

ATTITUDE COUNTS Sunday School- January 13, 2013

Unifying Topic: JESUS' HUMILITY AND EXALTAION

Lesson Text

I. Avoid Selfish Ambition (Philippians 2:5)

II. The Nature Of A Servant (Philippians 2:6-8)

III. Jesus Highly Exalted (Philippians 2:9-11)

The Main Thought: Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: (Philippians 2:5 KJV).

Unifying Principle: Sometimes people driven by the need to succeed exploit others and abuse power as they fight their way to the top. What honor is there in success won at the expense of others? God exalted Jesus because of Jesus' selflessness, obedience, servanthood, and humility.

Lesson Aim: To help students see how Paul uses the example of Jesus' humiliation and exaltation in order to make an important point about how Christians should treat each other.

Life Aim: To help students evaluate their lives in light of the self-emptying example of Jesus.

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

2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;

2:11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

HISTORY:

Philippians 1 Paul didn't want to ever do anything that would cause him to be ashamed, but he was determined to speak boldly for Christ even in the trials he was going through; for Christ was going to be magnified in life or in his death. ¹Paul's main purpose in living was to glorify Christ and yet he knew that if he was martyred he would also glorify Him through his testimony. His personal desire was to depart and be with the Lord. This he knew would be better for him as it would mean his release from persecutions and other hardships he suffered. However, he also knew that the Philippians needed him to live, and the Lord had more work for him to do, causing his life to be more abundant in Christ (vv. 20-26).

Whatever may happen, whether he see them or not, they were to keep conducting themselves worthy of the gospel, by standing fast in one spirit and one mind for the gospel and not disturbed by any adversaries. This will show that their adversaries can't win, but it's salvation to the Philippians and God. They should take comfort in knowing that, as they believe in Christ, they will also suffer for His sake. They go hand in hand. Paul is letting them know that what they had seen him go through; they're involved in the same struggle. The encouragement was that if Paul could go through, they also could. Our lives should match the gospel. (27-30). Chapter 1 concludes on a good note of encouragement.

Philippians 2:1-4

2:1 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies: Coming from Chapter One Paul says "If." "If" meaning, there is a condition or stipulation; if what is said to be true, then it will result in something. You see Paul had said that they were involved in the same kind of struggle he had gone through. In others words faithful disciples should experience the same persecutions as their teacher but go through knowing the strength within to do so. Now he says if our consolation (*encouragement*) is in Christ; if our comfort is found in His love; if we have fellowship in His Spirit, then agreement will occur. "*Bowels*" is the same word as we find in 1:8 and means tender-heartedness, tender mercies. "*Mercies*" means compassionate yearnings and action. Therefore, if our deepest affection, tender-heartedness and our compassionate yearnings and action comes forth from Him, it will result in unity and having the right attitude with others. Paul does not doubt their Christian faith. He is reminding them that their faith should be rooted in Christ. ²They must show Christ's love to other people. If they are not united, their witness to the world will be weak. Therefore, we have to know our position in Christ and our responsibility

¹ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/the-christian-life-is-a-battleground/>

² <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/philippians-lbw.htm>

<http://www.pitwm.net//pitwm-sunday-school.html>

in that relationship. Four things that we constantly receive through God's grace and we need to pass on to others in a spirit of loving service are: 1.) The consolation we have in Christ 2.) The comfort found in His love 3.) The fellowship we have in the Spirit 4.) The bowels and mercies we enjoy. Now you can fulfill my joy...

2:2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind: All of this was to give Paul joy? "*Be the cause of my joy*"; make his joy complete. How? - By oneness of attitude, living in harmony, being intent on one thing; having the same love...That's what Christ wants for the church.

2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory: Paul gives two negative attitudes to stay away from:

1. Strife

- a. ³Where you have this kind of behavior, you have a divided church.
- b. It is a work of the flesh.
- c. It is the total opposite of the work of the Holy Spirit.
- d. It is the result of any church or individual's behavior where God's love is absent.

2. Vainglory

- a. Those are operating against Christ and in competition with Him.
- b. It is the exact opposite of the one who should get all of the glory and His name is Jesus Christ.

Nothing is to be done through conflict, fighting, contention, or discord; neither done through empty, proud, or groundless self-esteem. Strife also comes through selfish ambition, self-assertiveness and conceit—wanting to promote his own cause—empty glory. **V3b...but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves:** "*But*" is a conjunction, meaning "*instead of the other*"; lowliness of mind is what I want you to display; this is the proper attitude: display humility of mind, meaning, to have a humble opinion of one's self. This is self-forgetfulness in serving others, the spirit which most resembles Christ. We are to "*esteem*"—regard and respect others above ourselves. This is that Christlike spirit of humility which fixes its eyes on the excellency of others. We are placing ourselves under others with an attitude of respect.

