

BOB HALLMAN - THE EPIC LIFE

Joy: Humility and Exaltation

Philippians 2:1-11

2008

Introduction

Summary of keys to Paul's joy and peace as he sat on "Death Row":

1. He was a follower of and bondservant of Jesus Christ
2. He was others' centered even in the midst of his own crisis
3. He accepted his high position and identity in Christ - he was a saint rather than a sinner
4. He understood and rejoiced in the unmerited grace of God
5. He remembered and recited the good in others
6. He made it a practice to share the gospel of Jesus Christ with others
7. He was confident in God's power to finish what He had started
8. He openly and transparently loved people
9. He had a lifestyle of interceding in prayer for others
10. He recognized the divine appointments even while in chains
11. He rejoiced in the advancement of the gospel
12. He cultivated an eternal perspective on life and death
13. He accepted that the Christian life involved temporal suffering

Paul has told the Philippians how to "prokope" in the midst of *external* conflicts.

Now he tells them how to prokope in the midst of *internal* conflicts in the body of Christ.

This passage is set against the background of two quarreling women in the church at Philippi (4:2). Their quarrel was threatening to destroy the unity of the church.

I The Benefits of Christ

IF: Not an "if" of doubt, but a rhetorical "if" of certainty -- as in "since"!

A. The benefits of knowing Christ [Verse 1]

1. **Encouragement** from being united with Christ

Encouragement = Paraklesis = "Consolation, exhortation, solace, comfort"

2 Thess 2:16-17 "May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word."

2. Comfort from his love

Comfort = Paramuthion = "To console or strengthen"

2 Cor 1:3-5 “Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles, so that we can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves have received from God. For just as the sufferings of Christ flow over into our lives, so also through Christ our comfort overflows.”

3. Fellowship with the Spirit

Fellowship = Koinonia = “Partnership, participation, communion”

Eph 1:13-14 “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession — to the praise of his glory.”

2 Cor 13:14 “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

4. Tenderness and compassion

Tenderness = Splagchnon = “Spleen, intestines, affection”

Compassion = Oiktirmos = “Pity or mercy”

a. There is the "affection" that comes from Jesus and from other believers.

Phil 1:8 “God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ.”

b. There is the "mercy" that comes from our loving heavenly Father.

Eph 2:4-7 “But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions — it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.”

B. The responsibilities of knowing Christ [Verse 2-5]

1. Be like-minded

Like-minded = Phroneo = “To share the same sentiment or opinion”

Note: Paul is advocating unity -- not uniformity!

1 Cor 1:10 “I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.”

Application: How can we maintain unity with believers? Be united with Christ!

1 Cor 6:17 “But he who unites himself with the Lord is one with him in spirit.”

2. Have the same love

Love = Agape = “Affection, charity or benevolence”

John 13:34-35 “A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”

3. Be one in spirit and **purpose**

One in spirit = Sumpsuchos = “Like-minded, co-spirited”

Eph 4:1-3 “As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Application: How can spiritual unity be restored?

Jer 32:39 “I will give them singleness of heart and action, so that they will always fear me for their own good and the good of their children after them.”

4. Do nothing out of

a. Selfish **ambition**

Selfish ambition = Eritheia = “Intrigue, faction, strife, contention”

Gal 5:19-21 “The acts of the sinful nature are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition [Eritheia], dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

b. Vain **conceit**

Vain conceit = Kenodoxia = “Empty glorying”

Definition: “An excessively favorable opinion of one’s self”

James 3:13-16 “Who is wise and understanding among you? Let him show it by his good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. Such “wisdom” does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, of the devil. For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice.”

Balance: Rom 12:3 “... Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.”

In place of these carnal and ungodly characteristics, they were to ...

5. In humility consider others **better** than yourselves

Better = Huperecho = “To consider superior or more excellent”

Like today, the ancient Greeks considered lowliness of mind to be a fault, not a virtue.

Rom 12:10 “Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves.”

