

Philippians 2:5-11

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[0 : 01] Well, as your bulletins say, my name is David Short, so any problems you have, my email david at sjvan.org. I respond 24 hours a day.

My address is... No. Just kidding. My name's Chris. It's lovely to be with you as David is unwell and recovering. Our society today is fractured.

We're divided. Out there, but in here too. There's a former CIA analyst named Martin Goury who comments, the digital revolution has shattered society.

So the public is not one thing. It's highly fragmented. And it's basically mutually hostile. The public is mostly now people yelling at each other and living in bubbles of one sort or another.

We live in a time of tribalism, of skepticism, and hostility toward others of whom we are different. And these same forces out there threaten us in this church.

[1 : 16] Fragmentation and disunity threaten our defense of the gospel and our promotion of it as well. So what should we do?

When we see division and discord, distrust, and the dissolution of shared values and virtues, how do we witness to the truth of the gospel?

Pastor Paul from prison has the same concern about his promising parish in Philippi.

In chapter 1, verse 27 of Philippians, he writes about the one danger that he's concerned about for this church. Only let your lives be worthy of the gospel of Christ, he says.

Now listen. Standing firm in one spirit, with one mind. Striving side by side for the faith of the gospel. And then again in chapter 2, verse 2.

[2 : 17] Be of the same mind. Have the same love. Being in full accord and of one mind. Paul is writing this letter to try to get a community of Christians to live together in unity.

United in defending and promoting the gospel. In the midst of disunity and discord. Paul wants this church to be a community that's united in suffering.

United in humility. United in considering the needs of others above their own. So that the gospel may be defended and through them it might progress to the glory of God.

Disunity will ruin a church. Just as disunity will ruin a society. It's the single thing Paul is most concerned about.

For the Philippians. And so he appeals for unity. Their unity in the gospel. Unity defending the gospel. Amid suffering and opposition from within and from without.

[3 : 23] A unity that's been forged through humility. Through considering the needs of others more significant than yourself. As we strive side to side for the faith of the gospel.

This is the message of last week's text. And this week continuing on. We see what motivates our unity. What is the model by which our unity is molded?

Paul points to only one thing. That has the power to unite all people in gospel fellowship. The solution to any disunity is not to try harder. It's not the seven steps of highly effective churches.

The model and motivation for our unity is the gospel itself. The gospel himself. Which is God's good news of great joy that unites all people.

The only thing on earth. That contains within it the power of God. To unite the most divided. Is the gospel of Jesus Christ.

[4 : 29] I'm not ashamed of the gospel. Paul writes in Romans. For it's the power of God. For the salvation of everyone. Paul appeals to unity amongst division. By pointing us to the gospel.

Of God's grace. So let's look there together. Philippians chapter 2 verse 5. Have this mind among yourselves.

Which is yours in Christ Jesus. Or if you look at your footnote. You could read it. Have this mind among yourselves. Which is also in Christ Jesus. Three times so far in this sentence.

Paul has called Philippians to have one mind. And now in chapter 2 verse 5. He tells them the one mind. That he wants them to have. Share in the mind of Christ.

Have Christ's mind amongst yourselves. If you are in Christ. Then have the mind of Christ. Together. Be the body of Christ. By having the mind of Christ.

[5 : 31] Together. Paul says consider what's going on. In Jesus mind. So that you may be one with him. So now Paul takes us. Into the very mind of Christ.

To show us the motivation. And the model. And the means. Of our unity. This is holy ground. Upon which we are going to tread. Let's look at verse 6.

Paul says Christ. Who though he was in the form of God. Did not count equality with God. A thing to be grasped. But he emptied himself. By taking the form of a servant.

Being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form. He humbled himself. By becoming obedient to the point of death. Even death. On a cross.

Paul brings us into the will of Christ. He reveals to us how Jesus thinks. What motivates him. Who he is. And how he lives. I have broken our passage into three parts.

[6 : 36] First we enter Christ's mind. In verses 6 to 8. Then we enter God the Father's mind. In verse 9. And then finally in verses 10 to 11. We enter the mind of a united humanity.

