

How To Live As New Creations In The Image Of Christ

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[0 : 00] Jesus said that he was the light of the world. In our passage, it talks about shining as lights in the world.

There's a very simple way to see if Jesus was telling the truth that he was the light of the world. There's a simple test that you can do. And it's what that song was talking about.

If you take a long, hard look at Jesus, if you read his words and look at his life, and then see if it doesn't feel like your own life is being exposed by his light, by his words and his life.

They are a light that exposes the darkness in our world. And so any of us can read his words and look at his life and see if he really is indeed the light of the world. And I think many of the problems we have in this world could be solved by taking a long, hard look at Jesus, turning our eyes upon Jesus.

And so this morning, Paul sets out this example of Christ to these Christians in Philippi. And he says, this is who to look at if you want to learn to live as those who follow Christ.

[1 : 23] And so this morning, I want to give us a how-to. It's a program I used to watch when I was younger called How-To. It used to tell you how to do this and how to do that. And there is a sense that all creation is wearing down, our bodies are wearing down, this world is wearing down.

But the Bible says that those who believe in Christ are new creations. That he has made them to be new creations, given us a new soul, a new heart, and he's going to give us a new body.

He's going to renew the world. And so I would say that this passage here in Philippians 2 is a how-to. How to live as new creations in the image of Christ.

And firstly, he looks at the mindset of Christ in 1 to 5. And then he looks at the way of Christ in 6 to 11. And then he looks at reflecting Christ, being lights shining in the world.

And so we'll look at those. But firstly, I want to let us help us think about a diagnosis.

[2 : 34] It's a new year. I don't know how you approach new years. Do you have resolutions? Do you feel like a new you? Are you aiming for a new you?

If you don't have any resolutions or goals, I want to give one to us all as a church. Each one who belongs to this church.

To remember that we are new creations and to strive to live as the new creations we are in Christ. And if there's anyone here that doesn't identify as a Christian, then at least I'm keen for this church as a family to be a family that reflects Christ.

We should. We ought to. If we take the name of Christ, we should reflect who he is. He is the image of God and the exact imprint of the Father. And likewise, we should reflect Christ as we are made in his image.

And so Paul is writing to these Christians in Philippi, which was a Roman colony. It was a wee outpost. Utterly Roman was this little city.

[3 : 39] It was like a mini-Rome. Unlike these other Greek cities and places, Philippi was like a wee copy of Rome.

It was a mini-Rome. And so he's writing to these people who know what it's like to reflect the mother city. He's writing to people who know what it's like to reflect something that they're supposed to be a reflection of.

But he's reminding them to reflect the city they belong to, the heavenly city. And that's why he says in chapter 1, verse 27, Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ.

That's what he's warning. Let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ. Now, it's really easy to point the finger at each other. It's really easy to say, the church isn't doing that. But me and you, we are the church.

Are we living in a manner worthy of the gospel? And so one of the reasons that I wanted to explore this passage was because the reality of living a life worthy of the gospel means that we would have such love and grace and humility that it would make it impossible for us to point the finger at one another.

[4 : 59] Make it impossible for us to grumble or dispute with each other. Think about going into a new year. Think about a church like this, right?

If you've ever visited a church. Imagine how it would reflect the light of Christ if for this entire year we never had a single dispute amongst one another.

Can you think of any church that's like that? Imagine we went the entire year without one single grumble against one another. Imagine what light that would show.

That would be good, wouldn't it? When we grumble and criticize each other, when we have dispute, do we look like people that have been shown the incredible mercy and grace of God?

We don't. And so when we don't live in a manner worthy of the gospel, it basically says to the world, the gospel is worthless. That's what happens when we don't live in a manner worthy of the gospel.

[6 : 05] And so what does it look like? What does it look like to live in a manner worthy of the gospel? Because I'm sure every single one of us need help. What does it look like to live as new creations in Christ?

What does it look like to have the mindset of Christ, as Paul says? Does it look like grumbling or disputing? Does it look like pride? Does it look like wanting your own interests and preferences over another?

Does it look like disunity? How the church has had a problem with disunity for thousands of years. So we're never going to have any of these things unless for something that Paul highlights here.

And so if you need a resolution, this is something for us to practice this year. And if you're doing it, then good on you. Keep doing it. It is to have humility.

We're never going to reflect Christ without humility. Humility. And humility is the way to unity. We're never going to have unity without humility. And so let me give you this diagnosis that comes from Philippians 2.

