

Messages on Philippians

by

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CHAPTER FIVE

THE HUMILITY OF CHRIST

The Apostle Paul was so drawn to Christ and so much in love with Him that his great ambition, as expressed in the third chapter, was to be like Christ in his life and in his death. This deep feeling of his heart is brought out in every chapter in this book. He calls to the believers to imitate him in this blessed anticipation and expectation. He had a deep desire to see the saints at Philippi respond to the call of the Spirit to become more and more like the Saviour.

- He calls them to be like Christ in every aspect of life, in every circumstance and in every condition.
- He calls them to be united in Christ as the Father and the Son are united, as the members of the body are united, as the family is united.
- He calls them to walk in sweet fellowship with Christ as the disciples did, as the angels do, as the Father and the Son are in fellowship with each other.
- He calls upon them to rejoice in Christ, to fill the home with Him, to love His very presence just because of who He is, to rejoice because they belong to Christ and He belongs to them.

These calls to the saints are echoed and re-echoed from his blessed pen throughout the four chapters of the book.

Perhaps the climax is found in chapter 2:5-7. What an unusual mind our blessed Lord had in that He made himself of no reputation. This was a miracle. No one else in all the world could do it.

- Michelangelo painted beautifully and was an unusually skillful sculptor. He made his reputation with no effort on his part, for his gift could not be hidden.
- Mendelssohn was a master musician. His skill became widely known and he was greatly honored.
- Burbank was a plant wizard. His reputation spread far and wide because of his wonderful work in developing plants, vegetables and fruits.
- Edison became known throughout the world for his wonderful discoveries in the field of electricity. Wherever he went his reputation preceded him.
- Napoleon was a wonderful warrior. Many volumes have been written about his person and work.
- Dr. James Young Simpson became famous for his introduction of chloroform to the medical profession in England.

- General Goethals built the Panama Canal and has a place in history for that mighty achievement.

All of these men were men of reputation.

Christ Jesus, however, paints the beautiful sunset with colored tints and multicolored rays. The clouds are lined with silver and the winter sky becomes a halo of glory, yet no one speaks of Jesus as the painter who so marvelously mixes and mingles His colors.

Christ Jesus gave the song to the canary and to the lark. He makes the wind to sing through the trees; gives a beautiful singing voice to many men and women, has made the strings to vibrate in such ratio as will cause them to blend in beautiful harmony, yet He has no reputation as a musician.

Christ made the blushing peach, the beautiful apple with its delightful tints, the juicy orange, the nutritious potato and all other fruits and vegetables, but no one speaks of Him as a plant wizard.

Christ made the lights to hang in the heavens and made all the forms of light that there are, yet He has no such reputation as Edison among the scientists.

Christ has directed the wars of the ages, making it possible for a small army of His people to defeat a huge army of His enemies, yet no one ever speaks of Him in glowing tones as a mighty strategist or a marvelous warrior.

Christ gives sweet sleep as the shadows fall. The birds tuck their heads beneath their wings and sleep throughout the night; the animals lie down to rest; human bodies relax in restful slumber, but He has no reputation as a sleep-giver as Dr. Simpson has.

Christ made the Royal Gorge and the Grand Canyon which fill men's eyes with admiration and their lips with praise as they gaze upon His marvelous work, yet He has no reputation as an engineer such as General Goethals has.

Dr. Zeiss designed wonderful lenses and became world famous, but Jesus made the most perfect lens of all, the eye of the eagle and the eye of man. It contracts and expands with the light with no conscious adjustment on our part. It accommodates for far distance or near-by objects and needs no regulation by the human hand. In all of this, the Saviour gets no glory whatever, for he made himself of no reputation.

The surgeon replaces a bit of bone or performs a grafting operation on the skin. He becomes well and favorably known for his ability to handle the human body. Christ Jesus made the human body, designed it, fastened it, gave it life, sustains it and makes it work, yet we listen in vain for any word of praise to Him. He made himself of no reputation.

Christ, the mighty Monarch of the eternal ages, made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant that He might save man. This is an astounding fact and a truth not seen elsewhere in human experience.

