

# **Turning Your Sunday Drive into a JOYRIDE**

**Series: J.O.Y. Jesus, Others, and You - #3**

**A Study of the Book of Philippians**

**Text: Philippians 2:1-11**

**INTRODUCTION:** Did you ever go on a Sunday afternoon drive when you were growing up? My family used to do that when I was a kid. We would all load in to the chevy van and take off on a Sunday afternoon. There was no destination in mind; just a leisurely drive to enjoy the beautiful scenery of the countryside, but we did always stop for ice cream on the way. When Nancy and I were teens, we liked to take our own Sunday afternoon drives to Mt. Wachusett.

I googled to see how many other people had memories of Sunday drives.

- When I was young, my grandparents always went for a Sunday drive, and took me and my brother along. We drove down dirt roads. We stopped to pick plums and blackberries growing wild. We still talk about those days.
- Family Sunday afternoon drives in the new 1956 Ford station wagon were fun, usually stopping for ice cream at the end - but we never went during the football season.
- After church on Sunday, with 5 kids bouncing around in the back of a mint green '57 Chevy station wagon ;) We really liked going because we knew it would end at the Dairy Queen. If my dad had a good week, we'd get hot dogs too. My mother always shuddered because she thought we should be having a 'proper' Sunday dinner.
- I remember those Sunday drives. Sometimes we'd end up at Lake Milton or at Mill Creek Park. We took empty jugs to fill with mineral water. I still remember that sulfur smell... Drinking it in and farting it out.
- My grandmother raised me and would take me on Sunday drives in Humboldt County, CA, home of the redwoods. We would traverse slowly, winding through these magnificent trees. We would stop at the "tourist turnouts" where loads of Japanese tourists from a tour bus would gather. They often requested a picture of the little American girl in her pink gingham dress in front of, or climbing or walking across, fallen redwoods.

Anyone have memories of taking a Sunday drive? Now that you're older, you've probably traded in those Sunday drives for a Sunday afternoon nap, right?

Most of the time it was just a drive with no destination in mind. I wonder: Do we live our lives that way, with no destination in mind?

What about our spiritual lives; our walk with Christ? Has your relationship with Jesus become mundane? Do you find yourself simply going through the motions of what a Christian should be and what a Christian should do? Walking the road of life with Christ is much more than a Sunday drive.

The national Highway Traffic Safety Administration was charged with the task of reducing deaths, injuries and economic losses resulting from motor vehicle accidents. There have been all kinds of traffic studies contradicting one another regarding causes and reasons for traffic accidents. Many reasons have been cited such as speeding, driver inattention, cell phones, poor weather conditions, and improper design. Remarkably, one statistic has held true for every study ever performed. You are 12 times less likely to be involved in a traffic accident when you are driving on a one-way street.

The same is true if you are living for Jesus. Being a Christian doesn't exempt you from troubles, but living according to His plan and walking with Him on the narrow way, will lessen your chances of ending up in a mess.

### **At the Crossroad**

**“I encountered a man on the Road of life, so sure of himself – so convinced he was right.**

**He had (his) religion, but he didn't know God, and though he had eyes, I thought that rather odd:**

**He only could see what he wanted to see. So, blind to the truth that could set his soul free; the man charged ahead – unaware he was lost, until he encountered a Man on a cross, at a fork in the road, where the path became two, and the man who'd always been sure of himself had to choose.**

**Between broad and narrow, between left and right, Between things he could see, and things still out of sight.**

**And I'm sure that the man would have gone the wrong way, Had he not encountered the Savior that day.**

**But love rescued him! Truth set him free! Grace opened his eyes – he could finally see...Now listen, as this once-proud skeptic proclaims:**

**“For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.” (Source unknown)**

If your Christian life resembles a Sunday drive, or maybe a roller-coaster ride, I want to show you today how to turn your **Sunday Drive into a Joyride.**

Turn with me to the book of Philippians, chapter 2, beginning with verse 1.

***“Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.***

***5In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!” LET’S PRAY***

**STORY:** A city boy had never been on a farm before and he asked a farmer: 'Mister, why doesn't this cow have any horns?' The farmer cocked his head for a moment, then began in a slow, patient tone, "Well, cattle can do powerful damage with their horns. Sometimes we keep 'em trimmed down with a hacksaw. Other times we can fix up the young'uns by puttin' a couple drops of acid where their horns would grow in.

Still, there are other breeds of cattle that never do grow horns. But the reason this cow don't have no horns, is..... 'cause it's a horse.'

**You'd think even a city boy would know the difference between a horse and a cow... but then you'd also think that a Christian would know the difference between true Christianity and what a lot of folks THINK is Christianity.**

We only get to take the ride of life once. Shouldn't it be a joyride? Even with the bumps in the road, the sharp curves, the steep cliffs, and the deep valleys, don't you want every hour, of every day, of every week, of every year, to be filled with joy?