[7 : 10] If we don't have unity as a people, it is indicative of a lack of humility. That's the diagnosis. And so we all need help in this area because we're all human.

And so Paul, throughout this passage, gives the symptoms of a deficiency of humility. And so if you've got your finger in the passage, you'll be able to identify these.

But let me just run through some of these symptoms, and then we'll see the solution that Paul gives us. One symptom is selfish ambition.

The Greek word is erytheion, and it refers to rivalry. If any of you have ever had a, you know, if any of you have had brothers or sisters, you know what rivalry is.

Sibling rivalry, it's a thing, isn't it? Now, don't get me wrong. Our boys are very good. They're lovely. At times I see what it says in Psalm 133.

[8 : 15] Oh, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity together. Some days I see that. Some little moments of days I see that. And other times I see what sibling rivalry is.

They want to get their own way. They want to win over the other. So these words that Paul uses in verse 3, selfish ambition and conceit, they're talking about rivalry and arrogance.

Basically wanting your own way and winning. It's all about winning. Paul is saying that the church isn't supposed to be like that. We're not supposed to have the attitude of wanting to win or wanting to get our own way.

It's not about getting your own way, and it's certainly not about winning against your brother. We're supposed to win people, not win arguments. And so these things are a symptom of a lack of humility. Now, another symptom, verse 4, is looking to your own interest more than the interest of others.

And so do you ever think, how often do we think about the interest of others? Interest of everyone else. More than that, would you ever go so far as to make your own interest subordinate to someone else's interest?

[9 : 29] Especially someone that you don't like very much. But without humility, we won't do this. It's hard to do this without humility.

Now, let me give you a ridiculous example, right? I'll give you a ridiculous example of self-interest. I did some research, and a six-year study, right?

A study that went over six years from 2011 to 2017 showed that 53 people died by shark attack. Right?

I know you're thinking that's quite random. The kids had these shark toys. 53 people over those six years worldwide died by shark attack. Now, who's ever swum with a shark?

Anyone ever swum with a shark? Would anyone ever like to? Sharks are awesome. They are the apex predator of the sea. They are incredibly powerful and fearful.

[10 : 28] You don't want to come face to face with a shark. 53 people over those six years died by shark attack. Now, in the same six-year span, 259 people died taking a selfie.

Is that not like your phone? Five times more people died doing that than by shark attack.

Is that not crazy? It's absolutely crazy. But it's people putting themselves in dangerous situations to take a picture of themselves, and they end up falling and dying.

And lives, lives that are lost, 259 lives over those six years, you know, sadly lost unnecessarily due to self-obsession.

And so for every one person killed by a shark, there's five people die taking a cool picture of themselves. And so this level of self-interest is literally more deadly than the apex predator of the sea.

[11 : 37] Self-interest is a symptom of a lack of humility, and evidently it's deadly. Another symptom, verse 12, Paul says not listening or obeying.

Paul talks about obeying. Basically being a difficult person to lead, being defiant. That's defiance. We don't want to obey. We want to rebel. It's in the human heart.

It's a human condition. Paul is saying, don't obey only when I'm around to see it. And he's just showed the example of Christ, the example of him being obedient to death.

So how much should we obey? How much should we listen? How much should we do what we're told? Well, look at Christ. He did it until he died. He obeyed to death, death on a cross.

But you're not going to do that unless you have humility. Another symptom, verse 12, is a lack of fear and trembling when it comes to your own salvation.

[12 : 40] Paul says, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it's God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure. It's God who does this, not you.

It's not me and you who work. We don't gain salvation by the good things that we do. It's God who's at work within us. And so we ought to approach our own salvation or think about our own forgiveness and our own salvation with fear and trembling.

Because if we think that we're entitled to it, that will be reflected in how we treat people. And so Jesus gave an example of this. He illustrated with a parable about a man who was, he owed debt more than his lifetime could pay.

And he went to the king and he pleaded for mercy. And the king showed mercy. He could never pay back this debt. The king showed mercy. And then the man went out and he found someone who owed him a month's wages.

And he threw him in prison and showed no mercy. Because he acted entitled. He didn't have a fear and trembling. He didn't have humility.

[13 : 51] You see, how can we not show one another mercy for the very little mistakes that we make? When we have been shown such a great mercy for the insurmountable wrong that we have done in our lives, when God has shown us such grace, how can we not show a little bit of mercy to one another?

