who in the beginning created all things, for all things were made by him, and without him was nothing made that was made. This is that which Paul dares to say to the saints.

Aware of Corinth, he took unto himself the form of a servant to be controlled. How many times do we read words like these in Holy Writ? Not only do I delight to do thy will, O my God, but my meat is to do thy will. Here in the beginning of his days, as a boy, he said, Wish ye not that I shall be about thy part of business? This a woman at the end of his days said, Not my will, but thine be done.

I'm not sure, because I don't keep an account of what I say and where I say it, but I have a strong feeling that, when I was last with you some three years ago, we were thinking, in the 13th chapter of Hebrews, of something of the wonder of this one. I reminded you that here was a Christ of whom he could be said, and of him alone, the only man that ever lived, who finished his life where he began it, and began it where he finished it. He started off, thou holy thing that shalt be born of thee.

But is it not easy to say of a baby, thou holy thing? It's not that that counts. What counts is what they say at the end of the journey, and what is it said? He offered himself without stop to God. He started as a boy doing the will of his father, but I've heard hundreds of boys as they've come to me and said, I'd like to be

about the father's business.

Maybe they've not used those words, but that's what they've said. And I put my hand on their shoulder and say, God bless your son. And that's where it begins, but that's not where it counts.

What counts is at the end of the journey. Are they going to say, I want to be about my father's business? Christ it was, not my will, but thine be done. At the beginning of his journey, he starts his ministry, and he says to those that he looks upon their faces, blessed and merciful, but anyone can say that before they've found you out.

What do you say when three and a half years have passed, when those same people have lived in the same home, and walked the same streets, and listened to you again, and again, and again, what do you say then? What did he say? Oh hallelujah. Father forgive them. They know not what they do.

Where he started, he began, and where he ended, where he started, he finished, and where he finished, he began. Oh this is the wonder of it all. Brethren, here we see it as he who is the servant.

The gospel of Mark, he the servant of Jehovah. But if we see him on the throne concerned, and upon the earth controlled, we see upon the cross consistent. He became obedient unto death, he says.

He became obedient unto death. Oh no, please brethren, sisters, do not do not cram these words into one isolated truth. It is true that he became obedient, and therefore went to the cross.

For this was the will of the father, that is the outcome of his obedience. He went on to Calvary. But it's more than this, is it not? That here is one who became obedient to death.

Death laid its hand upon him, and he obeyed the claims of death, and he went through it. He became obedient unto it, and I thank God for that. But death had no control upon him.

He willingly and humbly placed himself under the power of death, that you and I might know the power of life. Oh glory to his name. What a savior we are.

What manner of men and women ought we to be, brethren? What manner of men and women? But then, bless God, that if we see him on the throne concerned, if we see him on the earth controlled, if we see him on the cross consistent, if we see him back on the throne, and glory to his name, he's compensated. Wherefore God has highly exalted him. Give him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.

Oh, the wonder of it all. The wonder of it all. I thank God for this.

I bless God that as we think of him, we are thinking of one who lives. For never let us forget there could be no harmony in the church unless the head was alive. There can be no great picture of humility, lest he who died was raised from amongst the dead.

And I'm glad of that. You know, I love to tell young folks that they took our blessed Lord, and they put him in a tomb. They rolled a stone over the tomb, and they put a seal on the stone, and they threw us to the soldier by the stone.

But hallelujah, no stone sealed soldier could keep him there. From the grave he arose. He had been loveless, been loveless.

I was calling a crowd of youngsters some little while ago, and they'd asked me in a school to speak on the evidence of the resurrection. I don't think any of the youngsters had any data about it. It was the schoolmaster who did.

But nevertheless, we went along and spoke on the evidence of the resurrection. And I dare you to remind these young folks that they took one of every one of the kingdoms, didn't they? They took a stone, the mineral kingdom. They took a seal, the vegetable kingdom.

They took a soldier, the animal kingdom. They took one of every one of the kingdoms, and they said, well, he's the king of kings in the tomb. But hallelujah, he defeated them all.

Wherefore God has finally exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name. What a saviour we've got. What a saviour.

And when you think of it, and then you remember, here's humility. Oh, oh God, teach me, teach me humility. But if we see exemplified in the saviour humility, then we remember that this preacher, he not only encourages harmony amongst the saints, and exemplifies humility in the saviour, but now he expects holiness in the stewards.

