



How The Incarnation Inspires Humility in Me

Philippians 2:1-11
Paul's plea for unity

Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, ² make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

³ Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, rather with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. ⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

⁹ For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

1. What is the cause of the disputes?

In verses 1-5, Paul's essentially saying that despite these powerful bonds we share in Christ, (encouragement, comfort, tenderness, compassion) they aren't enough to stop the human drama of selfish motives.

Instead Paul reminds us of the antidote to such conflict:

...being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

Philippians 2:2

Same mind - A common understanding and a genuine agreement.

Same Love - Devoted to one another.

One spirit - Selfless harmony

One purpose - Literally means "thinking one thing"

So how do we do that?

³ Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, Philippians 2:3a

1. Do nothing from selfishness; nothing.
2. Empty conceit means, self-importance.

2. How to be a peacemaker instead.

...rather with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; ⁴ do not *merely* look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Philippians 2:3,4

In a sense, this is the corrective for the two negative ones. Instead of selfish ambition and self importance maintain *a humility of mind*. Humility of mind here is regarding one another as more important than yourself,

...regard one another as more important than yourselves; Philippians 2:3b

How do we see others as more important?

The only way I know is to compare what we know of our own heart condition, and how much we don't know of their heart condition. In other words stop assuming you know them and at the same time remember what you actually know about your own heart condition.

The Apostle Paul had a proper double standard. He was gracious to everyone he met, but of himself he said, *"I'm the least of all the Apostles and not fit to be called an Apostle."* Later he said of himself, *"I am the least of all of God's people."*

Then in his last years he wrote of himself:

Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners—of whom I am the worst. 1 Timothy 1:15

C.S. Lewis-Mere Christianity:

"Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it's thinking of yourself less."

3. How the incarnation motivates our humility?

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Philippians 2:5-8

He was *this* high (He existed in the form of God,) **and he came *this* low.**

"He had no beauty or majesty that we should desire him." ...Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering, ...We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.

Isaiah 53:2,4,6

Jesus was up *there* and he came down *here*, and as a result, he has more honor if that were possible.

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,

Philippians 2:9

How could that be? Because the greater glory gives up glory in order to glorify others.

C.S. Lewis: *"To be loved by God ... delighted in as an artist delights in his work or a father in a son—it seems impossible, a weight or burden of glory which our thoughts can hardly sustain. But so it is."*