But it will be hard to do that without humility. Another symptom of a lack of humility is verse 14, grumbling. This is a funny Greek word.

Gongusmon. Gongusmon. It's a murmuring, a complaining, always criticizing behind people's backs and under your breath complaining.

Nothing positive to think. Nothing good to say. Just gongusmon. Gongusmon. Now, I try to say this when I'm teaching kids. So you can either be grateful or you can grumble.

You get two choices. You can be grateful or you can grumble. You're not going to do both. You're going to do one or the other. Nothing needs to change about your situation, by the way. This is really hard for any of us to accept.

[15 : 04] But nothing needs to change about your situation. It's just your perspective, your attitude. You can either be grateful or you can grumble. And I used to be like that.

I used to... I know it's hard to believe. I'll tell you a story, right? When I was in my late teens, I used to be grumpy at people. Somebody gave you attitude, you give them it ten times harder back.

I remember getting on this bus, right? And this guy was in... The driver was in a real grump, right? He was in a bad mood about something. And so I reflected that. I was like, okay, you're going to give me bad mood?

I'll give you bad mood. And so we were on our job. We had a bit of an argument. I think it was just nasty to him. He was just in a bad mood. And I was in a bad mood. And anyway, we were on this bus. And I was up the stairs.

And an accident happened. And the bus went right into the car in front of it. And had a crash. Right? Anyone ever been in a car crash?

[16 : 03] Yeah? Anyone ever been driving? Anyone ever caused a car crash? Let me tell you, the last thing you need is someone coming up and criticizing you. But what do you think I did as soon as I got off that bus?

Because everyone had to get off that bus. And I thought that would be a good time to go up and tell this driver what a big mistake he made. And I'll tell you something. I am grateful when I look back now that he didn't punch me in the face.

Because I deserved it. And he must have had a lot of patience. But I used to be like that, you know. And there was a change some point in my life. And I don't always get it right. Jen will tell you that.

I don't always get it right. But now I realize that people are like that for a reason. If somebody's grumpy and in a bad mood, they're like that for a reason. And they don't need you adding to that. I once heard, how can you tell if somebody needs encouragement?

As a really simple test to tell if somebody needs encouragement, ask yourself this. Are they breathing? Because if they're breathing, they need encouragement. Everyone needs encouragement.

[17 : 08] And so I learned this, that people are like that for a reason. You don't fight fire with fire. It doesn't work like that. It was like Martin Luther King said, you don't fight darkness with darkness.

Don't fight hate with hate. Paul says in Romans 12, 21, don't let evil overcome you, but overcome evil with good. If you fight evil with evil, in a fight, in a fist fight, or some kind of violence, at the end of the day, evil still wins.

Darkness still wins. Don't let evil overcome you, but overcome evil with good. And so the way to respond to darkness is with light. Outdo someone's evil with good. In Luke chapter 6, Jesus says this.

He says, love your enemies. If you only love those that love you, how are you different from anyone else? Everyone does that. Love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you. Bless those who curse you.

And pray for those who persecute you. Pray for those who mistreat you. Grumbling is a symptom of a lack of humility. Being grateful, let me tell you, being grateful is far more enjoyable.

[18 : 17] It's a happier life. The way to counter someone's grumbling is to bless them. Everyone needs encouragement. Solving your discontentment isn't about changing something on the outside.

Solving your discontentment is about changing something on the inside. Changing your perspective, your attitude. Gratitude leads to contentment. Paul's circumstance didn't determine his contentment.

And he says this in Philippians chapter 4. Paul's circumstance didn't determine his contentment. For he said in chapter 4, he says, I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content.

But, as I've said, without humility, it's not going to happen. Another symptom of a lack of humility, verse 14, is disputing, being argumentative.

Again, I'll say this to the kids. I'll say it's not about what you say. It's about how you say it sometimes. You may make a comment. You might have sincere concern, or you may make a comment with an undertone of accusation or assumption or grumbling.

[19 : 34] You may make a comment. The words are right, but you say it in a way that you grudge to say it. There's another thing. Another thing that we teach to kids as adults. We teach this to kids, don't we?

Don't make assumptions. Don't draw conclusions when you don't have all the information. But how many times do adults do that? How many times do we do that as adults?

But yet, James, the brother of Jesus, who was probably, you know, had times in his childhood with Jesus. You know, I don't know if Mary ever said, James, if you could only be more like your brother.