6. Look not only to your own interests

Look = Skopeo = “To spy or watch carefully”

Phil 2:21 reveals another internal problem the Philippian church was facing:

“... everyone looks out for his own interests, not those of Jesus Christ.”

a. But also to the interests of others

1 Cor 10:24 “Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others.”

7. Our **attitude** should be the same as that of Jesus Christ

Eph 5:1-2 “Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children and live a life of love, just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”

II The Example of Christ

“**Let this mind be in you**”: In other words, choose to take on this same attitude!

A. Being in very nature God [Verse 6-7]

Quote: Dr. B. B. Warfield

“... the phraseology which Paul here employs was the popular usage of his day . . . and . . . was accordingly the most natural language for strongly asserting the deity of Christ which could suggest itself to him. . . . "Form" is that body of qualities which constitute Him God, and without which He would not be God. What Paul asserts then, when he says that Christ Jesus existed in the "form of God," is that He had all those characterizing qualities which make God God, the presence of which constitutes God, and in the absence of which God does not exist. He who is "in the form of God," is God.”

<https://bible.org/seriespage/3-spirit-christ-philippians-21-13>

John 1:1,14 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

1. He did not **grasp** for equality with God

Grasp = Harpagmos = “Robbery”

It wasn't that Jesus was trying to achieve equality with the Father. He already had it!

But instead of clinging to what was already His, He willingly surrendered His rights, prerogatives and privileges of deity.

Application: As Christians, we have already surrendered our rights!

1 Cor 6:19-20 “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.”

2. He made himself nothing

Nothing = Kenoo = King James says, "emptied Himself"

Some suggest that Jesus divested Himself of many of the attributes of deity - such as omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, and even suffered the loss of His own divine self-consciousness.

Yet Jesus did not become “less God” in the incarnation; rather humanity was *added* to His nature.

Then exactly what did Jesus empty Himself of or give up by becoming a man?

1. He laid aside **position**

Though He continued to be God, He voluntarily humbled Himself and took on the lifestyle of a servant (John 1:10-14).

2. He laid aside **possessions**

Paul spoke of this when he wrote, “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich (2 Cor. 8:9).

All of His life our Lord was borrowing things. He was born in a borrowed cattle trough. He rode into Jerusalem on a borrowed donkey. He was buried in a borrowed grave. Our Lord, who created all things, laid aside what was rightfully His.

3. He laid aside **privilege**

A servant does not possess privileges. The master eats first, the servant later. The master has one entrance, the servant another. The master has one dwelling place, the servant one substantially inferior. The master is free to do as he wishes, but the servant has little freedom. All of the privileges which our Lord could have rightfully claimed (such as the praise and worship of men), He was willing to set aside (Mark 10:45).

3. He took on the very nature of a **servant**

Again, He did not empty Himself *of* His deity, attributes or equality with God.

Instead, He emptied Himself *into* the form of a human bondservant!

Isa 42:1 “Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen one in whom I delight ...”

Mark 10:45 “For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Application: The true nature of Christian leadership -- servant leadership!

2 Cor 4:5 “For we do not preach ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, and ourselves as your servants for Jesus' sake.”

4. He was made in human likeness

Jesus was not pretending to be human while on earth . . . He was human!

- a. He came into the world through natural birth - Luke 2:7
- b. He grew up like other boys - Luke 1:80; 2:52
- c. He learned a trade like other young men - Mark 6:3
- d. He was hungry, thirsty, weary, and slept like others - Mt 4:2; Jn 4:6; Mark 4:38
- e. He got angry like others, though often for other reasons - Mark 3:5
- f. He died like others, He suffered physical death

B. Being found in appearance as a man [Verse 8]

Appearance = Schema = “Fashion, external condition”

1. He **humbled** himself

Humbled = Tapeinoo = “To depress, humiliate, abase”

- a. He was humble in that he took the form of a man.
- b. He was humble in that He was born into an obscure, oppressed place.
- c. He was humble in that He was born into poverty, among a despised people.
- d. He was humble in that He was born as a child instead of appearing as a man.
- e. He was humble in submitting to the authority of human parents.
- f. He was humble in learning and practicing a trade.
- g. He was humble in the long wait until He launched out into public ministry.
- h. He was humble in the companions and disciples He chose.
- i. He was humble in the audience He appealed to and the way He taught.
- j. He was humble in the temptations He allowed and endured.
- k. He was humble in the weakness, hunger, thirst, and tiredness He endured.
- l. He was humble in His total obedience to His Heavenly Father.
- m. He was humble in submitting to the public humiliation of crucifixion.
- n. He was humble in enduring the physical and spiritual agony of the cross.

