



IMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH
SERIES: TOGETHER FOR THE GOSPEL
SCRIPTURE: PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11
DATE: MAY 31, 2026

INTRODUCTION

We are now in week five of our series through Philippians titled “*Together for the Gospel.*” In this passage, we come to one of the most well-known and theologically rich sections in the entire letter. Paul is calling the church to humility, and he does so by pointing them to the ultimate example of humility—Jesus Christ Himself. The central command is found in verse 5: “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.” In other words, Paul is not simply asking for outward behavior change, but for a complete transformation of mindset, where humility becomes the lens through which believers view every relationship and every decision.

Text

Philippians 2:5-11

⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,^[a] ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,^[b] ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant,^[c] 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.

Explanation

Christ's Humility

Here Paul writes so beautifully to describe the humility of Christ. Just as Paul has urged the church to complete his joy by showing humility to one another, he puts forth Christ as an example. If there was any doubt from the Philippians whether they have experienced any portion of Christ, Paul shows that there is really no doubt at all. In humility, Christ has given *all* of Himself to the Philippians.

Paul begins by describing the depth of Christ's humility in verses 6 through 8. Jesus, though He existed in the very form of God and possessed full equality with God, did not cling to His rights or privileges. Instead, He willingly "emptied Himself" by taking the form of a servant and being born in human likeness. This does not mean that Jesus ceased to be God, but rather that He chose to veil His glory and take on the full experience of humanity, including its weakness, limitations, and suffering.

The humility of Christ is seen not only in His incarnation but also in His entire earthly life. He lived without earthly status or comfort, often without even a place to lay His head (Lk. 9:58). He took on the role of a servant, ministering to the weak, the overlooked, and the broken. Ultimately, His humility reached its climax at the cross, where He became obedient even to the point of death— "even death on a cross," the most shameful and painful form of execution in the ancient world. Jesus was betrayed, denied, abandoned, and unjustly condemned, yet He submitted Himself fully to the will of the Father. In the Garden of Gethsemane, in His deepest moment of anguish, He still prayed, "Not my will, but Yours be done" (Mt. 26:39). There is no greater display of humility in all of history than the Son of God willingly laying down His life for sinners.

Demonstrating His humility was central to Jesus' goal. Jesus Himself said in Mark 10:45 that "He came not to be served but to serve and to give His life as a ransom for many." On the night before His crucifixion, He washed the feet of His disciples, taking the posture of the lowest servant (John 13:12-17). Paul would conclude to the Corinthians, "Though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9). All of these moments reveal a consistent truth: the Son of God chose the path of humility for the sake of others.

God Has Highly Exalted Him

The passage does not end with the cross. In verses 9 through 11, Paul shows the divine response to Christ's humility. "Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name." The One who descended in humility is now exalted in glory. God raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand, giving Him authority over all creation.

"One day, every knee will bow—in heaven, on earth, and under the earth—and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." What was once rejected and humiliated by men will one day be universally acknowledged as Lord over all. Scripture confirms this exaltation in places like Hebrews 12:2, which says, "... who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God." We see a wonderful picture in Revelation 5:12 with a heavenly chorus singing, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" The pattern is clear: humility leads to exaltation, and the cross leads to glory.

The Call to Imitate Christ

Paul's purpose in describing Christ's humility is not merely to inform but to transform. "Have this mind among yourselves," he says. The church is called to think and live in the same pattern of humility that Christ demonstrated. Where believers are tempted toward pride, rivalry, or selfish ambition, they are instead to consider others more significant than themselves. Where there is a temptation to insist on personal rights, they are to adopt the posture of a servant.

Paul reinforces this by drawing subtle parallels between Christ's example and his own instructions to the church.

- Paul told the church to “count others more significant than themselves” and “Jesus, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.”
- Paul told the church to “do nothing from rivalry or conceit.” And “Jesus made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant.”
- Paul urged the church towards humility, whereas Jesus “humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”
- Paul urged the church to unity by saying, “being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.” Now, because of Jesus’ humility, His glory is the unifying ingredient. Notice as Paul says the following about Jesus: “so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” Paul said the church should have the same mind, and the same love, and be in full accord. Their minds and love and accord should be centered on glorifying Christ.

Discussion Questions

- When it comes to service, which is harder: serving *whoever*, or doing *whatever*?
- Do you think it takes humility to recognize humility?
- Similarly, does it take pride to recognize pride in someone else?
- Do you think that you can truly grasp the humility of Christ if you are not humble to some degree?
- Paul and Jesus both model choosing service over personal comfort. What is one practical way you could serve someone this week without expecting recognition?
- The Bible often says, that “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to humble.” How does our passage today relate to this?
- In your opinion, how can a person grow in humility?

Conclusions or Applications

IMITATING CHRIST'S HUMILITY

At this point, it is natural to feel that such humility is beyond reach. In one sense, it is true that we cannot match the perfection of Christ's humility. However, Paul does not leave us without example or hope. He himself lived in a way that reflected this same mindset. In Philippians 1:21–24, Paul expresses a willingness to remain on earth and continue serving others, even though he personally desired to be with Christ. His life demonstrates a willingness to prioritize the spiritual good of others over personal gain. Just as Christ left heaven to come to earth, taking the form of a servant, so too Paul would have chosen to remain on earth and prolong his arrival in heaven so that he might serve the Philippians.

Jesus repeatedly taught this same principle to His disciples. In Mark 9:35, He said, "If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all." Greatness in the kingdom of God is not measured by status, power, or recognition, but by humility and service.

As we conclude, the challenge is simple but profound. The mind of Christ is not only something to admire but something to adopt. This week, believers are called to examine their hearts for pride, selfish ambition, and self-centered thinking, and instead intentionally choose humility in their relationships, their service, and their daily interactions. The cross of Christ shows us what humility looks like, and the exaltation of Christ shows us that God honors that kind of life.