They must have had friction growing up, you know. But James, in his letter, says, be slow to speak, quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger.

The anger of man doesn't lead to the righteousness of God. It doesn't do any good. And Paul, similarly in 1 Corinthians, Paul says, do you know, I would rather speak five words that build someone up than 10,000 that don't?

[20 : 40] Five words versus 10,000. So, being argumentative, just because you don't see a good reason for something doesn't mean there isn't one. And we teach kids this, but it happens all the time.

You know, some people are consistently encouraging, and even when they question something, it's a sincere and genuine inquiry for more information. But sometimes, sometimes we can be critical, and we often make assumptions and draw conclusions without information.

And sometimes, some people, there's no margin for error, there's no slack, there's no benefit of the doubt. And again, I've been there, I've done that, I've learned the hard way, I've realized that all I was doing when I was being like that was hurting people, hurting friends, hurting good brothers and sisters, and being difficult to lead and misrepresent Christ.

I've been there. When I first went to Calderwood, that's what I was like. And I thank God for the patience that my friends had, people like John had. But it's not a happy way of living, is it?

We've all done it, and it's not a happy life when that happens. So I realized that really what it demonstrates is a lack of humility. And so we cannot reflect Christ without humility.

[21 : 52] So all these symptoms are just to say, let's pull the curtain back, let's shine the light on all these silly things that we do and realize this isn't helping us to live as new creations in Christ.

This isn't how to do it. And if we try and deal with one of these symptoms, it's not going to work. The root cause is a lack of humility.

And if you want to deal with any of these things, it's simple. Humility. A lack of unity is indicative of a deficiency of humility.

So Paul tells us that these symptoms of a deficiency in humility are all these silly things that we're prone to. If we don't have humility, we will not live in a manner worthy of the gospel.

What does it look like to live as new creations in Christ? It starts with humility. And humility starts by looking to Christ. Looking to Christ.

[22 : 52] So at the beginning of this year, I realized that as long as unless we take a long, hard look at Christ, unless we start looking at Christ and stop looking at ourselves, I remember thinking about all the ways the church was getting things wrong.

And then I realized that I was part of the problem. And I thought to myself, I was in Calderwood the first at Calderwood. And I thought to myself, how many people in this church? Over a hundred.

And I thought, imagine that was over a hundred. Me. Imagine it was a hundred people like me. What a terrible thing that would be. And it takes humility to realize that it would be a terrible thing if there was a hundred of you and all your problems.

That's not to say that you're not wonderful and made wonderfully and fearfully made. That God has made you in a unique way and gifted you in a unique way and given you a purpose in life.

But He wants you to reach that purpose, doesn't He? And so, and He wants a diversity of people. So unless I, I remember thinking this, I was part of the problem and I thought to myself, I need to stop criticizing people.

[24 : 15] I need to stop pointing out what we're getting wrong. I need to start encouraging people. And unless I start encouraging rather than criticizing, unless I start serving instead of complaining, and unless I stop trying to win arguments and start trying to win people, unless I take a long, hard look at what Christ has done for me when I didn't deserve it, unless I do that, I'll never be living the way I'm supposed to be living.

And so, if there's any resolution I could give us, it would be to remember that we are new creations in Christ and to remember the only way we're going to be able to do that is with humility. And so, let me just say, if you're having any trouble doing that, which you are, because you are human just like me, and we fail and we're all prone to all of these symptoms at times, however, let me give you just one thing again, it's humility.

Humility. Now, have the same mindset as Christ. That's what Paul says. Follow his example. Verse 8, Paul says, he humbled himself.

Christ, he was God, divine, glory before the creation of the world was the Father, didn't need to come into this world.

He humbled himself. Now, if you look at verse 10, what does it say in verse 10? It says, every knee should bow. And so, when we think about humility, here's the reality of it.

[25 : 47] By the time we get to verse 10 in the world, everyone will be on their knees. Now, you can either humble yourself or you can be humbled. It's the only two options.

You can humble yourself or you can be humbled. The way of Christ is humility. So, humble yourself and you'll find that it's actually a far better life and a far happier life. And just now, there's studies, there's recent studies in science to show the benefits that humility has to mental and physical well-being, which is something that religion has been saying all along.

