

SERMON NOTES

By Pastor John Paul Miller

The Epistle of Paul the Apostle to the Philippians

Philippians 2:5-11 – “The Mind of Christ (Pt. 1)”

Philippians 2:5-11, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

We come to a unique section of Philippians which, unlike the rest of the book, is doctrinal.

I struggled greatly this week wondering how to introduce a text as grand as this.

I feel like Moses at the burning bush when the Lord spoke and told him to take off his shoes for the place he was standing on was holy ground.

This text is considered by many to be the greatest in the New Testament, if not the whole Bible on the person of Christ.

J. Vernon McGee – “...one of the great theological statements in the scripture. Some consider it the greatest doctrinal statement in the New Testament relative to the person of Christ.”

Lehman Strauss – “These seven verses of scripture form one of the most sublime and majestic paragraphs on the person of Jesus Christ to be found anywhere.”

Howard F. Vos – “...one of the most significant doctrinal passages in all of scripture, one which shows the essential nature of the Mind of Christ.”

James Boice – “This passage is among the most glorious sections of the New Testament. In these few verses we see the great sweep of Christ’s life from eternity past to eternity future.”

Why does Paul interject this doctrinal passage here at this time?

In Philippians 1:27, Paul exhorted the Philippians to steadfastness.

Paul knew the way to steadfastness was unity.

In Philippians 2:1-4, Paul exhorted us to unity:

Philippians 2:2-3, "*Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.*"

How?

By humility (vs. 3)

Now we see the Pattern – It's Jesus (vs. 5)

Philippians 2:5, "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*"

Paul's purpose in this passage was not to teach doctrine, but to use the Doctrine of Christ to illustrate his exhortation to oneness, lowliness and helpfulness.

Paul's picture of the Lord Jesus as our pattern, our example is a powerful incentive to unity and humility.

I want to outline verses 5-11 for you so you can see the whole picture.

I. The Illustration of Christ (vs. 5)

II. The Humiliation of Christ (vs. 6-8)

III. The Exaltation of Christ (vs. 9-11)

Today we want to look together at the first two divisions (vs. 5-8)

I. The Illustration of Christ (vs. 5)

Philippians 2:5, "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:*"

Paul does two things in verse 5:

1. He issues a command – it's a present imperative - "*Let this mind be in you...*"
2. He gives us the example – "*...which was also in Christ Jesus:*"

Verse 5 is a transition from exhortation to illustration.

What does Paul mean by the Mind of Christ?

- Its His humble attitude
- His unselfish devotion

- It's the disposition of the eternal Son of God, even before He came to earth, who regarded no sacrifice as too great, no humiliation as too painful, in accomplishing His redeeming work.

C. Erdman – Paul is “saying that as Christ stooped from heaven to earth that he might secure our redemption, so his followers should be willing to make sacrifices and to undertake lowly, self-forgetful tasks in the service of others.”

Jesus is always our supreme example!

1 John 2:6, “*He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.*”

How? In humility!

II. The Humiliation of Christ (vs. 6-8)

Philippians 2:6-8, “*Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.*”

In these three verses Paul paints three pictures of Christ:

1. The Sovereign (vs. 6)
2. The Servant (vs. 7)
3. The Sacrifice (vs. 8)

We will see seven steps down from Heaven's splendor to earth's suffering.

But before we trace His steps of Humiliation we need to first take note of who He is and where He came from.

1. The Sovereign (vs. 6) we see His Deity

a. *Who, being in the form of God,*

“form” – Greek *morphe* which denotes the inner nature, not the external appearance.

It's saying Jesus is God!

Today's New International Version renders it, “*Who, being in very nature God...*”

“being” means, Jesus did not begin to be in the form of God, because as God, he was from eternity in the form of God.

1. Jesus as the second person of the triune Godhead is eternal

John 1:1, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*"

2. Jesus was pre-existent

John 8:58, "*Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*"

Colossians 1:17, "*...he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*"

John 17:5, "*And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*"

3. Jesus possessed all the divine attributes.

4. Jesus claimed to be God

John 10:30, "*I and my Father are one.*"

5. The Bible says He's God!

Hebrews 1:8, "*But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.*"

b. "...*thought it not robbery to be equal with God:*"

Literally, he did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.

