



# GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

## 8 = The Proper Order

8/27 @6:30  
Grace Group at  
the Church

8/29 @6:00  
Grace Group at  
2070 Corley Dr

8/29 @6:30  
Grace Group at  
1710 Mariposa Dr

**ICE BREAKER:** What was your favorite subject in school?

**REVIEW:** Was there anything covered or said on Sunday that you had any questions or comments about?

**READ:** Philippians 2:1-4

One of my favorite classes in college was my “Formal Logic” class. In that class we learned how to evaluate different forms of arguments from a more technical perspective. One of the most important types of arguments is one that all of us hear (and use) all the time. The “fancy” name is “conditional arguments” but you usually just use them as “If.. then” statements. And for today’s lesson what is important about them is that the order matters -- a lot. Think of this: what is the difference between telling your kid a) if you behave then we will go to McDonalds or b) if we go to McDonalds then you will behave? One is a reward, the other is a foolish hope and dream. Paul gives us an if.. then statement in the passage we read, and the order there is super important too. But here the consequence carries a much greater weight than just a meltdown in the store!

To just read it again to make the point more clear, Philippians 2:1-2 says this: “So *if* there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, **[then]** complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.” So what then is the order? Well **FIRST** we see what precious gifts we have in Christ, **THEN** we are able to live and move and be together in beautiful unity and harmony. The heart of this becomes an important distinction that we all must wrestle with. Am I self-righteous, or do I allow the righteousness of Christ to change me? Self-righteousness thinks: I will love better, I will be more united, I will strive to do this because I am good/strong/wise/loving enough to do that. The righteousness of Christ, on the other hand, is holy and perfect and changes us and empowers us to do all that perfectly. In the end the truth that I have learned is this: my self righteousness will **NOT** lead to having the “same mind, having the same love, and being in full accord.” Instead it will lead to strife and division and trouble as I will struggle to “count others more significant than myself” (verse 3) because I will be mad that the people around me are not as righteous as me (from my point of view...).

**DISCUSS:** Why is self-righteousness so dangerous? In what ways do you struggle in this regard?

In many ways the solution is the first half of what Paul wrote, i.e the “IF” part of the statement. And here there are four particular tools. Each one is worth our time and attention. They are: 1) encouragement in Christ, 2) comfort in love, 3) participation in the Spirit, and 4) affection and sympathy. So lets look at these in turn!

**DISCUSS:**

1. What, in particular, is the encouragement that we have in Christ? How does this help us to be united?
2. How does love bring us comfort? How does my comfort impact my ability to have one mind with those around me? Should it be that way?
3. Read, Galatians 5:22-23. Easy question: how do the fruit of the Spirit help us live the way Paul wants us to? Possibly more difficult question: Which of these fruits do you do well at exhibiting, which do you need more of?
4. Paul ends with affection and sympathy. These two have what I call “vertical and horizontal” components. By this we mean the affection and sympathy of God to us (vertical) empowers and helps the affection and sympathy we have with one another (horizontal). In what ways do we see this happen (in other words, how does God’s affection and sympathy give us the same for one another)?
5. Which of these four do you see the most in your life? Which should you cling closer to?