

## Philippians 2: Our servant King

May I Speak in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Lydia set the scene of Paul's letter to the Philippians in her sermon last week. The dilemma of loyalty was addressed, should I stay or should I go and our readings from Philippians' today continues and asks what the source of that loyalty is how does the spirit makes Christ's mind in ours. It is also a call from Paul for Unity and humility in the early church.

In Philippians one, Paul is demanding a high level of loyalty, challenging the followers to be ready to die for the life of Christ, which understandably, is a big ask. The words in the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter provide the means on how we can reach that level of loyalty. to the Gospel and to Jesus Christ. Paul is addressing a church that is doing well, yet facing the early signs of internal friction. His remedy for their division isn't a complex management strategy or a checklist of rules. It is a radical, counter-cultural call to shift the focus entirely. Paul challenges us to stop looking at what we can gain and start looking at how we can serve, clearly stating that it is only through the Spirit working with us and through us that we can be loyal, and not on our own strength of will power.

He was inspiring the early Christians to bring honour to God, and not to themselves. In the culture in which these letter were written, being humble was seen as being weak. Paul is saying that this is not the case. He is saying that you can only approach God in humility, and in acknowledgement of your own sin.

True Christian unity is not uniformity. It does not mean we look the same or think exactly alike on every minor issue. It means we share the same core of mission and love. How do we practically live this out? Paul gives us two sharp, actionable directives:

We are told to do nothing from selfish or empty conceit,. We must examine our motives. Are we serving to be noticed? Are we arguing just to be right? Secondly, we are told to regard one another as more important than ourselves. This is the antidote to pride. It means looking at the people around us, even those we find difficult, and deciding that their needs, comfort, and spiritual well-being matter more than our own comfort and preferences. That can be a hard thing to do. To do this, we can only look at the example of Christ.

Paul makes some very profound descriptions of Jesus as he lays out Christ's humanity: and divinity. He surrendered His rights: Though Jesus was in the very form of God, possessing all divine glory and privilege; He did not view equality with God as something to be grasped or exploited for His own advantage. He emptied Himself: He willingly set aside His heavenly glory. He didn't just step down to earth as a king; He took the form of a servant. The Creator of the universe allowed Himself to be restricted by human flesh, hunger, fatigue, and pain. He obeyed to the point of death: Jesus did not stop halfway. He humbled Himself to the absolute lowest point possible in the ancient world, death on a Roman cross. The cross was a place of utter shame, reserved for criminals. Jesus chose it for us.

Because of this radical, self-emptying obedience, God highly exalted Him. The way up in the Kingdom of God is from the way down. Jesus lowered Himself to the grave, and God raised Him to the right hand of majesty, bestowing on Him the name above every name. Stating, that one day, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord as foretold by the words of Isaiah.

In our Thursday morning Bible Study, we are looking at who and what the Holy Spirit is. This week as we read, this phrase jumped out at us, **because the Spirit loves to bring glory to Christ by taking what is His and making it ours.** But what does it mean and why did it resonate with us, The words in Paul's letter I thought answered this question. The Holy Spirit brings glory to Christ by taking what belongs to Jesus, by taking His righteousness, victory, and status, and imparting them to believers, perfectly mirroring the downward and upward movement of Christ described by Paul in his letter. This statement means the Holy Spirit brings honour to Jesus by sharing Jesus' spiritual riches, such as righteousness, forgiveness, and eternal life, with believers. Jesus owns perfect holiness, peace, and favour with God, he shares this. The Spirit shares these gifts with all who trust in Jesus, treating Christ's achievements as if they belong to the believer. And the Spirit leads us to see how much we have received from Jesus through the Spirit, then we can praise and admire Jesus even more.

Last week, Lydia concluded with a vision of a community that can learn the deep art of loving each other as Christ loves us, to share that love around. Let us continue that vision by looking to our servant King, The one who calls us to follow him in unity humility and love, to enthrone him in our lives and to serve each other in faith and love as we serve Christ. Amen