

Philippians 2:5-11

Thinking of Yourself Less

Image Church // Philippians Week 5

MPS: Christ is the model and the motivation for humility

Introduction

Well, good morning Image family and friends joining us this morning... If you have your **Bibles** *go ahead and grab them and turn to **Philippians** as we continue our series...*

Hey real quick, before we jump in this morning, I want you to grab your phone, or go on your computer to ***imageatl.com*** and click on **stay connected** and put in your name and email...

- *Go ahead and do that right now...*

This is our **weekly update** which is a communication platform that we just launched, communication is a big deal for us, and it's the way that we can do that well, and that we're going to be using to keep you looped in week-to-week on what's going on...

If you're a guest with us, or you've been joining us online and **you're consider our church** please make sure that you subscribe to this update so that you be up-to-date with everything that's happening and our plan moving forward.

In the coming days we're going to be rolling out a big **COVID-19 update** on how we're assessing when we're going to start gathering again, as well as laying out what **our phased plan** will look like when that time comes...

So, make sure to go to our website and sign up to receive the weekly update! We want to make sure everyone is lopped in...

Around **1820** in **Dorchester County, Maryland** an American Hero was born. We don't know for sure what year she was born because slave owners didn't record the birthdates of slaves.

As a child she born into slavery and was loaned out to different plantations, but by the time she was 12 she was working in the fields... Her birth name ***Ara-minta***, but she went by ***Harriet*** and in **1844** she married **John Tubman**, and would become ***Harriet Tubman***...

Having been under the oppression of slavery for **29 years** she dreamed of being free, and in **1849** that became a reality, she followed the North Star and escaped to Philadelphia, where she was finally free!

But here's the thing, instead of living in the midst of her long awaited and hard earned freedom, she chooses to dedicate her life to helping others be able to achieve freedom. Her efforts made her a fugitive, and yet she still continued to travel back to the south to help free slaves.

Harriet Tubman became the most famous conductor of the ***Underground Railroad*** saving over **300 slaves**...

She was literally willing to risk her life for the sake of others, she put the freedom of others above her own freedom...

Harriet Tubman saw others as greater than herself... her actions proved that... She was willing lowered herself to become a fugitive, laying down her life so that others could be free...

It's been said that ***Love begins when someone else's needs are more important than my own***,¹ there's a word for that, and its **humility**, which is what Paul's going to be pointing us to this morning... Last week we looked at Paul's call for ***unity within the church***, and this week we're going to pick back up on the tail end of that as we look at the grounds for that unity which is **humility**...

¹ Fee, G. D. (1995). *Paul's Letter to the Philippians* (p. 185).

That's not something that's easy for us... We're out for #1- and we're actually the opposite of humble, we want to lift ourselves above others...

- Try to make ourselves look better
- Try to look like we have it together so we can *be above the rest...*
- We try to be better than other people, we even use others as justification for where we are spiritually... Well, at least I'm not like Jimmy or Susie...
- We work to leverage our lives for the sake of ourselves making life as **comfortable** and **convenient** as possible...
- Our ambitions drive the lifting up of ourselves socially, financially, positionally... I shouldn't have to convince you much on this...

That's what our culture is all about... you don't have to take it from me, **take it from Nelly**, who writes in one of his most famous songs:

*I am, number one, no matter if you like it
Here take it sit down and write it ey
I, am, number one ey ey, ey ey
Now let me ask you man
What does it take to be, number one?
Two is not a winner and three nobody remembers (ey)
What does it take to be, number one?*

We love **#1 Status**, and even if we don't hold that status we still view ourselves as #1! See, at the end of the day, we're self-centered people by nature, and so **humility** is hard for us...

And I think at the root of it is that we don't really understand what humility is...

Humility **isn't** being nice to someone, or thinking about other people every once-in-while, it isn't serving someone every now-and-then, this isn't a really big one-off act of kindness...

Humility also isn't being prideful less often... See, here's what we have to understand... **Humility isn't an action it's an attitude.**

The way that Paul defines **humility** is an attitude where you regard others above yourself.

Don't miss that... Humility is a posture that you have in life where you regard others above yourself...

Tim Keller talks about Humility like this: *It's not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less...*

And that kind of attitude is hard for us... **The good news is** Paul knows that, which is why he's going to transition into what he does here in **Chapter 2...**

Alright, let's jump into the text, I want to start in **verse 3** which is where we ended last week because it sets up the text we're going to be in today... *Here we go...*

Philippians 2:3-11

3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in **humility** consider others as more important than yourselves. **4** Everyone should look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

*Notice the key here is **humility**... So that's the attitude that we need to have, now Paul's about to show us the **model** and **motivation** for living this out...*

5 Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus,

6 who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited.

