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Good morning everybody, I hope everyone's doing alright. I'm glad we seem to be past the storm right now, yesterday was a beautiful day as long as you were inside. Sarah and I just had a bit of a lazy day. And I actually love this time of year, the school year is settling in and the weather is kind of refreshing. And this year has actually been a good one so far. As some of you may know my wife recently got a job as a teacher, she teaches a grade 3-4 class. I've been able to go over there a bit and teach some of the kids how to play soccer. It's fun seeing the kids, seeing them learn and grow. And Not long ago I went to a conference and we learned that there is one characteristic that leads to success far more than anything for school age children. more than having a good education, more than having a supportive family, if kids learn how to play well with others they will likely succeed in life. If kids can just learn to get along the odds are that they will do well in life. I think the same goes for churches, if we can learn to just get along we will be fine.

Therefore we named this sermon "just get along." Paul is talking to the church in Phillipians and he's telling them to just get along. This is Phillipians 2:1-11

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Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.

[3]

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

[4]

***Though he was God,
he did not think of equality with God
as something to cling to.
Instead, he gave up his divine privileges;
he took the humble position of a slave
and was born as a human being.***

[5]

***When he appeared in human form,
he humbled himself in obedience to God
and died a criminal's death on a cross.
Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor
and gave him the name above all other names,***

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***that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.***

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Let's look at the first part again: ***"Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and compassionate? Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each***

other, loving one another, and working together with one mind and purpose.” in other words...”just get along.”

Did anyone here have a family that enjoyed spirited debates growing up? My family was one of those families. My parents and I have differing opinions on various issues. And when we get together we like to discuss all of those things. And we are at the place as a family where we can in love call each other idiots for having certain opinions. We rarely agree on politics and social issues, but we enjoy the back and forth banter, we enjoy the disagreement. My wife on the other hand is much more like Christ than we are and she just wants everyone to get along, she doesn't enjoy arguments, she doesn't enjoy debates.

If we were around during the time of Paul I imagine that he would get really mad at my family and probably kick us out of the church and try plant a church with Sarah. Why are we so bad at agreeing? I knew a guy who once used to be the chair of a lot of committees. One thing he would do was he would make sure to not ask people to clarify their opinions until extremely late in the process. Because if someone shares their opinions in a group and another person shares an opposing opinion that committee will turn into a battle for who is going to win, and come hell or high water no one will change their opinion because that would mean they would lose. And we don't want to lose for the sake of agreeing, we're ok if the other person loses for the sake of agreeing, but not us. We are incredibly bad at agreeing.

I mean could you imagine Jesus at some of our bible studies, I feel like he would spend most of his time telling people to shut up, just stop disagreeing. Paul would lose his mind. We spend our time disagreeing about the most trivial things. I don't know if we know how often we do it too. I've hear people get in debates about whether Jesus used to be a carpenter or a stone mason. Even Jesus would tell us to shut up it doesn't matter what I used to do for a living, I told you guys to go tell people the gospel not talk about my 9-5 job.

But we're disagreeing all the time. Paul sounds almost desperate here. The way he says it, it sounds like his dying wish, I just picture Paul on his deathbed, “you know what would make me truly happy...yes Paul, what is it, anything for you? if you would agree with each other? Paul, you know that's not possible.” And then he dies.

We can't even agree with each other, and you know who's the worst at this? Baptists. We can't agree with the other baptist church down the road let alone any other church. I mean, there are 19 different baptist denominations in Canada alone. Are the other 18 really that bad that we can't even share some resources with them? I don't know anything about them, but I'm sure they're probably fine people for the most part.

But why is it so important to get along? I mean, there's scripture that talks about how iron can sharpen iron, and this clash of ideas is what can bring us forward and help us grow. Obviously in this church if you were to ask everyone here their opinions on theological issues you would have several different answers and I'm sure that opposing viewpoints could both have some biblical merit. Is this passage saying that we all need to think the exact same on every possible issue? no, of course not, that will never happen. What it's saying is that we need to agree to disagree on some issues that are not central to the gospel message. We can disagree on which translation is the best to use, we can disagree on styles of worship music, we can disagree on all sorts of little things as long as we agree on the mission because Paul is clear we need to work together with one mind and one purpose. Our purpose is to lead people to become committed followers of Christ Jesus. To go out into the world, loving people and loving God.

And this is exactly what Paul wants, but he knows that if we can't agree to disagree on all of these secondary issues this main problem will never get solved. And this takes all of us, we

need to put our pride to the side and all of these secondary issues that aren't at the core of the gospel message we need to be able to say I can disagree with some people on this but I will still work with them to fulfil the mission that we have to share the gospel.

But so often we allow those petty disagreements to get in the way of us accomplishing anything. Think of your marriage for example. I'm sure many of you can look at your spouse and think we're a great team we help each other out, where one of us is weak the other is strong. I know my wife compliments me so well. But how much of our marriage do we end up arguing over stupid meaningless things. I can't believe you forgot to take the garbage out, you keep on putting the toilet paper the wrong way around, in my house it's a constant fight over the thermostat, whenever Sarah's not looking I turn it down, whenever I'm gone she turns it up, we get in arguments over the dumbest things.

