

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### First Quarter 2026: *Uniting Heaven and Earth: Christ in Philippians and Colossians*

#### Lesson 4 “Unity Through Humility”

##### Read for this week’s study

Philippians 2:1–8; Jeremiah 17:9; Philippians 4:8; 1 Corinthians 8:2; Romans 8:3; Hebrews 2:14–18.

##### Memory Text

“Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind” (Philippians 2:2, NKJV).

##### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Disunity in Philippi
- III. The Source of Unity
- IV. Mind Implant or Mind Surgery?
- V. The Mind of Christ
- VI. The Mystery of Godliness
- VII. Further Study

##### Questions and Notes for Consideration

###### Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. This week we are looking at the biblical basis for unity in the church. Unity is strength, but knowing that is not the same as doing it. For starters, what is unity? How does a church get there? Paul’s answer to these questions is in Philippians 2:1-8. Read Luke 12:51-53. How do you reconcile Jesus’ saying with Paul’s admonition in Philippians 2? (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. Read Philippians 2:1-3. What factors would Paul say lead to disunity within the church? What is Paul’s suggested remedy? In your experience, does Paul’s diagnosis still work today? (Sunday)
3. What practical steps does Paul share for implementing love and humility in the church? What advice did Jesus share along these same lines (John 13:34-35)? How

- did Jesus love us? What role might “death to self” have in leading us to the kind of love exhibited by Jesus? (Monday)
4. In what ways are our minds shaped by technology in today’s world? What advice on this might Paul give us today? Read Philippians 2:5. What is the mind of Christ like? What does it mean to have the “mind of Christ”? Here we have an account of the humility of Christ/God. Is there a tension within God between humility and infinite power? (Tuesday)
  5. Read Philippians 2:5-8. This is a beautiful depiction of “the mind of Christ”. What are some implications of this model for our minds and thought-processes today? What does Jesus Himself have to say about this (Matthew 23:11-12)? (Wednesday)
  6. Read 1 Corinthians 8:2. What does this verse say to educated people who are proud of their level of learning? (Thursday)
  7. “The more we learn in [the school of Christ] the more we shall advance in meekness and lowliness of mind” (Ellen G. White, MS 36, 1885). Is there a scientific, as well as an inspired basis for the superiority of humility over pride in human behavior? (Friday)
  8. Poetic passage on the infinite, exhaustless love of God from Ellen G. White:
 

“Tongue cannot utter it;  
           pen cannot portray it.  
 You may meditate upon it every day of your life;  
           you may search the Scriptures diligently in order to understand it;  
 you may summon every power and capability that God has given you,  
           in the endeavor to comprehend the love and compassion of the heavenly  
           Father;  
           and yet there is an infinity beyond.  
 You may study that love for ages;  
           yet you can never fully comprehend the length and the breadth,  
           the depth and the height,  
           of the love of God in giving His Son to die for the world.  
           Eternity itself can never fully reveal it.  
 Yet as we study the Bible  
           and meditate upon the life of Christ  
           and the plan of redemption,  
 these great themes will open to our understanding more and more.”

*5 Testimonies 740*
  9. If you were talking with a person on hospice care and they told you they are nothing, and can do nothing, what remaining purpose might you suggest for that person’s life? (Friday)

## Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

This universe will be run on the authority of truth alone and the truth spoken in love. And if we're not susceptible to that, if we don't respect the truth spoken softly in love we will not be safe to save because there'll be no more Sinai, no more thundering. God will not hold the universe together with demonstration of power because that's artificial, that's a unity that's produced with baling wire. You snip it and we all fall apart. Our church is not really united unless we voluntarily band together in the highest sense of freedom because we all love and worship the same God who speaks to us with the authority of truth spoken in love. That's real unity which cannot be shaken, and God will have that in His kingdom. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Understanding the Mission of the Church, #5, recorded September 1983, Camp AuSable, Michigan} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/5MMUTMOTC>*

But if the Bible is a record of God's revelation of Himself in many and various ways, and one of His ways is through the people who so loved and admired Him that they imitated Him and became like Him. That doesn't sound like Paul before Damascus Road. Look at him now. He's so tender of heart and gracious. Wonderful things had happened to Paul. And I think that fits in very well. In fact, I think things like this are among the most important parts of Scripture.

