

Preacher: Mike H

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Description: Uncover the bedrock of Christian unity in Philippians 1. This sermon challenges us to embrace humility, recognizing that all good in us stems from God's initiating work, not our own striving.

Key Passages: Philippians 1:1-11, John 1:1.

Summary

Philippians is a letter from the Apostle Paul to the church in Philippi, a Roman colony. Paul's message that "Jesus is Lord" directly challenged the Roman message of "Caesar is Lord," leading to his imprisonment and the conversion of diverse individuals like Lydia (a wealthy merchant), a demon-possessed slave girl, and a jailer with his family. Paul wrote this letter primarily to address divisions within the church, particularly between Euodia and Syntyche, but he builds a strong theological foundation for unity through humility before directly addressing the conflict.

The sermon extracts three key reasons for unity from Philippians 1:1-11:

1. Anything good in us is God's work (Philippians 1:6): Paul emphasizes that "He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion." This truth humbles those who rely on their own success or efforts for righteousness. God has "inaugurated" a good work within them, regardless of people's self-perception. Our spiritual growth is credited to God's grace, not our own hard work.

2. We share in God's enabling grace (Philippians 1:7-8): This grace is not just for salvation, but it's the grace that empowers believers to do good works and navigate life's challenges. Paul, writing from prison after enduring immense suffering, highlights that this grace is shared by all believers. God provides specific grace tailored to individual circumstances and seasons (e.g., for new mothers, difficult workplaces, suffering for Christ like Paul), enabling us to "shine like stars" in our lives.

3. Focus on the Day of Christ (Philippians 1:10-11): The ultimate return of Jesus, when every knee will bow and every tongue confess Him as Lord, serves as a powerful reminder for humility and unity within the church. This future event encourages believers to put aside "petty squabbles" and disagreements, fixing their eyes on Christ, as that day will be entirely about His glory and not about individual achievements or disputes.

Discussion Questions:

1. What does the sermon's teaching that "Jesus is Kyrios" (Lord), even over Caesar, mean for how we live our lives now, in current society?
2. The sermon notes the first converts in Philippi included a wealthy merchant, a demon-possessed slave girl, and a jailer, calling them a "ragtag group of individuals." How does the diversity of people in church reflect God's grace, and what does this mean for our church body?
3. The sermon emphasizes that any "good work" in us is "God's work," not accomplished through our own efforts. How has remembering this truth shaped your walk with the Lord?
4. Mike points out that 'God has started something good in you, which he will complete into eternity.' based on verse 6. Why should this be comforting to us in our daily lives? Who does it say will complete this work?
5. Mike finishes the sermon by reminding us that our petty disagreements and issues seem very insignificant when we fix our eyes on Jesus and his return. Scripture repeatedly speaks about those who 'eagerly look forward to his appearing.' Are you eager for Jesus' return? If not, feel free to explore that with the group.