In response to what God the Son. And God the Father. Have done. Christ's mind. The Father's mind. The united human mind. Let's go.

First. Christ's mind. Paul writes that we understand Jesus' mind. Through understanding his two natures. His two forms. And through also recognizing Jesus' two actions.

So under that first point. Christ's mind. There are now two natures. And two actions. Christ's first nature is revealed in verse 6. Consider Christ. Paul writes. Who though in the form of God.

Did not count equality with God. A thing to be grasped. Jesus is fully God. That's what in the form of God means.

[7 : 37] He's not a demigod. He's not a prince of heaven. But he is God himself. This echoes the beginning of John's gospel. That says in the beginning was the word. And the word was with God.

But the word was God. Jesus is the word. Therefore Jesus is God. And though God.

Existing eternally. In all glory. And power. And sovereignty. And knowledge. And immortality. Jesus did not consider his nature. His divinity. As something to be grasped.

Or hoarded. For his own benefit. Jesus could have fully remained. In the form of God forever. Enjoying the status and glory and goodness. Of that infinitely exalted nature.

But he didn't. Jesus will not do something. That only serves himself. Jesus refused. To simply exist in God's glory.

[8 : 36] For his own comfort and praise. The nature of God is not selfish. He is generous. He is gracious. He is good.

That's his first nature. Jesus is fully God. And from this incredible revelation. That Jesus is equal to God. We now read of his first action.

In verse 7. He made himself nothing. Literally. He emptied himself. Completely. Jesus poured himself out.

All his status. All his power. All his glory. He emptied himself. Completely. He made himself nothing. It's astounding.

To our selfish. Hyper individualistic. Success oriented selves. This makes no sense. We can scarcely imagine. A king emptying himself.

[9 : 36] Or a master. Reducing herself. To be less than her servants. Why would anyone. Sacrifice their status. And success. To become less. And lower. Than others.

Now why would one. Who is equal with God. Therefore empty himself. Make himself. Nothing. It surpasses.

All understanding. It confounds. All of our selfish. Sensibilities. But this describes. The nature.

And the action. Of God. Of the gospel. Revealed in Jesus. This is the God. We worship. This is the true God. And this is truly. What he is like.

Jesus though. In the form of God. Will not hoard. His status. For his own soul benefit. But rather. He chooses. To make himself. Nothing. Why? We read on.

[10 : 34] Verse 7. Taking the form. Of a servant. And being born. In the likeness. Of men. Here's the second nature. Of Jesus. The form. Of a human servant.

The posture. Of a slave. The reason. Jesus makes himself. Nothing. Empties himself. Completely. Manifests. His divinity. With mortality.

Is so that he can take. A new form. A new nature. And the new form. Is that of a servant. A slave. A slave. He makes himself.

Nothing. A slave. Born as a human baby. Words fail. As we contemplate. The willful descent.

Of Jesus. From divinity. To human servant. God becomes a man. And takes the form. Of a servant. Jesus is fully God.

[11 : 30] And fully man. Those are his two natures. Fully God. Emptied out. Into a feeble. Human frame. Fully God.

Yet made. Nothing. Common person. A carpenter's kid. As a child. A homeless refugee. Born to an unmarried. Teenage girl. In a barn.

In Bethlehem. Consider. Christ's mind. Mind. And have this mind. Amongst yourselves. Jesus has two forms. Two natures. Fully God.

And then shockingly. Fully man. He willfully. Makes himself. Nothing. He empties himself. Into a human. Frame. Now notice here.

This is his. Action. He doesn't let himself. Be emptied. He. Empties. Himself. He makes. Himself. Nothing.

[12 : 24] Jesus. Jesus is not. Passive. In the incarnation. He's the one who's doing it. What an outrageous thing. For God to do. Why would he do this?

We find out. As we journey. Into the mind of Christ. By now reading. The second action of Jesus. Which follows. In verse 8. Being found in human form. He humbled himself.

By becoming obedient. To the point of death. Even death. On a cross. Consider Christ's mind. Paul pleads.