Would you like to face life every day with a smile on your face, a bounce to your step, and joy in your heart regardless of your circumstances?

Here in the second chapter of Philippians, Paul gives a three-step formula on how to do that. Paul is telling the Philippian church what Christianity should look like. In fact, there are many churches who have great doctrine and a catchy vision and mission statement. They have a beautiful building, a dynamic preacher. But don't live as true Christ-followers.

Paul writes in verse 2, ***"make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind."*** (Philippians 2:2, NIV)

Did you catch the emphasis here??? ***Same mind, same love, being in one spirit.*** That's what Christianity should look like. And when Christians live like that there is a powerful atmosphere of joy, enthusiasm, and unity.

It is interesting. Paul said, ***'my joy will not be complete until your joy is as well.'*** Herein lies the secret to JOYRIDE.

## **I. Give Jesus Preeminence.**

The thing that Paul is about to say hinges on his first sentence which encompasses the first two verses.

***"Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind."*** (Philippians 2:1-2, NIV)

You may not know this, but in the Greek language, the condition of this sentence is one that doesn't state a possibility, but a probability. The word ***"if"*** could be better translated ***"since"*** because it begins with our encouragement from being united with Christ.

In other words, Paul is assuming that the focal point of our life will be Jesus. He will have first place in our life. Think about this. The fact that Jesus came, died for us, lives in us, to be with us through eternity; that alone should bring you joy unspeakable and fully of glory.

Beyond that we have the 'comfort' from his love. It is because He loves us that we love Him. Think about the added benefit to that. If I love Jesus and you love Jesus, then we are going to love each other. Do you understand why that is so important not just for you and me, but for our church and for every Christian?

Why do we exist? To point people to Jesus and inspire them to live as devoted followers of Christ. Do you know the number one way we as a church point people to Jesus? By loving one another. Jesus himself said, **"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."** (John 13:35, NIV)

When people outside our church walk inside our church and sense, we truly love each other, they will know the difference that Jesus makes in our lives.

Then to make sure that we give Jesus preeminence, that we keep Him first, Paul reminds us of two things:

1. ***"our fellowship with the Spirit."***

***"Therefore, if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the spirit, if any tenderness and compassion."*** (Philippians 2:1, NIV)

The word '**fellowship**' literally means to share in common. It is the Spirit's job to keep us focused on Jesus, to keep us in love with Jesus, to keep us pointing people to Jesus, to keep our minds and hearts on Jesus, but that raises a question.

If the Holy Spirit lives in every Christian, why is it that sometimes Christians are divided and don't get along?

There is a difference between the ***indwelling*** of the Holy Spirit and the ***influence*** of the holy spirit. Not every believer is equally influenced by the Holy Spirit. When we get out of fellowship with the Holy Spirit, guess what? We get out of fellowship with each other.

If I am full of the Holy Spirit and in fellowship with the Holy Spirit and you are full of the Holy Spirit and in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, we can disagree and we can debate, we can discuss, but we will not be divided.

**Example:** *There is a great illustration of this in Acts 15, 24We have heard that some went out from us without our authorization and disturbed you, troubling your minds by what they said. 25So we all agreed to choose some men and send them to you with our dear friends Barnabas and Paul— 26men who have risked their lives for the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. 27Therefore we are sending Judas and Silas to confirm by word of mouth what we are writing. 28It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us not to burden you with anything beyond the following requirements:*

He goes on to say, *"Then make my joy complete by...*

## 2. ***being like-minded...***" (Philippians 2:2, NIV)

To be like-minded doesn't mean we will always think the same way, but it does mean we will be spiritually-minded.

In each of the synoptic gospels we find that we are to love God with all our **mind** as well as our **heart, soul, and strength** (Mat 22:37, Mark 12:30 and Luke 10:27).

To love God **"with all your mind"** is to know that your mind has great influence on everything else about you.

To love God **"with all your mind"** is to use your mind to focus on the things of God.

To love God with **"all your mind"** is to know that your spiritual condition affects how you think.

Rom 8:6 says, **"the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace"**.

Rom 12:2 says that we should be **"transformed by the renewing of our minds"**, which is a process.

In Phil 1:9 Paul prays **'that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight'**.

When you're taking a Sunday drive with the son of God, the love of God, and the Spirit of God you will find yourself beginning a JOYRIDE because you're giving Jesus preeminence.

