

EMULATING OTHERS Sunday School- May 1, 2011

Unifying Topic: THE CHRIST HYMN

Lesson Text

I. **Unity And Humility In Christ (Philippians 2:1-4)**

II. **Christ: The Perfect Example (Philippians 2:5-11)**

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

Unifying Principle: One way people honor others they revere is to imitate them. In what ways does our imitation mold our behavior? As a pattern for living and worship, we imitate Christ Jesus as we recall His life and sacrifice on our behalf.

Lesson Aim: To empower students to follow Christ's example in their lives (i.e. dying to self in order to follow God's redemptive purposes).

Life Aim: To teach how Christ helps us achieve unity and humility by following His perfect example. By emulating His example, we become a community shaped in His image.

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,
2:2 Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.
2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.
2:4 Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.
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:

¹Paul and Timothy worked together in ministry, traveling and preaching the gospel. At the point that this letter is written, Paul was imprisoned by the Roman government. This will become very obvious as we continue our study in **Chapter One**. The letter to the Philippians was dictated by Paul to Timothy, with the purpose of sending it to the church in Philippi. ²Paul begins his epistle with his customary salutation followed by an expression of thanksgiving and prayer. The church at Philippi had been a source of great joy to Paul by virtue of their fellowship with him in the proclamation of the gospel. Confident that God will complete the work He began in them, Paul prays that their spiritual growth will continue (1-11). ³Paul had taught the Philippians and it was his responsibility to think about them. It is important for those in leadership to think about the people they lead in the light of the Word of God

⁴His circumstances at Rome have actually been for the furtherance of the gospel, despite imprisonment and opposition by false brethren. He is confident that everything will turn out alright, and that he will even come to them again. It is not without mixed feelings, however, for he is torn between a desire to be with Christ and a realization that to remain in the flesh is more needful for them (12-26).

At the moment, his desire is that whether absent or present he may hear they are conducting themselves worthy of the gospel, by standing fast in one spirit and one mind for the gospel and not disturbed by any adversaries. They should take comfort in knowing that, like Paul, they have been granted the honor not only to believe in Christ, but also to suffer for His sake (27-30). Our life should match the gospel. Chapter 1 concludes on a good note of encouragement.

LESSON:

Philippians 2:1-4 Unity And Humility In Christ

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 unity and humility. You see Paul had said that they were involved in the same kind of

¹ <http://rondaniel.com/library/50-Philippians/Philippians0101.html>

² http://executableoutlines.com/phil/phil_01.htm

³ <http://rondaniel.com/library/50-Philippians/Philippians0101.html>

⁴ http://executableoutlines.com/phil/phil_01.htm

struggle he had gone through. In others words faithful disciples should experience the same persecutions as their teacher. 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 unity 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 humility with others. ⁵Paul is not doubting their Christian faith. He is reminding them what the result of their faith should be if it's rooted in Christ. They 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 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. ⁶Where 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. **2:3b...but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves:** There is a conjunction, "*but*", meaning "*instead*", this is what I want you to display; this is the proper attitude: display a lowliness of mind—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.

Philippians 2:5-11 Christ: The Perfect Example

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. ⁷If 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 unity could be acquired.

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, previous to His birth, and His continued deity afterwards*. 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.

⁵ <http://www.easyenglish.info/bible-commentary/philippians-lbw.htm>

⁶ <http://www.fotbc.org/commentary/50philippians.htm>

⁷ <http://versebyversecommentary.com/category/philippians/page/16/>

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

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 there is no actual existence without it. It does not refer to 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 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 power of the Holy Spirit—The Trinity—One! "*Equal*" means the same as. He was the same as 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 renounced, 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. ⁸We 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 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. ⁹Likeness 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. ¹⁰His 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, washing His disciples' feet; complied with the Will of the 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 **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.

2:8ceven the death of the cross: For Jesus to die was not unique; everyone dies. However, the most despised death

⁸ <http://versebyversecommentary.com/category/philippians/page/16/>

⁹ http://www.workingpreacher.org/preaching.aspx?lect_date=3/16/2008&tab=3

¹⁰ <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/geb/view.cgi?book=php&chapter=002&verse=008>

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.

- ¹¹The 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. People run to religion to tell them that they are "ok." Some are offended when they hear an honest physician tell them a diagnosis they do not want to hear. They run to quacks to tell them about some panacea. They are not looking for a doctor; they are looking for a quack

If He did not die, there would be no salvation for man; and only the cross of Christ can save us from our sin.

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 through 8. Because of the journey Christ took, God exalted Him. 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, "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)*.

- ¹²The 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:** ¹³The 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 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

¹¹ <http://versebyversecommentary.com/category/philippians/page/15/>

¹² <http://www.searchgodsword.org/com/geb/view.cgi?book=php&chapter=002&verse=009>

¹³ <http://versebyversecommentary.com/category/philippians/page/15/>

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 begun.

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 focuses 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 the 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 the 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 when men openly acknowledge Christ as Lord.

SUMMARY:

The challenge from Paul is that he desires that the church strive for unity and humility in Christ. Without humility there can be no unity in any church body or between any believer(s) as well. It all begins in Christ.

Paul holds up the earthly ministry of Jesus as the example of humility. The pain was that even though He was God, He did not cling to His rights as God. He laid aside His glory. He took upon Himself the nature of a human servant. He humbled Himself, became obedient, and died on the cross. However, the gain was that God exalted Him to the highest place. He has been given a name above all other names. And someday all people will acknowledge that He is Lord.

Paul issues his first appeal to unity. This appeal is based upon four parallel clauses describing four shared experiences of the Philippians. He issues his second appeal to humility. This appeal is to regard others more highly than their own selves.

Though Jesus was Deity, He was willing to come in the likeness of Man which would lead from the throne of God, to earth, to the death of the cross. It reminds me of the song: "*Lord I Lift Your Name on High*."

*You came from heaven to earth to show the way
From the earth to the cross my debt to pay
From the cross to the grave
From the grave to the sky
Lord I lift Your Name on high.*

He could not come as man without humbling Himself; voluntary submission. Humility brought high exaltation.

One can only emulate others as they have seen others emulate Christ. The likeness of Christ's character is seen through others actions. "*Christ is the same yesterday, and today and for ever*" *Heb.13:8*. This essence poured out will result in unity and humility; having a lowliness of mind, and esteeming others better than themselves. Are you following the right One? Jesus is our perfect example!

APPLICATION:

This is the truth: Every knee will bow... every tongue will confess His Lordship. He is God yesterday, today and throughout eternity. Accept Him with a contrite heart. He is able to help us achieve that unity and humility we need.