



A Community of Cruciformity

Philippians 1:1-11, 27

03.10.2019

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“Christianity is especially a social religion; and that to turn it into a solitary religion, is indeed to destroy it.”

- John Wesley

How does Philippians inform and shape how we build Authentic Community?

Philippians 1:1-11, 27

Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all God's holy people in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers

and deacons: Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart and, whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus. And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God...Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel.

Mark 1:14

The Kingdom of God [heaven] has come near, repent and believe the good news!

Ekklesia: (literally: “assembly,” translation: “church”) an assembly of people who confess and worship Jesus as God’s exalted, crucified King

- He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. (1:6)
- For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. (1:21)
- Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenwards in Christ Jesus. (3:14)
- Rejoice always, again I say rejoice! (4:4)
- I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. (4:13)

“What is a yuppie? We guide our lives more by unconscious myth and feeling than we do by rationality and so we may define the term yuppie by four interpenetrating slogans: Quality of Life, Upward Mobility, the Pursuit of Excellence, and Material Comfort...Obviously, not all of this is bad, nor novel. People have always wanted these things and the myths of past generations (e.g., rags to riches, work hard and get ahead) hardly seem different. Neither is there anything inherently immoral in these things. The emphasis on excellence should not be challenged. What is novel, less moral, and needs challenge is the fact that it is tied to an explicit philosophy of life in which unbridled individualism, selfishness, and [personal] development are unabashedly held up as virtues. Self-development is salvation pure and simple. Everything — marriage, family,

community, justice, church, morality, service to others, sacrifice—makes sense and has value only insofar as it enhances one's self. Self-development is pursued with a sense of duty and asceticism that were formerly reserved for religion because, for the yuppie, self-development is salvation, the religious project.”

- Ronald Rolheiser, *The Shattered Lantern*

CRUCIFORMITY: Conformity to the crucified Christ

“What Paul means by conformity to the crucified Christ [is] showing that this conformity is a dynamic correspondence in daily life to the strange story of Christ crucified as the primary way of experiencing the love and grace of God...Paul's mission in life was to seek to order the lives of Christian congregations by pulling everything into the tremendous gravitational field of the cross.”

- Michael Gorman, *Cruciformity*

Paul succeeded more clearly than anyone in expressing what is the ultimately distinguishing feature of Christianity...The distinguishing feature of Christianity as opposed to the ancient world religions and the modern humanisms...is quite literally according to Paul 'this Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ crucified.' It is not indeed as risen, exalted, living, divine, but as crucified, that this Jesus Christ is distinguished unmistakably from the many

risen, exalted, living gods and deified founders from religion, from the Caesars, geniuses, and heroes of world history.”

- Hans Kung, *On Being a Christian*

Philippians 2:5-8

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!

Cruciformity is when our life takes the shape of Christ’s cross.

“Although [x] Not [y] but [z]”

“Although [status] not [selfishness] but [selflessness]”

Although [very nature God] **Not** [use that to his own advantage, not self-seeking] **But** [made himself nothing to be obedient to the way of death on a cross]

Philippians 2:1-5

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being

one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus.

Philippians 1:27

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel.

The church is a colony of heaven.

Philippians 3:20

But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.

“Live faithfully now as a colony of citizens of that heavenly imperial city, in the midst of this colony of Rome. Your Lord and Savior—your ‘Emperor’—is Jesus, whose cruciform pattern of faith, love, power, and hope is the city charter of your colony. And as you live by this charter, do so in unity, for you must be one as you face persecution together for the sake of Christ.”

- Michael Gorman, *Cruciformity*