

The Determination of the Lord Jesus

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Philippians 2

1 Therefore, if there is any encouragement in the Messiah, if there is any comfort of love, if there is any fellowship in the Spirit, if there is any compassion and sympathy,
2 then fill me with joy by having the same attitude, sharing the same love, being united in spirit, and keeping one purpose in mind.
3 Do not act out of selfish ambition or conceit, but with humility think of others as being better than yourselves.
4 Do not be concerned about your own interests, but also be concerned about the interests of others.
5 Have the same attitude among yourselves that was also in the Messiah Jesus:
6 In God's own form existed he, and shared with God equality, deemed nothing needed grasping.
7 Instead, poured out in emptiness, a servant's form did he possess, a mortal man becoming. In human form he chose to be,
8 and lived in all humility, death on a cross obeying.
9 Now lifted up by God to heaven, a name above all others given, this matchless name possessing.
10 And so, when Jesus' name is called, the knees of everyone should fall wherever they're residing.
11 Then every tongue in one accord, will say that Jesus the Messiah is Lord, while God the Father praising.
[International Standard Version]

We just sang the song we sing every week. In this song 212, verse 3, the word 'one' appears seven times. After all, it is most important for us to become one. Let me read the same verses, from verse 2;

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2 then fill me with joy by having the same attitude, sharing the same love, being united in spirit, and keeping one purpose in mind.
3 Do not act out of selfish ambition or conceit, but with humility think of others as being better than yourselves.
4 Do not be concerned about your own interests, but also be concerned about the interests of others.

Let us discuss these verses briefly. Also, let us divide the discussion into two subjects. Firstly, what is the

way to get to the determination of the Lord Jesus? Secondly, what is the characteristic of the determination of Jesus?

As you know, Jesus' believers in the world place very high importance on the Epistle to the Philippians. It is also known as 'Letter of Joy.' The word 'joy' appears a number of times.

At the same time, it also explains where this joy comes from, that is to say, it reminds us of the indescribable great love of Jesus, especially in chapter 2. The word 'joy' appears 358 times in the Old Testament and 133 times in the New Testament.

Why does it appear so many times in the Old Testament? Presumably, because it was used to lead David. So, the word 'joy' appears 523 times in the Old and New Testament combined.

The Bible describes the importance, necessity and possibility of being pleased. It is not just the desire and prayers of Paul that are explained, but the epistle actually tells us the intention of the Lord. That is to say, it tells us to have the same attitude, to share the same love, to be united in spirit and to keep one purpose in mind.

The eternal plan of the Lord God is explained in 8:29 of Romans: "those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son."

Although humans are so unstable, the plan of the Lord never ever changes. It is most important for the saved people to be conformed to the image of Jesus. The desperate desire of the Lord God is for each one of us to stand on the side of the Lord, refuse to compromise and to strive to put the Lord first.

Let us think about the first question quickly. What is the way to reach the determination of Jesus? Paul mentioned three points.

He mentioned the necessity (for believers) of having truly the same attitude, and how this same attitude should be maintained. It is maintained by humility and maturity. Three things are pointed out regarding the development of a truly shared attitude.

These are to share the same love, to be united in spirit and to keep one purpose in mind. As you know, this letter was written from prison. Paul may not have been released from this prison, where he possibly died a martyr's death. In this prison, Paul must have been distressed, agonized and full of suffering.

But one thing is clear that he did not want to place importance on his own life. He did not care about himself but kept praying for the growth of believers. He never asked anyone to pray for his release from prison. Instead, he would pray, "Please let this desire of mine be fulfilled." That is to say, please let them have the same attitude, share the same love, be united in spirit and keep one purpose in mind. Please let them share the same compassion.

By this, they would experience the love of the Lord that was manifested through Jesus and they would be used as vessels to proclaim this love. There are some similar verses in Ephesians;

Ephesians

2 demonstrating all expressions of humility, gentleness, and patience, accepting one another in love.