Jesus is fully God. Equal with God. And yet willfully. Makes himself. Nothing. Pours himself. Into a human frame. Into the form of a servant.

A slave. And being found. In this human form. He now. Humbles himself. That's his second action. By becoming obedient. To the point of death.

[13 : 24] See the humbling. And the humiliation. Of Jesus. Extends far before. Anything mortal. He humbles himself. Further than that. By now becoming obedient.

Unto death. And this is why he came. Now note again. It's Jesus. Who is humbling. Himself. It's not the Romans.

It's not Pilate. It's not the Pharisees. Or the Sadducees. Or the soldiers. Or the crowd. They're all culpable. Of course. Just as we are. But they're not in control.

Christ is. He's still God. He is still in control. Through his trial. And his crucifixion. He is in control.

He himself. Is humbling. Himself. He is willing. His death. Consider Christ's mind. His thinking. This is the mind.

[14 : 21] We are to have. As we abide in him. Jesus. In the form of God. Makes himself nothing. He becomes a servant. He enters a frail. Human frame. And he then. Humbles himself.

By becoming obedient. Unto death. Even death. On a cross. You've never heard. The Christian gospel. Before. You have to admit. This is a story.

Unlike anything. You've ever heard. This is unlike. Any other religion. Any other God. Any other myth. Any human heroes. That we've ever conceived. Why would Jesus.

Do this? What could possibly. Explain. Why God the son. Would empty himself. Humble himself. To the point of death. Even death. On a cross. The key is found.

In the word. Obedient. Jesus humbles himself. By becoming. Obedient. Jesus does all of this. To obey the will.

[15 : 17] Of his father. Father. Take this cup. From me. Jesus prays. The night before. He's killed. I don't want to do this. Please deliver me.

From the cross. And the grave. But then immediately. He adds. Yet not my will. But yours. Be done. Our father in heaven.

Jesus teaches us. To pray. Your will. Be done. Not my will. But yours. Be done. What motivates Christ.

What is going on. In the mind of Christ. Is only one thing. I want to obey. My father. Not my will. But yours.

Be done. And the way. Jesus obeys. God the father. Is by giving his life. For our salvation. Our salvation. Is from God.

[16 : 11] God. That's what Paul. Wrote earlier. In this sentence. In chapter 1. Verse 28. Our salvation. Is not earned. It's not deserved. It's a gift.

It's grace. Jesus. Did all of this. To be obedient. To his father's will. And he did it. So that all of us. Could now be offered. Salvation. This is what God.

Wants. And so Jesus. Obeys. Jesus describes. His coming to earth. This way. In Mark chapter 10. He says. The son of man. That's Jesus. Did not come to be served.

But to serve. And to give his life. As a ransom. For many. Do you know what a ransom is? It's the price you must pay.

To have a captive. Or a criminal. Freed. Jesus came to serve. To serve God. And to serve us. By giving his own life. As a ransom.

[17:07] For many. His life. Is the price. It cost. To buy. Ours. The gift. Of salvation. Which is from God. Cost God.

The life of his son. To purchase. The very life. Of the very son of God. Is what you. And I. And our neighbors. Are worth. To the father. I kind of feel like.

I should just be quiet. For 10 minutes. And let that wash over you. Your inherent value. To God. Is limitless. He loves you. He has made you.

In his image. Whoever you are. However you are living. However you feel. About him. He loves you. He so. Loves you. He so.

Loves. The world. That he would give up. His only child. To save us. Jesus. Willingly. Empties himself. Humbles himself. To obey. His father's will. To buy us back.

[18:03] From slavery. To sin. And to being a prisoner. Of death. Let's consider. The deep. Deep. Love of Jesus. Vast.

Unmeasured. Boundless. Free. Rolling. As a mighty ocean. In its fullness. Washing over me. This gospel.

This person. Contains the power of God. For the salvation of everyone. The gospel is given. For everyone. It's good news. Of great joy. For all people. Because it's so unbelievably generous.

And undeserved. It is more gracious. And beautiful. And scandalous. And challenging. Than anything. Any human. Has ever conceived. Or could ever even. Consider.