And the more time we spend arguing the less time we spend doing. And that gets pretty dangerous when we're not doing the mission that God has given us.

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The passage goes on saying: ***Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too.***

This whole passage sounds like Paul is trying to teach a kindergarten class. Be nice to each other, and share your toys, listen to each other. And scripture like this unfortunately doesn't get nearly the attention it deserves because we think we're above this. People who've been going to church for their whole lives often consider themselves above this, so we read Romans because it is more intellectually challenging. We like to chew on the meat of scripture, and we think that the meaty scripture is the intellectual stuff, but we're so wrong. I mean if that were the meat Satan would be the best fed and healthiest Christian among us. He knows that stuff way better than we do. Challenging ourselves intellectually isn't meaty.

You know what Satan can't do that we can strive to do. Get along with each other. We can strive to be humble. We can strive to take interest in each other. I'm sick of people thinking that these simple truths are for new Christians and these are just the basics of our faith. No this is the stuff, this is the big stuff getting along with each other, loving each other, growing in humility, that's the hard stuff, these are our challenges as Christ followers this is who we want to be.

You see Paul sounds like he's talking to a kindergarten class, and we look at it like it's a basic thing, well, you tell me, when do you learn the most important lessons in school. It's kindergarten. Don't even try to pretend you still remember or have ever used grade twelve physics in real life, that wasn't an important lesson. If there's a grade 12 physics teacher here, I'm really sorry. But even your grade 12 physics teacher will admit that the lessons you learned in kindergarten were way more important. How to share, how to get along, how to work as a team.

Paul's not giving us some basic lesson here, he's reminding us of the most important lessons. Because if you can't get along, or if you can't humble yourself, or if you don't look out for each other, it won't matter how much you know. it doesn't matter what you try to do because God needs his body of believers working together in one spirit.

And this isn't just Paul telling us to humble ourselves for the heck of it, it's to follow Christ's example, this is how he continues:

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***You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.
Though he was God,
he did not think of equality with God
as something to cling to.
Instead, he gave up his divine privileges;***

[10]

***he took the humble position of a slave
and was born as a human being.
When he appeared in human form,
he humbled himself in obedience to God
and died a criminal's death on a cross.***

Though Jesus was God he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. This is because of Jesus' humility, he was God but he didn't hold that so high to stop him from becoming a man. Jesus didn't need to stay on his throne in heaven he came down, born in the most humbling setting on a feeding trough and lived a life with all the struggles that anyone could have. And this passage is telling us to be like that.

But we don't like that, we like to think that we're above that, but if Jesus isn't above that, I hate to tell you but we aren't either. This means when people share struggles with sin in your growth groups, you're not the one who gets to tell them the steps that they need to take to become a better person like yourself. It doesn't matter who you are, it doesn't matter if you've been a Christian for half a century, it doesn't matter if you lead the growth group or the Bible study. Your job is to be humble. To not only say, but also believe that you are equal with that person.

Jesus isn't our equal, not by any means, but he still humbled himself as a slave and he died an undeserved death on the cross. When he had all of the power in the universe to get off that cross but he didn't do it, that is the humility that we too are called to.

I'll speak for myself, I hate humility if people don't see how humble I'm being. I hate it. If I give someone else the credit for something that I've done, and nobody knows that it was actually me who deserves the credit, I start to get so frustrated, I'm in turmoil inside, I need to get credit for whatever it was.

There was one time I lost a game of Super Smash Brothers on purpose to a kid who was like 11 at the time, and I did it so he would feel good, and then when he got excited for beating me I couldn't handle it. I'm actually so immature that I told the kid we had to rematch and I just wrecked him the second time, because I'm so insecure. Most of you probably don't struggle with humility as much as I do, but I think it is a struggle, when we feel as though we've worked for something or earned something, we don't want to let anyone take that away from us, and we need people to know just how great we are, don't we.

Our example from Jesus is so extreme that this should be made abundantly clear, we are called to humble ourselves for the sake of the gospel.

That's what Jesus did, we don't even have the ability to come close to humbling ourselves in the same way Jesus did, because we aren't that great, Jesus came down from heaven for us, and because of that this is what God did.

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Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor

***and gave him the name above all other names,
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.***

I'll speak for myself, I'm so happy that Jesus is our God. Jesus humbled himself so that God could elevate him. This is the opposite of every other leader in any other context and in any other religion. What do we see in our world? we see people trying to elevate themselves. Look at politics, you don't see humility in politics, you have people hiding their flaws and exaggerating their successes. in business you see people elevating themselves and putting themselves on the pedestal, in many churches you see Pastors put themselves on these pedestals for many reasons, they may feel like they need to, and that lasts for a time. When anyone elevates themselves it lasts for a while, until they fall short and the crowd that was so happy to put them on that pedestal will eventually tear them down from it.