Robert G. Gromacki – "When Christ did not esteem His equality with God as a prized possession, He did not look 'on his own things' (cf. 2:4). Instead, He viewed 'the things of others,' namely, the sinful plight of the human race. He did not contemplate what He would gain for Himself, but rather what He could do for others."

Jesus is the eternal God, in heaven with the Father and Spirit from eternity past.

Micah 5:2, "*But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.*"

God cannot change! (the Immutability Of God)

This is who He is and where He came from.

Jesus – reincarnate before Bethlehem.

2. The Servant – we see His incarnation

The Sovereign became The Servant.

7 Steps Down

A. Step 1 – “*But made himself of no reputation...*” (vs. 7)

Literally, Himself He emptied “*kenosis*”

What did He empty Himself of?

1. Not His Deity

Malachi 3:6, “*For I am the LORD, I change not;...*”

2. Not His divine attributes

What did He give up or empty Himself of?

1. He temporarily divested Himself of His divine glory - *The insignia of His majesty*

2. He emptied Himself of the independent use of His divine authority.

3. He emptied Himself of the voluntary exercise of His divine attributes.

4. He emptied Himself of His eternal riches.

2 Corinthians 8:9, “*For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.*”

5. He emptied Himself temporarily of His face-to-face relationship with His Father.

B. Step 2 – “*...and took upon him the form of a servant,...*” (vs. 7)

Literally, He willingly took the nature of a slave.

The divine Son who with the Father was supreme over all now becomes servant of all, and wholly submissive to His Father's will.

C. Step 3 – *“...and was made in the likeness of men:”* (vs. 7)

Jesus was truly man (full humanity)

How?

The supernatural conception in the womb of the virgin Mary.

John 1:14, “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”

Forsook the Courts of everlasting Day,
And chose with us a darksome House of mortal Clay.

Milton, On the Morning of Christ's Nativity 1629

The true manhood of Jesus

Jesus was really man, but not merely man (a false teaching).

Isaiah 9:6, “For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.”

Jesus in His humanity was just like us except He had no sin!

But like us in:

- * temptation
- * suffering
- * sorrow
- * disappointments

3. The Sacrifice (vs. 8) – we see His crucifixion

D) Step 4 – *“And being found in fashion as a man,...”* (vs. 8)

Literally, being found in appearance as a man.

His outward appearance was altogether human.

He was God, veiled in flesh.

John 1:10-11, " *He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not.*"

1 John 1:1-2, " *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)*"

He was treated as a man so He understands and can help.

E) Step 5 – "...he humbled himself,..." (vs. 8)

Jesus was not humbled by others, but rather, He humbled Himself.

He voluntarily submitted Himself to the will of the Father.

Illustrations:

Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane

Matthew 26:39, " *And he went a little further, and fell on his face, and prayed, saying, O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt.*"

The arrest, trials, mockeries and buffetings, Jesus willingly submitted Himself to them!

Isaiah 53:7, " *He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.*"

How?

Isaiah 53: 3-4, " *He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from him; he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.*"

O what Love!

F) Step 6 – "...and became obedient unto death..." (vs. 8)

Jesus actually died (it was an act of obedience)

Jesus took on humanity and a human body in order to die.

Hebrews 10:5-10, "Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me: In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure. Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) to do thy will, O God. Above when he said, Sacrifice and offering and burnt offerings and offering for sin thou wouldest not, neither hadst pleasure therein; which are offered by the law; Then said he, Lo, I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second. By the which will we are sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all."

G) Step 7 – "...even the death of the cross." (vs. 8)

Jesus not only died, he died by crucifixion.

His death was a cruel execution.

The extent of Christ's humiliation can be seen in that He went from the throne of divine majesty to the cross of agony.

He became sin for us (He bore our sin).

There was a separation from the Father which He had never known.

Jesus cried, "...My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"
(Matthew 27:46)

Such suffering, sorrow and shame has never been known. And to think He did it all for me.

He was thinking of me!

You don't understand Christianity if you don't understand the cross.

The cross can be summarized in three statements:

1. The sin bearer (He redeemed us)
2. God satisfied (He defeated Satan)
3. The Love of God (He revealed Himself)

Jesus is our example – summarized in one word, humility

Jesus humility illustrated: John 13

This whole doctrinal passage is not for our information, it's for our transformation.

If Jesus could humble Himself, so should we!

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