

8/2/26

An Embarrassing Lesson On Humility
Phil. 2:5-8

As you live on this world you will learn that if you do not walk humble in life, you will be humbled by life.

Pride is man's greatest enemy against humility.

* Spurgeon said, "The way to heaven is downhill, not uphill. #673 **humility**

1. Paul has already pointed out the party spirit present at Rome. Phil. 1:15-16
2. He has told them to be striving together for the faith of the gospel in their persecution. Phil. 1:27
3. Paul will point out two women, Euodia and Syntyche who were at odds with each other and will beg them to be of the same mind in the Lord. Phil. 4:2
4. Paul has just exhorted the Philippians to seek unity in humility of mind for the purpose of looking beyond one's own interest, to the interest of others. Phil. 2:1-4

His exhortation is in view of their persecution, each believer having the potential to allow the Spirit to make them like-minded as Christ, able to yield to the same love, be of one accord and one mind, in lowliness of mind, esteeming others better than self, looking to the interests of other and not just to their own interest after the model and conduct of Christ.

1. We are used by God to comfort or encourage people by the Holy Spirit of Christ through us, as the

Spirit works to maintain the unity of the Spirit through each person!

2. We do not make or create unity, we only disrupt the unity of the Spirit in the body of Christ, the church!

The Philippians were not to be acting carnal through pride, selfish ambitions or conceit, but rather seeing others through the mind and heart of Christ.

Paul commanded the Philippians to think like Christ towards others by a three-fold description of Christ's humility of mind for the service of others. Phil. 2:5-8

- I. The greatness of Christ's humility. vs. 5-6
- II. The extent of Christ's humility. vs. 7
- III. The depth of Christ's humility. vs. 8

I. The greatness of Christ's humility: Christ in the Incarnation. vs. 5-6

- A. The apostle Paul pointed out the greatness of Christ's humility was that He was God. vs. 5-6b

* "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God."

1. Paul addressed all believers.
 - a. So verse five is a transitional verse that looks back to the exhortation of versus 2-4, as well as looking forward to the illustration of Christ on how He manifested His humility of mind in the

Incarnation, a supreme example of unselfish humility.

- 1) The mind that is motivated by love.
 - 2) The mind that humbly looks out for the interest of others and not self.
 - 3) The mind that is esteeming other better than self.
- b. The command is found in verse five, “Let this mind be in you.”
- 1) We noted that it is an imperative command, not a suggestion.
 - 2) The imperative present middle voice indicates each person must do it.
- c. The kind and quality of mind is stated, “which was also in Christ Jesus.”
- 1) The title “Christ” again identifies His deity as the Messiah of the Old Testament.
 - 2) The name “Jesus” identifies His humanity, and it means Yahweh is salvation.
2. Paul goes on to describe the particular mind of Jesus Christ, “who being in the form of God.” vs. 6a-b
- a. The personal pronoun who, refers back to Christ Jesus in verse five.
- 1) The word “being”, in the Greek describes an antecedent condition that is carried to the present, being in the nature of God.

- 2) This is a participle present active, an ongoing reality.
 - 3) In other words, before the Incarnation Jesus was God, during the Incarnation He continued to be God and after He was exalted, He was still God.
- b. The word form “morphe”, without the article referring to the inner; essential and abiding nature of His person, the essential attributes and character of Divine essence, not physical shape.
- 1) For God is Spirit, He has no physical body. Jn. 4:24
 - 2) Jesus was the answer to Isaiah’s prayer, “Oh that you would tear open the heavens and come down.” Is. 64:1a-b
 - 3) Micah says Jesus was from the vanishing point or the days of eternity. Micah 5:2
 - 4) Jesus said, “Before Abraham was “I Am”, he rejoiced to see my day and saw it and was glad.” Jn. 8:56, 58
 - 5) Jesus said, “He that has seen Me has seen the Father.” Jn. 14:9d
- c. Paul knew the Tabernacle was a picture of the Incarnation prophetically.
- 1) The outside was rough and rugged with no real beauty, a covering of ram skins dyed red with a covering of badgers skins. Ex. 36:19

- 2) The inside was splendid and glorious by the fine line woven with blue, purple and scarle thread with designs of cherubim and the presence of God.
Ex. 26:1-37
- 3) All the funishings spoke of Christ.

