



Philippians 2:1-4

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Introduction

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, Amen. Brothers and sisters, it has been a great pleasure this week, as we got the opportunity to assemble here in Frankfurt for evaluating our partnership. To me to speak partnership, I am convinced to believe that we are basically talking about the relationship between our people in Africa, Asia and Germany. Furthermore, I think, we are looking on how this partnership will bring together our people, that is, in working together, sharing together, and the like. Ultimately this would lead us to the common understanding of our fellowship and unity in Christ.

As today we are approaching towards the end of our evaluation, I would like to read from Philippians 2:1-4.

In Christ there is encouragement to Unity

I have picked this text from the lectionary of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Tanzania, my Church. According to that lectionary Philippians 2:1-4 is the text for today with a theme namely: OUR NEIGHBOURS. Here I find a relationship or a reconciliation between the text and in a way the purpose of this consultation. So my dear due to that let us consider on few ideas found in this text. The apostle brings out this idea due to his faithfulness to his Lord and to the Gospel. Despite of his imprisonment he thinks of others and the Church. He encourages the Christians that they should remain in unity. Opposition and rejection of the Gospel from the opponents of the Church should not divide believers. Rather in that situation believers should stand alert in order to overcome whatever comes to attack the Church.

Disunity is rejection to the will and to the purpose of our Lord Jesus Christ who urges the Church to be one (Jn. 15:4-6). For sometimes it is a pity that when we think that we are one, it is the time when we divide on baseless grounds. Let us think on our common goal that is to serve our Lord Jesus with the intension of strengthening our respective churches. The spirit of love, which we know for sure that is a blessing to us, should be manifested to other.

In humility Christians regard others as better than themselves

Brothers and sisters, humility is not a simple habit. Normally we are not humble rather we are arrogant and arrogance can win over anybody, either he is a Christian or non Christian, either a clergy or a non-clergy person; either an old person or the

young one. Arrogance does not fear anybody. Why are we so attached by this? I think the reason is usually we think of our qualities, rank and possessions, we want to be greatly honoured, and so on and so forth. So then, this habit of arrogance contradicts with the mind which was in Christ and which is expected to be found in the Church of Christ.

We are blessed as we are co-workers with the humble Lord, Jesus Christ. We have an opportunity and place where we can learn from as he says: *“take my yoke upon me and learn form me; for I am gentle and humble in heart ...”* (Mt 11:29). We know much how he was humble to the death on the cross. We know how he was merciful and compassionate. We also know how he overcame the spirit of selfishness and conceit which are the inevitable enemies of fellowship and hindrances to unity.

In this regard, we Christians are called for two things. One, to seeing the strengths and gifts of others , thinking and speaking of the interests of others and not just of our own. This is the way we can uplift others as we first come down ourselves. Remember the god Samaritan in Luke 10:30-37. If he had not been moved with pity and come down to care the one who fell into the hands of robbers and got bitten to the point of death, the man could have died.

Two, humility, also urges us to think of our weaknesses, failures and limitations. It is at this point we ask for grace from our Lord Jesus Christ. And here, it is at our turning point when we find grace from our Lord Jesus Christ. It is also here when we come to our turning point to look at the cross of Jesus and ask for forgiveness for what we have failed to accomplish. With this spirit of submission and confession before our Lord Jesus Christ, the Church worldwide can work together and ultimately the fellowship and unity will get equipped.

Blessing and glory and wisdom and thanksgiving and honour and power and might be to our God forever and ever, Amen.