

Philippians #2: Finding Joy in Fellowship

Phil. 1:1-14

I. Key Words: Joy, fellowship, gospel

1. Joy/rejoice: 16 times in Phil; e.g. 1:3, 18
2. Fellowship: “*partnership in the gospel*” (1:5); “*partakers with me of grace*” (1:7)
3. Gospel: (1:5); “*defense & confirmation of gospel*” (1:7); “*advance of gospel*” (1:12)

II. Context: Competing Worldviews—Christian vs. Secular

1. How did we get here?
2. Who am I? Are we (humans) special?
3. What went wrong? What’s the problem?
4. What’s the solution?
5. What’s our final destiny?

III. Fellowship—Enjoyed, Lost & Regained, Results

1. Fellowship enjoyed—among the Trinity & with Mankind (Gen. 1-2)
 - *Perichoresis* (Greek): the “dance of God;” among the Trinity each person shares the life of the other two in a 'community of being.'
2. Fellowship lost—between mankind & God & among people—a broken world (Gen. 3)
3. Fellowship Regained
 - By God’s action in Jesus Christ’s life, death, resurrection
 - By our believing the gospel (Jailer: Acts 16:31)
 - Testified in baptism (Lydia & Jailer: Acts 16:15, 33)
 - Issuing in joy, rejoicing (Jailer: Acts 16:34)
4. Results—fellowship with God & believers (church community)
 - Restored relationship with God--God’s children in God’s family
 - Restored relationship between humankind—esp. within believing community
 - Reordered priorities—“*know what really matters*” (Phil. 1:10)
 - Being saved from being self-centered to being others-centered (Phil. 2:4-5)
 - Gospel—sharing God’s love & Christ’s salvation with others (Phil. 1:5)
 - Concerned—praying for others, with joy (Phil. 1:4)
 - Gathering—open heart (Phil. 1:7) & open home (Lydia: Acts 16:15, 40)

Quotes: Among the Trinity—God the Father, Son & Spirit: “Each of the divine persons centers upon the others. None demands that the others revolve around him. Each voluntarily circles the other two, pouring love, delight, & adoration into them. Each person of the Trinity loves, adores, defers to, & rejoices in the others. That creates a dynamic, pulsating dance of joy and love.”-- Tim Keller

“Our future is not an ethereal, impersonal form of consciousness. We will not float through the air, but rather will eat, embrace, sing, laugh, & dance in the kingdom of God, in degrees of power, glory, & joy that we can’t at present imagine. Jesus will make the world our perfect home again. We will no longer be living ‘east of Eden,’ always wandering & never arriving. We will come, & the father will meet us & embrace us, & we will be brought into the feast [Luke 15].”-- Tim Keller

The Gospel is a Person: “If the gospel were primarily a set of good ideas, then the end would be intellectual assent & acceptance. But if the gospel is primarily a Person, then the end is a surrender to, & a following of, that Person.” –E. Stanley Jones

Philippians #2: Finding Joy in Fellowship [Supp. Material]

Phil. 1:1-18 “Paul & Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers & deacons: Grace to you & peace from God our Father & the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership [fellowship] in the gospel from the 1st day until now. I'm sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers ['fellowshippers'] with me of grace, both in my imprisonment & in the defense & confirmation of the gospel. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. It is my prayer that your love may abound more & more, with knowledge & all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent [‘what really matters’], & so be pure & blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory & praise of God.

I want you to know, brothers, that what's happened to me has really served to advance the gospel, so that it's become known throughout the whole imperial guard & to all the rest that my imprisonment is for Christ. Most of the brothers, having become confident in the Lord by my imprisonment, are much more bold to speak the word without fear.

Some indeed preach Christ from envy & rivalry, but others from good will. The latter do it out of love, knowing that I'm put here for the defense of the gospel. The former proclaim Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely but thinking to afflict me in my imprisonment. What then? Only that in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is proclaimed, & in that I rejoice. Yes, & I will rejoice...” (Philippians 1:1-18)

Note #1: Paul prays for the Philippians with *joy* (v. 4), a word that will become a keynote theme in chapter 4. This joy springs from their *partnership [fellowship] in the gospel* (v. 5). ESV

Note #2: Paul is *sure [confident]* about God's commitment to the Philippians. The foundation for spiritual growth is recognizing that it is God who *began a good work in you & will bring it to completion* (v. 6). Genuine spiritual progress is rooted in what God has done, is doing, & will do. His faithfulness ensures that He will be with believers until Jesus returns (*the day of Jesus Christ*; cf. Phil. 2:16). They can have confidence that the God who has saved them will never let them go, & that they will inherit their eternal reward. ESV

Note #3: The 1st item in Paul's prayer is that God would cause the major Christian virtue of *love to abound more & more*, & that it would be accompanied by *knowledge & all discernment*, so the Philippians' love would find expression in wise actions that would truly benefit others & glorify God. As Christians grow in their understanding of what it means to follow Jesus, they'll increasingly be able to affirm & practice *what is excellent*. Such joyful obedience to God will give them the confidence of being found *pure & blameless* when Jesus returns. This doesn't imply instantaneous spiritual perfection but rather an increasing likeness to Christ. But *fruit of righteousness* is not produced in the believer's own power. Because that fruit comes *through Jesus Christ*, it will result in the *glory & praise of God*. ESV

Note #4: Paul's Imprisonment has meant the Gospel's progress: Paul realizes that the Philippians are grieved over his imprisonment, so he encourages them by pointing out his circumstances are furthering the gospel's proclamation. His joy in difficult circumstances is meant to be an example to the Philippians to likewise rejoice even in difficult times. Plus, Paul's charitable attitude toward fellow believers who make life hard for him is to function as a model for the Philippians, since it's evident that there is some disunity in the congregation. ESV

Note #5: When the Christians in Rome, where Paul was in prison, saw his boldness when his life was in danger, his e.g. inspired them to be more courageous also, so they were *much more bold* to proclaim Christ.

