

of God the Father.” (9-11) In this text Paul reminds the Philippians that everything Jesus did was for God's glory. The reason Jesus took on human flesh and was nailed to the cross, raised from the dead, exalted to the Father's right hand, and given the name above every name was for “the glory of God the Father.” As Jesus faced the cross, the glory of the Father was uppermost in His mind: *“Father, the hour is come; glorify your Son, that your Son also may glorify you”* (John 17:1). In fact, He has given this glory to us (John 17:22), and one day we shall share it with Him in heaven (John 17:24; Rom. 8:28-30).

Jesus told us that we should think and live in this way. In Matthew 5:16 He said, *“Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and praise your Father in heaven.”* So, as Paul wrote in 1 Corinthians 10:31, *“...whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, we must do it all [not for the glory of self but] for the GLORY OF GOD.”*

The person with the submissive mind, as he lives for others, must expect sacrifice and service, but in the end, it is going to lead to glory. Joseph suffered and served for thirteen years, but then God exalted him and made him the second ruler of Egypt. David was anointed king when he was yet a youth. He experienced years of hardship and suffering, but at the right time, God exalted him as king of Israel. We are letting our light shine through our good works, and this glorifies the Father in heaven (Matt 5:16). We may not see the glory today, but we shall see it when Jesus comes and rewards His faithful servants.

Reflection:

1. What is true humility? How would you rate yourself in this area? What can you do practically to become more humble in your everyday life?
2. In what ways did Jesus serve others? How do you think this affected what Jesus thought of Himself?

June 11, 2017

Philippians (5): Following His Example

Philippians 2:1-11

Rev. Dr. Charles Yoon

The beginning of chapter 2 is a continuation of Paul's call for unity in the Philippian church. The Philippian Christians were encouraged by being in union with Christ. The phrase “in Christ” is a frequently used formula in Philippians. Paul makes the clear connection between unity and union in Christ, with the unity and union of believers. True unity in the church cannot occur unless people are genuinely united with Jesus Christ, and have a genuine, experiential knowledge of him.

In view of the tremendous blessings that the Philippians had received in Christ, Paul urged them to be united in harmony. Paul wants the Philippians to think the same way and have the same mind; that is, to have similar attitudes, concerns and intentions. This does not mean that it is necessary for us to always have the same opinions in church life on matters of faith or practice. Even Paul disagreed with other apostles at times. (cf. Acts 15:39; Galatians 2:11ff) Often it is good to have differences of opinion as this will stretch our understanding of God, his word, his mission, and his world. However, we need to watch that differences of opinion may not destroy an individual's faith, or the mission and testimony of the church. Like-mindedness, harmony and unity among the Philippian believers will make Paul's joy full and complete.

Jealousy and rivalry may have been behind some discord in the Philippian church. Paul states in today's text, instead of being envious and contentious, or following empty ambitions, we are to be humble (2:3a). Humility is an essential characteristic of Jesus Christ and his true followers! Paul gives us clear and practical advice on how to live with humility towards others. He says: *“Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.”* (2:3b-4) Paul writes that we should have the same humble and selfless attitude as

Jesus Christ. He says, "This is the way your mind should operate. Follow Jesus' example. Think like He does!"

Jesus is the best example of humility. In Matthew 11:28-30 our Lord described Himself when He said, "Come to me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart..." In our text Paul reminds us that Jesus is the perfect example of this characteristic of humility.

1. Jesus thinks of others, not Himself (2:5-6).

Paul says, "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage" (5-6) As God, Jesus Christ did not need anything. He had all the glory and praise of heaven. But verse 6 states an amazing fact: He did not consider His equality with God as something selfishly to be held on to. Jesus did not think of Himself. He thought of others. His attitude was that of unselfish concern for others. This is "the mind of Christ," an attitude that says, "I cannot keep my privileges for myself, I must use them for others, and to do this, I will gladly lay them aside and pay whatever price is necessary."

More than twenty times in the New Testament, God instructs us how to live with "one another." We are to prefer one another (Rom. 12:10), edify one another (1 Thess. 5:11), and bear each other's burden (Gal. 6:2). We should not judge one another (Rom. 14:13) but rather admonish one another (Rom. 15:14).

Paul reminds us that we need to follow Jesus' example of thinking of others. C. S. Lewis writes, "Whenever we find that our religious life is making us feel that we are good - above all, that we are better than someone else - I think we may be sure that we are being acted on, not by God, but by the devil."

2. Jesus serves and sacrifices (2:7-8).

Paul says, "rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death - even death on a cross!" (7-8) Jesus thought of others and became a servant. Paul traces the steps in the humiliation of Christ: (1) He emptied Himself, laying aside the independent use of His own attributes as God; (2) He permanently became a human, in a single physical body; (3) He used that body to be a servant; (4) He took that body to the cross and willingly died.

What a grace! From heaven to earth, from glory to shame, from Master to servant, from life to death, "even the death of the cross." (8) Jesus did not pretend to be a servant; He was not an actor playing a role. He actually became a servant and sacrificed.

Dr. John H. Jowett, a British preacher at the turn of the 19th and 20th century, said, "Ministry that cost nothing accomplishes nothing." If there is to be any blessing, there must be some "bleeding." The person with the submissive mind does not avoid sacrifice. He or she lives for the glory of God and the good of others, and if paying a price will honor Christ and help others, he or she is willing to do it. It is one of the paradoxes of the Christian life that the more we give, the more we receive; the more we sacrifice, the more God blesses. This is why the submissive mind leads to joy; it makes us more like Christ.

In coming to earth to live and die for you and me Jesus Christ revealed 'who God is.' He showed us that it is God's nature to act in love toward mankind. You see God is a self-sacrificing Being. If we are Christians with a submissive mind, we will follow Jesus' example no matter how costly it is to do so.

3. Jesus glorifies God (2:9-11).

Paul says, "Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory