

Our Example for Humility

Philippians 2:5-8

All Stand and Read Scripture

Philippians 2:5-8

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁵ Have this attitude ⁱⁿ yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be ^{grasped}, ⁷ but ^{emptied} Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death ^{on} a cross.

Prayer

INTRODUCTION:

Paul has been telling the Church of Philippi and us how we can have UNITY. He says that when we became Christians, we took on a new citizenship, if you will. He told us how to be worthy citizens of a heavenly kingdom by saying in 1:27 "Only conduct yourselves (live your life) in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ."

We read that we can be good heavenly citizens if

1. Verse 27: We stand firm in one spirit for the gospel.
2. Verse 27: We unite with one mind for the gospel.
3. Verses 28-30: We are prepared to suffer for the gospel.

This is the pattern that Paul gives us in the opening of the second chapter to achieve unity.

In chapter 2 he gives the **MOTIVATION of UNITY**.

- If there is any encouragement in Christ (and there is).
- If there is any consolation of love (and there is)
- If there is any fellowship of the Holy Spirit (and there is)
- If any affection and compassion (and there is)

Then he tell us in verse 2 what true unity looks like, or the **SIGNS of UNITY**.

- Being of the same mind.
- Maintaining the same love.
- United in spirit.
- Intent on one purpose.

Verses 3 & 4 tell us HOW TO DO IT. That is the **MEANS of UNITY**.

How do we get there?

- By not practicing selfishness.
- By not practicing empty conceit.
- By practicing humility of mind.
- By regarding one another as more important than himself.
- By not looking out for our own personal interests alone.

All of these are great ideals on how to live for Christ, however, I don't know anyone that practices these successfully all of the time.

I can think of no one, well, except for Christ.

That is the one that Paul now focuses on...the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ, and Christ alone, gives us the **pattern of true Biblical humility**.

What was so incredible about Christ that He could be called the epitome of humility?

I would like to point out three basic things this morning that Christ was willing to do that was an example for us.

- V6: He was Willing to Let Go
- V7: He was Willing to Step Down
- V8: He was Willing to Submit

He was Willing to Let Go (That has to do with His Preincarnation)

He was Willing to Step Down (That has to do with His Incarnation)

He was Willing to Submit (This has to do with His Humiliation)

BODY:

I. Christ was Willing to Let Go.

Philippians 2:5-6

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁵ Have this attitude ^[a]in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, (Think this way, the way Christ thought) ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be ^[b]grasped,

What does verse 6 mean?

The Bible says that Christ has always existed. Jesus Christ, the second person of the trinity, did not come on the scene all of a sudden. He became **man** all of a sudden, but He always existed. He existed “in the form of God”.

Why does it say “in the form of God”?

John 1:1-3

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² ^[a]He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.

Christ was God. He was in the beginning with God. He is part of the trinity (The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit). Jesus Christ was continually God. That is what Paul is writing in this text. He existed in the “form of God”.

The second part of verse 6 is truly amazing. He **did not regard equality with God a thing to be ^[b]grasped.**

The King James Version says He **thought it not robbery to be equal with God.**

The word “Robbery” is the idea of “Seizing” or “Grabbing”. Paul says that Christ **did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.**

God told Christ that it was time for Him to go into the world as a man.

Jesus did not look around at

- the worship of the angels,
- the spender of Heaven,
- the fellowship with His Father and the Holy Spirit,
- and say, “No, I think I want to **hang on** to this”.

He looked at

- the worship of the angels,
- the spender of Heaven,
- the fellowship with His Father and the Holy Spirit,
- and said, “OK!” **He gave it all up!**

He didn’t **grasp** it. He didn’t **clutch** it. He did not consider it **robbery**. He was willing to **just let go!**

ILLUSTRATION:

Our invitation hymn this morning is page 453, ***I Gave My Life for Thee.***

The second verse reads,

My Father’s house of light, My glory-circled throne,
I left for earthly night, For wand’rings sad and lone;
I left, I left it all for thee, Hast thou left aught for me?
I left, I left it all for thee, Hast thou left aught for me?

Jesus left it all. It was something he could have clung to, but in humility, he chose not to. Christ was willing to simply “**LET GO**” and come into this world!

Jesus Christ, God Himself, was willing to leave Heaven, all for **US!** ”I left, I left it all for thee”, **Hast thou left aught for me?**

So what is the application for us? Jesus left a “LOCATION”, if you will. I realize that Christ is omnipresent (he is everywhere at once). But, still He leaves Heaven’s glory to become a man. Are we willing to let go for HIM? Jesus was willing to leave Heaven. Are we willing to leave whatever we find comfortable for the glory of God?

If it would bring glory to God, would be willing to leave your family? If we could please the Father, would you be willing to serve in a foreign mission field?

You might say, “No way!”. My kids and grandkids live here! Do you expect me to not see my grandkids! Jesus said OK. That is what it means that He **did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.**

In context, Paul is not talking about going to a mission field. In context, Paul is talking about **UNITY** by way of humility. The reason many do not get along with each other in the church is because of **PRIDE**. You and I see some things differently. Our pride wants us to insist that **I AM RIGHT!** Not only do I think I am right, I want to make sure that YOU KNOW that I am right! Humility will let differences of no eternal value go, regardless of **WHO** is right!

Let it go! That is what Jesus was willing to do.

Have this attitude [in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus. The first attitude is **to be Willing to Let IT Go.**

II. Christ was Willing to Step Down.

Philippians 2:7

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁷ but ~~l~~emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.

