

DATE OF MESSAGE: October 30, 2016

MESSAGE TITLE: Who is Jesus?

SCRIPTURE: Philippians 2:5-11

KEY TRUTH

This passage of Scripture gives us a clear and beautiful picture of Jesus. Let's allow this passage to stir our hearts through the power of the Holy Spirit to worship Jesus and to obey Him.

GETTING STARTED

Who is Jesus? Often referred to as the Hymn of Christ, these 7 verses answer this most important question by referencing Jesus' divine preexistence, incarnation, death, resurrection and rightful ascension to the right hand of God the Father. Paul wrote this wonderful description of Jesus' identify to encourage the Philippian believers to consider the welfare of others before their own. Grasping the full meaning and measure of who Jesus is leads to a response of humility and self-sacrifice among His followers.

OBSERVATION

What does Paul assert that believers have access to in Christ that will allow them to put others first?

What does it mean to have the mind of Christ?

What did Jesus refuse to grasp or cling to in order to become a servant of mankind?

Into whose likeness was Jesus born, according to verse 7? Read Luke 2:1-15 to refresh yourself with the story of Jesus' birth. How does this passage in Luke compare with the description of Jesus in Philippians 2:5-11?

To what point did Jesus humble himself on earth to obey His Heavenly Father? What did it cost Jesus to fully comply with His Father's wishes?

What did our Heavenly Father bestow on Jesus in response to Jesus' humble self-sacrifice? How does Paul say the entire world one day will acknowledge the gift bestowed on Jesus?

What two parts of the body will all people engage in praising the name of Jesus? Why do you think Paul cited these two body parts in this passage?

APPLICATION

Read Philippians 2:5-11 silently. What part of Jesus' identify most captures your attention? How do you believe God would want you to respond this week to this revelation of His Son?

The Bible commands us to have the mind of Christ. Would your spouse or the person closest to you (if you are not married) agree that your words and actions mostly reveal that you think like Jesus?

Take a moment to picture in your mind the scene Paul describes in verses 10 and 11, namely every person on earth bowing his knee and confessing Jesus is Lord. What emotions does this scene elicit in you – joy, fear, sadness, gladness, etc? What do you think causes those feelings to bubble to the surface?

PRAYER

We thank You Heavenly Father for revealing the person and work of Your Son, Jesus, so vividly in this passage. Please move us beyond mere intellectual agreement with what we read in Philippians 2:5-11. Stir our hearts to believe all that Paul wrote about the preexistent, incarnate, all powerful Jesus! May we bow our knees and confess with our mouths that Jesus is Lord each day. Do a gracious work in us to humble our hearts in Your presence as You desire.

SHARE POINT

Read and review the application questions. Share with someone in your life how God's Word is changing you into a growing disciple. Encourage that person to do the same. That person could be a family member, a friend, a co-worker or a neighbor.

COMMENTARY NOTES

2:5 Jesus serves as both the model and source of the kind of humility that stirs a believer's heart to put others first. Paul encouraged the Philippian church to be of one mind united by love and humility.

2:6 Prior to the incarnation, Christ was in the form of God. Despite the assertions of some scholars to the contrary, this most naturally refers to the preexistence of Jesus, who is an eternal part of the trinity. The Son of God is and always will be God. Having the form of God is roughly the equivalent of having equality with God. Remarkably, Jesus did not imagine that having equality with God should lead him to hold onto his privileges at all costs. It was not something to be grasped or to be kept for his own advantage. Instead, He had the mindset of a servant and refused to please Himself so that He could serve us.

2:7 Paul is not saying that Jesus became less than God or gave up some divine attributes; he is not even commenting directly on the question of Jesus' divinity. Rather, Paul is stressing that Jesus, who had all the privileges as King of the Universe, gave them up to become an ordinary Jewish baby bound for the cross. While He had every right to remain where He was in a position of power, His love for us drove Him to a position of weakness for the sake of sinful mankind. The emptying consisted of his becoming human, not of his giving up any part of his true deity.

2:8 Jesus went much further than merely becoming a man. He took on the form of a servant (morphē – to become) and walked perfectly in a broken world. Jesus became obedient to the point of death on the cross. Crucifixion was not simply a convenient way of executing prisoners. It was the ultimate indignity, a public statement by Rome that the crucified one was beyond contempt. The excruciating physical pain was magnified by the degradation and humiliation. No other form of death, no matter how prolonged or physically agonizing, could match crucifixion as an absolute destruction of the person. Crucifixion represented the ultimate counterpoint to the divine majesty of the preexistent Christ.

2:9 Jesus' humiliation became the grounds for his ultimate exaltation. By humbling himself on the cross out of love, He demonstrated that He truly shared the divine nature of God who is love. So, God raised Him to life and highly exalted Him, entrusting Him with the rule of the cosmos and giving him the name that is above every name. This name is not specified here but many think it refers to the name Yahweh. God's personal name, which in the Septuagint is regularly translated in Greek as Kyrios or Lord. In any case, Paul means that the eternal Son of God received a status and authority that had been his before he became incarnate as both God and man. Jesus exercises his messianic authority in the name of Yahweh.

2:10-11 While Jesus now bears the divine name Yahweh, he is still worshiped with his human name, Jesus. The astounding union of Jesus' divine and human natures is reinforced by the allusion to Isa. 45:23 in the words, 'every knee should bow and every tongue confess', which in Isaiah refer exclusively to Yahweh. The fact that these words can now be applied to God's messianic agent, Jesus Christ, shows that Jesus is fully divine. But the worship of Jesus as Lord is not the final word of the hymn. Jesus' exaltation also results in the glory of God the Father. God gave Jesus messianic dominion over all creation, and everyone will one day rightly give praise to him as their Lord. But when his kingdom reaches its fullness, Jesus does not keep the glory for himself. Instead, the Son himself will also be subjected to him who put all things in subjection under him, that God may be all in all. Even in his exaltation, Jesus remains the model of loving service to God.

SOURCES CONSULTED

ESV Study Bible

Serendipity Bible for Personal and Small Group Study