Application: We are called to humble ourselves as well!

1 Peter 5:5-6 “Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.”

2. He became **obedient** to death

- a. Even death on a cross!

The magnitude of his humility is measured by the extent to which he was obedient. Christ’s obedience took Him all the way to Calvary!

Heb 5:8-9 “Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, once made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him ...”

Death by crucifixion was considered to be reserved only for criminals, those who were slaves, thieves, killers, and outright enemies of the state. The Jews viewed death on a cross as a sure sign that the individual so crucified was accursed by God (Deut 21:22, 23; 1 Cor 1:23).

C.H. Spurgeon: “The lower he stoops to save us, the higher we ought to lift him in our adoring reverence. Blessed be his name, he stoops, and stoops, and stoops, and, when he reaches our level, and becomes man, he still stoops, and stoops, and stoops lower and deeper yet.”

A.T. Robertson: “Death on a cross was the bottom rung in the ladder from the Throne of God.”

III The Fruit of Christ

A. God **exalted** him to the highest place [Verse 9]

Exalted = Huperupsoo = “To elevate above others or raise to the highest position”

The honor which he refused to claim for himself is now conferred upon him by the Father!

Heb 2:9 “But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.”

Heb 12:2-3 “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.”

B. God gave him the name that is above every name [Verse 10-11]

1. That at the name of Jesus every knee should **bow**

This phrase is taken from Isaiah 45:23 where God Himself declares that before Him (Yahweh) every knee will bow and every tongue confess that He is Lord. The fact that Paul is applying this to Jesus reveals once again that Jesus *is* Yahweh.

a. In **heaven**: Spirits (good/bad) in the heavenly realm

b. On earth: Living human beings

c. Under the **earth**: Demons and Christ-rejecters

2. That every tongue **confess** that Jesus Christ is Lord

Confess = Exomologeoo = “To acknowledge or agree fully”

Lord = Kurios = In LXX; Tetragrammaton, standing for the name *Yahweh*.

Citizens of Rome were required to swear an oath of allegiance to the Emperor, declaring, “*Caesar is Lord*”, while burning incense to an image of the emperor. The New Testament Christians rightly interpreted this as idolatry - and refused to participate, often paying with their lives.

a. To the glory of God the Father

John 17:1-5 “After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”

Application: You can either worship now by choice or in the future by force!

Ps 95:6-7 “Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.”

Conclusion

Unbeliever: Have you bowed your knee and confessed Jesus Christ as Lord?

1. **Admit** and repent of your sin

Acts 3:19 “Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord ...”

2. **Believe** in Jesus Christ

John 3:16 “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.”

3. **Confess** Jesus as your Lord

Rom 10:9 “That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Luke 12:8-9 “I tell you, whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God.”

Believer:

The responsibilities of knowing Christ

1. Be like-minded - 1 Cor 1:10; Rom 15:5-6; 1 Cor 6:17

2. Have the same love - Jn 13:34-35; 1 Jn 4:8

3. Be one in spirit and purpose - Eph 4:1-3; Jer 32:39

4. Do nothing out of

a. Selfish ambition - Gal 5:19-21

b. Vain conceit - James 3:13-16; Rom 12:3

5. Consider others better than yourselves - Rom 12:10

6. Look not only to your own interests - Phil 2:21
 - a. But also to the interests of others - 1 Cor 10:24
7. Our attitude should be the same as Jesus - Eph 5:1-2

If the list seems overwhelming to you, simply follow Christ and love God!

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