B. The apostle Paul pointed out the greatness of Christ's humility was that He was God and waived His right as God.

- * "did not consider it robbery to be equal with God." vs. 6c
- 1. Paul presented the very thoughts of Jesus at the time of His Incarnation.
 - a. The word consider "hegeomai", means judgment based on facts.
 - 1) The tense is the indicative present middle voice.
 - 2) This was His ongoing thought process coming from Jesus himself.
 - b. The calculation, assesment and the perfect conclusion of His thinking.
- 2. Paul declared, "He, Jesus, did not consider or account it robbery to be equal with God."
 - a. The word robbery "harpagmos", the act of seizing or a thing siezed.
 - 1) The meaning is a prize or treasure to be retained or held on to at all hazards or to clutch greedily, found only this one time in the New Testament.

- 2) Yet the first Adam attempted to become like God, being a man.
- b. Jesus was not trying to obtain equality, for He was God.
- c. Jesus was not trying to hold on to equality for His own benefit, but rather waived His natural right for the sake of lost man.
- d. Jesus denied Himself by self-denunciation of what belonged to Him natually.
 - * Wuest "The only person in the world who had the right to assert His rights waived them".
- d. Paul is saying take a lesson from God in humility and interest for others.
 - * *Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus!*

Illustration

The story is told of two brothers who grew up on a farm. One went away to college, earned a law degree, and became a partner in a prominent law firm in the state capital. The other brother stayed on the family farm. One day the lawyer came and visited his brother, the farmer and asked, "Why don't you go out and make a name for yourself and hold your head up high in the world like me?" The brother pointed and said, "See that field of wheat over there? Look closely. Only the empty heads stand up. Those that are well filled always bow low." (Green:198)

Application

1. The problem of man is that too often he allows his momentary greatness to get in the way of humbling himself before others. Phil. 2:4

* “Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.”

2. The other problem with man is that more often than he knows, his greatness is only in his own mind, having no room or desire for humility, being self-deceived. Phil. 2:2-3

* “Fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, *being* of one accord, of one mind. *Let* nothing *be done* through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.”

3. The sinful nature of man’s pride is forever attempting to exalt himself above other by comparing himself to others. Phil. 1:29-30

* “For to you it has been granted on behalf of Christ, not only to believe in Him, but also to suffer for His sake, having the same conflict which you saw in me and now hear *is* in me.”

The greatness of Christ’s humility is evident by the height that He had, He was God and He waived His right as God in the Incarnation!

II. The extent of Christ’s humility: Christ by the Incarnation. vs. 7

A. The apostle Paul described the extent of Christ’s humility, He actually emptied Himself. vs. 7a

* “But made Himself of no reputation”.

1. Paul stated Jesus did this of his own will.

a. The personal pronoun “Himself” is emphatic, Jesus was the one who made Himself of no reputation.

1) The phrase no reputation “kenoo” comes from “ekenosen”, to empty, indicating He divested or laid aside His prerogative, His usual mode of existence as God, called the “kenosis”.

2) The tense is the indicative aorist active, something done in the past with ongoing present results.

b. The word but “alla”, means nevertheless, in spite of this fact that Jesus was God.

1) He made Himself something other than God for a set time.

2) This Jesus did of His own will, not because He had to, but chose to!

2. The question is of what did Jesus empty Himself of?

a. Did Jesus empty Himself of His deity?

* No, otherwise His claim to be equal to the Father would have been a lie.

b. Jesus divested Himself of His expression of deity, not His possession of deity.

- 1) This involved His glory, the outward expression of His inward possession.
* That which He prayed for and had with the Father from all eternity. Jn. 17:5
 - 2) The word glory “doxa”, means His majesty, including His preeminent position and place of rulership, leaving His throne.
 - c. The rightful glory and visible radiance of Who He was, Jesus veiled with a body.
 - 1) Jesus was and is the visible image “ikon” of the invisible God, used for stamp on coin. Col. 1:15; 2:9
 - 2) Jesus was and is the expressed “image” of God’s person, used of an engraver or tool and die, “Who being the brightness of *His* glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the **Majesty** on high.” Heb. 1:3
- B.** The apostle Paul described the extent of Christ’s humility by the fact that He emptied Himself in two ways. vs. 7b-c
* “Taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men”.

1. Paul first stated Jesus took on the form of a servant.
 - a. The word took “lambano” is another participle aorist active.
 - 1) Indicating a simultaneous action, being God He became man.
 - 2) Literally, “having taken”, a simultaneous action.
 - b. The word form “morphe” is the same as in verse six.
* The inner essential and abiding nature of person and character.
 - c. The character was that of a bondservant.
 - 1) The word bondservant “doulos”, indicates a slave by choice, related to the Old Testament practice of serving a master for life piercing the ear and putting an earring to reveal their love and commitment for life to their master. Ex. 21:1-6
 - 2) This was prophetic of Jesus, in fulfillment of the Scriptures. Is. 43:1-3; 50:5-6; 52:13-53:12
2. Paul second stated Jesus came in the likeness of men.
 - a. This indicates the Incarnation.
 - 1) There was no exchange the one for the other, God for man.
 - 2) There was the two existing as one with the other, the Godman.

