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ANY LOVE ?

In the letter to the Philippians, the Apostle Paul writes in a brilliant way to encourage and inspire and challenge his readers, to trust in the Lord to complete the good work that He has begun in them.

Remember the elderly couple who had this conversation? She complains, "When we were younger we used to sit next to each other in the car, but not anymore." He says, "I ain't moved." That's sort of the idea behind Paul's direction in chapter 2. If things aren't good between you and God, it's because YOU've moved away from Him. What to do about it?

When you and I notice something out of sorts, we often respond with criticism or demand improvement. Paul is much wiser. He takes an "if-then" sort of "love and logic" approach. It is only through God's TRANSFORMING GRACE in Christ that any of us can change from selfish sinners into unselfish saints.

So Paul continues his thoughts like this: ***"So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, then complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind."***

Any encouragement? In moments of discouragement, you might feel like God's promises are far away, or His presence is not near. That's because you've "moved." God never changes. Eternal faithfulness is part of what makes Him "God." He is always near, always faithful, always at work in our lives.

Any love? The Bible tells us it is only by Jesus that we know what true "love" is - putting the best interests of someone else ahead of your own. He gave His life to reconcile us to God. And all who receive Jesus as Lord & Savior are born again, adopted into God's family as children of God.

Any Spirit? Becoming a child of God is the work of the Holy Spirit. He conveys to us God's acceptance and affection. He gives a sense of belonging, encouragement and comfort and love in Christ. All believers are indwelt by the Holy Spirit, and it is His ministry to draw us close to the Lord through prayer and reading the Bible and fellowship with believers. He makes us "one" in Christ.

So then, Paul says, have that same mind in Christ. Go on, realize the fullness of all you have in Christ. Have His unity of heart and mind and spirit with one another. It's an expansion of living "side-by-side" that Paul talked about in chapter 1.

Privileges bring responsibilities. Since you have the things in verse one, then do the things in verse 2. If you don't, then you must be choosing self-indulgence or self-fulfillment instead of fulfilling what Christ promises you in the Gospel good news. So what will it be? Your mind, or Christ's mind?

JOY is what follows from fully trusting in Jesus and experiencing His new life living through yours. It's worth repeating: **J-O-Y** is Jesus first, Others second, Yourself last. And that's not only possible, it is what Jesus PROMISES you as you trust Him and live for Him by His power. Jesus is not only our model and example, but He is the means by which we live our lives like His.

Any love? If you've put your trust in Jesus, then you have His love, encouragement, comfort, Spirit, affection, power, joy, and mind. So go ahead, live out His LOVE in your life, by trusting Him to live in you and through you !