2:4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others: The word "*look*" means to mentally consider, regarding something as an aim. However, we are not to look, consider, regard our aim toward self. Discipleship focuses on other people not selfish purposes. By doing this and giving it our priority we are imitating the humility of Christ, while staying in unity.

LESSON:

Philippians 2:5 Avoid Selfish Ambition

2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: "*Let*" means allow, consent to; something you have to do. The word "*mind*" here does not mean mental activity or intellectual process. It means attitude. Let your attitude be like Christ as He had did while He was here on earth. Christ demonstrated a humble mind (*attitude*) and behavior and He is to be our supreme example of humility. He is divine by nature but did not selfishly demand His divine rights. Instead He gave up the glory of heaven to become a human. Even then, He did not seek royal treatment but took the role of a servant. He obeyed the Father's plan to the end by dying for our sins. That was the ultimate example. ⁴If Jesus regarded no sacrifice too great, no humiliation too painful, should not we have this sacrificial attitude toward fellow Christians? What an incredible example of attitude for the believer to follow, none other than Christ Himself. Jesus set and focused His attitude upon humbling Himself. He met our need as He humbled Himself to show that the mind of Christ could be acquired.

Philippians 2:6-8 The Nature Of A Servant

2:6 Who, being in the form of God: This is fundamentally about what He was and what we are to think of Him to be, before He became man. The phrase "**who being**" (*huparchōn*) **in the form of God** implies His *preexistent deity*, and *His continued deity*. It denotes prior existence. Jesus existed as God. Paul's purpose here is not to explain the mystery of the Trinity, but to use it to illustrate the great sacrifice Christ made in becoming a human being. The word "**form**" (*morphē*) does not mean shape, but "*the nature or essence*" subsisting in the individual, and retained as long as the individual itself exists. So, therefore, in the Person of Christ includes the whole nature and essence of Deity; is inseparable and

³ <http://www.fotbc.org/commentary/50philippians.htm>

⁴ <http://versebyversecommentary.com/category/philippians/page/16/>

<http://www.pitwm.net//pitwm-sunday-school.html>

there is no actual existence without it. It does not refer to the outward shape or outward form of a thing. Christ preexisted in the "*form of God*," His very form—the essential nature and character—identified Him as God. While on earth, He was in the form of God. In other words, His prior existence still existed; His nature and essence.

2:6b...thought it not robbery to be equal with God: God came in humility as a baby. He did not regard His position as equal with God the Father as something to hold onto, but as something to be relinquished for the redemption of men. He gave up the throne in glory for a cross of shame and suffering. He did not obtain anything, including His deity by force or use force to seize, by robbery and usurpation, as Satan attempted to do. He did no injury, nor deprived Himself of any glory, or assumed to Himself which did not belong to Him. He was God! Just as He laid His life down for man on a cross, He laid down His rights of Divine majesty to become a Son on earth; He set aside the use of His essence of God, because of His mission. When Christ went to the cross, He fulfilled the role of the Son and the Savior from the original plan of the Father. The spoken plan of the Father—became the plan of the Son—carried out with the power of the Holy Spirit—The Trinity—One! "*Equal*" means one and the same. He was one and the same—God. He was undiminished in that equality. He was eternally conscious of His existence with the Trinity.

2:7 But made himself of no reputation...: "*No reputation*" literally means "*emptied*" Himself. Christ did not empty Himself of being the Godhead. He did not cease to be what He essentially and eternally was. He did not empty something from Himself, but He emptied Himself from something, i.e. the form of God. He emptied Himself of His divine glory, but not of His divine nature. He renounced and set aside His *privileges*.

2:7b ...and took upon him the form of a servant... Paul uses the same *Gr.* word "*form*" (V6), again, which indicates exact essence and nature. The essential nature and character—identified Him as a human being. He was the God-man; fully God and fully man. He "*took upon Himself the form of a servant.*" His humanity was the vehicle through which He manifested Himself as a slave. ⁵We do everything in our power to build a reputation. Yet He shelved His rights as God. He thought more of us than He did of His own name. This was not forced upon Him. He was not manipulated into doing this. He did it of His own free Will. He was a servant to His Father and a servant to His people partly by preaching the Gospel to them, and partly by working miracles, healing their diseases, and going about doing good, both to the bodies and souls of men.

