Complete My Joy

Philippians 2:1–4

[1] So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, [2] complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. [3] Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. [4] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Introduction

- Jump straight to verses 2–4 and we are outgunned. Verse 1 is Paul opening with the plan and the firepower; verses 2–4 are where "I love it when a plan comes together."

Point 1 — Resources for Kingdom Living (2:1)

*[1] So if there is **any encouragement in Christ**, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy,*

- "If there is any encouragement in Christ": of course there is. Encouragement means comfort, building up, foundation, strengthening.

- The long-lost heir: a man who has lived his whole life in poverty learns he is an heir of the royal family. He is flown to London, given his own residence, and sits at the king's table. His future is certain, his past doesn't matter, his status is completely changed.

- We were not long-lost heirs; we were rebels. The perfect, only Son, with all the rights and love of the Father, laid it all aside to make room for brothers and sisters:

  > *Hebrews 2:11 — [11] For he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified all have one source. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers,*

- The Son paid our debt:

  > *Colossians 2:13–14 — [13] And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, [14] by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.*
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  > *Romans 8:1 — [1] There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.*

- The Son made us legal children of the family, and heirs with Him:

  Galatians 4:4–5 — [4] But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, [5] to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

  Romans 8:17 — [17] and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

- The Son prepared a place for us:

  John 14:2–3 — [2] In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? [3] And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also.

- The Son makes us fit in the family: His righteousness counted as ours, and a new life that teaches us how to live and gives us the ability to live it:

  2 Corinthians 5:21 — [21] For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

  2 Corinthians 5:17 — [17] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

*[1] So if there is any encouragement in Christ, **any comfort from love,** any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy,*

- "Any comfort from love": agape, the love of God the Father (Christ, the Father, the Spirit). Other translations say "consolation": relief when we are frightened or overwhelmed. Love means valuing someone, regarding them as precious.

  1 John 3:1 — [1] See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are. The reason why the world does not know us is that it did not know him.

  John 17:23–24 — [23] I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me. [24] Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

- The lost child in a crowded store: surrounded by adults, but none of them his. Then his mother steps around the corner. He runs to her because he knows he is loved and she won't abandon him. Apart from God, we are that child, only infinitely more helpless:

  John 10:29 — [29] My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand.

- The Father's part: He looked at rebellious creatures, valued the lost, and said, "Those are mine." He needed nothing from us. His love sets the Son's obedience in motion:

  Ephesians 1:4–5 — [4] even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love [5] he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will,

  1 John 4:10 — [10] In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

[1] So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, ***any participation in the Spirit,*** *any affection and sympathy,*

- "Any participation in the Spirit": koinonia, sharing, communion, a real relationship. The same pattern as the benediction:

  2 Corinthians 13:14 — [14] The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.

  Ephesians 2:18 — [18] For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father.

- God is transcendent (infinitely above us) and immanent (near to us). The God the heavens cannot contain has chosen to dwell within us:

  John 14:17 — [17] even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you.

  John 14:23 — [23] Jesus answered him, "If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him.

- The adopted child who never sees the king: the palace, the provisions, the inheritance, but never his presence. The greatest privilege is knowing the king as your father, and the Spirit makes that possible.

- The Spirit's part: He comes with the good news and opens our eyes. When we think, "I don't belong here," He tells us, "Yes, you do." He brings us the Father's love and the Son's treasures:

  1 Corinthians 2:12 — [12] Now we have received not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given us by God.

  Romans 8:15–16 — [15] For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" [16] The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God,

  Romans 5:5 — [5] and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

  John 16:14 — [14] He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you.

- The same Spirit lives in every believer. We are not asked to create a fellowship, only to live out the one God has given:

  1 Corinthians 12:13 — [13] For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body — Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

*[1] So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, **any affection and sympathy**,*

- "Any affection and sympathy": not a blessing like the first three, but what those blessings produce in us. Affection is heartfelt tenderness; sympathy (or mercy) is being moved by others' needs. First who we are, then how we live:

  > *Colossians 3:12 — [12] Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,*

- Because God has loved you, love others. Because God has shown you mercy, show mercy. That is the firepower Paul brings to verses 2–4.

Point 2 — Kingdom Unity (2:2)

[2] complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

- "Complete my joy" is the central command of the section. Paul was willing to stay alive for their joy; what would bring him joy is that they love one another:

  > *Philippians 1:25 — [25] Convinced of this, I know that I will remain and continue with you all, for your progress and joy in the faith,*

- Of the same mind, the same love, in full accord, of one mind. This doesn't mean agreeing about everything, but belonging to something greater than ourselves.

- Back to the palace: many other adopted children. What if each arrived still chasing his own goals and plans, with no one submitting to the one plan of the kingdom? Paul didn't care how it got done or who got the credit; he just wanted the King's work moving forward:

  > *Philippians 1:17–18 — [17] The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. [18] What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, and in that I rejoice. Yes, and I will rejoice,*

- The same Father, Son, and Spirit, and one agenda from our King: getting the name of Christ out and living the gospel together so others want to know Him:

  > *Matthew 28:19 — [19] Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,*

- When each of us pushes his own agenda, there is friction. When we deal with one another so that the King's agenda moves forward, the friction goes away.

Point 3 — Kingdom Humility (2:3)

[3] Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

- Picture the king's children competing for the best room and the most attention. None of them earned a place; everything they have is a gift.

- Humility doesn't mean pretending others are more talented. It means taking their interests and well-being seriously: "How can I honor my brother or sister?"

- A line often associated with C. S. Lewis: "Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less." It sums up Mere Christianity, "The Great Sin": the humble man "will not be thinking about himself at all."

- We already belong to the King, already have His love, already have an inheritance that cannot be taken away. Why compete? That is what it means to be humble.

Point 4 — Kingdom Helpfulness (2:4)

[4] Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

- If one of the king's children is struggling, the others don't say, "That's his problem." They're family.

- "Not only" our own interests: notice who is struggling and be hungry to help. Find out what someone actually needs, dig in, and get it done, even when it inconveniences us.

- This is what affection and sympathy look like in practice: affection loves, mercy is moved, helpfulness acts.

Conclusion

- Patrick Lencioni, The Ideal Team Player: the people who make a team work are humble, hungry, and work well with others. Lencioni never makes the connection, but it comes straight out of Philippians 2:2–4.

- Working well with others is unity (v. 2): the King's agenda ahead of my own. Humility is verse 3: counting others more significant than yourself. Hunger is verse 4: finding what someone needs and getting it done.

- The world has noticed that these are the traits of a team that works. Paul shows us where they come from: the Father loved us, the Son made it happen, the Spirit brought us in.