The humility of Christ. The mind of Christ. Is what now motivates. Our humility. Toward each other. The emptying of Christ. Models. How we should be constantly.

[19:00] Self-emptying ourselves. For others. This is the will of Christ. Consider it. Embrace it. Embody it.

For then. We are truly. The body of Christ. This is how Christian unity. Is formed. So don't focus. On the disagreements. We have with others here.

Don't grumble. Consider Christ. Consider the mind. Of Christ. And be of the same spirit. Because we are Christ's body. Gifted with Christ's mind.

And God's Holy Spirit. Dwells within us. Just as it dwelt in him. Therefore. Be of one mind. Which is yours. In Christ. Okay.

That's Christ's mind. And if you think I should have ended it there. Remember to email me. David. At sjvan.org. It's not the end of our text.

[19:57] The story of the gospel. Does not end at Christ's cross. It does not end at the grave. It doesn't even end at the empty tomb. On Easter morning.

So far. We've only heard half the gospel. We can't stop here. The first half. Is about the descent of the son of God. To become a son of man. To empty himself. And humble himself.

Unto death. To obey his father. And it's because of Christ. In response to Christ's obedience. That God the father. Has been now moved. To action. And this is.

The second half. Of the gospel. And it's outlined. Through two actions. In verse nine. Of God the father. In response to Jesus. Self emptying. And self humbling. These two actions.

Reveal for us. Secondly. The will of God. The father. Verse nine. Therefore. Because of what Jesus has done. God has highly. Exalted him.

[20 : 55] God. Exalts. Jesus. He highly. Exalts. Him. This is the second half. Of the gospel. The resurrection.

In the ascension. Of Jesus. Are the exaltation. Of Jesus. Above all. By the father. God the father. Shows his approval. And his acceptance. Of Jesus.

And his self sacrifice. By raising him. From the dead. And by ascending Jesus. To heaven. Highly. Exalting him. That's God's first. Action. And then secondly.

The father. Bestows upon Jesus. The name. That is above. Every name. So that at the name. Of Jesus. Every knee should bow. In heaven. And on earth. And under the earth.

And every tongue. Confess. That Jesus Christ. Is Lord. To the glory of God. The father. Do you remember? God said in Isaiah.

[21 : 48] This is in chapter 42. I am the Lord. And there is no other. I give my glory. To no other. And then in our first reading. I am the Lord.

And there is no other. There's no God. Besides me. A righteous God. And a savior. There's none. Beside me. Turn to me. And be saved. All the ends of the earth. For I am God.

And there is no other. And then this verse. To me God says. Every knee shall bow. And every tongue. Shall swear allegiance.

God is emphatic. Through Isaiah. That he alone is God. He alone is the Lord. He shares his glory. With nobody.

That's God's will. Paul now quotes. This Isaiah text. Directly. Saying that in response. To Christ's self-emptying. Self-humbling sacrifice.

[22 : 45] To atone for our sin. God the Father. Has highly exalted him. And listen. Bestowed upon him. The name above every name. So that. At the name of Jesus.

Every knee should bow. In heaven and on earth. And under the earth. And every tongue confess. That Jesus Christ. Is Lord. To the glory of God. The Father.

For the ancient scribes. Who copied out. Our sacred texts. You know. Millennia ago. Like Isaiah 45. Whenever they came across. God's name in the text.

Yahweh. They wouldn't write it. They would write the word. Lord. In all caps. Initially. And then they came to a short form. Where instead of writing out. Lord. They would write.

L. D. And they'd write a line. On the top. Obviously not in English. But you get the idea. I'm not about to teach you Hebrew. So they'd write out. The first and the last letter. With a line. On the top.

[23 : 40] Just like that. On the screen. It's shorthand. It's a code. Because the scribe felt. I am not worthy. Of writing out God's name. It's too holy. Well this is the first papyrus.

We have. Of Philippians. It's from as early. As the second century. It could be a generation. Or two after Paul. Potentially. You see. In the text.