2:7c ...and was made in the likeness of men: He relinquished the celebrity of His deity to be made in the likeness of men. ⁶"*Likeness*" refers to an outward expression that is assumed from the outside and does not come from within. "*Likeness*" means similarity, but not sameness. Christ was not identical with man, in that He could not sin. He was exposed and tempted to the things man would be tempted and exposed to, but He was sinless; He did not sin. The word "*likeness*" protects that distinction. His deity remained throughout the whole course of His self-imposed humiliation. He lost nothing of what He had; the glory of His divine nature was covered, and out of sight; and though some rays and beams of it broke out through His works and miracles, He still became a person to whom people refused to give honor. As Jesus went around preaching and healing, He did all His acts not as God, but as the servant of God. The purpose was not for Jesus to emulate us (man), but for man to emulate Him being a servant.

2:8 And being found in fashion as a man...: The word "*fashion*" points to an external appearance. Men recognized Him as a true man. He was a man, but He was not just a man. He was fully man (Heb. 2:14, 17), but He was also sinless (4:15) and fully God (Col. 1:15; 2:9. ⁷His fashion, His form, were like that of other men; though He was not begotten as man, but conceived in an extraordinary manner by the power of the Holy Ghost, yet He lay nine months in His mother's womb, born as children are, grew in stature; He hungered, was thirsty, became weary, in pain, experienced grief, sorrow, and death itself—all of what man goes through, yet, He was fully God and fully man. Jesus was both undiminished deity and true humanity. He was always God who became man.

2:8b ...he humbled himself and became obedient unto death...: He humbled Himself to his parents, had a trade as a carpenter, washed His disciples' feet; complied with the Will of His Father, and even forgave His enemies. He was obedient from the cradle to the cross. Christ humbled Himself by **becoming** a man, but also He humbled Himself in

⁵ <http://versebyversecommentary.com/category/philippians/page/16/>

⁶ http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?lect_date=3/16/2008&tab=3

⁷ <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/geb/view.cgi?book=php&chapter=002&verse=008>

<http://www.pitwm.net//pitwm-sunday-school.html>

dying for man. He didn't have to do either one, but He did both. He knew the plan, became the plan, and the plan was carried out by the Spirit of God. To humble oneself involves volition (a Will, a decision, a choice).

2:8c ...even the death of the cross: For Jesus to die was not unique; everyone dies. However, the most despised death of a condemned criminal was on an accursed cross. When slaves were executed, they were crucified. Christ placed Himself on the same plane as the worst of criminals. He says, "*No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father*" *Jh.10:18 (NIV)*. Jesus did not stop half way. He showed the mark of slave/servant in His obedience. He never was death's slave, but death's master and conqueror.

- ⁸The cross was the **goal** of the incarnation. "*Having wiped out the handwriting of requirements [the law] that was against us, which was contrary to us. And He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross*" *Col. 2:14 (NKJ)*. Jesus was nailed to the cross and with Him the judgments of the law against us.
- The cross is the **focal** point of God's dealings with us. That is where our redemption from sin was worked out. By shedding His blood on the cross He paid the price for all sin for all time. "*...God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them...*" *II Cor. 5:19 (NKJ)*.
- The cross is a **bloody** issue with which to deal. The cross is offensive to many people. The cross offends people, especially religious people (Gal. 5:11). Religion leads people to believe that if they lead a decent life they will be acceptable to God. That's why people run to religion to tell them that they are "ok." It becomes offensive and distasteful, causing them to not want to accept that it was the cross and not man having the power to save. If Christ did not die there, there would be no salvation for man. Only the cross of Christ could save us from our sin. God's best was on a distasteful cross. The cross is not to offend us.

Philippians 2:9-11 Jesus Highly Exalted

2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him: "*Wherefore*", determines a reason or purpose for something. Jesus went from the highest point imaginable—the "*form of God*" (*the essence of God*), to the lowest place conceivable—the "*death of the cross*." The "*reason*" or the "*wherefore*" for God's exaltation of Christ is contained in verses 6-8. It was because of the journey Christ took, God exalted Him. It was because Christ humbled Himself as an obedient servant, God exalted Him. God exalted Him by raising Him from the dead and enthroning Him in heaven. It is true that God exalts those who humble themselves. *Lk. 14:11 says, "For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."* Just as Jesus taught others, it was by humbling Himself as a servant that He became greatest of all. To exalt Him is one thing, but to "*highly*" exalt Him is another thing. Because of His voluntary renunciation, obedience, and death, God exalted Him supremely. He was never to stay on the cross; He was never to stay in the tomb. He said, "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up*" *Jh.2:19*. He was referring to the destruction of His body and to His resurrection from the dead. When Christ's body was destroyed, the purpose and existence of the Jewish Temple were also destroyed. The task was done. Before He died, He prayed, "*And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began*" *Jh.17:5 (NIV)*.