He's going to speak of them as stewards, as those that hold forth the word of life, as those for whom has been given the blessed treasure of the glorious message of the gospel. So he speaks to them of their holiness, and he says, first of all, their holiness depends on the work of Christ. That's the first thing he says.

Now I hear a number of folk talk about holiness. Now I'll let you into a secret. I would rather a man show me holiness than talk about it.

My experience, if it stands for anything, has been this, that the people who speak most about holiness are the people who so frequently know so little about it. They have not learned what we've already seen. The broader source is of harmony in the senses, of seeing other better than themselves.

But here the apostle does dare to say that holiness depends upon Christ himself, for he says, this is God which worketh in you, or work out your own salvation, he says, with piety and strengthfulness, material salvation. We won't forget, of course, that he's not saying work for your own salvation. He's saying work out your own salvation, and you can't work anything out unless it's in, first of all.

Well, the Lord puts it in, and he says, now you work it out, and it's God who worketh in you. The source of anything that is for the glory of heaven is found in Christ. And then he dares to tell us that our holiness not only depends upon Christ, but he says our holiness displays the will of Christ.

If our holiness depends on the work of Christ, it's God who worketh in you, then our holiness displays the will of Christ. As he says in verse 15, be blameless and harmless. Blameless and harmless.

Oh, brethren and sisters, I must rebuke you to interpret what that means. It hurts me too much. It is that one of us would stand before another and say, I am completely blameless.

Any one of us who would say we're harmless. But this is that which is required of us, that if we are going to be stewards of the Word, then surely we must be those who are blameless and harmless. But then he says holiness not only depends upon the work of Christ, and holiness displays the will of Christ.

He dares to say that holiness declares the Word of Christ, holding forth the Word of Life. Now, brethren, the longer I find myself in the service of God, the more I realize that it is the Word of Christ that brings liberty to men and women. That I am responsible, both in my gospel preaching and in my ministry, that I shall present to men and women the Word of the Lord.

Not what I think about it, but the Word of the Lord. I have a desire that if there are Christians, I want to teach them, and if there are unconverted, I want to reach them for Jesus Christ, and I can neither teach nor reach unless the Word of God is declared. And holiness declares the Word of Christ.

Not what we think of it, but it is faithful and true to that which has been written. And then he goes on, and he dares to say this. He dares to say, as a preacher, that he not only expects holiness in his spirit, but he exhibits helpfulness in his sermons.

I think that's wonderful, don't you? And would you notice he uses three distinct things to show helpfulness. He uses, first of all, sacrifice, and then he uses service, and then he uses suffering as that which can be helpful to others. First of all, sacrifice, and he speaks a little himself.

And he dares to say that my sacrifice is helpful to the saints. Yea, says verse 18, yea, if I'm the author. What then goes on? I will rejoice.

And then he goes on, and for the same cause also do you joy and rejoice with me. If I be author, if I be sacrificed, if something happens to me, then if it's for the glory of God, I rejoice. And my rejoicing in my, in my sacrifice, it enables you to rejoice also.

What a remarkable thing. That as a servant of God, all that we say and do should have this before us, not only the glory of Christ, but the blessing of the church. And then having spoken of his own sacrifice, and he speaks of it so briefly, he speaks of himself being offered, then he goes on and speaks a greater length of Timothy.

That's always the sign of a man of God, isn't it? He speaks of others more than he speaks of himself. All he witnesses, he tells folk what Jesus means to him, but he speaks of others. And here, having spoken indeed of a sacrifice that he made, now he speaks of service that Timothy has made.

And he does tell us three things, it seems to me, about Timothy. He says, first of all, that Timothy was a true man. In verse 21, all seek their own, not the things of Jesus Christ.

Isn't God saying, as he holds Timothy up in contrast, that here is a man that is true? Others may seek the things of the twelve that he thinks seek the things of Christ. Brethren, sisters, if you and I are going to be servants of the Lord in any capacity, I believe I am not just speaking now of being a preacher. I wonder why it is, I wonder why it is, that amongst us we have some idea that the greatest gift is the gift of preaching.

