

## Philippians 2:5-11

### Be willing to give yourself in order to advance the Gospel

Philippians 2:1-4 make the point that we should be humble, looking not only to our own interest, but the interest of others--even to the point of counting others as more important than ourselves. What does that look like? Verses 5-11 flesh out, so to speak, what it means to live in such a way.

Make your own attitude that of Christ Jesus,  
We begin with the idea that our attitude should be that of Christ. But, what was that attitude? Verses 6-7 say this:

<sup>6</sup> who, existing in the form of God, [Christ is the preexistent God] did not consider equality with God [equality with God means coequal persons of the Trinity] as something to be used for His own advantage. <sup>7</sup> Instead He emptied Himself by assuming the form of a slave, taking on the likeness of men. [See Rom 8:3 for Christ taking on the likeness of sinful flesh; while he was the form of God and took on the form of a slave, he did not take on our original sin.]

And when He had come as a man [Now Paul says that Jesus did come as a man; the two parts of verse 7 show the tension of Jesus being fully human and yet fully God.]  
in His external form,

<sup>8</sup> He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death--even to death on a cross. See Hebrews 2:10; 5:9; 7:28 for how Jesus' obedience through temptations showed his perfection as atonement for us.

<sup>9</sup> For this reason God highly exalted Him [the reason being his obedience to death, his perfectly fulfilling the Law] and gave Him the name that is above every name,

<sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow--of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth--[above, on and under are poetic ways of saying everyone, living and dead; so even those who die rejecting Christ will one day bow in submission to him.]

<sup>11</sup> and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

God will be glorified through the worship of Jesus, and that worship will come in the end when every knee bows and every mouth confesses Jesus as Lord,

So, God exalted Jesus to a name above all others.

But, before that exaltation could happen, Jesus had to prove himself obedient by dying on the cross. (Hebrews 2:10; 5:9; 7:28)

Dying as a human required Jesus to take on the external form of a human,

And that required he empty himself of his likeness to God,

And that required he first be willing to give up his God form and not

Now, how does that address the original question of what it means to live Christlike, looking out for others and treating others as more important than ourselves?

First, seek the glory of God. Without a focus on the glory of God, we can't truly seek the good of others. This is why some people think it's unloving to question the way other people live--most

especially with evangelism. But with a focus on God, we see that the most loving thing we can do is tell people about their need for Christ.

Second, be willing to take on any humility for the good of others. Being a Christian can be embarrassing sometimes. Serving "the least of these," such as the poor or those in prison, opens you up to risks, and requires that you be willing to forgo your own interests and resources. Neither of these applications is probably shocking to you. These are pretty basic Christian ideas. What is shocking is that our example is God himself. Jesus, as God, has gone farther than we ever will. So, if we keep our eyes on him, we'll be spared from two dangers: 1) self-congratulations about how much we do for others, and 2) self-pity over how much we have given or lost, or maybe were just asked to give or lose, for others.

There's a danger in telling people to act like Jesus. We simply can't do it. We need the Holy Spirit working in us in order to act like Jesus.