Note #6: The identity of those here who *preach Christ from envy & rivalry* is indeterminate. They are clearly antagonistic to Paul, & one might imagine they're the same “Judaizing” people in chapter 3. But it's hard to see how Paul *rejoicing* in the proclamation of something (i.e., a return to the old covenant) which betrayed the good news (Galatians). [Plus Paul is referring to people in Rome; Phil. chap. 3 is about people in Philippi.] It's more likely these are other Christians who preached a generally sound gospel but were personally at odds with Paul, perhaps due to his poor speaking abilities (1 Cor.) or his constant suffering & weakness (2 Cor.); whatever their rationale, they were motivated by a desire to harm Paul in some way. But Paul, like Jesus, isn't concerned for his own interests—he's not self-centered (Phil. 2:4), he “rejoices” as long as the gospel is progressing. ESV

I. Key Words: Joy, Fellowship, Gospel

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 - “Joy for Paul was not an emotion or mood or feeling, but an attitude”
2. Fellowship: “*partnership in the gospel*” (1:5); “*partakers with me of grace*” (1:7)
 - Greek: *koinonia* Thayer defines it as: “fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation...” (*Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*). It describes the state of “association” or “joint participation.” *Koinonia* belongs to a family of words used in the NT to describe such “joint participation.” *Koinonia* is a bond for a united purpose. The nature of the bond depends on the nature of the purpose. For

e.g., in Luke 5:10 James & John are “*partners*” (*koinonos*) with Peter in the fishing business. Here their bond was a common occupation, & their shared purpose is (literally) catching fish. Phil. 1:5 describes the “*fellowship (koinonia) in the gospel.*” 1 John. 1:3 indicates the “fellowship in the gospel” is a spiritual bond which comes about when someone accepts the gospel. When the gospel was preached at Pentecost, those who accepted it “...continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching & fellowship (*koinonia*), in the breaking of bread, & in prayers (Acts 2:42). [Kyle Pope (article)]

- With the Father & the Son: “*That which we’ve seen & heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have **fellowship** with us; & indeed our fellowship is with the Father & with his Son Jesus Christ.*” (1 Jn. 1:3) The purpose of [the apostles’] proclamation is not just forgiveness of people’s sins; but is far richer, for the gospel message binds together those who receive it: *that you too may have fellowship with us.* Yet the purpose is richer than mere human fellowship, for believers’ fellowship *is with the Father & with his Son.* Such “fellowship” is personal communion with the Father made possible by the mediation of the Son. ESV
3. Gospel: (1:5); “*defense & confirmation of gospel*” (1:7); “*advance of gospel*” (1:12)
- The Gospel is a Person: “If the gospel were primarily a set of good ideas, then the end would be intellectual assent & acceptance. But if the gospel is primarily a Person, then the end is a surrender to, & a following of, that Person.” –E. Stanley Jones

II. Context: Competing Worldviews—Christian vs. Secular

1. How did we get here?
2. Who am I? Are we (humans) special?
3. What went wrong? What’s the problem?
4. What’s the solution?
5. What’s our final destiny?

III. Fellowship—Enjoyed, Lost & Regained, Results

1. Fellowship enjoyed—among the Trinity & with Mankind (Gen. 1-2)
 - *Perichoresis* (Greek): the “dance of God;” among the Trinity each person shares the life of the other two in a ‘community of being.’
 - In the Trinity—Father, Son & Spirit: “Each of the divine persons centers upon the others. None demands that the others revolve around him. Each voluntarily circles the other two, pouring love, delight, & adoration into them. Each person of the Trinity loves, adores, defers to, & rejoices in the others. That creates a dynamic, pulsating dance of joy and love.”--Tim Keller
 - Some people say that God was “alone & incomplete,” so He created mankind; but this contradicts the concept of *Perichoresis*: E.g. consider the statement: “Before God had secured the proper man, He was alone. It was not good for God to be alone. Although God is absolutely & eternally perfect, He is not complete. To say that God is imperfect is to speak blasphemy. Our God is eternally perfect. Nevertheless, without the church He is incomplete. Without the church He is like a husband without a wife... Therefore, when God said that it was not good for Adam to be alone, it meant that God Himself was incomplete & that it was not good for Him to be alone.” [*Life-Study of Genesis*, Chap. 17, Section 2]
2. Fellowship lost—between mankind & God & among people—a broken world (Gen. 3)
3. Fellowship Regained
 - By God’s action in Jesus Christ’s life, death, resurrection
 - God brought them [Philippians] to faith & fellowship...with the Gospel, Paul & each other.”
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Philippians #2: Finding Joy in Fellowship [Script]

PIX: Lydia [Ian's picture]

PIX: The Jailer [Ian's picture]

- Recap—Paul & Co went to Philippi—Lydia & the Jailer (Acts 16)
- Now (~12 years later) Paul writes from Rome (He's back in prison again!)

“Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are at Philippi, with the overseers and deacons: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with **joy**, because of your partnership [**fellowship**] in the **gospel** from the first day until now. I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. It is right for me to feel this way about you all, because I hold you in my heart, for you are all partakers [**fellowship**] with me of grace, both in my imprisonment and in the defense & confirmation of the **gospel**. For God is my witness, how I yearn for you all with the affection of Christ Jesus. And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

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I. Key Words: Joy, Fellowship, Gospel

PIX: Philippians Joy

PIX: Philippians Fellowship

PIX: Philippians Gospel 1

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PIX: Worldview Eye

II. Context: Competing Worldviews—Christian vs.	Christian	Secular
a. How did we get here?	Created by God	Random chance
b. Who am I? Are we special?	In God’s image	Advanced animals
c. What’s wrong? What’s the problem?	fellowship broken	Nothing (should be worse)
d. What’s the solution?	God’s action—saves	more education, money?
e. What’s our final destiny?	Eternity	Nothing, Annihilation

III. Fellowship—Enjoyed, Lost & Regained, Results

A. What is fellowship?

PIX: Fellowship of the Ring 1

- Tolkien’s “*Fellowship of the Ring*” Saga—9 characters engaged in a common purpose
- Greek: *koinonia* Thayer defines it as: “fellowship, association, community, communion, joint participation...” (*Greek-English Lexicon of the NT*). It describes the state of “association” or “joint participation.” *Koinonia* belongs to a family of words used in the NT to describe such “joint participation.” *Koinonia* is a bond for a united purpose. The nature of the bond depends on the nature of the purpose. For e.g., in Luke 5:10 James & John are “partners” (*koinonos*) with Peter in the fishing business. Here their bond was a common occupation, & their shared purpose is (literally) catching fish. Phil. 1:5 describes the “*fellowship (koinonia) in the gospel.*” 1 John 1:3 indicates the “fellowship in the gospel” is a spiritual bond which comes about when someone accepts the gospel. When the gospel was preached at Pentecost, those who accepted it “...continued steadfastly in the apostles’ teaching & fellowship (*koinonia*), in the breaking of bread, & in prayers. (Acts 2:42) [Kyle Pope (article)]

PIX: 1 John 1 v3 Fellowship

- With the Father & the Son: “*That which we’ve seen & heard we proclaim also to you, so that you too may have fellowship with us; & indeed our fellowship is with the Father & with his Son Jesus Christ.*” (1 Jn. 1:3) “**Fellowship” is participation in the ‘community’ of the Trinity—enjoyed among the 3 persons of the Triune God.**
- The purpose of [the apostles’] proclamation is not just forgiveness of people’s sins; but is far richer, for the gospel message binds together those who receive it: *that you too may have fellowship with us.* Yet the purpose is richer than mere human fellowship, for believers’ *fellowship is with the Father & with his Son.* Such “fellowship” is personal communion with the Father made possible by the mediation of the Son. ESV

B. Fellowship enjoyed—among the Trinity & with Mankind (Gen. 1-2)

PIX: Perichoresis

PIX: Perichoresis Kids Dance Around

- *Perichoresis* (Greek): the “dance of God;” among the Trinity each person shares the life of the other two in a ‘community of being.’

- In the Trinity: “Each of the divine persons centers upon the others. None demands that the others revolve around him. Each voluntarily circles the other 2, pouring love, delight, & adoration into them. Each person of the Trinity loves, adores, defers to, & rejoices in the others. That creates a dynamic, pulsating dance of joy and love.”--Tim Keller.
- **God created us (humankind) to participate in this ‘mutual self-giving community’ (join in the divine dance) of the Triune God.**
- **“God did not create us to get the cosmic, infinite joy of love & glorification [He already has that], but to share it. We were made to join in the dance.”**--Tim Keller, p.219
- **God was not “alone & incomplete”** Some people say that God was “alone & incomplete,” so He created mankind; but this contradicts the concept of *Perichoresis*: E.g. consider the statement: **“Before God had secured the proper man, He was alone. It was not good for God to be alone.** Although God is absolutely and eternally perfect, **He is not complete.** To say that God is imperfect is to speak blasphemy. Our God is eternally perfect. Nevertheless, without the church He is incomplete. Without the church He is like a husband without a wife... Therefore, **when God said that it was not good for Adam to be alone, it meant that God Himself was incomplete & that it was not good for Him to be alone.”** [*Life-Study of Genesis*, Chap. 17, Sect. 2]

C. **Fellowship lost**—between mankind & God & among people—a broken world (Gen. 3)

PIX: Broken Relationship Picture

PIX: Broken World 1

PIX: Broken World

D. Fellowship Regained:

1. By God’s action in Jesus Christ’s life, death, resurrection
 - God brought them [Philippians] to faith & fellowship...with the Gospel, Paul & each other.”
2. By our believing the gospel (Jailer: Acts 16:31)-- The Jailer asked, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?” They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, you’ll be saved, you & your household.”
3. Testified in baptism (Lydia & Jailer: Acts 16:15, 33)
 - “Lydia...The Lord opened her heart to what Paul said. After she was baptized, & her household as well, she urged us, saying, “If you’ve judged me faithful to the Lord, come to my house & stay.” And she prevailed upon us. (Acts 16:14-15)
 - Paul & Silas “spoke the word of the Lord to [the Jailer] & all in his house. He took them & washed their wounds; & he was baptized at once, he & all his family.” (Acts 16:32-33)
4. Issuing in joy, rejoicing (Jailer: Acts 16:34)—“He rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.” (Acts 16:34)

E. **Results**—fellowship with God & believers (in a church community)

PIX: Restoration

PIX: Philippians New Life Fellowship

PIX: Dancing with God

PIX: You Me & God

PIX: Small Groups Life Together (Hands)

PIX: Small Groups Tree

PIX: Pray

PIX: Pray 4 Each Others

1. Restored relationship with God--God's children in God's family--God's intention for His children is not that they'd just be isolated individuals; they're family members!
Welcome to the family! Paul wrote the Church in Philippi (w overseers/deacons).

SONG: "God's family, God's family, there's the shy ones & the bold ones, young/old..."

