

**INTRODUCTION** We continue in this week's notes to plumb something of the infinite depths that sum up Christ's humiliation in Philippians 2. In saving us from sin and Satan by His birth in the manger and by his death on the Cross, Christ draws our attention to this verse to begin this week:

Though He was in the form of God, Christ did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. (Philippians 2:6-7)

**MONDAY/TUESDAY/WEDNESDAY: Read Philippians 2:1-8 and Galatians 2:20.** We begin where we left off last week: by dwelling upon the *self-emptying* nature of faith. By definition, true saving faith is the Spirit-enabled emptying of the human will of its sinful pride and rebellious self-direction and replacing such self-exalting attitudes with the desire that, "Christ would be magnified in my body, whether by life or by death." (Philippians 1:20).

Of course, we cannot produce in ourselves such a death to self and such a single-minded focus on Christ and on His Lordship and will for our lives. This grace of self-denying humility, which grows in the Christian throughout all his pilgrimage of faith lived in this world, only comes through union with Christ in His death and through the spiritual vitality of our new life in Christ.

Moreover, once one is "in Christ" by faith and saved by His blood sacrifice on the Cross, God is completely in control. The Christian life is basically the increasing realization that fighting against God's sovereign will be futile. It is not our life to live, as we are "crucified" to our old way of living and Christ takes over living in our place. This is what Galatians 2:20 says:

I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

But the amazing fact about this real human life of living by faith is that *Jesus Christ, God's Son*, is the One who crafted such a self-denying faith when He "took upon Himself the form of a servant." (Philippians 2:7) By His life-giving power, Christ gives us this "Christ-life" to live in us. His faith becomes the template or mold that impresses itself on our lives.

***Meditate and Pray:*** Give thanks to Jesus that, when He saves us through His Word, He plants in each believer the same human nature which He wore to the Cross. It is a fact that it is no longer we who live, but Christ who works in us according to His good pleasure. (Philippians 2:12)

Sing about the mind and life of Christ in you, using hymn # 644:

1 May the mind of Christ my Savior  
live in me from day to day,  
by his love and pow'r controlling  
all I do and say.

2 May the Word of God dwell richly  
in my heart from hour to hour,  
so that all may see I triumph  
only through his pow'r.

3 May the peace of God my Father  
rule my life in everything,  
that I may be calm to comfort  
sick and sorrowing.

4 May the love of Jesus fill me  
as the waters fill the sea;  
him exalting, self-abasing,  
this is victory.

5 May his beauty rest upon me  
as I seek the lost to win,  
and may they forget the channel,  
seeing only him.

**THURSDAY/FRIDAY: Read Philippians 2:5-8.** As we read Philippians 2:7, the question must be asked: “When Christ emptied Himself, does that mean to be our human Savior He somehow became less God? Did His “taking the form of a servant” mean that He discarded *not only the privileges of His position as God’s Son, but also that He reduced His Divine character or even set it aside?*

Not at all! Though in English, the word “emptied” usually means becoming less: less full, less in control, less in potential or power, this verb used of Christ does not mean Christ emptied Himself of who He was as eternal God before He became man. Rather, as Professor Donald McCleod puts it in his short book on Philippians 2 entitled, “The Humiliated and Exalted Lord”:

Christ emptied Himself by taking. Let us see the glory of that. It is not emptying by subtraction. It’s the paradox of emptying by addition. He emptied *Himself* ... He emptied *Himself* and He emptied Himself taking the form of a servant. The doctrine defined here consists not in the renunciation of deity, not in the abdication from divine prerogatives, not in the laying aside of divine distinctiveness but in taking the **form** of the **slave** ... In all the moments of His incarnation: His birth; His life; His temptations; His anguish and weariness; His hunger and thirst and pain; in the agony of Gethsemane, when all forsook Him; and in His final dereliction, where He cries to His Father, “Why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46). (Even at His lowest points of suffering) Christ remains who He always was ... retaining all the distinctives and all the essential attributes of deity.

**SATURDAY/SUNDAY: Read Philippians 2:9-16.** What then is the result of such a lowly stooping on the part of no one less than the Son of God - becoming as we are, serving fallen mankind, even to the nadir of dying in order to take away our sin?

The result is two-fold. May God enable us to rejoice in both the Father’s exaltation of His Son in verses 9-11 (the first result of His Cross) and in the life-giving power of that Cross for our lives – (the second result of His death as our lives are described in Philippians 2:12-16).

First, Christ’s being obedient to His Father, even to the point of death as Philippians 2:8 puts it, though it is the lowest point of Christ’s sorrows, is the very moment when God the Father was most pleased with His Son. Christ’s absolute obedience to His Father, an obedience which the Son freely embraced out of love for His Father and for us, gave the Father great pleasure. No wonder the Father often says of His Son’s obedience, “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.”

Therefore, how could the Father not rescue His Son from death and exalt Him above every name? This is the Father’s response to His Son’s perfect accomplishment of the work He gave Him to do – to exalt Christ above all others, as Philippians 2:9-11 describes it.

But that is not all. Because the Son took our nature *down* into our guilt and penalty for sin, and took that nature *up* in resurrection power to the right hand of His Father, we now benefit from *every act of Christ’s obedience as if it were our own*.

Ours is a complete salvation. Though with fear and trembling, we are to learn to obey and to work out our salvation (Philippians 2:12-13), we are working from a position of *possessing a full salvation*. We are already sanctified and spiritually born again – “Therefore,” Paul says, “Reckon with all that you have been given in Christ and work it out into your daily lives.”

What does such an outworking of salvation look like? It is a life of light and contentment, learning to do all things without grumbling and learning to live a guileless life, in which we seek to shine in the midst of a crooked perverse generation. (Philippians 2:14-15)

But always, let it be said again as we close this week’s notes:

That power and discipline to live this light-filled life of reverent fear and godly living comes from the life-giving power of the Word of God as that Word is wielded for our spiritual healing and restoration by the Spirit of Christ. (Philippians 2:16) It is because it is no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us (Galatians 2:20) that we are able to cling to that life-giving Word! May God help us so to do! Amen!