If you zoom into it. That they use. That same divine. Shorthand code. It's laced. Throughout it. You see. That there's little. Lines above words. That refer to God. Just like in the Old Testament.

God's name. Is not written out. In full. They use that same code. You can see the lines. Even if you don't read Greek. There you go. That's the oldest text. Of Philippians. We have. That's our passage today.

Well when Jesus. Is mentioned. In the most ancient. Philippians text. The copyists. Do the same thing. They use that same. Divine code. For Jesus name.

- [24 : 36] As they do. For Yahweh. They don't write out. Jesus name. They don't feel worthy. Because God. Has bestowed upon him. The name. That is above every name. Because the father.
- Equates Jesus. With himself. So do the people. Who wrote out. Our first Bibles. This pattern. Is found in. Every ancient manuscript. We have. Here's another.
- Ancient record. This is from Sinai. This is from the fourth century. And if you look at. Philippians 11. You see. This. Same. Practice. The earliest.
- Copies we have. Of this ancient. Letter. Ascribes to Christ. Equality. With God. Jesus. Is. Lord. Use that word.
- For Yahweh. Therefore. Yahweh. Is Jesus. And Paul tells us. At the very end. Jesus isn't stealing glory. From God the father.
- [25 : 32] He's adding to God's glory. Because Jesus. And the father. Are one. God has exalted Christ. To sit at his right hand. To share his throne. To share his divine name.
- And glory. And this is what Christ's ascension. Is all about. So you should come to our ascension service. Here is Christ's will. And here is God's will.
- Now how on earth. Are we supposed to respond to this. What should our will. Now be. Jesus tells us.
- In verses 10. And 11. God does this. So that at the name of Jesus. Every knee should bow. In heaven. And on earth. And under the earth.
- And every tongue confess. That Jesus Christ is Lord. To the glory of God. The father. Father. Our response. Is with our bodies.
- [26 : 26] The will of Christ. And the will of the father. Empowers us now. To have a universal. United. Human. Will. First.
- We bow. Before him. In worship. And praise. And then second. We confess him. With our tongues. Our response. To the gospel.
- Of Jesus Christ. Is to first. Bow before him. To honor. And adore him. To make ourselves. Less. So that he might become more. To humble ourselves.
- Before our humble. Lord. To give our lives. To serve the servant king. To praise him. For his passion. To live our lives. On bended knee. Before the throne.
- Of God above. Love. We are a people. Who unite. When we worship. Who live. As one. With knees bent. Before our Lord. And our God.
- [27 : 19] That's our first response. And ultimately. Paul tells us. It'll be the universal response. There will come a day. When Christ returns. To consummate his kingdom.
- On earth. That every knee. Will bow. In the end. Everybody becomes. A worshiper of Christ. Whether they want to. Right now. Or not.
- Because he. Is God. He is. Lord. Over all. Heaven. Earth. Under the earth. He is Lord. Over your life. Whether you acknowledge him now.
- Or not. Christ. Unites. Humanity. And finally. Our second response. Will be to confess. With our tongues. That Jesus Christ.
- Is Lord. And again. This is going to be. A universal reality. All of us. Will confess him. But those of us. Who follow him.
- [28 : 13] Are called to confess him now. To this perverse. And crooked. Generation. To this fractured. Society. Of fragmentation. And disunity. And discord. To a world.
- That is living in darkness. We are to shine as lights. Holding fast. To the word of life. The gospel. Of our salvation. That's next week.

Paul is appealing. To unity. Amongst bickering believers. He's appealing. To unity. Amidst suffering. And self-interest. He implores the church.

To unify. Around the gospel. To defend it. And ensure. Its progress. And in our text. He gives us. The model. And the motivation. And the means. By which we can live.

With one mind. And it's ours. In Christ. We reveal. The mind of Christ. The mind of God. And the mind of united humanity.

[29 : 07] When we bow. And when we confess. So let's practice. What we preach. Let's lay our swords aside. And let's unite as one.

Let's bow our knees. Before him. Let's come worship. And adore him. And together. Let's confess. That Jesus Christ is Lord. To the glory. Of God.

The Father. Amen.