

Striving Together: Paul's Epistle to the Philippians

Lesson 4: Philippians 2:5-11

The Instruction (v. 5)

- Looks back at the previous section – “others first”
- Paul presents Jesus' mission as the evidence and ideal of this mindset
 - “mind” → “same mind” = understanding, opinion (Romans 12:16)

Jesus' Deity (v. 6)

- “in the form of God” – identifies with His very nature; the same essential quality
- “robbery” = something to be grasped or seized
 - As opposed to Lucifer (Isaiah 14:12-15)
 - “equal with God” – Colossians 1:15-17; John 8:58

What motivates humans to grab for even the smallest power and authority?

What Jesus Willingly Did (vv. 7-8)

- Jesus emptied Himself - NASB, ESV (v. 7a)
 - NKJV: “made Himself of no reputation”
 - NIV: “made Himself nothing”
 - Greek: *kenōō* – to make empty; in theology: kenosis
 - What does this mean?
 - Simply, Jesus poured Himself out for us...COMPLETELY
 - He left glory and adulation for mocking, disbelief, and death (v. 8)
 - He voluntarily laid down the independent use of His powers, depending on the Holy Spirit while here on earth
 - By emptying Himself, instead of grasping for power, He proved His divinity
- He became a slave as a human being (v. 7b)
 - “form” – to contrast with “form of God” in verse 6 – again, essential quality
 - Slave, bondservant – Matthew 26:39; Mark 10:45
 - “likeness of men” – He lived a fully human life (Hebrews 4:15)
 - Heresies since the early church challenge that Jesus was fully human as well as fully God (hypostatic union)
 - Docetism – Jesus was just a vision, as were his suffering and death
 - Apollinarianism – Jesus' body was human, but His soul was divine
 - Based on Greek dualism: the spirit is good, the flesh is evil
 - Our response: 1 John 4:2-4

If Jesus was willing to do all this for all of us, why is it difficult to serve some people?

- Jesus' mission was the cross (v. 8)
 - "appearance as a man" – human in every aspect
 - "humbled" – not only emptied, but then brought low (humiliated)
 - Not just human, but the lowliest human of all time
 - He didn't just come to die, but to die in perhaps the most awful and demeaning way ever devised by mankind

What does Jesus' death on the cross mean to you?

God's Response (v. 9)

- "Therefore" – because Jesus so completely fulfilled His mission
- The One who was the greatest servant, who emptied Himself and then went even lower as He took the cross for all of humanity, has now been exalted above every single name in all of creation
- This is the epitome of the last shall be first and the least shall be the greatest
 - Jesus is the paradigm of humility and servanthood
 - Biblical directives: Matthew 23:11; Mark 10:29-31; 1 Peter 5:6-7

What does this principle teach us about humbling ourselves and serving others?

Creation's Response (vv. 10-11) – the result of God's response

- "name" in Scripture is connected to one's character and reputation
 - Jesus' reputation and role went from slave to master
- Knees bowing denote worship (believers) or concession (unbelievers)
 - "heaven" – spirits and the redeemed
 - "earth" – living humanity
 - "under the earth" – hell
- Regardless, all will acknowledge that Jesus is Lord of heaven and earth
 - "confess" = to agree; EVERY tongue will ultimately agree that Jesus is Lord
 - This brings glory to God the father (our life goal as well)

Next week: Philippians 2:12-18