

Imitating Christ's Humility

Phil 2:5-11

This passage explains how Jesus whom has all the power and glory in the universe, chose to humble himself so much that he became a man. The passage starts with encouraging us to follow the example of Christ. All throughout the New Testament (especially 1st John) following Christ's example is a central theme. When Paul speaks of imitating the example of Christ, he is referring that we become humble, and that we love our neighbors as ourselves. We need to be self-sacrificing to the cause of others. This is not to be taken literally, since the word sacrifice has multiple definitions.

In verses 7-8, Paul is explaining how Christ, as we all know is God, had all the power and knowledge in the universe, yet chose for our benefit to become a servant to his creation, and died as a criminal. A servant and a criminal are not the same. Christ came to serve; yet died as a criminal. Christ sets a great example for us to follow. So often we feel that certain people are under us, and we only need to associate ourselves with those that we feel are at are level regarding attractiveness, intelligence, race, etc. However, Christ did not do such things; he has all the glory and power, yet served the tax collectors and sinners. He served those whom did not have a group of people around them, those that were shunned by society. In verses 9-11, Paul explains how Christ has been rewarding for the atoning sacrifice he made for mankind. Christ saved mankind, and did the unbearable and impossible act, that he deserves the ultimate position of recognition in the universe as verse nine points out. Martin says, "The elevation is, then, not in regard to his nature or inherent place within the Godhead. It is rather an ascription to him of what could only be his after the submission and sacrifice of his

earthly life, and specifically relates to his lordship as king of the universe" (Martin 1987, 109). Some cultists use a verse like nine, and use it in their debate that Christ was never God, but is his first created creature. In verse 10-11, we get a good display of the judgment. In Revelation the disciple, John mentions a judgment, and in these verses, we do know that those that love Christ and those that spit in his face will bow and confess him as Lord. I do believe he is referring to humans and perhaps spiritual beings. These verses also seem to indicate that those who were not born with legs or a tongue, or lost it sometime during their lives, will be restored at the judgment. At the judgment, they will be able to move and speak as if they were on earth. I do not think that Paul was using allegory here, but is speaking in a literal language. It is a surprise to me, to hear that some radio preachers use this passage, as well as another in Romans to back up their views that spiritual beings will also kneel and confess Christ to be Lord. This passage does not seem to indicate this.

Study Questions

1. In verse 6, Paul indicates that Christ did not consider equality with God. Some cults use this verse and others in aid to their debate that Christ was not God, but was the first of his creation. What do you think Paul meant in verse 6? How would you respond to a cultist who grossly misquotes scripture?
2. In verses 10-11 Paul indicates that at the judgment everyone in heaven, earth, and in hell, shall confess with their tongue that Christ is Lord. Some radio preachers seem to use this passage and one from Romans to aid their view that Satan and his demonic angels will also bow and confess Christ to be Lord, what do you say?
3. In verse 5, Paul says that we need to have the same attitude of Christ Jesus, whom was the perfect example of a humble suffering servant (Isa 52). Do you think that part of the equation of emulating Christ is to surround ourselves with friends whom are not are not our equals? Like a highly attractive individual surrounding him/herself with individuals that are not.