- ⁹The first step of Christ's exaltation was His resurrection from the dead. His body became a glorious body; raised in incorruption; glorified as Mediator; justified in the Spirit, and acquitted and discharged from all the sins of His people; and all God's elect were justified in Him, for He rose, for their justification; and was glorified.
- The next step of His high exaltation was His ascending on high up to the third heaven, where He is made higher than the heavens; when He was accompanied by an innumerable company of angels, and by those saints whose bodies rose out of their graves after His resurrection; and was received and carried up in a bright glorious cloud; and passing through the air, He led captivity captive, and triumphed over principalities and powers, having before spoiled them on His cross; and then entering into heaven, He sat down at the right hand of God, which is another branch of His exaltation; and shows that he had done His work, and that it was approved and accepted.

2:9b...and given him a name which is above every name: ¹⁰The word "*name*" is equivalent to character. Character is beyond reputation. A person might have a good reputation but not have integrity. A person might have a talent

⁸ <http://versebyversecommentary.com/category/philippians/page/15/>

⁹ <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/geb/view.cgi?book=php&chapter=002&verse=009>

¹⁰ <http://versebyversecommentary.com/category/philippians/page/15/>

but no character. A name spells out who and what a person is. Becoming a Christian has to do with Jesus' name:

- "...to those who believe in his name" (John 1:12),
- "...because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (3:18).
- "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).
- Prayer is to be executed in Jesus' name, "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:13, 14).

What name is that? The name Jesus had already been given to Him. The name most likely in view here is "Lord" (verse 11). The word translated "Lord" (*kurios*) was used of Yahweh, the God of Israel, in the Greek translation of the Old Testament. God gave Jesus the very name of God: "Yahweh" (in Hebrew) and "Lord" (in Greek). God has placed Him in rank above everyone and everything else. To not appreciate who we are in Christ is to diminish what Jesus did for us.

Scripture affirms that this was Jesus' rightful title as the God-man. Now He is openly and manifestly glorified with Himself, with the glory He had with Him before the world began.

2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth: All worship is to focus on Jesus Christ. To bow one's knee meant to recognize and acknowledge one in authority. Jesus will be acknowledged as the ultimate authority—God. To illustrate total submission, Paul says that the knees of...

- those "in heaven" means angels and people who have gone to heaven,
- those "on earth" refers to human beings who are **alive** in time,
- those "under the earth" probably refers to fallen angels will bow.

Even during Christ's earthly ministry the demons recognized Him for who He was and trembled at His authority. After resurrection, Jesus said to His disciples, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me" *Matt.28:16 (NIV)*. Every being has to recognize the supreme authority of Christ. We can do it now as we submit our lives to Him, or we can do it at the judgment when we will all stand before His throne.

2:11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord: Actions will not only indicate the sovereignty of Christ but words will as well. Every tongue belonging to all beings spoken of in verse 10 will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, that He is Yahweh; that He is the One True God. Jesus has all rights to my life; He is my Master. "Confess" means to acknowledge a debt owed. The word "confess" here is intense and it means to "confess out." This is an out and out consent, to consent fully. God wants us to acknowledge openly, that is, publicly that Jesus is Lord.

2:11b ...to the glory of God the Father: When we acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus, we glorify the Father. God is glorified and is highly exalted when men openly acknowledge Christ as Lord.

SUMMARY:

Paul gives the perfect example of the mind which Christians should possess, which was in verses 3-4. "You should have the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus. He always had the nature of God. But He did not think that He should hold on to His rights and honour as God. Instead He made Himself have no reputation. And He became a servant. He came in the form of a man. As a man He was humble. He obeyed God. So He was prepared to die – even to die on a cross. For this reason God raised Him up to the highest place. God has given Him the name that is higher than any other name. So in honour of the name of Jesus, every being in heaven, on earth and beneath the earth shall kneel. And all will declare that Jesus Christ is Lord. In this way, honour will come to God the Father" (*The EasyEnglish Bible Version*).

APPLICATION:

We will be forever asking ourselves, WWJD? His attitude was never with a selfish motive, but one of servanthood. His ambition was never about Himself but that of the Father's Will. His nature was that of a servant which concludes how our ministry should be. In the end, exaltation came from the Father not from man. It was all about the attitude in which He approached and did things. Jesus was highly exalted because He honored the Father in everything He did. As we empty ourselves, not esteeming ourselves, we become like Him.