3 Do your best to maintain the unity of the Spirit by means of the bond of peace.

It is expected of each believer to deliver this blessing to other believers. That is to say, it is expected that through us, other believers of Jesus have deeper fellowship with him; brothers and sisters get even closer to the Lord, refuse to compromise and live a life of faith being filled with joy. The Lord wants to use each believer for this purpose.

The only concern of the Lord God revolves around the people who are led by Jesus and are embraced by Jesus. When we contemplate the compassion the Lord God has for each one of us and the sacrifice he paid to redeem each one of us, we too are compelled to love everyone, aren't we?

It is not a result of human effort but it is of course, a manifestation of the love of the Lord. In the well-known verse 5, of Romans chapter 5, it is said; "God's love has been poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us." It does not say it may be given to us someday. But it has been given to us already. The Lord God is truly concerned about us. Thus, our primary concern too should be placed on accepting all brothers and sisters sincerely without prejudice.

In prison, Paul wrote the second point, caring about his fellow believers "to be united in spirit." Let us have the same targets in our minds. Before musical concerts, players tune their instruments with each other.

Likewise, unless we are united in spirit and share the same purpose, we will not be able to reveal the glory of the Lord. What should the gathering of believers be

like? David wrote; "Look how good and how pleasant it is when brothers live together in unity!"

Division is not acceptable in church, which represents the body of Jesus. Instead, each part of the body has to care about the other. It only occurs where there is the same Spirit and the same love, where we share praise with each other and accomplish worship in the name of the Lord together. I suppose that David emphasized the importance of being united in spirit and having the same attitude. Let's look at Psalm 34, verse 3, which includes the words 'with me' and 'together';

Psalms

34:3 Magnify the Lord with me! Let us lift up his name together!

Please be united in spirit and voice. This is the desire of Paul and the commandment from the Lord God. It is also the secret to be blessed. No matter how hard we serve the Lord together and work together, it is meaningless if we don't do so having the same attitude, isn't it? Such services are pointless because the blessing is only given when we share the same attitude. If we want to seek new blessings, we need to look up to the Lord while being united with other believers.

Acts 1

14 With one mind all of them kept devoting themselves to prayer, along with the women, including Mary the mother of Jesus, and his brothers.

Brothers and sisters should not be divided from each other because of difference of opinions. The Bible makes it clear that believers have to accept each other with love. There are more important problems than insignificant debates.

The purpose of the fellowship of Christians is not to worry about insignificant problems, but to worship the Lord being united in spirit. This is also the purpose of the salvation and it was the reason for which we were saved. What does it mean to have truly the same attitude? It is to share the same love, to be united in spirit and to keep one purpose in mind.

What does it mean to keep one purpose in mind? It is to have the same determination that can be found in Jesus. That is to say, we are told to see people as Jesus sees them, to see this visible world as Jesus sees it and to have the same demands that Jesus has.

Paul wrote that there were two kinds of believers in those days;

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20 I do not have anyone else like him (Timothy) who takes a genuine interest in your welfare.

21 For all the others look after their own interests, not after those of Jesus the Messiah.

These were the words written not for non-believers, but for believers; those who were already saved. They undoubtedly have accepted Jesus as the savior and believed in him wholeheartedly. But they still looked after their own interests rather than Jesus. Here, what I truly want you to understand is that it is not possible for us to keep one purpose in mind unless we completely disregard ourselves and pursue the glory of the Lord.

Jesus, for example, never asked Peter to become like John, or John to become like James. Likewise, Jesus never asked Mary to act like Martha, or Martha to act like Mary.

Choirs are made up of many different voices. The Lord wants us to praise him by keeping harmony with each other in order to make beautiful sounds, instead of just singing in a monotone. People of weak faith or strong faith, competent or incompetent, all should be united in spirit to praise the Lord.

Even to believers who lack the right understanding, or who are filled with falsity, Jesus showed his compassion. He loved them and sacrificed his own life for such people. It is the same determination that we ought to have. So far, we have been thinking about the necessity of being united in spirit. Now, I would like to briefly discuss humility.

