

TOGETHER WITH CHRIST IS THE FULLNESS OF JOY

Philippians 2:1-18

Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain. Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. For the same reason you also be glad and rejoice with me.

Just prior to Jesus being put to death on a cross, or maybe better stated from our perspective, before Jesus died on a cross for our sins, Jesus began preparing His disciples for His departure, telling them that He was to be going back to the Father and then that He would not, as Jesus said, "leave you as orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:18). Jesus was assuring them that He would send the Holy Spirit, to be theirs, and our Helper and Comfortor (parakletos), that is, to all those who would believe on Christ and receive Him, just as the Apostle John describes in John 1:12-13. "But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will

of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." We know from the Scriptures, that is, the Word of God, that what that is describing is the the being "born-again", as Jesus put it, being born of the Holy Spirit. It is also described as the beginning process of regeneration-where our spirits are brought back to life to be in fellowship with God, AND in the blessed fellowship with all of God's people, to have a oneness in Christ. It is there that, not only will experience prove that to one's self, but the Word of God tells us also, and the Holy Spirit also testifies to that being, we can have the fullness of joy in Christ Jesus, for together with Christ is the fullness of joy!

That Comfortor or Helper, that Jesus promised, and being the Holy Spirit, is the Greek word "parakletos", which is a combination of "para" and then "kletos". Much could be expounded upon that, but we can see from para which means close-beside and then kletos which means "make a call" or "testifies for", that it is the Holy Spirit that testifies to us that we are children of God, but also testifies to others of who were are in Christ Jesus, and then unifies us in that testimony of the covenant we have in Christ Jesus.¹

Paul, in his letter to the Ephesians gives us a bigger picture for us to see, that we are not JUST getting saved so that we individually are each given eternal life so that when we get to heaven, as I have said in the past, we will be able to prance around in the fields of glory and swim in the crystal sea, and go for strolls on the streets of gold. I have to be honest, that all sounds great to me, especially in considering that we will be free from the grief and sorrows that we experience down here on this wretched earth. Yet Paul tells us, "He Himself [Jesus] gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the **edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness of deceitful plotting, but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love." (**Ephesians 4:11-16**)

Paul used the body of Christ as an analogy for us to recognize that Christ Jesus is the Head and that we are His body; not to be taken literally but to help us to recognize that we are all in this, of what God is doing through Christ Jesus, in building up the body of

1 <https://biblehub.com/greek/3875.htm>

Christ, to become one in Him, spiritually speaking, to the glory of God. It therefore can make sense then, for us, that we truly cannot experience the fullness of joy, in Christ, as a lone regenerated soul. We are Christ's. Paul tells us that, saying, "For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's." (**1 Corinthians 6:20**) It is then, as we are working together, as the body of Christ, in fellowship and worship and in the sharing and showing the love and the gospel of Christ Jesus where we can have the fullness of joy—at least the most fullness of joy that can be had in this lifetime.

In the Apostle Paul's letter to Titus, Paul says this concerning that regeneration of the Holy Spirit, "But when the kindness and the love of God our Savior toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior, that having been justified by His grace we should become heirs according to the hope of eternal life." (**Titus 3:4-7**) God, then gives of His Holy Spirit, to give us the full assurance of our faith, as Paul explained most succinctly in a couple of His letters, one in **Ephesians 1:13-14** where he says, "In Him [Christ Jesus] you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise [believing on Christ and then receiving Him], who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory." The other is in **2 Corinthians 1** where I'll start in **verse 20**, where Paul tells us, "For all the promises of God in Him [Christ Jesus] are Yes, and in Him Amen, to the glory of God through us. Now **He who establishes us with you** in Christ and has anointed **us** is God, who also has sealed **us** and given us the Spirit in **our** hearts as a guarantee. [The NIV puts it like this: that He has, "set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come". Yet, as the saying goes, but wait, there's more! Paul continues, saying:] Moreover I call God as witness against my soul, that to spare you I came no more to Corinth. Not that we have dominion over your faith, but are **fellow workers for your joy**; for by faith you stand." (**2 Corinthians 1:20-24**)

Jesus told His disciples, as is recorded in **John 15:9-12**, "As the Father loved Me, I also have loved you; abide in My love. If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love, just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and **that your joy may be full**. This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." There is much that can be expounded upon that too but it is of no coincidence that Jesus said, "These things I have spoken to you, that My joy may remain in you, and **that your joy may be full**"

and then says, "This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you." I am always amazed, or really maybe just delighted, every time I find a correlation of the Old Testament with the New Testament. After all, He is God Almighty, Creator of all things, and we are told in His Word that He does not change. (**Malachi 3:6, Psalm 55:19**) In **Psalm 16**, the Psalmist, being David, says this, in praying to God and being inspired by God, "You will show me the path of life; **In Your presence is fullness of joy**; At Your right hand are pleasures forevermore." (**Psalm 16:11**)

The gathering of people together to have a common bond, to be unified in a cause, will never develop into the fullness of joy that is in Christ Jesus. You could go to a Star Trek convention, or a ballgame, or a music concert, and you may experience some kind of likeness in "spirit" but that is far from the fullness of joy that we have in Christ Jesus! In our passage of Scripture in **Philippians 2**, I'll reread it. "Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any **fellowship of the Spirit**, if any affection and mercy, **fulfill my joy** by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

That consolation or consoling of our spirit in Christ, and being comforted by the love of God in Christ is most definitely personal in the way we have been reconciled to God through the redemptive work of Christ, dying on a cross for our sins, taking our sins upon Himself, cleansing us from sin through the shedding of His blood, and then conquering death and evil, raising from the grave on the third day, which paved the way for us too, to overcome the sting of death and have eternal life in Christ Jesus. Yet we also are not alone in how God is presently building His eternal kingdom with each of us, bringing us into the unity of the faith so that we are blessed in the fellowship of the Spirit and have the fullness of joy.

"Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

Do all things without complaining and disputing, that you may become blameless and harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain. Yes, and if I am being poured out as a drink offering on the sacrifice and service of your faith, **I am glad and rejoice with you all.** For the same reason you also **be glad and rejoice with me.**"

May we all take heed to what God's Word is telling us. We are being saved by the grace of God through the faith that God have given to each of us as Paul tells us in **Ephesians 2:8-9**, and we are also, as he continues by saying, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." Those good works are demonstrated through the fruit of the Spirit, of "love, **joy**, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control" (**Galatians 5:22-23**), those good works are within the callings that we each receive through Christ, and is all for the edifying of the body of Christ, to bring us into the unity of the faith in Christ to the glory of God.

When Jesus said, "**Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends**" (**John 15:13**), Jesus was saying what Paul was describing as being poured out as a drink offering, which both point to our call to complete surrenderedness to Christ, as we are His, and we are His workmanship, to where He is using each of us to bring us into a oneness in Christ, that that we may know and experience the togetherness in Christ for the fullness of His joy and ours!