"Jesus wept." Think what that says about God. God attended the funeral of one of His friends, and the Bible says that He cried. And when He raised Jairus' daughter, He says, "Wait a minute, everybody. This little girl is hungry. Somebody get something for her to eat." That's theology! Why do we put other things above it? See, that's "Let this mind be in you which is in Christ Jesus, who said, 'This little girl is hungry. Get her something to eat.'" And He cried at a funeral. That's the mind of Christ. Why has theology become so far out on cloud nine it even has a vocabulary of its own? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/69MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/70MMPOGIA66> (Part 1)

And so, "Let this mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus," the same mind as in the Father, as in the Holy Spirit. The way the Trinity behaves is the real model. You think what the Trinity has gone through in our behalf. One has presented Himself as Father. One has presented Himself as Son, and look what He's done. And one has worked humbly behind the scenes. We don't mention Him much, and we've never seen Him. He's called the Holy Spirit, to represent the way He works so quietly on just the basis of evidence, behind the scenes. And when do we honor

Him? I think we have a lot of overdue thanks to give to the Holy Spirit when we meet Him in the hereafter.

But I think that the oneness you see: “I pray you all may be one, as I and the Father are one,” Jesus says. “I wish all you children would behave the way the three of us do.” So, to imitate Christ is to imitate the Father; to imitate the Holy Spirit. What’s the difference?

So that’s what Paul means. He says, “Let this mind be in you which” we see in Christ, because we haven’t seen the Father. We haven’t seen the Spirit. But do remember, Jesus said, “If you’ve seen me, you’ve seen the Father. And when I go, I’ll send another Counselor just like myself.” So what we see in Christ, we see of all members of the Godhead. And look how Christ honored both the Holy Spirit and the Father, didn’t He, over and over again. So that’s a very theological passage. Look how it describes God, and look at the other side in the Great Controversy. How opposite is the attitude of Satan. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Philippians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians*, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

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### **Further Study with Ellen White**

Jesus, the brightness of the Father’s glory, thought “it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant.” Philippians 2:6, 7, R.V., margin. Through all the lowly experiences of life He consented to pass, walking among the children of men, not as a king, to demand homage, but as one whose mission it was to serve others. There was in His manner no taint of bigotry, no cold austerity. The world’s Redeemer had a greater than angelic nature, yet united with His divine majesty were meekness and humility that attracted all to Himself. {MB 14.2}

Christ abiding in the soul exerts a transforming power, and the outward aspect bears witness to the peace and joy that reign within. We drink in the love of Christ, as the branch draws nourishment from the vine. If we are grafted in Christ, if fiber by fiber we have been united with the Living Vine, we shall give evidence of the fact by bearing rich clusters of living fruit. If we are connected with the Light, we shall be channels of light, and in our words and works we shall reflect light to the world. {RC 104.3}

To love as Christ loved means to manifest unselfishness at all times and in all places, by kind words and pleasant looks. These cost those who give them nothing, but they leave behind a fragrance that surrounds the soul. Their effect can never be estimated. Not only are they a blessing to the receiver, but to the giver; for they react upon him. Genuine love is a precious

attribute of heavenly origin, which increases in fragrance in proportion as it is dispensed to others. . . . {5BC 1140.4}

Christ had not exchanged His divinity for humanity; but He had clothed His divinity in humanity (RH Oct. 29, 1895). {5BC 1128.3}