2. Restored relationship between humankind--esp. within believing community. Lydia & the jailer had new feelings towards Paul, Silas & believers--welcomed, washed. We (as believers) should have positive/welcoming attitude towards believers (esp. new)
3. Reordered priorities--"*know what really matters*" (Phil. 1:10)

At the end of life, **people don't regret things; their regrets are people-related.** It's not "I wish I'd bought a better car or a house with 3-car garage or more money in the bank." No! It's "I wish I'd spent more time with my kids, grand-kids, shown more affection to my spouse, etc. I wish I hadn't been estranged from parents, siblings, kids."

4. Being saved from being self-centered to being others-centered (Phil. 2:4-5)
5. Gospel--sharing God's love & Christ's salvation with others (Phil. 1:5)
6. Concerned--praying for others, with joy (Phil. 1:4)
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W. Lee—“**Not good for God to be alone**”

“God created the heavens, which are for the earth, and the earth, which is for man. Then God created man, who is for God, with a spirit to receive Him. **Man typifies God as the real, universal husband who is seeking a wife for Himself.**

1) Not Good for God to Be Alone

After man was created, God said of him, "It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make him a helper as his complement" (Gen. 2:18, Heb.). Although man was perfect, he was not complete. For example, a human head is perfect, but without the body it is incomplete. Every person resembles a half of a watermelon. Since he is just a half a watermelon, he is incomplete. Although he is perfect, he needs a counterpart to complete him. It takes the two halves of a watermelon to make a whole melon. Likewise, a man and wife, resembling the two halves of a watermelon, together make a complete unit. This is why I frequently tell the young people to get married. If you are unmarried, though you may be a perfect person you are incomplete. Thus, **as God looked at Adam, He seemed to say, "Adam, you are perfect, but you are only a half a unit. You are too lonely. I will make a complement for you. I will make you a counterpart."**

Man is a type of God, the real, universal husband. **Before God had secured the proper man, He was alone. It was not good for God to be alone.** Although God is absolutely and eternally perfect, **He is not complete.** To say that God is imperfect is to speak blasphemy. Our **God is eternally perfect. Nevertheless, without the church He is incomplete.** Without the church He is like a husband without a wife or like a head without a body. Therefore, **when God said that it was not good for Adam to be alone, it meant that God Himself was incomplete and that it was not good for Him to be alone.** Adam's need for a wife typifies and portrays **God's need** to have a complement. If we see this, every aspect of Genesis 2 will be clear.” [W. Lee, *Life-Study of Genesis*, Chapter 17, Section 2 & also *Conclusion of the NT*, (Msgs. #205-220), Chapter 10, Section 1]

“In [Exodus 20] verses 5 and 6 the Lord said that He would visit the iniquity of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation of them who hate Him and show mercy unto a thousand generations of them who love Him and keep His commandments. This also is a word spoken as God was courting His people, seeking a people to love Him. **From the creation of the world until the time of Exodus 20, God was alone. In a sense, He was lonely, a ‘bachelor.’** In giving the law to His people, He was courting them, telling them that if they would love Him, He would show mercy unto their descendants for a thousand generations, a time span that will lead into eternity... Each commandment uses the expression ‘Jehovah thy God,’ an expression uttered intimately again and again as God lovingly courted His people. **He had been lonely for a long time,** and now He was seeking their love.” [W. Lee, *Life-Study of Exodus*, Chapter 53, Section 1]

Lonely:

1. affected with, **characterized by**, or causing **a depressing feeling of being alone**; lonesome.

2. **destitute of** sympathetic or **friendly companionship**, intercourse, support, etc.: *a lonely exile*.

3. lone; solitary; **without company**; companionless.

Alone: separate, apart, or **isolated from others**:

“God created man with the purpose of having a counterpart (Gen. 1:26). His intention in creating man was not mainly to have servants. If we read the Bible in a pure way, without any preoccupations, we shall realize that God's purpose in creating man was to gain a counterpart. God is not a fighter; He is a lover. He created man in the image of Himself as a lover. This means that He created man so that man would love Him. **In eternity God was alone; we may even say that He was lonely.** His desire for love could not be fulfilled by angels. Therefore, God created man according to His own being. God is loving, and He wants man to love Him. In this way there will be a mutual relationship of love between God and mankind, those created to be His counterpart.” [W. Lee, *Life-Study of Exodus*, Chapter 55, Section 1]

“...God loves us. He desires to be one with us and to be our life. For this reason, God created man according to His image. It is wonderful that God did not create a pair of human beings; He created only one man, Adam. After Adam was created, though all the living creatures were brought before him, he did not find his match. He was a lonely man. Hence, **the Bible says that ‘it is not good that the man should be alone’ (Gen. 2:18). This signifies that it is not good for God to be alone. He does not want to dwell alone.** Instead, He wants to join Himself to the man He created in His image.” [W. Lee, *God's Way in Life*, Chapter 1, Section 2]

“Without man, God would feel lonely and would not be satisfied. After creating the first man, Adam, God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone’ (Gen. 2:18). **In saying this, God was also referring to Himself. In other words, it is not good for God to be alone, to be without man.** Therefore, He created man so that man could be His counterpart. As a result, God is man's unique satisfaction, and man is God's satisfaction. God is man's happiness and rest, and man is God's happiness and dwelling (Isa. 66:1-2). Man lacks everything if he lacks God, and God lacks satisfaction if He lacks man. If man does not have God, he is empty, and if God does not have man, He has no one to fill. Man needs God, but God also needs man.” [W. Lee, *Christ Being the Burden of the Gospel*, Chapter 8, Section 2]

Watchman Nee: “In God's view, **Christ seems to be incomplete without us, as though it was not good for Christ to live alone, and as though He would still be lacking if He did not have the sinners.** God's purpose in saving us is not just for us but also for Christ. God wants Christ to be satisfied, pleased, and **completed.** Therefore, He gives us to Christ. Let us see that we are called not just for our own blessings, but also to satisfy Christ's heart. Our responsibility is not to fail God. To whatever extent we satisfy Christ is the same extent God has not failed Christ.” [W. Nee, *Collected Works, Vol. 8: The Present Testimony (1)*, Chapter 29, Section 1]

“The Bible reveals that in the universe there is a divine romance between God and His elect. The Bible is the record of a romance, in the most pure and holy sense, of a universal couple. The male of this couple is God Himself, and the female is God's redeemed people as a corporate being.