Philippians 2

3 Do not act out of selfish ambition or conceit, but with humility think of others as being better than yourselves.

The foundation of spiritual unification is spiritual humility. Unification without humility is false and untrue. If services are carried out with self-centered motives or by obligation, they cause divisions between believers. Having humility is the opposite of seeking something for yourself. Jesus is the only one who did not want to please himself.

Jesus could say; "I am humble in spirit. I do not pursue my intention but seek the will of the one who sent me." Our worst enemy is our own ego. Ego is useless in serving God. It deserves death. Thinking of others as being better than yourself—this is the attitude of Jesus, which is true humility. The attitude of the devil is characterized by presumptuousness and arrogance.

The devil never wants to bow down and he never apologizes. Many people share the characteristic of caring only about themselves. That is the reason their marriage, family life and social life don't go well. It is also the reason that this world is filled with conflicts, jealousies and hatred.

Humility is never a result of weakness. It is actually the strongest weapon. Against Jesus who said, "I am meek and humble of heart", the devil could not do anything. When we believe that we are better than others and we do not need help from other brothers and sisters, division arise.

Verse 4, "Do not be concerned about your own interests, but also be concerned about the interests of others." Life without self-denial is so tragic. Living for no one but yourself will eventually make you devastated. Living just for yourself is nothing but self-satisfaction. It is easy for anyone to live just for themselves, place themselves at the center of everything and pursue their own desires.

Because, as I just mentioned, our worst enemy is our own ego. Instead of living for yourself, living for Jesus, who sacrificed himself on the cross and was resurrected after three days, is the supreme privilege and blessing. Those who place importance on nothing but themselves have to live meaningless lives, while those who desire to live for Jesus will be liberated.

They will be fulfilled and bear rich fruits of blessing. We have to be transformed to the image of Jesus. Jesus himself emphasizes that his image needs to be formed within us.

Let us discuss another point. What are the characteristics of the determination of Jesus?

Firstly, he made himself nothing. Secondly, he humbled himself. Thirdly, he became obedient to death. And fourthly, he took the very nature of a servant.

I would like to conclude this sermon with a brief discussion on these four points. To begin with, Jesus made himself nothing. "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."

Had Jesus stayed in heaven, being the eternal God, he could have lived in magnificent blessing and in the greatest comfort. Instead, he poured himself out into emptiness. He abandoned everything he had, all his wisdom and strength.

Jesus never sought praise or honor of men at all. He totally made himself nothing. Some people believe it is their right (to seek praise or honor) and make every effort to exercise that right. However, our only right is merely a right to forsake our right; that is to say, (a right to) make ourselves nothing.

Jesus had never done anything to pursue his own pleasure, honor or wealth. The only desperate desire of Jesus was this; "Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy."

Jesus clearly confessed, "I do not seek my own praise, but seek the praise of my Father." Jesus could confess that, "I do not live by my intention. I live by the will of my Father who sent me." Thus Jesus, as I mentioned earlier, lived in all humility.

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7 In human form he chose to be,
8 and lived in all humility, death on a cross obeying.

It was only Jesus, who was humble in the true sense of the term. Jesus could sincerely say; "I am humble." That is to say, Jesus did not care about himself at all. He did not want to please himself. To please oneself is nothing but self-satisfaction. Humans always choose the easier way.

Nobody wants to be bothered. After all, we all pursue our own interests. Jesus is the only one who did not want to please himself. While the devil is arrogance itself, Jesus made himself nothing. And what the Lord God wants from us is after all, to have the same determination that was seen in Jesus. Peter wrote the same thing;

1 Peter 5

5 All of you must clothe yourselves with humility for the sake of each other, because: "God opposes the arrogant, but gives grace to the humble.

