

WHEELERSBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

Life Application Sunday School Class

Philippians - Session 6

May 20, 2001

Review

Humility is the key of unity in the church, which is in contrast to selfish ambition and vain conceit. Humility is a state of mind. It is how we view ourselves. How aware are we that we are what we are only by the grace of God?

- Humble people realize what they are: sinners saved by grace
- Humble people realize what they can do: nothing apart from Christ
- Humble people realize what they know: not much, so they are teachable
- Humble people recognize their lack of strength, so they depend on Christ and His resources.
- Humble people realize what they deserve; nothing, which makes them content and thankful.

Selfish ambition means self promotion to gain a following - creating factions and strife. It carries the idea of being partisan and contentious, taking sides.

Vain conceit means empty pride, self esteem, vain glory. People who want recognition and a feeling of importance do things to promote themselves and gain a following. They can many times be people pleasers and flatterers, but their motive is always to make themselves look good. In the modern vernacular, they are politicians. We saw that this is never to be our motive.

A humble person will not be self-centered. A humble person realizes that the world doesn't revolve around him. Listen to yourself when you converse with others. Does everything you say relate to you or your job or your family? Do you take a sincere interest in others and their lives and families and joys and problems? In our relationships, are we there to give as well as take? An outward demonstration of Christ-likeness is when we are sincerely interested in the well being of others, and not just ourselves. A humble person recognizes the privilege and blessing in giving as well as receiving. Are we transparent in our relationships? A humble person will make himself vulnerable, and take the risk of being hurt for the sake of edifying another. True fellowship and unity will only thrive in an atmosphere of humility.

Humility paves the way to fulfill the commandment in chapter 2. To be:

- Like-minded - literally means to think the same way; think the same thing
- Same love - love for each one without respect of persons
- One in spirit and purpose - having the same desires, goals, and affections

We are called as members of the Lord's church, to have the same goals, affections, and desires. God has provided the means to accomplish this goal. Eph 4:11 states that God has provided apostles and prophets (their teaching through the New Testament) and evangelists, pastors, and teachers (ministry leadership) for the equipping and building up of His people - the goal being in verse 13 - unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God - the fullness of Christ.

Finally, we looked at the divine resources that enable us to fulfill this calling to unity.

We love Him, and others, because He first loved us; The idea expressed here is that this close relationship we have with Christ constrains and compels us to love one another as we are loved. God empowers what He commands. A command in scripture is the same as a promise. We can

humbly serve one another and experience unity based on the great love, fellowship, and assistance that we receive from God through Christ and the Holy Spirit.

Let's summarize verse 1-4:

Paul is calling the Philippians to unity of thinking, purpose, and spirit. He says that it is possible if they will act out of humility and putting others before themselves, and that they can do that based on the intimate relationship they have with Christ Jesus.

READ Chapter 2:5-11

⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶ Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ 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.

In this call to humility, Paul now turns our attention to the perfect example of servant-hood and humility, namely, the Lord Jesus Christ. This passage of scripture is the most complete teaching on Christ becoming man. It is something that we must pray and ask God to reveal to our hearts, for it is overwhelming. As we meditate and think about what Christ did, it will strengthen and motivate us to be better servants and bring more glory to Him by imitating His example.

First, let's look at what Christ left to come to earth.

1. What did Christ leave to come to earth as a man?

Heb 1: In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. ³ The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. ⁴ So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs. ⁵ For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father"? Or again, "I will be his Father, and he will be my Son"? ⁶ And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." ⁷ In speaking of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, his servants flames of fire." ⁸ But about the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever, and righteousness will be the scepter of your kingdom. ⁹ You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has set you above your companions by anointing you with the oil of joy." ¹⁰ He also says, "In the beginning, O Lord, you laid the foundations of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. ¹¹ They will perish, but you remain; they will all wear out like a garment.

¹² You will roll them up like a robe; like a garment they will be changed. But you remain the same, and your years will never end." ¹³ To which of the angels did God ever say, "Sit at my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet"? ¹⁴ Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?

John 1: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

¹⁸ *No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.*

John 17: "Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. ² For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³ Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴ I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

Col 1: ¹⁵ He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

Christ was:

- Heir of all things
- Made the universe
- Radiance of God's glory
- Exact representation of His being
- Sustainer of all things
- At the right hand of God
- Much superior to angels
- The Father's Son
- Worshipped by angels
- Rules from an eternal throne
- Laid the earth's foundations, heavens are works of His hands
- Eternal, not temporal like the creation
- With God - Is God
- All life from Him
- At the Father's side
- Authority over all people
- Perfect image of God
- Preeminent over all creation
- All created by Him and for Him
- Holds all things together

The Son of God in eternity past, was in perfect communion and fellowship with His Father through the Spirit. He is the full expression of the Father's radiance and glory - called the image of God, the exact substance of God - literally God Himself. All things were made by Him - all that exists came through the Son, and He also sustains, or holds all things together. He is truly the King of creation, and rightfully so, because He is the creator, and all creation was made for Him.