A lot of the issues that we have as Christians come down to whether we have humility or not or whether we have pride. If we want to live like Christ, if we want to reflect Christ, if we want to have any hope of unity this year, if we want to shine as lights in the world, if we want to have a better and happier life this year, then let us look to Christ and have the same humility.

And so, let me just quickly run through this wee bit in the passage. Is there any encouragement in Christ? That's how Paul starts. Is there any encouragement in Christ? Well, think about how that's possible.

The Son of God left glory to come and save me and you. He joined himself to a dying people to rescue us. He suffered at the hands of those he could easily destroy and he allowed sin and death, Satan and hell to take his best shot at him for our sake.

[27 : 17] Because he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death on a cross, me and you can be forgiven. Do you feel encouraged? Because he became obedient to the point of death on a cross by humbling himself, me and you can be forgiven.

Because he lived a perfect and holy life overcoming every temptation in his flesh, me and you can have his righteousness when we stand before God in the judgment and not our own. Do you feel encouraged?

I want you to know, brothers and sisters, he didn't just rise from the dead for his sake. Though death couldn't hold him, whatever you feel, whatever you face, the truth is that the one who had the right more than anyone to condemn us instead gave his life for us.

The one who was so holy he should be repelled by us instead wants us to be with him forever and he's going to renew us so that that can happen. The one that we were so far away from because of our sin, the one who should condemn us gave everything of himself to make a way for us to stick about with him forever.

If you feel like you don't belong, that you're not worth it, that nobody wants you, then Jesus lived to give you his life. He died to cancel your debt of sin.

[28 : 33] He rose so that you could live forever in a perfect body and he ascended into heaven to take the throne above all things so that no one in all of creation could undo what he did for me and you.

Is there any encouragement in Christ? Absolutely there is. Let me ask, is there any encouragement in the world? Are people out there encouraging you? Is there any comfort from love, from the love of God in Christ?

Was it not out of his unfailing love that he did all of this? Is there anyone or anything that could stop God doing something for someone he loves? Well, let me tell you, he loves me and you.

Do you know the love of God in Christ? In Ephesians, Paul's prayer is that Christians would have the strength to comprehend the breadth and the length and the height and the depth and to know the love of Christ that surpasses everything that we can know.

God's love will have the love. You cannot find the edge. You cannot find the edge of it. You can't reach the end of it. You can't get to the bottom of his love. You can't reach the top of his love.

[29 : 40] Your greatest experience of love in this life is but a drop in the infinite ocean of the love of God in Christ for me and you. And don't feel sorry for your brothers and sisters who have died.

Don't you realize that this tidal wave of God's love now overwhelms them? Yeah. Paul's point is to encourage us to live in a manner worthy of these new creations that we are in Christ.

And so if you are in Christ you are a new creation. If you want to live that out live with humility. If you're not in Christ what are you waiting for?

He humbled himself for you. He gave everything for you. And you will only find true peace and joy. unless you find your identity in Christ.

If you find it hard to humble yourself because you will, because you're human, then just look at Jesus. This is the way to help us to humble ourselves. It's just to look at Jesus.

[30 : 43] Take our eyes off ourselves. Take our eyes off the problems in the world and turn our eyes upon Jesus. Look full in his wonderful face. And all the things of earth will grow strangely dim in the light of his glory and grace.

Do you feel encouraged? I want you to know that he didn't just rise because of his own sake. He did all of this for our sake. He humbled himself taking the form of a servant.

He lowered himself to the lowest point. You can't get lower than what Jesus did to serve me and you. And even when we, by our nature, would, if he were to come now, even we, by our nature, would reject him and kill him.

He was obedient to the point of death and a cross. No one can go lower. No one has greater humility than Christ, as Paul says in this passage.

And consequently, no one is more highly exalted. And no one has a more glorified name than the one that is above every other name because one day every knee will bow in the name of Jesus.

[31 : 52] Every tongue will confess that he is the Lord to the glory of God, the Father. And one day soon, every eye will see who he really is. Every knee will bow to the one that we call our king.

And every tongue will confess what we confess right now, that Jesus Christ is Lord. And so what's left to do but humble ourselves and say, hallelujah, what a savior.

And so we're going to sing that right now. Heavenly Father, you are great and glorious, yet through Christ, the Son of God humbled himself like we couldn't imagine, all for our sake.

Help us to look to Christ. Help us to see how glorious he is. Help us to humble ourselves and find what it is to have true joy in Christ.

Amen.