What did Christ empty Himself of?

If I empty something, it sounds like I am pouring something out. If I pour something out, then there must have been LESS Jesus than there was in the beginning.

As you can imagine there has been a whole lot of “ink to be spilled”, if you will, over this verse by commentators. There are chapters of books written on this one word.

What did Jesus pour out of Himself when Paul says Christ “emptied Himself”? The hard question to answer is that if Christ empties Himself of something, then is He less of a God then He was previously? This is a very hard concept for people to deal with.

I don’t proclaim to have the complete understanding of this verse. But a very common belief by many Biblical scholars is that Christ emptied Himself of **NOTHING!**

This word “**EMPTIED**” is often used in the scriptures without a direct object. In other words, if I say, “I emptied the water out of the glass”. The direct object is the “water”.

ILLUSTRATION:

If you knew a very kind person, you might say that “he pours himself out for other people”.

The person might ask, “He pours WHAT out for other people?”

You might answer, “He just pours himself, he is very giving.”

He says, “He pours out WHAT, his lungs, his organs, what?”

You say, “No! It is just a metaphor”.

I think this is what Paul is talking about here. When he says Christ emptied Himself, he is saying that Christ gave of himself completely. One song says it this way, “**He humbled Himself in matchless love**”.

So, if He poured Himself out completely, how did He do it? Let's let the text answer this for us.

- He emptied Himself by,
- taking the form of a bond-servant,
- and being made in the likeness of men.

This is how Christ gave Himself completely; He **took the form of a bond-servant**.

This is an incredible idea. For Christ to come as a man is incredible enough, but at least, He should come as a King, right? If Christ was to let go of His comforts in Heaven and come to earth as a man, at least He should come as someone to worship with royal robes and the band playing, right? No, he did not come with accolades as a King, He came as a servant!

Mark 10:43b-45

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant; ⁴⁴ and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His ^{la}life a ransom for many.”

It says in verse 7 that Christ came as a servant. In verse 6 he **took the form of God**, (meaning He was truly God), in verse 7 He **took on the form of a servant**, (meaning He was truly a servant), and **being made in the likeness of man**.

Jesus Christ came into this world, He left it **ALL** to become a **servant** and to become a **man**!

He was Willing to Let Go (that was verse 6)
He was Willing to Step Down (that was verse 7)
And FINALLY...

III. Christ was Willing to Submit.

Philippians 2:8

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death ^[d]on a cross.

What did Jesus do? It says in verse 8, He humbled Himself.

The definition of the word “**humble**” is to humiliate by assigning to a lower place or exposing to shame. That is what Jesus did, He came to a lower place and exposed Himself to shame.

It is interesting to note, that the scriptures do not say that He was humbled, it says that **He humbled Himself**.

ILLUSTRATION:

We know what it is like to be humbled. We brag about how well our team is playing and how they are going to massacre the next team they play and then they get cremated by that team and we feel humiliated.

This text does not say that Christ was humiliated. It says that He chose to humble Himself to shame. How?

The next part of verse 8 gives us the answer: **by becoming obedient.**

Who was He becoming obedient to...to the Father! **But, He is equal to the Father!**

Why would He be obedient to the Father when He is equal to the Father? It is because of HUMILITY.

But, Christ did not JUST OBEY! Look at the rest of verse 8. He became **obedient to the point of death.**

Christ was willing to die for us. From a worldly standpoint, this does not make sense!

ILLUSTRATION:

The Normandy D-Day invasion makes for a good illustration. Who landed first for the allies? Did all of the generals hit the beach first and give their lives for all of the privates in the back so that when the beaches were cleared that they could say to all the privates, it is now safe? No, it was the other way around. The generals are in another country at their desks or safe in ships.

Why?

Because the lesser always dies for the greater.

How about our secret service agents? When someone attacks the president of the United States, they put themselves in harm's way to protect the president. The lesser is willing to die for the greater.

Christ was willing to be obedient to the point of death. But, not just death, but death on a cross! It is the most humiliating death known to man. The scriptures say “cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree” (meaning the cross). Yet Jesus was willing to hang on the cross. God in the flesh, hung on a tree for you and for me.

CONCLUSION:

This takes us back to Paul's admonishments in verse 3.

Philippians 2:3-4

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

³ Do nothing ^[a]from ^[b]selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

You may want to ask Paul, "How can I EVER get close to that attitude? The answer is in verse 5.

Philippians 2:5

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

⁵ Have this attitude ^[a]in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

What was Christ willing to do?

- V6: He was Willing to Let Go
 - V7: He was Willing to Step Down
 - V8: He was Willing to Submit
- All of these are examples of **humility**.

Until, by God's grace, we learn this type of humility, we will continue in our **pride**. We will fight and argue with one another just as the people at the church of Philippi were doing.

Christ is our pattern and example for true Biblical humility.

2 Corinthians 5:14-15

New American Standard Bible (NASB)

¹⁴ For the love of Christ controls us, having concluded this, that one died for all, therefore all died; ¹⁵ and He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf.

If **you** are to pattern **your** life after Christ, two things **MUST** happen:

- You **MUST** start taking Jesus Christ seriously in your life.
- You **MUST** start taking your own heart seriously.

If you have not accepted Christ as your Lord and Savior, this is your opportunity to come forward and let Him know that you are ready to become a part of His family.

We are also here with open arms, if you would like to identify yourself as part of this family of God in the Greenwood Christian church.