

Putting Aside Our Rights as Christ Did

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Text: Philippians 2¹

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Series: Miracle in the Manger

Introduction: Open your Bible this morning to **Philippians 2** if you will. We are continuing in our series entitled, "Miracle in the Manger." The title of our message is "Putting Aside Our Rights as Jesus Did".

It happens to you all the time. You were misunderstood. You felt forgotten or slighted. You trusted someone close to you, and they hurt you. You thought they were trustworthy. You gave your heart and friendship to a brother or sister in Christ, and they severely disappointed you. Perhaps there was a blow up. A big blow up.

How do you go on when someone in the Body of Christ hurts me? How do I go on if someone in the Body of Christ is robbing me of my joy in Christ?

The answer to these questions is found in the book of Philippians. Paul wrote this letter because of people problems. People can rob us of our joy. Paul was facing his problems with people at Rome (Phil. 1:15–18). Apparently there was a serious threat to the unity of the church. False teachers were coming in from outside the church (Phil. 3:1–3) and disagreeing members were doing damage from within (Phil. 4:1–3). We do not know what Euodia ("fragrance") and SYN-ty-che ("fortunate") were debating about, but it does not matter.² The situation replicates itself in every congregation.

We do not see people correctly because we do not see Christ rightly.

I. We need to see **people problems** rightly (vs. 1-5).

It is Christmas time, and our hearts are upon Christ's birth. Christ came to make us one in Him. This morning we are going to see the power of the Gospel. We are going to see how Christ so transforms a group of formerly rebellious people that they willingly submit to Him and to each other! All our "people problems" are an opportunity to bear reproach and be conformed to the image of Jesus Christ.

This morning we see the example of the most exalted Person in the universe becoming like a servant to the most undeserving beings—the sinful human race! If there is anyone who had rights, who could have demanded His own way, it was Jesus Christ. He is Lord of lords and King of kings, and He became the servant of servants and the slave of all.

¹ Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture is from the *English Standard Version* of the Bible.

² Wiersbe, W. W. (1996, c1989). *The Bible exposition commentary*. "An exposition of the New Testament comprising the entire 'BE' series"--Jkt. (Php 1:28). Wheaton, Ill.: Victor Books.

Christmas is about God entering humanity to take a race of selfish, proud, sinful people and transforming them into the likeness of His Son. He does it by transforming us by the Spirit—look at **verses 1-2**, “So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, 2 complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind”.

If you’ve been touched by Christ, if you are walking in the Spirit, which results in being filled with love, affection and sympathy, then be united in one thing. Be united in wanting to be like Jesus Christ!!

How? Imitate Him. Be like Him. If you are a Christian, you are being conformed to His image (**Romans 8:29**). You are to act like Him, or better yet, as we will see, let Him act through you. Have His mind in you.

Paul says it this way in **verses 3-5**, “Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus”.

What we need to see people problems correctly is the MIND OF CHRIST. Verse 5, “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus”.

Paul recognizes that sometimes Christians do not get along with other Christians as they ought to. Sometimes our feelings are hurt, and our emotions are bruised. As Christians we must not be focused upon ourselves—about “my rights, my well being”. I need each and every day to have an attitude of “humility of mind”. We all have equal rights, but because of Christ in us, we put those rights aside. We are to voluntarily lay those rights aside in the service to others and to Christ. We serve our Lord by serving others in the Body.

Do you have people problems? Then you need to the mind of Christ. You need to see them as Christ did and serve them as Christ served this world of sinners. We ought to be willing to serve even if no one else notices but the Lord. How can we have this attitude?

We look to one of the most exalted texts in all of Scripture. We see the beauty of God’s glory and what He does with that glory in this text. His love outshines His power in this text. Here in **Philippians 2:6-11**, many believe this is an ancient portion of an early Christian hymn that Paul uses.

If you want to be like Christ, this is how you can be like Him!

Philippians 2:5-11, “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be

grasped, 7 but made himself nothing [of no reputation], taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

II. We need to see Christ was made as **low** as the lowest person you know (vs. 6-8).

- A. Look at Christ’s **self-humiliation**. Verses 6-7, “though he was in the form of God, did not count *equality with God* a thing to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing [of no reputation], taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men”.

We see several amazing breath taking truths from these verses. There is a sense in which Christ wore the servant's towel from eternity past because He is the Lamb slain from before the foundation of the world.

1. First, notice, ***Jesus in eternity past existed in the very form of God***. Christ had “equality with God”. And in eternity past, he existed “in the form of God”. Prior to the incarnation, Jesus Christ existed in the very **“*morphe*”**—the form of God. What does that mean? We see that Paul explains it—Jesus actually has equality with the Father. John says it this way, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1).

Christ existed in eternity past in the very form of God. He is Yahweh. He is God.