Ok, let me stop right here, and make a couple of observations that are important...

The first thing that we need to see here is that **Jesus wasn't like God, He was God...**

That's big, and it's something that distinguishes Christianity from every other religion...

Everything it means to be God Jesus was... And listen, *I want to be clear on this*, the text **does not say** that God took on the **form of Jesus...** That's a heresy called **Modalism** ...

- *Water analogy for the trinity is wrong... liquid, ice, mist - that's modalism... Where God takes on 3 different modes, that's not true...*

The text says that Jesus existed in the form of God and the way that happens is through the **Trinity**...

Here's the thing about the **Trinity**, *you think about it too long trying to really understand it, and your head will explode...*

There's just no way we can fully understand it, but at the end of the day if we could understand everything about God then we would be God, *but we're not so there's that...*

But the best way that I can explain the trinity is like this... One God, that exists as three distinct persons, who coexist in perfect harmony together for all of eternity... **God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit...**

- This is **not** 3 God's, this is **one God, three persons...**

Alright, back to the text: So, Jesus who is fully God, did not consider His equality with God as something to be **exploited**, or **grasped**, or **held onto**...

What the heck does that mean?? It means that Jesus willingly laid aside certain privileges that come with His equality with God... He laid aside a certain measure of His glory in order to come down to us, because we could never get to Him...²

The text says it like this in verse 7:

² Thoughts from John Piper.

7 Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity.

Jesus **emptied himself**, He poured out himself, willingly putting himself at the disposal of people... He gave up himself, so that others could have... **John 3:16**...

One commentator says it like this: *[Jesus] effaced all thought of self and poured out His fulness in order to enrich others.*³

IOW: you could say it like this, **Jesus didn't leverage his status, He laid down His status**...

And He took on the **form**, or **likeness** of a servant, and He took on the **likeness** of humanity...

The Creator comes to creation, taking on the likeness of that which He had created...

- I think so many times, what happens is, we've become numb to the gospel, we hear it and we no longer are in awe of it and I think so often we forget the intricacies of what the gospel entails...

Listen, **do you understand the humility of Jesus-** do you understand the *humiliation* that it was for the **Son of God** to step out of heaven and come to humanity and take on its likeness?? **He's God**...

And what makes it even worse is why He came, *He didn't come to check things out*... He came because of the rebellion of humanity...

And He would come face to face with that rebellion, the criticism, the persecution, the hatred, the oppression the rejection... And He would take it...

³ Hawthorne, G. F. (2004). *Philippians* (Vol. 43, p. 117). Dallas: Word, Incorporated.

Do you understand that with a breath He could have wiped off the face of the Earth?!?!? And there He was enduring the rejection of the humanity that He created!!

Do you see the humiliation that He was willing to endure?!?!?

And it get's worse look at the end of **verse 7:**

And when he had come as a man,
8 he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death— even to death on a cross.

Jesus **humbled Himself by being obedient** which means that Jesus didn't go after the things of this world or the successes of this world, he didn't strive for earthy achievements...

Instead **His whole life** was characterized by self-surrender and sacrifice... And He did it for the sake of sinful rebels like you and me...

He would be perfectly obedient in our place, and His perfect obedience would lead Him to the cross where Jesus would willingly give up His life, where He would allow humanity to beat Him, degrade Him, rip our His beard, whip Him, mock Him, spit on Him...

And then he would let them drive 3-inch nails through His hands and His feet and raise Him up necked on a cross...

And as He hung there suffocating pushing up on the nail in His feet to breath, they would continue to mock Him...

Saying, if you really are God save yourself... But instead of saving Himself- which He could have easily done with a word- **Jesus chose to give up Himself so that others could be saved...**

And as He hung there and looked over the **wickedness of humanity**, He would say: **Father forgive them for they know not what they do...**

And then He would take on the wrath that we deserved for our rebellion... And He would die a brutal death, the death that we deserved...

Jesus in His death would assume the lowest place in all of humanity as he took on the sin of the world- dying for the sin of the world as a spectacle on a cross, hanging cloth-less for the world to see...

But He wouldn't stay dead, He would beat death showing off the fact that he was God, and extending to us new life in Him...

In Jesus life He gives us His **perfection**, and in His death He gives us His **punishment**, and in His **resurrection** He extends to us **restoration**... Restoring us from being a sinner separated from God to a son or daughter...

*And look at the result of the finished work of Jesus in **verse 9:***

9 For this reason God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow— in heaven and on earth and under the earth— 11 and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus went from glory, as low as He can go, the likeness of a servant in the body of a man, humiliating himself in perfect obedience, lowering Himself to the very bottom, the lowest He could go which is death on the cross, enduring shame and suffering...

