

15 December 2013: Preached by Elder John Leong Kit Hoong

Topic: **The Marks of True Spiritual Unity**

Scripture Text: Philippians 2:1-8

1. Acts 4:32 describes the early Church of the believers who were of one heart and one soul. The Apostle Paul has great concerns for the Churches that they be united together in the truth and often exhorted them in his Epistles. The Corinthian Church had the problem of division which was because they were carnal.

2. In Philippians 2:1-4, we can learn true spiritual unity. True spiritual unity has to be in the truth of God's Word. In v.1, it gives us 4 motives for spiritual unity to tell us why unity is so vital. These are:

a) Consolation in Christ - the Lord Jesus encouraged and prayed for us to be united in Him. This can be seen in the High Priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17:21.

b) Comfort of love - the Lord Jesus' love is our motivation to love others. We have the capacity to love others because the love of Christ flows in our heart.

c) Fellowship of the Spirit - the Holy Spirit who indwells in us empowers and assists us in promoting true spiritual unity.

d) Bowels and mercies - the Holy Spirit will fill our hearts with tenderheartedness and compassion for others to want to care for them.

3. A fifth motive is given in v2a that it "fulfills the joy" of the leaders of the Church when there is spiritual unity. Leaders are encouraged when members work together in unity.

4. What does Spiritual Unity look like? In v2, it gives us the 4 marks of true spiritual unity as defined by the Word of God. They are:

a) Be like-minded - believers are of the same mind and think spiritual and heavenly thoughts. If someone thinks in the flesh, then conflict and disunity will arise.

b) Having the same love - love everyone the same way. True love acts on someone's needs no matter who he is.

c) Being of one accord - to be "soul-brother" to one another with the same passion and desire to glorify God.

d) Of one mind - intend on one purpose. Division arises when members have their own purpose and selfish agenda.

5. How do we get the Spiritual Unity? In v3-4, it tells us the 3 means to it:

a) Let nothing be done through strife and vainglory - do nothing from selfishness and self-promotion

b) In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves - a deep sense of one "littleness" and see others as better than ourselves

c) Look not every man on his own things but every man also on the things of others - give priority to help and care for others

6. The perfect model of spiritual unity is given to us in v5-8 who is none other the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our example to follow in pursuing true spiritual unity. Jesus did nothing out of selfishness and has the greatest humility of mind to regard us more than His own life to die and save us from our sins.