Jesus is the opposite of all of this, he humbled himself and God raised him up above all other names, and it's Jesus who we will bow to. What this really comes down to is an absence of pride in Jesus. This flies in the face of our culture which is driven by pride. Our society is built on building ourselves up, it's about looking good, having a nice house driving a nice car, having more friends, being more popular than the next person and it's this pride which creates so much turmoil in our lives doesn't it. Always trying to play this game to look better than the next person. This is what is holding us back from being genuine always pretending that we have our lives together even though we know we don't. Making our social media look like we have the best lives possible, this all comes from pride. And we fall for this trap don't we?

1 John 2: 15-17 says this

[12]

15 Do not love this world nor the things it offers you, for when you love the world, you do not have the love of the Father in you. 16 For the world offers only a craving for physical pleasure, a craving for everything we see, and pride in our achievements and possessions.

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These are not from the Father, but are from this world. 17 And this world is fading away, along with everything that people crave. But anyone who does what pleases God will live forever.

How great is it that the worlds way isn't the only way? that we're not stuck in this perpetual dilemma where we always need more, we always need to be better we need to keep on pretending to be the perfect person that we're not.

With Jesus we don't need to take part in this game of pretending that we have it all together we don't need to be driven by pride. Jesus was the only one who could ever live up to what we try to live up to. He was the only one who could have been put on that pedestal and lived the glorious life. But he chose not to.

I see our church growing so much in this, when I came here years ago on Sunday mornings the conversation was so shallow. This was a church where we had to be at a certain level and if we weren't there it was fine as long as we pretended to be there. I'm overjoyed to see this church transform into a place where we don't need to pretend anymore. We can humble ourselves and just be honest.

But this will continue to take work, just because we're growing in this does not mean that we're already there. This is why it's so important to be in community. If you're not in a growth group I encourage you strongly to be part of one. In our young adults group we spend time every week talking about how we're doing and we can be open and honest about where we are and we help each other as a community to continue to grow.

Please don't let your pride stop you from being in community, it's ok. And just because you're in a group doesn't mean you're in community. If you humble yourself and you're genuine in a group then you're in community. Jesus somehow humbled himself to be with us, and to be in community with a bunch of sinners. I think we can all humble ourselves to be in community with each other. We can humble ourselves to share our weaknesses and our sins and when we hear each other open up we can humble ourselves so that we don't give them all of the answers on how to be a better person "like us" but to listen to them and care for them to help them grow.

Because at the very beginning of this passage Paul was asking us to just get along. We do that by humbling ourselves and knowing that we are not better than anyone else here. We are all in this together, it doesn't matter how long you've been a Christian, it doesn't matter if you lead the group, it doesn't matter if you're the pastor, if Jesus humbled himself we can too.

You see we need to all be together, because this world is a big mission field. There are too many people who don't know Jesus in this world, in this country and in this city for us to be divided, there are too many people who don't know Jesus for us to be playing a game of who the best Christian is. There is too much at stake here for us to not get along.

and this is why we need to set our hearts on Jesus and not on ourselves so that instead of growing in pride we can grow in Christ and grow in our mission to share his name.

Just Get Along
Philippians 2: 1-11
October 16, 2016, Steve Karadimas

Objective of this Study: To learn to get along for the sake of sharing the gospel

[Remember, the main goal of each Growth Group is to allow God's Word to change your heart so that others would see Jesus in you and be likewise changed to be like him. He wants to change the world through us]

Worship (5 – 10 minutes)

1. Sing a song or two of praise and thanksgiving to God.
2. Spend five minutes in silence asking God to prepare your heart for how he wants to speak to you.
3. After the five minutes have someone interrupt the silence and read Psalm 133 meditatively to the group. Pause after each phrase letting God speak to you.

[It's really important when doing this study that we each think about ourselves specifically and ways we need to grow, not how Christians in general need to grow. Do the hard work of letting the Holy Spirit speak to your heart.]

Welcome

Describe a team that you've been a part of that has done well, were you able to get along?

Word (30-45 min)

- What stood out from the sermon?
- Read Philippians 2:1-11
- What stands out from the passage?
- Does the fact that Paul was writing from jail impact his message?
- Read 1 John 2:15-17
- What are the similarities between the 2 passages?
- Why is humility crucial for getting along?

Work (30-45 min)

Sermon quote: *"I'm sick of people thinking that these simple truths are for new Christians and they are just the basics of our faith. No, this is the big stuff; getting along with each other, loving each other, growing in humility, that's the hard stuff, these are our challenges as Christ followers, this is who we want to be."*

- Do you believe the above quote? Why or why not?

How have you seen pride get in the way of community?
how can you safeguard yourselves from this?

Sermon quote: *You see we need to all be together, because this world is a big mission field. There are too many people who don't know Jesus in this world, in this country and in this city for us to be divided, there are too many people who don't know Jesus for us to be playing a game of who the best Christian is. There is too much at stake here for us to not get along.*

- Do we live as though this is true? why or why not? what needs to change?

What specifically is a mission in Campbell River that we see?

- What would our group look like if we took this seriously?