2. Reflect on various events in Christ's life that displayed His humanity.

When the Son of God came to earth, He did not leave His deity behind, but He certainly veiled the glory He had with His Father. He is the essence of God, which is spirit, and became the essence of man, which is flesh. He was no longer omnipresent, but limited to a body of flesh. He no longer fully expressed His authority over creation on a moment-by-moment basis, though there were many times that this glory was revealed, e.g. the stilling of the storm, the resurrection

of Lazarus, the turning water to wine, the multiplication of the fish and loaves, the healing of the blind man.

As He walked upon this earth, He was tired. He was tempted, with such things as hunger, and pride, and selfishness, yet without sin. He was grieved, and mourned. He was despised. He was mocked. He was hated. He was ridiculed. He was misunderstood. He was forsaken. He was betrayed. He was mistreated. He was spit upon. He was cursed. This One, the creator of the universe, the sustainer of all life, the One who is the exact replica of the eternal God, and perfect expression of deity, willingly suffered these things - no one forced Him to do anything. From a position of perfect authority and with the right to do anything with creation, because He owned it all, He chose to come and serve. What did He leave - the very glory and splendor of the right hand of God.

3. Why did Christ leave His glory and come to earth?

But why did He leave all of this, of His own choice and volition. It was love for His Father. It was to redeem the ones that His Father had chosen and given to Him. It was to purchase a people for the expression of the glory of God. Why did Christ die? Certainly because He loved us - but that love is ultimately an expression of the love among the Father, Son, and Spirit. Our redemption is an expression of the Son's love for the Father and the Father's love for the Son in the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. And for His obedience and submission to the Father's will, He will forever be the exalted and glorified One - King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the absolute Sovereign over all. Through Christ's obedience and humility, He brings even more honor and glory to God as He is given the name above every name. All creation will look on the lamb that was slain and cry Worthy is the Lamb to receive honor, and glory, and power. And all will acknowledge Him one day. The redeemed acknowledge it now; the unsaved will confess it later. Those that have bowed the knee now will bring glory to God through their salvation, and those who have not bowed in submission will bring glory to God through their judgement.

4. How can this admonition motivate us to follow Christ in humility and service?

So this is the point of these verses - that we should have the same attitude that Jesus Christ had when He came to this earth. We need to set aside any privilege and rights and comforts that we may have, and become a servant - a bondsman, to one another. In so doing, we are expressing the nature of our Savior. Jesus is truly expressed in our lives when we respond and are like Him. He laid aside His rights to become a servant to bring greater glory to His Father by redeeming a people for the praise of His glory. When we lay aside our selfishness for others, we pave the way for more glory to be given to our God. To be able to walk in the service and humility that we are called to, we need a motivation stronger than human sentimentality and compassion. Jesus gave Himself because He loved us, to be sure, but it was for the joy set before Him. He saved us to bring glory and honor to His Father, and His Father gave us to His Son as an expression of His love and glory. In the same way, we need to serve others because we love them, but ultimately to bring glory to the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ. Only this motivation will be strong enough to carry us through the rough times when our service and sacrifice is ignored or even despised by others.

5. Read and reflect on the following passages: John 21:15-19; John 13:1-17; Mt 20:20-28

John 21: ¹⁵ When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, *“Simon son of John, do you truly love me more than these?”* “Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.” Jesus said, *“Feed my lambs.”* ¹⁶ Again Jesus said, *“Simon son of John, do you truly love me?”* He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.” Jesus said, *“Take care of my sheep.”* ¹⁷ The third time he said to him, *“Simon son of John, do you love me?”* Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, *“Do you love me?”* He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that

I love you.” Jesus said, *“Feed my sheep.”*¹⁸ *I tell you the truth, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.”*¹⁹ Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, *“Follow me!”*

John 13 It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love.² The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus.³ Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist.⁵ After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples’ feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, “Lord, are you going to wash my feet?”⁷ Jesus replied, *“You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand.”*⁸ “No,” said Peter, “you shall never wash my feet.” Jesus answered, *“Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.”*⁹ “Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!”¹⁰ Jesus answered, *“A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.”*¹¹ For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.¹² When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. *“Do you understand what I have done for you?”* he asked them.¹³ *“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am.”*¹⁴ Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet.¹⁵ *I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.*¹⁶ *I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him.*¹⁷ *Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.*

Mt 20²⁰ Then the mother of Zebedee’s sons came to Jesus with her sons and, kneeling down, asked a favor of him.²¹ *“What is it you want?”* he asked. She said, *“Grant that one of these two sons of mine may sit at your right and the other at your left in your kingdom.”*²² *“You don’t know what you are asking,”* Jesus said to them. *“Can you drink the cup I am going to drink?”* *“We can,”* they answered.²³ Jesus said to them, *“You will indeed drink from my cup, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared by my Father.”*²⁴ When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers.²⁵ Jesus called them together and said, *“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them.”*²⁶ *Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant,*²⁷ *and whoever wants to be first must be your slave—*²⁸ *just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”*