2. Second, notice, ***Christ did not hesitate to veil His glory***. Verse 6, “though he was [existed] in the form of God, [He] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped”...

Christ had “equality with God” and He “did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing [of no reputation], taking the form of a servant”. Christ gladly veiled His glory His glory with human flesh. Christ’s glory was not something He held on to or took advantage of. He did not hesitate to be veiled in human flesh. Christ did not insist on the manifestation of His glory.

Clarification: When Jesus took upon Himself our poor flesh and our poor blood, He did not rid himself of His deity, but He *veiled* His deity in the flesh. Don’t we sing about that at Christmastime?

*“Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see;
Hail the incarnate deity;
Pleased as man with men to dwell,
Jesus, our Emanuel.”*

Illustration: It's kind of like those reporters who become homeless for a week. They have no need to do it, except they want to. So and so did this in 1987. He could have gone home at anytime, but decided not to. Or how about the boss who becomes an employee to check on his operations. He's hiding his cover.

Here we have one who in the eternal state, and He is One with God and equal with the Father. We see the picture Jesus Christ in Isaiah 6. John 12 tells us that this vision is of Jesus, and He is being worshipped by angels in eternity past. He is in the highest place of worship.

3. Third, ***Jesus Christ did not cling to His rights as Creator God. Verses 6-7, “though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing [of no reputation], taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”***

- This meant that at His birth, He could have insisted on a birth fit for deity, but He didn't.
- When His parents were fleeing from Bethlehem to Egypt, He as God could have executed Herod. But He didn't.
- When they nailed Him to the Cross, He could have as God destroyed the world, but He didn't. He was “obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.” (verse 8).

Instead, Jesus made Himself nothing. His birth was announced to lowly shepherds. He was born in a stable, probably a cave. Joseph most likely delivered Him. Christ was raised in lowly Galilee and worked as a carpenter, not as a king. How did Christ “make Himself nothing”?

Notice, this does not say that He was made nothing. It says He “made Himself nothing”. This is a voluntary action. He is not forced into this role. This was His sovereign plan. He is Almighty, but willingly submitted Himself to be veiled in human flesh.

III. We need to see Christ is made **higher** than all (vs. 9-11). He is literally “super-exalted”.

Verses 9-11, “Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

A. Christ's great *Name*.

Verse 9, "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the Name that is above every name". God has literally "super-exalted" Christ by bestowing upon Him in human history the Name that is above every name. Christ is given many titles that are amazing and exalted titles.

He is called King of kings and Lord of Lords. He is called Wonderful, Counselor, the Mighty God, the Father of Eternity, and the Prince of Peace,

But what is this highly exalted "NAME"?

- It was such a sacred name that in Leviticus 24, when someone blasphemed "the Name", they were stoned to death.
- It was so precious a Name, that the scribes when coming upon the Name Yahweh, would take a bath, take up a brand new writing instrument, and write the Name of Yahweh each time they came upon it in transcribing the Old Testament Scriptures.
- [Giving Jesus Christ the name "Lord" which is the Greek for Yahweh, is the ultimate of all honors because he says in **Isaiah 42:8**, "I am the LORD [Yahweh]; that is my name." It is no one else's name. Yahweh is the name that trumps all other titles--the exalted covenant name of the God of Israel—"the Name that is above every name."³

Look at Christ's great Name. He became nothing for you. So we should also become nothing!

B. Christ's great *Fame*. Verses 10-11, "at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Soon every tongue of every rational being in all creation will confess that Jesus Christ is Yahweh! Every believer will cry at the top of his lungs in voice and song. We with the angels will do it over and over again for all eternity. It is our joy to "rejoice in the Lord always". Every unbelieving heart will confess too--in shock and despair. Even Satan will do it. His knee and his tongue will not be excluded. Every fallen angel will do it. Legion upon legion will do it. Caiaphas will confess Christ as Yahweh. Pilate will do it. Nero, Hitler, Alexander the Great, Stalin, Osama Bin Ladin, every Muslim, every Jew, every Jehovah's witness will confess that Jesus Christ is Yahweh. Every soul from every age will confess that Jesus is Yahweh, King of kings, and Lord of lords!⁴

He will put all enemies under His feet! He will come in the clouds with glory!

³ Kent Hughes. Philippians. p. 91.

⁴ Ibid.

Conclusion: People problems are calls to be like Christ! Paul says in **verses 3-5**, “Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus”.

Frustrations, wrongs, and emotional hurts and bruises were occurring at Philippi and they occur here at Tabernacle. The Gospel is the power to transform us—and our mind to be like Christ! The world would be an easy place to live if it weren't for people! But let us lay down our lives for unworthy people as Christ did. Let us love one another and become nothing. Jesus is Yahweh! He became nothing. Let us also become nothing! And in doing so, we become like Christ and trust ourselves to the One with all power and authority. We can trust Him. He is faithful, even when we are wronged.