The Bible shows us that we, as God's elect, are His wife and that between Him and us there must be a marriage union based upon mutual love. The universe, therefore, is a wedding place, the place where the Husband, the processed and consummated Triune God, is being joined in marriage to the redeemed, regenerated, sanctified, transformed, and glorified tripartite man. **The Husband is triune** and the wife is **tripartite**, and thus they match each other very well to live together as the unique couple in the entire universe.” [W. Lee, *Life-Study of Joshua, Judges & Ruth*, Chapter 9, Section 1]

“In Revelation 22:17 we have the forming of the universal couple. **This couple is** the mingling of the processed and dispensed **Triune God** with the regenerated and transformed **tripartite man**. This couple is the ultimate consummation of the divine romance revealed in the Bible. According to the entire Bible, there is a divine romance between God the Creator, the Redeemer, who is the male, and His redeemed people who are the female. This is a basic matter revealed in the Scriptures.” [W. Lee, *Conclusion of the NT, (Msgs. 172-188)*, Chapter 8, Section 2]

“According to the entire Bible, there is a divine romance between God the Creator, the Redeemer, who is the male, and His redeemed people, who are the female... The ultimate consummation of the divine romance revealed in the Bible is a couple. This couple is the mingling of the processed and dispensed **Triune God** with the regenerated and transformed **tripartite man**. Revelation 22:17 reveals that this universal couple, as the ultimate consummation of the divine romance revealed in the Bible, is the mingling of the processed and dispensed **Triune God** with the regenerated and transformed tripartite man. The Bible begins with the marriage of Adam and Eve in Genesis and ends with the marriage of the Spirit and God's redeemed people in Revelation. This final marriage is the marriage of the processed, consummated, and dispensed **Triune God** as the Husband with His regenerated and transformed people as the bride. For eternity this universal couple will be the full manifestation of the Triune God expressed in all His glory. This is the conclusion of the New Testament and also of the entire Bible. At the conclusion of the Bible there is an eternal, universal couple expressing the Triune God for eternity.” [LSM, *Truth Lessons, Level 4, Vol. 3*, Chapter 10, Section 2]

“The church being the Body of Christ not only speaks of her relationship to Christ but also of her function toward Christ. A body is the fullness of the head; it is the continuation of the head. Without a body, the head is incomplete. In the same way, the church is the fullness and continuation of Christ. **Without the church Christ is incomplete**. According to God's thought, it was **not good for Adam to be alone, and it is not good for Christ to be without the church** (Gen. 2:18-24; Eph. 5:23-32). Adam needed Eve, and Christ needs the church. Just as Eve was the fullness of Adam, the church is the fullness of Christ.” [W. Lee, *Crucial Truths in the Holy Scriptures, Vol. 6*, Chapter 1, Section 5]

“The result of Adam's sleep in which his side was opened to release a rib was that he gained Eve as his counterpart, his complement, to match him. This signifies that the result of Christ's death with His side pierced to release His divine life was that He obtained the church as His counterpart, His complement. Henceforth, **God is no longer alone, for Christ has gained a counterpart to match Him**. Therefore, chapters 21 and 22 of Revelation show us that the New Jerusalem as the

consummation of the church will be the wife of Christ for His full complement to match Him eternally.” [W. Lee, *Conclusion of the NT*, (Msgs.# 205-220), Chapter 10, Section 3]

“The relationship among the Father, the Son, and the Spirit is not only that They simultaneously **coexist but also that They mutually indwell one another**. The Father exists in the Son and the Spirit; the Son exists in the Father and the Spirit; and the Spirit exists in the Father and the Son. This mutual indwelling among the three of the Godhead is called coinherence.” [W. Lee, *Crucial Points of the Major Items of the Lord's Recovery*, Chapter 1, Section 3]

“The Triune God is three yet one. The Father is in the Son, and the Son is in the Father. The oneness in the Godhead is not a mere unification. That is the oneness of men. The oneness of the Three of the Godhead is that They mutually indwell one another...Our God is three-one because the Three indwell each other. The Father is in the Son and in the Spirit; the Son is in the Father and in the Spirit; and the Spirit is in the Father and in the Son. They are three, yet They are mingled together as one. This is coinherence. The Three of the Godhead not only coexist but also coinhere. Coinherence is a mutual indwelling or a mingling.” [W. Lee, *Practical and Organic Building Up of the Church*, Chapter 2, Section 1]

“**Wherever one of the Godhead is, the other two are as well, because the three of the Godhead not only coexist but also coinhere**. This is a mystery. To coexist is to exist simultaneously, and to coinhere is to exist within one another. The Father exists in the Son and in the Spirit, the Son exists in the Father and in the Spirit, and the Spirit exists in the Father and in the Son. The three exist at the same time and within one another. Therefore, when one of the three comes to us, all three come. The Lord Jesus told us that when the Spirit comes from the Father, He comes *from with* the Father (John 15:26). When the Spirit comes to us, He does not leave the Father in heaven. Instead, He comes with the Father and with the Son, because the Father, the Son, and the Spirit coinhere.” [W. Lee, *All-inclusive Indwelling Spirit*, Chapter 6, Section 2]

