



He Humbled Himself (Phil 2:5-8)

As we head into the most important week of remembrance and celebration for believers, we come to an incredible passage in Philippians that not only helps us consider the gravity of Christ's sacrifice, which started long before the cross, but also convicts us as we consider our own struggle with pride and choosing our will over God's.

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. [Phil 2:5-8](#)

For just a moment, try focusing your mind on this text and slowly take in the gravity of what the apostle Paul was saying. Here is Christ, the Son of God, eternally existent and deified alongside the Father Who sits on the throne. But He ***did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped***. ***Regard*** can be rendered as *count or consider* and ***grasped*** can also be thought of as *held onto*. Christ already possessed this esteemed position in heaven, yet His love for us was so great He was willing to give it up.

Therefore, He ***emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant***. Bond-servant is a nicer way to translate the Greek word [doulos](#), which is *slave*. You don't get much lower on the ladder of life than a slave. As a slave what you want is irrelevant and you are at the absolute disposal of another's desires. Christ willingly traded His highest position for the lowest one imaginable.

He did this by ***being made in the likeness of men***. Don't mistake this as Paul saying Christ was created at the time of conception – no, He simply *took on flesh* or *became in the likeness* of men when He was born of Mary. The first part of Paul's statement clearly indicates that Christ existed before He came to earth, and many other Scriptures confirm this ([Isa. 9:6](#), [John 1:1-14](#), [Heb 1](#), [Col 1:15-17](#), etc).

This Christ, our Savior, our Lord, the One Who sits at the right hand of the Father ([Psalm 110:9](#), [Mark 16:19](#), [Heb 12:2](#)) came to earth as a human and ***humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross***. This is almost too much to cogitate; too much to try to process from a human perspective. Many try to explain this by saying it is like a judge taking the place on death row for a convicted murderer. That's far from capturing the true gravity of what Christ did, but probably about as close as we can come to relating to such a seemingly absurd and incomprehensible act. Yet, this is exactly what Christ did, and He did it out of love for us.

Lord – we are so unworthy!

Since we cannot truly duplicate what Christ exemplified for us, how then are we to apply this Scripture to our lives? Paul said, ***“have this attitude.”*** What attitude is that? Christ's, when He ***humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death***.

Throughout Scripture we are told of the real-life costs required to follow the Lord (cf [Matt 16:24](#), [Luke 5:11](#), etc). It is sometimes very hard, demanding, and borderline impossible. But believers press-on in faith and ***obedience***. In many ways obedience is the simplest measure of true Christian humility and the health of our spiritual walk. It's the action of living out the Lord's prayer (*Thy will be*



done...). Christ obeyed His Father perfectly, and in doing so became our once-forever propitiation (ie: substitutionary payment) for our sins. He did this through obedience, even **to the point of death**. Scripture demands that we, too, obey God even to the point of great loss or death. It sounds so easy when things are good, but when our will or well-being is truly laid down before God and the strong temptation to exercise authority over our lives creeps in, we'll likely find it is shockingly hard and requires a great deal of prayer and perseverance. So each day, and really each minute, we must strive to live in obedience through faith. The two – faith and obedience - are inseparable; walking the Christian walk can't be done without both.

Thankfully, our salvation is not dependent on our own strength to obey God, the Lord will sustain us (cf [Psalm 55:22](#), [Phil 4:19](#)). Our faith and the ability to obey is a gift from the Lord, just as is mercy and grace. By coming down as a man, Christ not only experienced the same struggles and temptations we have, but overcame them, and now intercedes for us in the presence of God the Father ([Heb 7:25](#)). For this we owe Him our constant and unending praise and adoration – of which He is wholly worthy!

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

~Associate Pastor Jeremy Preece

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