

Make My Joy Complete: Philippians 2.1-4
[Going Deeper]

Paul has just finished talking about how to endure their struggles in dealing with the pressures from the outside. Now, he shifts gears and seems to implicate that, maybe, the greater struggle is their struggle to live in true Christian community with each other. Why do you think it is so difficult for us as Christians to really, truly love each other and to endure on the journey together?

What tends to separate you relationally from other Christians?

Read John 17.20-23 and John 13.34-35

What was it that Jesus said would make his disciples stand out?

Who does Jesus say that the love and unity are for? Hmm, I wonder why?

Read Romans 14

Paul raises the idea of "disputable matters." What would you describe as disputable matters?

Why do you think we tend to hold so tightly to disputable matters?

Sometimes it seems like some of us are actually fearful of a kind of unity that doesn't rest on agreeing on disputable matters. Why does this make us uncomfortable or actually fearful?

What disputable matters have you allowed to separate you from others?

Read Philippians 2.1-4

Where do you see "selfish ambition and vain conceit" in our culture? How about in your own life?

Beyond your material possessions, how have you experienced God's generosity?

When we celebrate with someone who succeeds or receives something we've always wanted or hurt with someone who fails or loses something we wanted for our selves, we are journeying together. What is it that keeps you from being able to do those things?

According to Philippians 2.1-4, how should you respond in those situations?

Paul sees us as being created in the image of a Trinitarian God, whose self-giving love cannot be contained, so He creates. When we are not at our best, we tend to be consumers of people and things. How does this bump up against the image we've been created in? Why?

So what should we do about it?

What keeps you from pursuing relationships with people who are different from you?

Some would say that holding someone's past against them is an indication that you hold your own past against yourself. What do you think?

How have you experienced a full, self-giving love? What will it look like for you to encircle others with that same kind of love?