"**The Father, the Son, and the Spirit are not three separate persons** or three Gods; **they are one God**, one reality, **one person**." [W. Lee, *The Triune God to Be Life to the Tripartite Man*, p.48 quoted by “An Open Letter from 70 evangelical Christian scholars to the leadership of the “local churches” and Living Stream Ministry” www.open-letter.org]

John 14:8-11 “reveal that the Son is one with the Father and that the Son is the Father. Therefore, **we should not consider that the Son and the Father are two separate persons**. Although They co-exist and are distinct, **the Son and the Father are still one and are inseparable**... We need to recognize that **although the Father, the Son, and the Spirit are three in person, They are one in essence**. Although They are three in Their ‘offices’ They are one in Their existence, for there is only one God, not three Gods (8:6a; 1 Tim. 2:5a).” [W. Lee, *Relationship of God with Man in God's New Creation*, Chapter 1, Section 1]

“As much as possible, we should **avoid words such as person**, substance, essence, subsistence, and hypostasis.” [W. Lee, *Young People's Training*, Chapter 7, Section 2]

“The **best theology says that the Trinity is three distinct persons**, while the poor theology says that the Trinity is three distinct and separate persons. Traditional theology keeps the three persons in a distinction and separation.” [W. Lee, *Elders' Training, Book 3: The Way to Carry Out the Vision*, Chapter 3, Section 2] W. Lee: **OK with Triune God 3 distinct (but not separate) persons.**

Distinct but not separate—(heading) “We need to be deeply impressed that **the Son never did anything apart from the Father** (John 5:19). Therefore, **when He became something, He did that with the Father. This is a crucial point, and it is an intrinsic part of the meaning of Triune.** The Son came in the Father's name (John 5:43), the Son came with the Father (John 6:46 and note 46¹—Recovery Version), and **the Son told us that the Father never left Him alone** (John 8:29; 16:32). **All the time the Father was with the Son, even in the Son's earthly life.** The Son even told us while He was on this earth that He was in the Father and that the Father was in Him (John 10:38; 14:11; 17:21). This is the basis of what is called coinherence, which means living together in one another. **You cannot separate the Son from the Father at all**, and you should not try to make such a separation. The Father, Son, and Spirit are one God, not three Gods. Even to say three persons is not quite correct. Griffith Thomas said that the word “Persons” may be borrowed because of the inadequacy of human language, but that it should not be pressed too far because it will lead to tritheism, the belief in three Gods. We should be on guard concerning the inaccurate teaching of the so-called Trinity that stresses the matter of three separate persons. **It is permissible to use the word distinct** in reference to the three of the Trinity, but **it is altogether inaccurate to use the word separate.**” [W. Lee, *Elders' Training, Book 1: The Ministry of the New Testament*, Chapter 4, Section 1]

“The use of the Greek preposition which means “from with” in the Gospel of John (*para*) is very significant. The Lord Jesus, the Son, is not only from God, but also with God. While He is from God, He is still with Him (John 6:46; 8:16, 29; 16:32). Likewise, the Spirit was sent not only from the Father but from with the Father (John 15:26). This indicates that when the Spirit comes from the Father, He comes with the Father. Therefore, **although the Father, Son, and Spirit are distinct, They cannot be separate. The Three of the Godhead are inseparable.** Although They are three, They are truly one. In fact, They are three-one.” [W. Lee, *Life-Study of Philippians*, Chapter 45, Section 1]

“In the light of the Bible, we believe in the co-inherence of the Three of the Godhead. We believe that the Three exist as one. Whereas **we believe that the Father, Son, and Spirit co-exist mutually for eternity.**” [W. Lee, *Secret of Experiencing Christ*, Chapter 9, Section 2]

“**All the groups in Christianity have been stranded** on their own sands, like a boat stranded on sands in shallow water. The Catholic Church is stranded on their sands of superstitions. Most of the Protestant churches are stranded on the sands of superficiality. They are not deep; they are too shallow, on the surface. Nearly all the Protestant churches are stranded in their kind of lukewarm theology....many have been **stranded on the sands of superstition, superficiality, and lukewarm theology.**” [W. Lee, *Triune God's Revelation and His Move*, Chapter 12, Section 4]

Perichoresis:

“The divine community, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, is complete and exists in exceeding love, fellowship and joy. The divine persons eternally love one another, rejoice in one another, serve one another, affirm one another in perfect, unbroken fellowship whose excellence so far exceeds the categories of human relationship that it is beyond our ken even to imagine. ‘God is love,’ wrote John in his first epistle. Jonathan Edwards writes, ‘Tis common when speaking of the Divine happiness to say that God is infinitely happy in the enjoyment of himself, in perfectly beholding and infinitely loving and rejoicing in his own essence and perfections.’ [George P. Fisher, *An Unpublished Essay of Edwards on the Trinity* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1903), p. 77] Timothy Keller acknowledges Edwards’ influence, and observes that the simple statement from John’s letter [i.e., ‘God is love,'] expresses an eternal truth about the nature and being of God. Only if God exists in community would the statement be true of him in an eternal sense. Love presupposes a subject and object, and thus ‘God is love,’ could not be true of a unitary God who had not created anything to love. Says Keller, ‘the very heart of reality, the meaning of life, the very essence of community is because of what has been happening in the interior life of God for all eternity. This is the ...divine dance’.” [Timothy Keller, “*Father, Son and Holy Spirit*,” sermon preached at Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York, Jan. 15, 2006] [Robinson W. Mitchell, *MISSION: A MARK OF THE CHURCH? TOWARD A MISSIONAL ECCLESIOLOGY*, Thesis Reformed Theological Seminary, (Aug., 2008) pp. 44-45]

Perichoresis—a doctrinal term, etymologically from the Greek *perichorein*, means to contain or penetrate, and refers to the unity of the persons of the Trinity being so complete that they interpenetrate one another. Another Greek word which is etymologically related is *perichoreuein*, meaning “to dance around,” and is the probable source of the image of the Trinitarian community in a divine dance. [Peter J. Leithart, “*The Dance of God, the Dance of Life*” (online article)];

Thomas F. Torrance holds a view of *perichoresis* which is intimately connected with the *homoousion*, the shared substance of the divine persons, and governed by the mutual indwelling of the Father and the Son and the Spirit. [Thomas F. Torrance, *The Christian Doctrine of God: One Being Three Persons* (Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1996), p. 97].

