

Scripture Text

Philippians 2:5-11

Context

Paul wrote his letter to the Philippians during a time of imprisonment, probably in Rome around a.d. 62. The chief theme of Philippians is encouragement: Paul wants to encourage the Philippians to live out their lives as citizens of a heavenly colony, as evidenced by a growing commitment to service to God and to one another. The way of life that Paul encourages was manifested uniquely in Jesus Christ; it was also evident in the lives of Paul, Timothy, and Epaphroditus .

Observation and Meaning

Let's read Philippians 2:5-8

- What is 'this mind' that Paul exhorts the Philippians to have? v5 (see Phil 2:1-4)
- How does Paul describe Jesus Christ in verse 6?
- What is shocking about Jesus' act despite who he was? v6-7
- To what extent did Jesus obey God? v8

Let's read Philippians 2:9-11

- How did God respond to Jesus' humility and obedience? v9
- What are the implications for everyone from Jesus' act of obedience to God? v10-11
- Who is Jesus? v11 (See God's words in Isaiah 45:23)
- What is the objective of Jesus' mission? v11

Big Idea

God's glory was displayed through Christ who did not count equality with God something to be grasped but instead laid aside his rights to obey God to the point of death on a cross. Jesus emptied himself to save us from our sin and pride, so how can we not now count others more significant than ourselves?

Connecting to Bible Storyline

God humbled himself and entered into human history as Jesus Christ, taking the form of a servant to die on the cross for the penalty of sin. Because of his humble act of obedience, God has exalted Jesus Christ to the highest point where every knee will one day bow to him when he returns to the glory of God.

Getting to Christ

The man Jesus Christ is the Messiah prophesied by the Old Testament prophets and encapsulates the fullness of God. Paul the apostle urges us to follow Jesus' example of humility for God's glory and our joy.

Sermon Outline

1. The command to be humble (v1-5)
2. Christ stepped down into glory from humiliation (v5-8)
3. Christ is glorified because of his humility (v9-11)
4. Our response to Christ's act of obedience - Count others more significant than yourself

Applications

- How is humility hard? What prevents me from being humble and serving others?
- How does Jesus' humility and obedience to the point of death challenge your pride?
- Jesus gives us a perfect example of humility, but he is more than an example for us to follow. How does your union with Christ make you change your relationship with others? (Or, how could a proper understanding of your union with Christ change your relationships with others?)
- How can my life give more glory to God?

Guide for Study Leaders

Use the C.O.M.A. (Context, Observation, Meaning, Application) method to work through the biblical text.

Context

Pay attention to the surrounding verses, paragraphs, chapters, events, etc. to see how this passage fits within the context of this particular book of the Bible.

Note how this passage fits within the larger storyline of the whole Bible, i.e. how God is saving a people through Jesus Christ to live under his rule in his place.

Observation & Meaning

Make careful observations of the biblical text. Notice details such as linking words (eg. "for", "if", "therefore"), repetition, dialogue, narrative, OT quotations, etc.

To understand the meaning of the biblical text, we need to discern the author's purpose or intent: Why is the biblical author writing this?

Helpful questions to ask include:

Who is writing and to whom?

What is the situation of the author and of the readers?

Are we made aware of any problems that need to be addressed?

Are there any repeated themes, or a single idea that holds everything together?

Application

Apply God's word to the heart. Move beyond merely addressing circumstances and behaviour by asking good "heart" questions. For example: Why do we do what we do? What do we really desire?

Always connect the gospel to application. For example, what difference does knowing Christ make to our obedience to God?

Ask what the passage teaches us about God, ourselves, salvation in Christ, the church, the world, etc.