

Philippians 2:5-11(ESV) ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Grace to you and peace from God our Father and our Lord and Savior Jesus the Christ.

Amen.

I had the privilege of attending a Bible-believing seminary, Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. Back in the 1960's, 70's (as well as earlier) many of our mainline seminaries turned a wrong corner and went liberal. The Bible was no longer accepted as the true word of God and they taught the Bible by deconstructing it, pointing out all the errors because what was written does not fit into today's world view. If the events in the Bible cannot be proven historically, they did not happen. All of the miracles were simply Jewish exaggerations giving a supernatural explanation when there are plain, ordinary, natural explanations for all of them. At the crossing of the Red Sea for example, there was a huge wind that came up that separated the waters, a totally natural occurrence. The rest of the story is simply a myth putting an overly spiritual interpretation on an event when it could be explained naturally without any outside influence.

Deconstructing the Bible means the miracles did not occur. Since angels and demons including the devil are part of that supernatural world view now defunct by thinking people, they do not exist. Jesus did not cast out demons from people. He helped calm down people who were having epileptic seizures. To attend a seminary as such is to learn how off base the Bible is because we know more today than the authors did then. So, you go to seminary to unlearn everything you were taught in Sunday school. This is why so many mainline pastors come out of seminary with very little, if any faith at all. The people in the pews have much more faith and maturity in Christ than the person standing in the pulpit. To be trained in unbelief and thinking yourself to be intellectually superior to the not so smart (dumb) parishioners who believe in the

Bible eventually leads to failing churches, which is exactly what has happened. The Christians in the pew know better and go to a place where the Scriptures are taught as true and their souls are fed. This is exactly why I chose a Bible-believing seminary. I did not want to graduate as a non-believer. My faith in Christ was too important to me, more important than attending a mainline seminary. It is true the mainlines have produced some great pastors such as our own Jared Parmley and Bill and Matt Shields, but the majority come out spreading their unbelief in the written Word of God.

The president of the seminary I attended once said to me personally, "God will honor your church's ministry to the same degree that you support world missions." The president, Dr Ockenga, was the Senior Pastor of the historical Park Street Church in downtown Boston. He lived what he preached, stressing the importance of world missions. Quoting Jesus, "And the Gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations and then the end will come (Matthew 24:14). When it comes to world missions and supporting missionaries, it is no time to shortchange the work that God wishes to do worldwide through his humble servants who leave all to follow Jesus. God has a special call on their lives and what a privilege it is to participate in their ministries worldwide. Our friends, Bob Yarbrough and Pastor Bill Shields have been able to do great ministry on foreign soil teaching and feeding the souls of church leaders. For many of their listeners it is the only training they receive as church workers. Bob and Bill have only been able to do such ministry because of the givers in this church. St. Mark is the primary church that undergirds their ministry. If it were not for us, they could not do such vital ministry abroad. We support another person who serves in the East. That ministry has born great fruit for Christ and you have supported that ministry for over half a decade and continue to do so. I wish for us raise up and support more missionaries world-wide as well as sending out more on short-term missions both in the states and elsewhere. Ron and Rhonda Haynes will be serving in Guam and we wish to help them too.

This is a calling from God, and one of the main reasons for the church's existence. We've a story to tell to the nations and then Christ will come. I believe Dr Ockenga's words about the significance of world missions to be true. This is no time to shortchange them.

Paul is considered to be the church's first missionary to the Gentiles. A Gentile is anyone who is not a Jew. The Christianity that saves us for eternity came to us via the work of missionaries all the way back to Paul. Our support of missionaries today will bear fruit until the Lord Jesus comes again.

Our lesson in Philippians is the reason this church exists. Our lesson in Philippians is why we support missionaries around the world. Christianity has a message and the message is Jesus Christ. There is salvation in no one else other than Jesus Christ. No other religion or person can save you other than the one who is King of kings and Lord of lords. Jesus died on the cross, not Allah or Buddha, or any other cult leader. Only Jesus satisfied the Father's wrath that we deserved. Only Jesus reveals the Father to us. Only Jesus met the criteria that satisfied divine justice. Sin had to be paid for, atoned for, and Jesus did it all. All to Him we owe.

These words of Paul put forth the truth plainly. More than likely these verses found their way into the liturgy of early Christian worship services. In short, "they teach the Divinity of Christ, his preexistence, his equality with God the Father, his incarnation and true humanity, his voluntary death on the cross, the certainty of his ultimate triumph over evil, and the permanence of his reign,"(J. Boice pg. 110). Bob Yarbrough, Pastor Shields, and others have traveled thousands of miles with your donations to preach and teach this same message, the Gospel! And this Gospel is changing people's lives all over the world. Praise be to God! May their numbers only increase.