David Crump, “Re-examining the Johannine Trinity: Perichoresis or Deification?” *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 59, Issue 4, Nov., 2006, pp 395-412

Abstract: Theological discussions of perichoretic trinitarianism typically turn to John's Gospel for supporting evidence despite the fact that John nowhere describes the Spirit's so-called ‘interpenetration’(A is in B and B is in A) of either the Father or the Son. In this article, all gospel references pertinent to questions of perichoretic union among Father, Son and Spirit are examined, demonstrating that **the Johannine Spirit does not share in such mutual indwelling**. Rather, the Spirit is inextricably linked to Johannine ecclesiology, performing the work of regeneration and illumination as Christ's earthly alter ego. John's pneumatology is thoroughly functional and salvation-historical, **offering no insight into the Spirit's eternal or essential place within the Godhead**. However, **John's Gospel does describe a third member of a perichoretic trinity: the disciples**. As surprising as it may initially appear, **believers are said to mutually indwell the Son, and to indwell the Father through the Son**, thereby occupying the very position never posited of the Holy Spirit. Although John

does not describe a perichoretic trinity, he **does depict a perichoretic soteriology reminiscent of the Orthodox doctrine of deification**. Such divine union is at the heart of Johannine salvation. It remains a crowning achievement of Johannine theology that **Jesus is portrayed as the one sent from the Father to lead his people into a provocative, new terrain where the language of perichoretic union** with the divine is more apropos of the believer than of the Spirit. [David Crump, “*Re-examining the Johannine Trinity: Perichoresis or Deification?*” *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 59, Issue 4, (Nov., 2006) pp. 395-412]

Attfield, D. G. “‘I in You and You in Me’: Perichoresis and Salvation”, *Theology*, vol. cix, no.852, pp. 421-29.

Randall E. Otto, *The Use and Abuse of Perichoresis in Recent Theology*, *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 54, Issue 3 (Aug, 2001) pp 366-384

Abstract: *Perichoresis (perichoresis, circumincessio)* is a theological term which describes the necessary being-in-one-another or circumincession of the three divine Persons of the Trinity because of the single divine essence, the eternal procession of the Son from the Father and of the Spirit from the Father and (through) the Son, and the fact that the three Persons are distinguished solely by the relations of opposition between them.’ This term was popularized in the eighth century by John of Damascus who, in his *De fide orthodoxa*, said the three Persons of the Trinity ‘are made one not so as to commingle, but so as to cleave to each other, and they have their being in each other [*kai ten en allelais perichoresin*] without any coalescence or commingling.’ This important theological term, which Karl Barth rightly regarded ‘as the one important form of the dialectic required to complete the concept of three-in-oneness’ ‘from the side of the unity of the divine essence’ and ‘from the side of the original relations,’ has suffered in some recent theology from its appropriation to describe relationality apart from mutually shared being. For example, in his influential social doctrine of the Trinity, Jürgen Moltmann emphasizes the ‘relational, perichoretically consummated life processes’ of the three Persons who ‘cannot and must not be reduced to three modes of being of one and the same divine subject,’ whose unity ‘cannot and must not be seen in a general concept of divine substance.’ [Randall E. Otto, *The Use and Abuse of Perichoresis in Recent Theology*, *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 54, Issue 3 (Aug, 2001) pp 366-384]

The Weak Person-perichoresis Thesis, or WPT “The persons of the Trinity share all their properties in a common divine essence apart from those properties that serve to individuate one of the persons of the Trinity, or express a relation between only two persons of the Trinity.” This may be called the Weak Person-perichoresis Thesis, or WPT. On this version of person-perichoresis the interpenetration of each of the persons of the Trinity by the others is limited, rather than complete. But this, it seems to me, is a requirement for a doctrine of person-perichoresis that makes sense, otherwise the individuation of the persons of the Trinity is jeopardised. [Oliver D. Crisp *Problems with Perichoresis*, *TYNDALE BULLETIN*, 56.1 (2005) p. 139]

“The use of person-perichoresis by theologians sympathetic to **social theories of the Trinity (roughly, theories that emphasize the threeness, rather than the oneness of the Trinity, focussing on three divine individuals held together by a single divine essence, in which they participate perichoretically)**,

does not mean that social Trinity theorists have a monopoly on this version of perichoresis.” [Oliver D. Crisp *Problems with Perichoresis*, TYNDALE BULLETIN, 56.1 (2005) p. 136]

Karen Kilby notes (somewhat ironically) that, “It is the divine perichoresis which makes the three one [in social theories of the Trinity], and it is perichoresis which makes the Trinity a wonderful doctrine. There is among the three divine persons, it is said, a kind of mutual interpenetration which is not to be found amongst human persons, and it is because of this perfect interpenetration that the three persons are one God.” [Karen Kilby, ‘*Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of the Trinity*,’ *New Blackfriars* 81 (2000) p. 435 quoted by Oliver D. Crisp *Problems with Perichoresis*, TYNDALE BULLETIN, 56.1 (2005) p. 135]

“All Christian theologians who want to consider themselves orthodox are committed to the proposition that God is three **“persons.”** And all modern theologians seem to agree that the meaning of person in the context of the Trinity is not simply identical with our current understanding of the word. But as to just *how* different the meaning is, and in what way, there is not such unanimity.” [Karen Kilby, ‘*Perichoresis and Projection: Problems with Social Doctrines of the Trinity*,’ *New Blackfriars* 81 (2000)]

Christ-Centered Hermeneutics Daniel Block on Christ-Centered Preaching-Part 2

Christianity Today, Posted by Ed Stetzer: June 19, 2013 at 10:00 am

As a hermeneutical principle, we should allegorize biblical texts only when they invite us to do so, but such invitations are rare.