## II. Giving Others PRIORITY.

How do you know that you have given Jesus preeminence? How do you know that Jesus is truly in first place? Well, you make others a priority. To do that, the first thing you must do is die to selfishness. That is why Paul says,

***"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit."*** (Philippians 2:3, NIV)

The first thing you must teach a child is **not** to be selfish. You know what the favorite words of a child are when he first learns to talk? Me, my, and mine. The problem is we are born with this desire to be first.

STORY: I love the story of the young mother that was making pancakes for her two sons: Kevin, five and Ryan, three. The boys began to argue over who should get the first pancake. This mother saw an opportunity for a teachable moment, and she looked at those boys and said, "now boys, if Jesus was sitting here, he would say, 'let my brother have the first pancake.'" Kevin turned to his younger brother and said, "Ryan, you be Jesus."

If we understand what Paul is telling us here, if we decide to take the prescription he sets forth in this passage, we will be of one mind and one love.

So, what's the prescription?

***"Do nothing from SELFISH AMBITION or CONCEIT, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look NOT ONLY TO HIS OWN INTERESTS, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus"*** Philippians 2:3-5

In other words – selfishness, ambition, conceit; looking out for my own interests FIRST leads to problems.

Notice all that Paul is saying here: it's OK to look out for your OWN INTERESTS. You've got to supply for your own family, you've got to pay your bills, take care of your home, take care of your body...etc.

But what happens too often is that Christians focus mostly on themselves... and others come in a distant 2nd, if at all.

**ILLUS:** Listen to the story of two 4th grade classes:

In both classes, the teacher introduced a game called 'balloon stomp.' A balloon was tied to every child's leg, and the object of the game was to pop everyone else's balloon while protecting one's own. The last person whose balloon hadn't popped - WON.

In the first class - when the teacher said 'GO' - these kids REALLY got into the game. A flurry of activity and shouting filled the room as kids stomped on each other's balloons. A few of the children clung to sidelines like wallflowers at a middle school dance, but their balloons were doomed just the same. The entire battle was over in a matter of seconds, leaving only one balloon intact.

The winner, as you can imagine, was the kid that acted like a bully. He was pushy, rude, and aggressive.

Now, the 2nd class that was introduced to this same game was made up of children with learning disabilities. Now, perhaps the instructions were given too quickly for them to grasp, but the one idea that got through to them was that the balloons HAD to be popped.

But they approached the game differently than the first class. Instead of fighting each other, they began to help each other pop balloons. One little girl knelt and held her balloon carefully in place while a little boy stomped it flat. Then he knelt and held his balloon for her. It went on like this for several minutes until all the balloons were destroyed. And everybody cheered. Because everybody won. (from a sermon by Davon Huss, sermoncentral.com).

Now aside from their mental abilities... what was the difference?

Well, the first class saw the game as this is MY balloon, and I must protect it to win. And so, they sought to "look out for their own interests."

The 2nd class saw the game as "WE" must win, and so they sought to "look out for everyone's interests."

It wasn't about ME... it was about WE. And that's what Paul was talking about.



Instead of running all over each other trying to be first, we ought to be falling over each other trying to be second.

I know that is counterintuitive and countercultural. We are told today to look out for number one, but the way to joy is to look out for number two.

We are told to do everything you can to get ahead. The bible says to do everything you can to get behind. The world says, 'you have to step on other people to get to the top.' the bible says, "put other people on your shoulders and help them get to the top."

The way to joy is to think of others the way you think of yourself. How do you do that? That word **"consider"** refers to a conclusion that is carefully thought out based on what is true. You don't just pretend that others are more important than you are. You've got to believe that others are more important.

In another letter to the Roman church, Paul wrote this, ***"For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment..."*** (Romans 12:3, NIV)

STORY: There is a story that happened several years ago when Don Shula was the head coach of the Miami Dolphins NFL team. He is the only coach that ever won a super bowl with an undefeated team, and he was at the height of his popularity. He was having difficulty with privacy and just going somewhere and enjoying himself and not being asked for an autograph or hounded by people.

He and his wife went away to a very small town in Maine thinking they would be anonymous and get some rest. They decided to go to a movie. As they entered the theater, everyone in attendance stood up and applauded. Shula was just disgusted and irritated. He sat down and leaned over to the man next to him and said, "I sure didn't think you would recognize me!"

The fellow looked at him and said, 'am I supposed to know you?' Shula shot back, "I am Don Shula of the Miami Dolphins and all of you applauded when I walked in."

The man said, "well, it is a pleasure to meet you, but the reason why we applauded was because the manager had just walked in and said if two more

people didn't show up, he would not show the movie." Don't think too highly of yourself.

*Turning your Sunday Drive into a JOYRIDE comes by giving Jesus Preeminence, giving others Priority, and lastly...*

### **III. Living Your Life Purposefully.**

Notice what he wrote next: ***“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross! Philipians 2:5-8 (NIV)***

To live your life purposefully, I see two things here.

