

The Humble Servant

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Philippians 2:3-11

We are in our kitchen. Here is a beautiful, gold color vessel containing water. Let me pour the same water into a disposable cup. The water is the same. The vessels are different.

though he was in the form of God, ... but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. (Philip. 2:6,7)

Christ is fully God and fully human. He emptied himself taking the form of servant and became a human like us. The water was in a “royal” vessel; the same water was poured into a cheap, fragile cup. How could it be? How can it be that God empties Himself and becomes like one of us?

And why? Why not become a KING, royalty?

He took the form of a servant.

Let us sing together this song

He left His Father’s throne above—
So free, so infinite His grace—
Emptied Himself of all but love,
And bled for Adam’s helpless race:
'Tis mercy all, immense and free,
For, O my God, it found out me!

Amazing love! How can it be,
That Thou, my God, shouldst die for me? (Charles Wesley)

Let us read the passage:

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count

equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Let us dig in

Last Sunday I started with this topic and I said we will continue this week.

1. Humility and Unity

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy,² complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. (Philippians 2:1-2)

Notice, this is not an artificial unity. No, Christ is binding us together. Only when Jesus is the source of the unity, we are genuinely united. When we have the mind of Jesus, when we have love of Jesus.

Then Paul introduces a poem about Jesus, the perfect example of a humble servant, who will unite us.

How?

2. War Against Selfishness

Paul gives several commands for the church to follow before this poem:

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. (Phil 2: 3,4)

What are the commands:

-Do nothing of selfish ambitions,

- Humble yourself,
- Count others more significant, important,
- Don't just look to your own interests
- Take care others as well.

This is war against selfishness. This is war against "sin" which makes us proud and selfish people.

Consider others more significant than yourselves? This is exactly against the standards of the world, which will say MY way, and Me first...

3. Christ, the humble Servant

Emptied himself...humbled himself...

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

I read in a commentary:

The story of the cross of Christ is told in each of the four Gospels; the meaning of the cross is the preoccupying theme of the epistles. But the present passage uniquely unfolds the cross as seen through the eyes of the Crucified, and allows us to enter into the mind of Christ.¹

We ask to each other, "What's on your mind?"

"What was it that seemed important to Jesus? What principles did he cherish? What objectives?"²

Paul says as command: Have this mind among yourselves. In Romans says renew your mind .

To understand the mind of Jesus, let us evaluate this poem.

It starts before incarnation:

He was with God, he was God. He was in the heavenly state.

He obeyed his Father and “emptied” himself from the highest realm, and took on the form of a servant. If you recognize, it is a voluntary action.

He became a *dulos*, (slave)... without losing his divinity.

He was fully human and fully divine.

He became a human being yet without sin. “And he put his divinity on hold.” (my way to explain he emptied himself)

What kind of God is this? Who gave up from His ‘seat’ in heaven to be with us as a servant?

Can anyone explain this mystery, please? Not just a servant, **but obedient to the point of dying on a cross.**

As we heard in the song of Charles Wesley:

’Tis mystery all! The Immortal dies!

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This mystery is a testimony of the nature of Christ.

Maybe I cannot explain, but surly it is a reality that Paul is drawing to them and to us today.

He emptied himself...

He humbled himself...

His humility is not just a moral characteristic. His humility took Him all the way to the cross because God’s Son Jesus Christ took on himself the curse of sin and nailed it to the cross. For you... for me... for humanity...

Though he was rich, so rich,
Yet for our sakes how poor he became!
Even his garments they parted
When he hung on the cross of shame.
All that he had he gave for me,
That I might be rich through eternity.⁴

Today I will participate in the Lord’s Table. Am I worthy of that? No, but Jesus made it possible for each of us to approach the Table with humility and brokenness.

4. Divine and Human Response

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
(2:9-11 ESV)

A. God's response:

- God exalts Jesus
- His name above all names

B. Our response:

- Every knee shall bow,
- Every tongue confess that
- Jesus Christ is LORD.

God did his part by exalting Jesus and giving him a name above all names.

We have our part.

We will continue to learn from Jesus how to serve Him and others.

We will continue to worship him: knees bow in obedience and tongues confess as a testimony that He is Lord.

We will continue to spread this wonderful story of Jesus to all over the world.

We will continue to fight against selfishness in us.

Thus

Come to the Table... come broken.... Come confessing your sins to KING Jesus.

He will heal you and give you life, everlasting life.

1. J Alec Motyer, Bible Speaks Today
2. ibid
3. E.H. Swinstead