- 3) Both are simultaneous, but both are not the same or identical.
- 4) Jesus had two natures, He was the Last Adam, identical to the First Adam before the fall.
- 5) Without the two, redemption and salvation was impossible!
- b. The phrase, in the likeness “homoionoma”, means resemblance, a figure or representation, identifying real humanity, yet without sin and not a mere phantom as taught by the Gnostics. 1Jn. 1:1; 4:2
 - 1) “God sent His Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and condemned sin in the flesh.” Rom. 8:3
 - a) Man has an intellect, emotions and a will.
 - b) Man has a body and a spirit.
 - c) The Spirit of God gives man the ability to live above sin, through the new birth, so as to not be mastered by sin nature!
 - 2) Jesus is holy, innocent, undefiled and separate from sinners, the Godman, the mediator. Heb. 7:26; 1Tim. 2:5
 - 3) “God made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” 2Cor. 5:21
- b. The intent of God was not to appear as God, but as men while being God.

- 1) He was the Last Adam, becoming poor that we might be made rich. 2Cor. 8:9
- 2) God became flesh, the God-Man. Jn.1:1, 14
- 3) “In Him dwells the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Col. 2:9
- 3. Paul in describing the emptying of Himself is not speaking so much of what Jesus emptied Himself of, but rather how He emptied Himself by taking on the form of servant and coming in the likeness of men!
 - a. “Jesus knowing that the Father had already given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going to God, He arose and washed the feet of the disciples.” Jn. 13:1-17
 - b. Paul is saying take a lesson from God who denied Himself and condescended to man’s low state, a little lower than the angels to enrich others! Heb. 2:9a-b
** Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus!*

Illustration

One person asked a rabbi, “How come in the olden days God would show Himself to people, but today nobody sees God? The rabbi said, “Because nowadays nobody can bow low enough”.

Application

1. Man contrary to Christ is always seeking glory that people be in awe of him and worship him. Phil. 1:16

* Paul said, “The former preach Christ from selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing to add affliction to my chains.”

2. Man contrary to Christ is not a servant by nature, but rather desires to be served. Phil. 2:21

* Paul said, “For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus.”

3. Man contrary to Christ seeks to present himself to be more spiritual than he is, denying his own imperfection and shortcomings. Phil. 3:12

* Paul said, “Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.”

The extent of Christ’s humility is evident by the length that He went to, taking on the form of a bondservant in the likeness of a man by the Incarnation!

III. The depth of Christ’s humility: Christ through the Incarnation. vs. 8

A. The apostel Paul declared the depth of Christ’s humility, in that He was in every way a man. vs. 8a

* “And being found in appearance as a man”.

1. Paul stated Jesus was found in appearance as a man outwardly.

a. The varification of the humanity of Jesus is expressed, being found “heurisko”, means to come upon or hit upon after searching and found to be so.

1) This involves enquiry, thought, examination and scrutiny of observation!

2) Jesus hungered, thirsted, tired, slept, got angry, cried, bled and died.

3) A participle aorist passive, something having taken place in the past, Literally, “having been found”.

4) The same word is used for Pilot about Jesus, “I have found no cause of death in Him.” Lk. 23:22

b. The confirmation of the humanity of Jesus is indicated, in appearance as a man.”

1) The reference to appearance “skema” means fashion, pointing to the external physical being, in contrast to Who he really was, God. verse 6-7

* The word is used for the external physical world that is passing away. 1Cor. 7:31

2) The word for man “anthropos”, a human being.

* We get our word anthropology, the study of man.

3) Paul stated the Jews told Jesus, “For a good work we do not stone you, but

for blasphemy, and because you, being a man, make yourself God.” Jn. 10:33

- 4) Pilate brought Jesus forth with His crown of thorns and beaten and said, “Behold the Man”. Jn. 19:5
 - a) He had a physical birth after nine months in Mary’s womb.
 - b) He hungered, thirsted, cried and died.
 - c) He was tested in all points as we are, yet without sin. Heb. 4:15
 - * His temptation in the wilderness was as man, not God. Matt. 4

B. The apostle Paul declared the depth of Christ’s humility, in that He submitted Himself to the Father as a man. vs. 8b-c

- * “He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death on the cross”.
- 1. Paul pointed out that the submission of Jesus was seen in attitude.
 - a. The word humbled “tapeinoo” means to abase or bring low, an indicative aorist active, ongoing and continuous.
 - 1) Jesus did this Himself and to Himself.
 - 2) Jesus did this of His own free-will, prompted by His infinite love for sinners.

b. Humility is the opposite of pride and self-exaltation and used in secular documents of the Nile River when the Nile ran low.