**1st – You must have the same mindset as Jesus.** The more that we all become like Jesus, the more we will be of the same mind and the same love. You see too often that when church people are in conflict, it's because one person wants one thing, and the other person wants something different.

**ILLUS:** There is the story of a church that argued over what color shingles to put on the roof of the church building. Some of them wanted red shingles and others wanted green. And they got into quite a heated argument over it. But eventually they compromised. They decided to shingle one half of the roof with red shingles... and the other half with green. And from that day on – the ½ that wanted red sat under the red shingles and those who wanted green sat under the green shingles. "Christians" sometimes don't behave like Christians.

Once we put Jesus in the mix and we begin to copy Him, we begin to decide that WE WANT should be what JESUS WANTS. And as we start getting closer to Jesus, we get closer to each other (we travel up the triangle toward Jesus), and we end up having the MIND of Christ and the LOVE of Christ.

**2<sup>nd</sup> – You must follow Jesus' example of being a Servant.**

***“Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a***

*servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."* Philippians 2:6-8

All this reminds me of an old Beatles song called - 'Try to See It My Way.'

**Try to see it my way. Do I have to keep on talking till I can't go on?**

**While you see it your way. Run the risk of knowing that our love may soon be gone. We can work it out. We can work it out.**

**Think of what you're saying. You can get it wrong and still you think that it's alright.**

**Think of what I'm saying. We can work it out and get it straight or say good night. We can work it out. We can work it out.**

[Bridge: Paul McCartney & John Lennon]

**Life is very short and there's no time. For fussing and fighting, my friend.**

**I have always thought that it's a crime. So, I will ask you once again.**

**Try to see it my way. Only time will tell if I am right, or I am wrong.**

**While you see it your way. There's a chance that we might fall apart before too long. We can work it out. We can work it out.**

**Do you know what that song is saying? It's saying - we can work it out IF YOU SEE IT MY WAY.**

If you insist on YOUR way and reject MY WAY 'there's a chance that we may fall apart before too long.' It's a power struggle over my right to have MY way.

But a Christian who realizes that his purpose is to be like Christ, understands that ***"Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant."***

Jesus was God, But He didn't use His Godhood as justification to be SUPERIOR, He emptied himself, and became a SERVANT.

What rights does a servant have? None! Jesus surrendered His rights and now He expects us to learn how to do the same. So, if I follow Jesus' example, I will empty myself of my rights and my major focus will be on helping you. Because... that's what Jesus did.

Jesus took *"the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."*

Why did He humble himself unto death? He died to remove our guilt and shame. Jesus died for us. And now He expects us to die to ourselves.

**ILLUS:** Rob Frazier wrote a song with these words,

**"Dead people don't mind the pain, don't get offended so they never complain.**

**They're not concerned about personal gain, does that sound like me or you?**

**The truth is rising from the mist and the word is this.**

**That when Jesus calls a man, He calls him to come and die!**

**He doesn't want you better, He wants you deader."**

And that's what Jesus said to His disciples in Matthew 20: *"You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. 26Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, 27and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— 28just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."* Matthew 20:25-28, NIV

**Jesus is our example of how to be selfless and live as servants. Jesus came not to be served, but to serve and to die for us.**

**CLOSE:** Do you realize that when you give Jesus first place, others second place, and yourself third place you are going to be full of joy because you will find that it will give you the most satisfaction.

No one who has ever lived was more joyful than Jesus. No one who has ever lived gave out more joy than Jesus. The reason that His life was pure, unadulterated,

undiluted, undeniable JOY, was because from the moment He came to this world, to the moment He ascended to the right hand of God, He was looking out for our interest. The way you get to where you want to go in life, is to help others get to where they need to go in Christ.

**When you look out for others, God will look out for you.**

There is a strange law in the kingdom of God that works like this. The secret to joy is not being able to climb to the top of the ladder; it is being willing to go to the lowest rung and give a helping hand up. It was a wise person who said, ***'there is no life so empty as a self-centered life, and there is no life so centered as self-emptied life.'***

Worship is when you give Jesus preeminence. When you disciple others, serve others, pray for others, give to others, you are giving others priority. If you are not serving in this church, through this church, with this church, or for this church somewhere, someplace, you need to. The more you give Jesus first place in your life, and love others, the more you will be filled with JOY.

Let me put these three points together and see if you see something.

1. Giving **J**esus PREEMINIENCE
2. Giving **O**thers PRIORITY
3. Living **Y**our Life PURPOSEFULLY

**This is the secret of turning your Sunday Drive into a JOYRIDE.**