

Bible study Guide for Phillipians 2:1-13

Philippians 2:1-13 is a passage that emphasises the importance of unity, humility, and selflessness in the Christian life. Here's a brief background:

Context

Philippians 2:1-13 is part of Paul's letter to the Philippians church, which he wrote while in prison (likely in Rome or Caesarea). The Philippians church was a beloved community that Paul had founded during his second missionary journey (Acts 16:9-40). Paul's letter aims to encourage and guide the Philippians in their faith, addressing various issues and concerns.

Key Themes

1. **Unity:** Paul urges the Philippians to be of one mind, having the same love, and being united in spirit (2:2). He emphasises the importance of unity and harmony in the church.
2. **Humility:** Paul encourages the Philippians to adopt the mindset of Christ, who humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death on the cross (2:5-8). He stresses the value of humility and selflessness in Christian relationships.
3. **Selflessness:** Paul exhorts the Philippians to look not only to their own interests but also to the interests of others (2:4). He encourages them to prioritise the well-being and needs of others.

1. Philippians 2:1-4: Unity and Humility

- Paul appeals to the Philippians' shared experience of Christ and the Spirit to encourage unity.
- Paul urges the Philippians to be united in their love and spirit.
- Paul encourages the Philippians to prioritise humility and value others above themselves.
- Paul exhorts the Philippians to look out for the interests of others.

2. Philippians 2:5-8: The Mindset of Christ

- Paul encourages the Philippians to adopt the mindset of Christ.
- Christ existed in the form of God but did not exploit his equality with God for personal gain.
- Christ humbled himself, taking on human form and becoming a servant.
- Christ's humility led him to become obedient to the point of death on the cross.

3. Philippians 2:9-11: The Exaltation of Christ

- God highly exalted Christ, giving him the name above every name.
- Every knee will bow at the name of Jesus.
- Every tongue will acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord.

4. Philippians 2:12-13: Working Out Our Salvation

- Paul encourages the Philippians to work out their salvation.
- God is at work in the Philippians, enabling them to will and act according to his purpose.

Application

The passage has significant implications for Christian living, emphasising the importance of:

1. Unity and harmony: Christians should strive for unity and harmony, reflecting the unity of the Trinity.
2. Humility and selflessness: Christians should adopt the mindset of Christ, prioritise the needs of others and demonstrate humility and selflessness.
3. Christ-like living: Christians should seek to live like Christ, reflecting his character and teachings in their relationships and daily lives.

This passage provides a rich foundation for exploring the nature of Christian community, the importance of humility, and the example of Christ's selflessness.

Questions

1. How can we practically demonstrate unity and harmony in our relationships, as encouraged in Philippians 2:1-4?
2. What does it mean to "value others above yourselves" (Philippians 2:3), and how can we apply this in our daily lives?
3. How does Christ's humility and selflessness in Philippians 2:5-8 inspire you to live a life of service and obedience?
4. In what ways can we "make ourselves nothing" (Philippians 2:7) in our own lives, and what benefits might this bring?
5. How does the example of Christ's exaltation in Philippians 2:9-11 motivate you to live a life that honours God?
6. What does it mean to "work out your salvation with fear and trembling" (Philippians 2:12), and how can we balance this with the assurance of God's sovereignty?

7. How does the truth that "it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfil his good purpose" (Philippians 2:13) encourage or challenge you in your walk with God?
8. In what ways can we prioritise God's good purpose for our lives, as mentioned in Philippians 2:13, and how can we discern what that purpose is?