

## *Christ Our Example*

Philippians 2:5-8

Series: Joy and Gratitude in Christ

### 1. Introduction

- a. Last week we finished our series on the unity of the church. We considered the Motives, Marks, and Means that make for spiritual unity.
  - b. My hope as your pastor was that you were overcome by the sheer magnitude of God's command for spiritual unity within the church. It is also my hope and prayer that with the teaching you were moved by the Spirit of God to act in such a way as to promote unity with your action, speech and within your thought process.
  - c. Today we will see Christ as our example to spiritual unity. This will be a two part teaching.
    - i. In this teaching we will focus on the incarnation as the central miracle of Christianity, the most grand and wonderful of all the things that God has ever done.
      1. This is the most profound theological teaching but it is also a profound ethical teaching. It is primarily designed to motivate Christians to live like their Lord and Savior.
      - ii. Paul chronicles the descent of the Son of God from heaven to earth, describing the exalted position that He left, then presenting a series of downward steps from that glory and honor to ever increasing indignity.
- ### 2. Verse 5 – Have this mind...which is yours in Christ Jesus
- a. In this verse, Paul presents the supreme, unparalleled example of humility to serve as the most powerful motive to believers' humility. We are called to self-denial, self-giving, self-sacrifice, and selfless love.
  - b. Verse 5 is transitory-
    - i. It bridges what was said to what is coming.
    - ii. Have this mind among yourselves speaks to what was previously said
    - iii. **Philippians 2:3-4** Do nothing from selfish ambition 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.
- c. This same mind, according to Paul, is demonstrated by elder brother Christ.
  - d. Have this mind yourselves speaks in regards to the church, which is always susceptible to the division and strife produced by pride and self-exaltation.
3. Verse 6(A) – The Exalted position left – though he was in the form of God
- a. According to Paul – Jesus was in the form of God – There is no other more exalted position to be in.
    - i. Before and during the incarnation, Jesus was in nature fully divine.
    - ii. The idea here is that before the incarnation, from all eternity past, Jesus preexisted in the divine form of god, equal with God the Father in every way.
    - iii. **Colossians 1:15** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation.
    - iv. **John 1:1-2** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) He was in the beginning with God.
    - v. **Hebrews 1:2-3** but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. (3) He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,
  - b. In light of the fact of Jesus’ full divinity, his incarnation becomes the most profound of humiliations.
  - c. For Christ to change in any way required descent.
  - d. Consider the following:
    - i. The creator become part of the creation
    - ii. The infinite becomes finite
    - iii. Immortality become mortal
  - e. Christ had special standing and privilege that he divested himself of in order to serve us and that example then becomes our clear directive.
  - f. We enter the family through this adoption guaranteed by Christ’s humiliation.

4. Verse 6(B) – the first descent – (Christ who) did not count equality with God a things to be grasped
  - a. This was the first step downward to service us
    - i. Christ continued to exist fully as God, during His incarnation He refused to hold on to His divine rights and prerogatives.
  - b. Christ never used His power or authority for personal advantage, because such prerogatives of His divinity were not a things to be grasped.
  - c. He suffers the basest humiliations, scorn, dishonor, maltreatment in order to save us.
  
5. Verse 7(A) – the second descent – but emptied himself
  - a. The next step required an emptying of Himself
  - b. This emptying means fully and completely.
  - c. Christ empties Himself of all vestige of advantage and privilege, refusing to assert any divine right on his own behalf. He who created and owned everything forsook everything.
  - d. Emptying himself –
    - i. Only of certain aspects of the prerogatives of deity and not of deity itself.
  - e. He empties himself of 5 divine rights.
    - i. He empties Himself of divine glory
      1. He gives up the worship of angels for misunderstanding, denials, unbelief, false accusations, reviling, and persecution.
    - ii. He empties Himself of independent divine authority.
      1. **John 5:30** "I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is just, because I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.
    - iii. He empties Himself of the voluntary exercise of some of His divine attributes.
      1. He chooses not to exercise the full limit of those attributes during his earthly life and ministry.
    - iv. He empties Himself of his eternal riches.
      1. For our sake he becomes poor.
    - v. He empties Himself (temporarily) of the face-to-face relationship with the Father.
  - f. Here we are challenged to empty ourselves of us in order to promote another.

- g. We are reminded, that just as Jesus did not stop being God, we will not lose ourselves in the service of others.
  - h. Christ's self-giving pleased the father, so will our following His example please Him as well.
6. Benediction –
- a. **1 John 2:5-6** but whoever keeps his word, in him truly the love of God is perfected. By this we may know that we are in him: (6) whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.