



If There Is Any...

Paul closed out chapter 1 of Philippians by telling his readers that it had been granted to them to suffer for Christ just as he was. We previously saw how the word *granted* was to be understood as a gift, a blessing, and even favor (see [Phil 1:29](#)). Perhaps a difficult truth to digest, but Paul followed this up with an immensely encouraging passage, and it begins here:

***Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.***

[Philippians 2:1-2](#)

The first word of the sentence, “*therefore*,” tells us that what is about to be said is in direct relation to the previous thought, and being that there were no chapter and verse breaks in the original text, we can easily follow the correlation. Even though suffering is to be an expected part of the Christian walk, and some suffering is even granted or gifted to us as a blessing by God, this is no reason in those times to lack joy and hope. In fact, Paul seemed to really want to drive home three primary reminders for those who might be subject to suffering for Christ:

***if there is any encouragement in Christ***  
***if there is any consolation of love***  
***if there is any fellowship of the Spirit***  
***if any affection and compassion***

The “ifs” here are rhetorical in nature, forcing us to ask ourselves some hard personal questions. Will we look for ***encouragement in Christ***, our Savior? We will seek the ***consolation of love*** among other believers and in our personal relationship with the Lord? We will commit to and pursue the ***fellowship of the Spirit*** with other believers? We will both seek out and pour out ***affection and compassion*** for our Christian family? Or will we do the opposite, focusing on the negative of our situation or what we lack and isolating ourselves from believers? Paul’s words insist we do the former. And if we do these things, we find inward joy and exhibit external evidence of our true faith as witness to those around us.

Paul makes this even more personal by saying that if believers do focus on and remember these things, they make ***his joy complete***. Like a parent, a good pastor also finds joy when the flock entrusted to his care grows in love of the Lord and of others. This is confirmation of the fruit of his labor, and no doubt brings great encouragement, especially if the pastor (in this case, Paul) is himself suffering for the cause of Christ and for the sake of the church. His hard work is paying off.



As we've seen before, Paul is adamant that believers stay united in their faith. Operating in the **same mind, same love, and same Spirit**, believers are the body of Christ, and should always be intentionally working together for **one purpose**. Such an important reminder and one we each need to prayerfully consider! Here, inspired Scripture demands that Christians be united in the faith. This must be founded on biblical truths – remember, there is no command to unite in purpose, work, or cause with any other faiths or around errant doctrines, in fact the opposite is true (see [2 Cor 6:14-16](#)). However, there is the requirement to join together in the labor of love for the gospel, fellow believers, and our Lord.

Going forward in this chapter, we'll see more and more encouragement to live out our faith in outward, tangible, and challenging ways. We'll be pressed to get outside the comfort zones the world tells us is right, surrender our wishes and wills for the good of others, and push ourselves harder to walk the walk of true believers, all of which bring honor and glory to God, and serve as a powerful witness to the lost and those weak in faith that it is indeed possible to **live as Christ** ([Phil 1:21](#)).

~Associate Pastor Jeremy Preece

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