Typology is a slightly different matter—though only slightly so. As a hermeneutical principle typology assumes correspondence between earlier and later phenomena—whether events, persons, or objects—and imagines that the earlier (the type) point to or anticipate the latter (antitype).

In principle, searching for these links is not objectionable. However, because of the widespread abuse of the method, I rarely use the word "type" or "typology." I prefer to speak of "correspondences" between phenomena, or "analogies."

Just because an earlier person or event corresponds in some respect to a later person or event, does not mean the former anticipates, let alone predicts the latter. Often the account of the earlier phenomenon simply provides the vocabulary for describing the later phenomenon. For this reason understanding the earlier is necessary for grasping the significance of the later, but this does not mean the earlier points to the later.

If we preach Joshua as a type of Christ, we minimize the role and work of Jesus and obscure the message of the book of Joshua.

Sometimes Christological typologizing may actually reflect a low Christology. Although Joshua shares his name with Jesus (both mean "YHWH saves"), this is insufficient ground for viewing Joshua as a type of Christ.

Actually Joshua's name was never intended to describe his role or reflect his mission. He was indeed Israel's general in their battle against the Amalekites in Exodus 17:8-16, and in the offensive charge against the Canaanites in the book of Joshua, but neither of these represents the paradigmatic "saving" event; that is reserved for the Exodus from Egypt. Joshua had no hand in that whatsoever.

In fact, his name says nothing about his role. To think otherwise is to obscure the direct hand of YHWH in Israel's salvation and to obscure the etiology of the name. According to Num 13:16, Moses renamed Hoshea ben Nun ("He has saved") as Jehoshua ("YHWH has saved") not because of Joshua's military accomplishments, but in fulfillment of YHWH's intention in the signs and wonders of Egypt and the Exodus itself: "Then you will know that I am YHWH" (Exod 10:2).

Joshua's name is not a commentary on the man, but on the God of Israel. Accordingly, the angel's word to Joseph, "You shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins," alludes not to the man Joshua, but to YHWH who "saved" Israel from the "sins" of Pharaoh. This is Exodus language.

If we preach Joshua as a type of Christ, we minimize the role and work of Jesus and obscure the message of the book of Joshua. Jesus is not a second Joshua; Joshua was his agent! Jesus is YHWH who commissioned Joshua to lead the Israelites into the Promised Land and hand the land into their hands.

Exodus-New Exodus Theme (type):

The Old Testament presents a recurring pattern of captivity and restoration. God's undeserving people sell themselves into captivity, but God in His mercy delivers them. The books of Judges and Kings record many deliverances. Each is like a mini-Exodus. Likewise, **the return from Babylonian captivity is pictured as a new Exodus.** Isaiah writes concerning the return of Israel from Babylon:

“Thus says the Lord, who makes a way in the sea and a path through the mighty waters, who brings forth the chariot and horse, the army and the power. (They shall lie down together, they shall not rise; they are extinguished, they are quenched like a wick):” “Do not remember the former things, nor consider the things of old. Behold I will do a new thing. Now it shall spring forth; Shall you not know it? I will even make a road in the wilderness and rivers in the desert’.” (Isaiah 43:16-19) ¹⁸

The new Exodus event to which Isaiah points is a pathway home for the captives in Babylon. Yet, the new thing that God promises to do finds its ultimate fulfillment in Christ and His redemptive work. The new and greater Exodus from bondage is found in Christ. He delivered us from a bondage far worse than Egypt or Babylon and now leads us through this present wilderness all the way to the promised Canaan above. [G.R. Schmeling, *The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament*]

Principle of Hermeneutics:

Take scripture in its “*plain sense*” meaning. The golden rule of interpretation is: “*When the plain sense of the scripture makes common sense, seek no other sense.*”

“The revelation contained in the Bible is accommodated.

a. The truth of God is **accommodated** to the human mind so the human mind can assimilate it; *revelation has an anthropomorphic character.*

b. An understanding of this fact should cause the interpreter to avoid excessively literal exegesis when he finds God as a Being resembling a man, who can be loving, hating, jealous, angry, glad, or filled with regret.

[BIBLICAL HERMENEUTICS, Hermeneutics 3-09, p. 7 <http://makarios-online.org/notes/pdf/Hermeneutics%203-09.pdf>]

"The Bible is to be interpreted in view of the fact that **it is an accommodation of Divine truths to human minds**: God the infinite communicating with man the finite...We must be careful, then, not to push accommodating language about God & His nature to literal extremes. God does not have feathers & wings (e.g., Psalms 17:8); nor is He our literal Father in the same sense our earthly father is."

"This is especially true when the Scriptures speak of God Himself!... So,...we must be careful not to press too far what is obviously accomodating language."

"Accommodation is God's adoption in *inscripturation* of the human audience's finite and fallen perspective. Its underlying conceptual assumption is that **in many cases God does not correct our mistaken human viewpoints but merely assumes them in order to communicate with us.**" [Kenton L. Sparks, *God's Word in Human Words, An Evangelical Appropriation of Critical Biblical Scholarship*, pp. 230-31]