

Philippians 2 – Humility in a Proud World

In last week's NEWSLETTER, we looked at Philippians 1 and how the gospel played an extremely important part in the life of Paul. He considered it a privilege to have been entrusted with the gospel of Jesus Christ and had shared it with the church at Philippi. He thanked them for their ***“partnership in the gospel.”*** (Philippians 1:5) He spoke of all of the opportunities to preach the gospel that his imprisonment had afforded him. And he encouraged the Philippians to conduct themselves ***“in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ”*** and to ***“stand firm in the one Spirit, striving together as one for the faith of the gospel.”*** (Philippians 1:27)

However, he mentions others who preach the gospel ***“out of envy and rivalry”*** (Philippians 1:15) and out of ***“selfish ambition”*** (verse 17) and from ***“false motives.”*** (verse 18) These so-called preachers are full of themselves, vainly trying to make a name for themselves and trouble for Paul. These are the traits that Paul warns the Philippian church against in **Philippians 2**.

This is what he tells them:

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” (Philippians 2:3-4)

Unlike most of the world, we are to stop being selfish and start being selfless. Paul is echoing the words of Christ that he spoke when asked what the greatest commandments of the Law were. His response, of course, was the love God completely. The second, He says, is to ***“Love your neighbor as yourself.”*** (Matthew 22:39) Paul also quotes the same Scripture in **Romans 13:9** and **Galatians 5:14**. James says it as well in **James 2:8**. The whole idea is that we cannot consider ourselves any better than anyone else. We must serve others humbly.

Paul continues in **Philippians 2** by saying that we should have Christ-like humility. This is what is said in **verses 5-8**:

“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!”

If Jesus, who is God, can humble himself and become a man and die the worst kind of death conceived by men to that point, certainly we can humble ourselves enough to serve others. Humility causes one to receive respect from others, whereas pride only breeds resentment and jealousy.

It is not only to the Philippians that Paul stresses humility. (**Ephesians 4:2, Colossians 3:12, Romans 12:16, Galatians 5:26, 1 Corinthians 13:4, and Titus 3:2**) It must certainly be one of the most important traits all of us as children of God should have.

In a proud world, show Christ-like humility. God's blessing will certainly be upon us if we do.

---Johnny Stephens