And then He is exalted as Lord Jesus, because of who He is and what He's done...

And so, here's what you need to see from the text today when it comes to humility... *This text preached it's self today*, but let me just summarize and apply it...

1. We have the perfect model of humility in Christ

When you want to know what humility looks like, look to Jesus...

We're to count others as more significant than yourselves in the same way that Christ did for you when you didn't deserve it...

You're to look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others in the same way that Jesus looked to your interests- and He had your best interests in mind...

- We're to have the best interest of others in mind

And the way that we follow the model of Jesus is by adopting the same attitude of Jesus...

And **the way that we adopt the same attitude of Jesus is by meditating on the work of Jesus**...

This orients your mind around the fact that life isn't about you it's about Him, and so everything you do is in light of what he has done for you...

Practically this means that you look at your life and ask the question:

- How do I lay down my position of influence for the sake of others?
- How can I take the attention off of myself and onto others?
- How can I leverage what I have to consider the needs of others on a consistent basis?
 - Generosity: Time, talent treasure...
- How can I give significance to those in our society that are looked down on?
- What are the opportunities for serving others around me?

- What about when things in our society happen racially where people are made out to be less significant, how can you leverage your voice to speak out to hold up their significance?
- How can I be involved in the local church?
 - Considering others would be to consider the church, to be involved in the church...
 - The church is a group of people so being part of the church is being involved with the people of the church serving and loving them, living in community.
- Following Christ's model means that you evaluate how you view people... Do you tend to look down on others?
 - Where ever it is, whatever area it is that you look down on someone for- intentionally engage them in that area... Assume the posture of taking action and not making assumptions...

Here's the second thing that we see from the text today:

2. We have the motivation for being humble in Christ

Christianity isn't about rules and regulations, it's about something so much more, it's about a relationship with God...

And so, Paul doesn't just say be humble- he gives us the motivation for being humble... Did you see it??

It's the ***exaltation of Jesus in verses 9-11***...

You say, ***what?!?*** I don't see the connection... Here's the connection...

I want to use **Romans 8:16-17 to make it for us:**

16 The Spirit himself testifies together with our spirit that we are God's children, **17** and if children, also heirs—heirs of God and coheirs with Christ—if indeed we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.

So, ***here's the connection***... Adopting the same attitude of Jesus now leads to our glorification later!

- ***It's because of the glorification of Christ that we can be glorified***- that's what He accomplished for us!!⁴
- I think it's easy to forget that- Christ purchased for you that opportunity to be glorified one day, not based on your work, but on His- that's good news!!!
 - And that glorification will be 10,000 times any kind of goodness or glorification that you could receive on this earth!

Which means that we can go low now, in this life on this earth, because we will be lifted up with Christ for all of eternity!⁵

Remember back to what Paul says earlier, He says, ***As citizens of HEAVEN!***

Family, for those of you that are Christians, this is not your home!!! This is a temporary residency, the motivation for humility now is what is to come later!!

This exaltation and glorification of Christ should drive us to our knees in worship as we acknowledge the work of Jesus, ***that He's Lord of ALL, and as a result***, the ***implications*** that we get to experience one day as we are raised with Christ!

Luke 18:14- humble yourself and you will be exalted...

An ***incredible kingdom awaits us one day*** provided that we continue in the faith, willing to suffer for Christ...

- **IOW**: Christianity is a call to life surrender not lip service...
- Surrendering will lead to suffering in some capacity- to giving up, to letting go, making yourself less than, considering other at the expense of yourself all for the sake of the gospel...

Again, it comes back to the perspective shift that Paul talked about In **Phil. 1:21** where to live is Christ... That Christ is the center of your life...

Here's one other thing that I want to show you about the exaltation of Jesus and the motivation that we have in it...

- The exaltation of Jesus shows us that Jesus was more than a teacher, which is why He's not just a model, He's more than that!
 - Because Jesus is God- and because of His finished work, He can give you the power to change...
 - This is where religion fails... Religions says conform and do, Jesus says believe and receive the power to change the Holy Spirit... YOU HAVE THE POWER TO CHANGE through Christ.

Conclusion [VAMP]

As you actively meditate on the work of Jesus you're reminded of the motivation found in Jesus, and the overflow of that is that it begins to change your attitude toward others... It begins to change how you view others.

Family would we be a church that lives out humility for the sake of unity to the glory of God... That we would humble ourselves by ***looking to Jesus as the model and the motivation... Fail? Turn back!***

**Appeal to non-Christian: Every knee will bow/tongue confess... PRAY*

⁴ 1 John 3:2; Colossians 3:3; 2 Cor. 4:16, John 17:22; 2 Peter 1:4

⁵ Thoughts here from John Piper.