



INTRODUCTION

It's probably safe to say all of us have asked the question, "What if?" "What if" I followed Christ from my early childhood? "What if" I never hung out with that crowd? "What if" my parents knew the Lord when I was young? "What if" I hadn't taken that first drink? "What if" I hadn't smoked that first joint? The difference between these "what if" questions of our past and the ones in our lesson is that the outcomes of the questions asked in this introduction can never be known. Therefore wrestling with these "what if's" is futile. The "what if's" in our text have a possible positive outcome. It would be better for us to look to the known future with our "what if's" rather than looking back at our past in regret. "What if", I prayed without ceasing? "What if", I loved my neighbor as myself? "What if", I put my faith in action? "What if", I loved my wife like Christ loves the church? You get the idea. Now let's get into God's word!

Philippians 2:1-2 (NKJV)

¹ Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,

² fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

Let's look at the first two verses of our text and see what God has for us.

¹ Therefore if *there is* any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy,

² fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

The "ifs" in our text are totally rhetorical. We know we have consolation (**comfort · solace · sympathy · compassion · pity · commiseration · empathy · relief · help · support · moral support · encouragement · reassurance**) in Christ. If you truly know Him, you will have had or will experience one or all of these benefits. David said it like this:

Psalms 103:1-5 (NKJV)

¹ Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, *bless* His holy name!

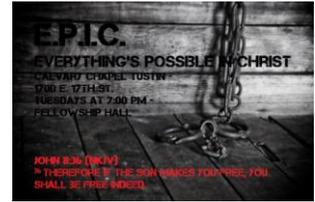
² Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:

³ Who forgives all your iniquities, Who heals all your diseases,

⁴ Who redeems your life from destruction, Who crowns you with lovingkindness and tender mercies,

⁵ Who satisfies your mouth with good *things*, So *that* your youth is renewed like the eagle's.

We know we have comfort in His love for by it He shed His precious blood for us, took upon His body stripes for our healing and died for us so that we can live. There's comfort in that. He will never love us any more or any less than He does right now. In fact, He loved us when we were yet sinners and will love us when we fall seven times or seventy times seven. There is comfort in that kind of love.



When we are His, we have fellowship with the Holy Spirit. In fact our bodies are the temples of the Holy Spirit. Sometimes it's not what you know but who you know. There is fellowship with whoever lives with you, so there must be fellowship if someone lives in you. This thought is comforting and convicting at the same time! The Bible says this:

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (NKJV)

¹⁹ Or do you not know that your body is the temple of the Holy Spirit *who is* in you, whom you have from God, and you are not your own?

²⁰ For you were bought at a price; therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God's.

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 (KJV) (I like the KJV of this particular verse better!)

¹⁹ What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost *which is* in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

²⁰ For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Whether we know it or not we always have the mercy of God. How do I know that? If we did not have mercy we would be consumed and because His affection, His compassion never fails. Love never fails (**1 Cor. 13:8**).

In Lamentations 3:21-24 the prophet Jeremiah inspired by the Holy Spirit says it this way:

Lamentations 3:21-24 (NKJV)

²¹ This I recall to my mind, Therefore I have hope. ²² *Through* the LORD'S mercies we are not consumed, Because His compassions fail not. ²³ *They are new every morning; Great is Your faithfulness.* ²⁴ "The LORD *is* my portion," says my soul, "Therefore I hope in Him!"

Paul knows that his joy will be full and the results will be total unity in the things of Jesus Christ and the church because we have these attributes through our relationship in the Lord Jesus Christ.

² fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind.

What is so important about unity in the church? Can't we all just get along? Isn't that enough? No. We must be in agreement in the things of Christ, not what color the green room is to be painted or how many hours the front desk be should covered. In those things we can agree to disagree. However, when it comes to the gospel of Jesus Christ we must be united.

Jesus taught us the importance of being alike in the spirit in the following passage.

Luke 11:17 (NKJV)

¹⁷ **But He, knowing their thoughts, said to them: "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house *divided* against a house falls.**