What speech is to thought, so is Christ to the invisible Father. He is the manifestation of the Father, and is called the Word of God. God sent His Son into the world, His divinity clothed with humanity, that man might bear the image of the invisible God. He made known in His words, His character, His power and majesty, the nature and attributes of God. Divinity flashed through humanity in softening, subduing light. He was the embodiment of the law of God, which is the transcript of His character (MS 77, 1899). {5BC 1131.6}

The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters (Letter 406, 1906). {6BC 1074.2}

For our sake Jesus emptied Himself of His glory; He clothed His divinity with humanity that He might touch humanity, that His personal presence might be among us, that we might know that He was acquainted with all our trials, and sympathized with our grief, that every son and daughter of Adam might understand that Jesus is the friend of sinners (ST April 18, 1892). {7BC 927.1}

Christ undertook to redeem man and to rescue the world from the grasp of Satan. The great controversy begun in heaven was to be decided in the very world, on the very same field, that Satan claimed as his. {PP 69.2}

But it was not merely to accomplish the redemption of man that Christ came to the earth to suffer and to die. He came to “magnify the law” and to “make it honorable.” Not alone that the inhabitants of this world might regard the law as it should be regarded; but it was to demonstrate to all the worlds of the universe that God’s law is unchangeable. Could its claims have been set aside, then the Son of God need not have yielded up His life to atone for its transgression. The death of Christ proves it immutable. And the sacrifice to which infinite love impelled the Father and the Son, that sinners might be redeemed, demonstrates to all the universe—what nothing less than this plan of atonement could have sufficed to do—that justice and mercy are the foundation of the law and government of God. {GC 503.1}

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to reveal, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. {8T 265.5}

At the Saviour's baptism, Satan was among the witnesses. He saw the Father's glory overshadowing His Son. He heard the voice of Jehovah testifying to the divinity of Jesus. Ever since Adam's sin, the human race had been cut off from direct communion with God; the intercourse between heaven and earth had been through Christ; but now that Jesus had come "in the likeness of sinful flesh" (Romans 8:3), the Father Himself spoke. He had before communicated with humanity *through* Christ; now He communicated with humanity *in* Christ. Satan had hoped that God's abhorrence of evil would bring an eternal separation between heaven and earth. But now it was manifest that the connection between God and man had been restored. {DA 116.2}

From all eternity Christ was united with the Father, and when He took upon Himself human nature, He was still one with God. He is the link that unites God with humanity [Hebrews 2:14 quoted] (ST Aug. 2, 1905). {5BC 1115.1}

The death of Christ upon the cross made sure the destruction of him who has the power of death, who was the originator of sin. When Satan is destroyed, there will be none to tempt to evil; the atonement will never need to be repeated; and there will be no danger of another rebellion in the universe of God. That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels. . . The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven. Human perfection failed in Eden, the paradise of bliss. All who wish for security in earth or heaven must look to the Lamb of God. {5BC 1132.8}

Jesus began His work by breaking Satan's power over the suffering. He restored the sick to health, gave sight to the blind, and healed the lame, causing them to leap for joy and to glorify God. He restored to health those who had been infirm and bound by Satan's cruel power many years. With gracious words He comforted the weak, the trembling, and the desponding. The feeble, suffering ones whom Satan held in triumph, Jesus wrenched from his grasp, bringing to them soundness of body and great joy and happiness. He raised the dead to life, and they glorified God for the mighty display of His power. He wrought mightily for all who believed on Him. {EW 159.3}

In Christ is gathered all the glory of the Father. In Him is all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. He is the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of His person. The glory of the attributes of God are expressed in His character. {7BC 907.3}

Christ invites us to draw near to Him, and promises that He will draw nigh to us. Looking upon Him, we behold the invisible God, who clothed His divinity with humanity in order that through

humanity He might shed forth a subdued and softened glory, so that our eyes might be enabled to rest upon Him, and our souls not be extinguished by His undimmed splendor. We behold God through Christ, our Creator and Redeemer. {7BC 925.2}