The One who created man and made all the marvelous tendons, muscles, joints, sinews and every part of the foot is seen sitting on the floor washing the soiled feet of twelve men. The One who made the gold, the silver, nickel, aluminum, platinum, magnesium, iron and copper is seen one day asking for a penny.

- It is as though the King of England should lay aside his royal robes, put on a pair of overalls, and be found sweeping the streets in the slums of London.
- It is as though the Commander-in-Chief of the Army should lay aside his uniform and be found in an old ragged suit, carrying a box over his shoulder, and stopping to shine the shoes of people sitting in the park.
- It is as though the Commodore of the Fleet should lay aside his position on the bridge and be found stoking coal deep down in the hold of the vessel.
- It is as though the Chairman of the Board of Directors of a great banking institution should be found in workman's clothes, polishing the brass on the front door of the bank.

None of these illustrations adequately express the great condescension of our wonderful Lord.

- He who communed with angels stopped in His journey to converse with a poor woman at the well.
- He who rode upon a storm and for whom the clouds became the dust of His feet rode upon an ass into Jerusalem.
- This One who commanded the host of heaven took the little children in His arms to bless them.
- This One who was the Author of life became the subject of death.
- This One who dwelt in light unapproachable and was surrounded with the glory of heaven endured the shame of the Cross and the darkness of Calvary at midday for he took upon him the form of a servant.

This great and lovely Christ became the center of Paul's vision so that his life was given in order that Christ might be preached and that Christ might be lived and that Christ might be honored. Paul rejoiced if Christ was preached. No other one could save the soul. No other one was worth preaching about. No one else could give life. Paul knew this. He reveled in it. He wanted others to know it, and when even his enemies preached Christ, his soul was glad for His desires were accomplished.

Paul rejoiced if Christ was lived. He wanted all the world to see the beauty of the life of Christ. He wanted everyone to know the virtues that were in Christ as they were manifested in human lives. Not only could he say, "**For me to live is Christ,**" but he wanted all the saints at Philippi to say it, too. He wanted the life of Christ to be multiplied and magnified. No other life is worth living. No other life is worth imitating. No other life is so attractive.

Paul rejoiced if Christ was known. His desire was to know Christ above all else and to make Him known above all else. This knowledge would last for eternity.

- This knowledge believed would fill the soul with gladness and the life with holiness.
- This knowledge accepted would transform those who found it.

He knew that every problem could be solved in Christ Jesus if only they knew Him. Paul realized the great and boundless blessings that followed the knowledge of God in Christ Jesus. This knowledge was so wonderful and so valuable that Paul rejected everything else. He refused all else in order that he might know him, and the power of his resurrection.

Paul rejoiced if Christ was honored. He wanted to see his Lord made Lord of all. He wanted the Lord to be the chief among ten thousand, greater than anyone else and more attractive than everyone else. Christ must have no competition in Paul's plan. He must be wholly supreme. All lives must be conformed to His life. All hearts must yield the throne to His beneficent reign.

Paul would have Christ look wonderful to every seeking soul. Christ must be magnified by Paul and in Paul and through Paul. Then Paul would rejoice. His desires were fulfilled, his heart hunger was satisfied. Prison bars became palace walls when Christ filled his vision. Prison fare became heavenly manna when Paul saw the Saviour he exalted and blessed and honored.

Thus we see that the book of Philippians expresses Paul's feelings about the One he had met on the Damascus road and all of this blessed revelation of Paul's heart was probably given in order to win the hearts of Euodias and Syntyche.

- If they could only partake of his vision, they would no longer see the faults in each other.
- If they could only be filled with these same desires, no longer would selfishness rule and criticism reign.
- If only their hopes and ambitions could be centered in Christ as his were, then these two Christian girls would spend their time in magnifying the Lord, glorifying Christ, spreading His precious Gospel, and thus the quarrel would cease.

What a blessed remedy this is for everything that is wrong in human hearts and lives! God grant that each of us shall be partakers of these same graces, desires and ambitions.

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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