"Who though he was in the form of God" Jesus Christ is the Son of God and God the Son. Every attribute, every personal characteristic of the Father is also true of the Son. Jesus

is the image of the invisible God. Hebrews tells us that The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of His being. Jesus himself said, "He who has seen me has seen the Father. Jesus also said, "Before Abraham was, I am. Jesus is the Jehovah of the Old Testament. Jesus is God's equal. Everything that God Almighty is, so is the Lord Jesus Christ. There is no real knowledge of the Father apart from a knowledge of the Son.

The church in Philippi was having the typical struggles of most churches. There were people in the church who were at odds with each other. Others in the church were paying a high price to confessing their faith in Jesus Christ. The church's existence in Philippi was at stake and Paul told them to quit majoring in the minors and start majoring in what is major, that that is the Lord Jesus Christ, who He is and what He has done for us.

Friends, in this church, we will have honest disagreements. Where you have two people you have four opinions. Disagreements over church issues are not the problem. We are free to disagree. It is how those disagreements are handled that create the problems. Put your focus on Jesus and being a servant of Christ Paul is telling us. Get off your high horse, humble yourself and don't think you are so high and mighty. Don't think you are the only one in the know, that everyone else is wrong and you are the only one who is right. And if you are wronged, so what. Look how wronged Jesus was his entire ministry and he kept serving day in and day out, day in and day out to the point of death. None of us here have been put to the test like that.

We are here to be servants of Jesus Christ. We are here to worship the Lord Jesus Christ and proclaim His Gospel. We are here to love Jesus and to love one another even as Jesus loves us and gave his life for us.

Jesus was fully equal with God. Jesus was so bright, literally, that no human could look at him and live. He was full of glory, both inside and out, but he agreed to let go of his outer glory and be born of a virgin and live among us. No one has ever given up more than him. For

us to faithfully serve the Lord Jesus Christ, there are certain things we must give up. We do not serve to bring glory to ourselves or to this church, but to bring glory to Jesus. Anytime we enjoy the attention we get for doing ministry, we are doing it for the wrong reason, for personal gain and not for the glory of Christ. The Bible says that Jesus made himself nothing.

When we serve the Lord are we out to make a name for ourselves or to point people to the Lord Jesus Christ. When Jesus is glorified, who cares if you get a pat on the back or not? We are not here to get pats from each other for doing good works, we are here to serve the Lord Jesus Christ and expect nothing in return except maybe to suffer a bit for it.

Jesus lowered Himself. Jesus emptied himself. Jesus gave so much up to come to earth. And this hit me as I studied this passage, Jesus knew what it was like to be God and full of glory. The Bible tells us that the glory of God lights up all of heaven. Talk about a wonderful glory and to leave that and to live the next 9 months inside of a womb. That is what you can call real humility. One reason he was willing to leave was he knew that when his work was over, he would be able to return to his former glory and joy. 17 For momentary, light affliction is producing for us an eternal weight of glory far beyond all comparison, 18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us.

Jesus was more than willing to come for He knew that the glory He would return to would be worth all the pain he had to endure to pay for our salvation. Every bit of suffering we experience on this earth is nothing compared to the glory that is to be revealed to us. Friends, that is one reason why I preach and teach how important it is for us to carry with us an eternal perspective. The only way to make it through the temporary is to focus on the eternal. The only way not to be overcome by disappointment or not to be overcome by your own personal pain and sorrow is to know the glory to come will make all our tribulations here absolutely worth it. When we get to heaven and see how God honors those that suffered the most for him, we may

even wish we had suffered more while here on earth for the Lord Jesus Christ who grants suffering.

Jesus suffered real disappointments just like the rest of us, but I think even more so. Christ wept real tears over Jerusalem. 37 "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling." All his friends abandoned him when he needed them the most.

You have disappointments too. It may be with your family, your work, your church. You may have reached out in love to a person only to be rejected and made fun of. You may even think of yourself as a failure or lack purpose in life. Jesus can relate to all of that and knows all of it. He became like you in all your disappointments and as a result, he is able to understand your sorrow. Please cast all your sorrows and disappointments on Jesus. Humble yourself before Him and He will lift you up.

Jesus humbled himself by being obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross and this is the message of the cross. His work caused God's wrath to be stilled; our sin removed, and the way to glory paved. No one endured more pain or suffering, no one had come from such heights to descend to such depths. .

Due to his obedience, the Father exalted him higher than anyone ever has been or will be. Jesus returned to his former glory and sat down. His work was finished. And His name, "Lord" is the highest name that is above all names. One day all of us will get on our knees and confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Until that day, look up your redemption is near. Amen and Amen.