- 1) Jesus said, “I am gentle and lowly in heart”. Matt. 11:29b
 - 2) He did not look down on sinners, but felt compassion and offered repentance and forgiveness to them and was called a “friend of sinners”. Matt. 11:19
2. Paul pointed out that the submission of Jesus was also seen in action.
- a. The example was that Jesus was obedient.
 - 1) The word obedient “hupechoos” means attentively listening.
 - 2) This is another participle aorist middle voice, Jesus Himself executed this obedience, no one else, literally, “Having become”.
 - 3) “I do not seek my own will, but the will of the Father who sent me.” Jn. 5:30
 - a) Jesus prayed all night to hear the Father's voice in order to choose the 12 disciples. Lk. 6:12-16
 - b) Jesus submitted to the Father who is said to be the head of Christ, yet Christ is God. 1Cor. 11:3

- b. The extent of the obedience of Jesus was completely and totally.
 - 1) “To the point of death”, refers to His entire life, from the birth of Jesus to His death.
 - 2) I do always those things that please the Father. Jn. 8:29
 - 3) In the volume of the book it is written of Me to do your will, oh God. Heb. 10:7
 - 4) Which of you convinces Me sin. Jn. 8:46
- c. The extreme of the obedience of Jesus was to the very termination of His life. even to the death of the cross.
 - 1) “Even the death of the cross”, refers to the most horrible forms of death in the days of Jesus.
 - a) No Roman would ever be crucified; it was reserved for the worst of people.
 - b) The death He died was one of a common criminal.
 - 2) In the Psalms the cross is vividly described and the reason given for abandoning His Son, the Father is holy and the Son became sin for us, so the wrath of God was poured out on Jesus, in our place. Ps. 22:1-3
 - a) In the Garden Jesus prayed, “Not my will.” Mk. 14:36

- b) A person died in shame and by a slow painful suffering, ending in suffocation.
- c) Jesus tasted death for everyone. Heb. 2:9c
- d) Jesus destroyed him who had the power of death, the Devil. Heb. 2:14
- e) Jesus endured the cross despising the shame. Heb. 12:2, 4
- f) Jesus became a curse for us. Gal. 3:13; Deut. 21:23
- g) “My Servant shall justify many”. Is. 53:11
- d. Paul is saying take a lesson from God who abased Himself and submitted to absolute obedience not regarding His life for the benefit of others.
 - * ***Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus!***

Illustration

Leonard Bernstein the great composer was once asked which instrument was the most difficult to play. He thought for a moment and then replied, “The second fiddle. I can get plenty of first violinists, but to find someone who can play the second fiddle with enthusiasm--that’s a problem. And if we have no second fiddle, we have no harmony.” (Green:198)

Application

1. The depth of the humility of man will often be measured by the acknowledgment of his own limitation, driving him to Christ. Phil. 4:13

* Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me."

2. The depth of the humility of man will be tested and cultivated throughout a life by submitting to others in life on different levels, most particular in times of testings and persecution. Phil. 1:18

* "Paul said, "What then? Only *that* in every way, whether in pretense or in truth, Christ is preached; and in this I rejoice, yes, and will rejoice."

3. The depth of humility of man will be evident by his obedience to God throughout life by yielding to Jesus Christ. Phil. 3:12-14

* Paul said, "Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me. Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing *I do*, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead, I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus."

4. Spurgeon said, "It is not humility to underrate yourself. Humility is to think of yourself as God thinks of you. It is to feel that if we have talents, God has given them to us. And let it be seen that like freight in a vessel, they tend to sink us low. The more we have, the lower we ought to lie". #667 Humility

* We have the mind of Christ the Scriptures tell us, what we need to do is put it on!

The depth of Christ's humility is evident by His obedience as man, even to the death of the cross through the Incarnation!

Conclusion

Paul commanded the Philippians to think like Christ towards each other by giving them this three-fold description of Christ's humility of mind for the service of others, an embarrassing lesson on humility.

- I. The greatness of Christ's humility is evident by the height that He had, He was God and He waived His right as God in the Incarnation!
- II. The extent of Christ's humility is evident by the length that He went to, taking on the form of a bondservant in the likeness of a man by the Incarnation!
- III. The depth of Christ's humility is evident by His obedience as man , even to the death of the cross through the Incarnation!