This is exactly what the whole Bible wants to tell us. Let us read one more verse from Colossians, 3:12;

Colossians 3

12 Therefore, as God's chosen ones, holy and loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

So, wrote Paul. Why do we bear only a few fruits? Why do we grieve the Holy Spirit so often? It is because we want to please ourselves, isn't it? We want to play some role, don't we? We all sympathize with ourselves.

It is also mentioned about Jesus that he even became obedient to death. This is the obedience that can be found solely in his determination. Obedience is a consequence of humility. Jesus did not care about himself at all. He did not care about being misunderstood or being despised. Furthermore, he chose to take on himself the punishment of the wrath of his Father God for the sins of human beings.

Jesus accepted being outcast and cursed. What did it mean to Jesus? It was an unimaginable sacrifice. Those who want to satisfy their own eagerness for fame and pursue their own interests are so miserable. Jesus could confess sincerely, "I am truly humble."

"I do not pursue my own intention but I seek the will of the one who sent me." Those who are led by nothing but their own will are so pitiful. Jesus became obedient to death—even death on a cross.

The fourth characteristic of Jesus' determination is "taking the very nature of a servant." Only those who humble themselves can obey faithfully and only those who obey faithfully can serve. Jesus made this confession. It can be found in the most important verse in the whole Gospel according to Mark;

Mark 10

45 because even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many people."

Jesus took the form of a servant and washed the feet of his apostles. It was the job of slaves in those days. Moreover, Jesus did so willingly. A characteristic of our innate nature is to care only about ourselves. This nature, in actuality, makes people devastated, isolated and unsatisfied.

For this very reason, Paul worried so much about the growth of believers while he was in prison and wrote with prayers to them; "Have the same attitude among yourselves that was also in the Messiah Jesus." Jesus made himself nothing and became obedient even to death. He served all people in a real sense when he paid the price of salvation by his own sacrifice.

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9 Now lifted up by God to heaven, a name above all others given, this matchless name possessing.
10 And so, when Jesus' name is called, the knees of everyone should fall wherever they're residing.
11 Then every tongue in one accord, will say that Jesus the Messiah is Lord, while God the Father praising.

Father God gave Jesus the highest position that could be given. Although Jesus now sits on the throne in heaven, he does not want to stay there by himself. He chose to be crucified so that all believers share his determination and eventually they will sit with Jesus on his throne. End

It might be the way filled with disgrace and pain, but it is still the way that leads to his throne that the Lord wants us to take. Those who have seen the purpose of the Lord in the eyes of their hearts will not reflect on their past conduct anymore. Paul wrote to the brothers and sisters in Philippi to remain in the determination that is in Jesus.

Let us cast everything to the Lord; that is to say, our thoughts, our intentions and our emotions. Furthermore, let us give up our rights to Jesus—even the rights we used to take for granted. What will be the consequence of it? Paul confessed it as his own experience. It is a wonderful testimony.

Philippians 3

8 What is more, I continue to consider all these things to be a loss for the sake of what is far more valuable, knowing the Messiah Jesus, my Lord. It is because of him that I have experienced the loss of all those things. Indeed, I consider them rubbish in order to gain the Messiah.

Remain in the determination that is in Jesus. The reason of all problems in our lives lies, not in our innate nature, but in our selfish arrogance. The reason for problems lies especially in the inclination to justify ourselves, our arrogant desires and pursuit of self-interest, doesn't it? When we desire to live for Jesus, we will surely have to make some sacrifice, but we will actually lose nothing by that.

We receive many blessings. Those who only care about themselves and pursue their own pleasure will never get true satisfaction. They would never succeed. Those who desire to know Jesus better and serve Jesus are fulfilled, blessed and will be used by him in his work.

Those who disregard their own thoughts, motivations and emotions and are instead determined to give Jesus the utmost priority in all aspects of their life will never fail to be blessed and will be transformed to the image of the Lord. Those who value themselves will end up living meaningless lives of misery. However, when you desire to live for Jesus, you will be liberated, pleased and will definitely bear rich fruits.