Oh, how many young men just long that they might be able to show their spirituality by preaching? Please remember this, that the Bible teaches, as we've seen already through the ministry of our brother, the priesthood of every believer. And it is this that has kept me amongst the people I am amongst. And, really, that's the only reason that's kept me amongst them.

But a realization of the priesthood of every believer, that Peter said, you are, not we are, Paul and Apostles and Cephas, but you are, you are. Isn't it wonderful as holy priests we have spiritual sacrifices,

as we've been reminded to offer to God? And isn't it glorious as royal priests we go out to represent him who has called us out of nature's darkness into his glorious light? And I dare suggest that this is the highest, this is the highest of our spirituality, that as priests we may offer sacrifices first to God, then as royal priests, as holy priests of God, as royal priests we must go out and present Christ to the nations. And I want a deep appreciation of the Savior.

You know, Lord's Day morning, after we had remembered the Lord here, I turned to the dear sister that was sitting next to me, oh wait a minute, but I can't even remember, I don't know. But I turned, if you were the person you'll know what I said, I looked at you and I said, you know, I was thinking again this morning, as so often I do over Lord's Day morning, I was thinking of that lovely verse from the 48th chapter of Genesis. Remember when Joseph said to his brethren, go tell my Father of all my glory.

We tried to do that Sunday morning, didn't we? We tried to tell the Father of all his glory. Our brethren, sisters, don't let's forget this, that our remembrance Lord's Day morning is not a service. It's the Lord's death we shall, the Lord's death.

We shall it until he comes. We're there that we might present our appreciation of Christ to the Father. This is the height of spirituality, appreciating Christ for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

But nevertheless, if we do rise that we might be a servant of the Lord in a different capacity, it's still true that whether as servants of the Lord in the ordinary things, we may be true and seek the things of Christ. And then he says, he's not only true, but don't you forget no man's true until he's tested. And so he says, he's tested in verse 22.

You know the proof. You know the proof of him. For to stand, he hath served with me in the gospel.

This is it. And then he says something more. Maybe the Lord's just giving me a real hit this morning.

Then he says he's tender. He says he's one who cares. This is the servant of the Lord.

Tender. Do we care for one another? And then having brought before us the fact that service, the servant, is helpful to the Lord, then he dares to tell us that Epaphroditus, not now in his sacrifice, and not now just in his service, but in his suffering, is helpful to the Lord. He dares to tell us the story of this man.

He says so many wonderful things about him. We haven't time to look at them. Just to say this, he says first of all, of him, verse 30, that he was a brother that night.

So that covers a lot, doesn't it? A brother. I like that. Did you notice as Brother Harry was ministering to us this morning? Of course you did.

Did you notice the words of the Savior? When they turned to Mary, who'd anointed him, and they began to criticize her, for what purpose is this wait? Do you remember the words of Jesus? Let her alone. Was that good? Amen. Isn't it wonderful? And I'll let you in on a secret.

If I really thought you were my brother, I wouldn't be willing to listen to someone else talk about you, would I? I have an earthly brother. If you came to me and said something about our bill, I'd put my hand on your shoulder, and I'd shake you, and I'd say, hey, that's our bill. He was a brother.

He was a companion in labor. I like that. I like that.

A companion in labor. Do you know what he did? Well, I know he brought from, he brought from, oh, I know that we're going to look at that in the last chapter, so I mustn't go into that too much, but there are other ways he labored. Isn't it wonderful to be a companion in labor? He says he was a fellow soldier.

Shall I be carried to the skies in flowery beds of ease, while others walk to in the pines and tell true bloody things? He was a soldier. He says of him that he was a messenger and a minister. Oh, this is who he was and what he suffered.

He suffered sickness, and he suffered sorrow. He was full of evidence. Isn't that helpful to the saints? And he who suffered was he who supplied their lack of service.

As a preacher, this is what he said. He says, Brethren, sisters in Philippi, whatever else you do, whatever else you do, let me encourage harmony among you. Be of one mind.

Whatever else you do, let me exemplify humility to you. And you let the mind of Christ be in you also. Whatever else you do, remember I expect holiness from you.

Remember that this only comes to the faith. Whatever else you do, exhibit helpfulness in your complete activities, that men and women may look and say, there's a church of God in Philippi, and may it be so for you.

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