

# *Philippians 2:5-8*

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/17/2007*

## **How can we maintain unity in the church? Part III: Riches to Rags to Riches**

### **Prayer**

Father, we praise You and thank You for Who you are, that You are a gracious God. That You are a righteous God. That You are a holy God. That You are a just God. That You are a merciful God. We praise You that it was not from man or man's mind that Your plan to save us came. That You decided to send Your Son to die for our sins so that we might have life. Father, we thank You so much for what He has done. And Father, as we look into Your Word and we see a glimpse of what You want us to know concerning what He fought, Lord God, during His incarnation on earth, help us to grow in the grace a knowledge of Your Son. And help us to be like Him, Lord God. We ask You to bless Your Word as it goes out; pierce our hearts, convict us, encourage us, rebuke us, train us, whatever You deem right. May we be soft, may we be teachable, Lord God. May You be glorified in our response today. We pray this now in Jesus' name.

### **Sermon**

We live in a culture that is centered around one's own rights. Even in our founding documents, we have rights. And certainly, we as Americans are quick to claim our rights. For instance, freedom of speech or whatever it may be. Now, it seems as though, yes God has given us some gracious privileges and rights in His mercy. It seems as though the world demands those rights. And so often, we see that in the mindset of the world laid out in Scripture which is "We deserve things. We deserve this." Or "We deserve that."

Now, unfortunately, this idea of self-centeredness and deserving one's rights has permeated the church. And we see that when a bondservant or a servant starts declaring they have rights, we find out that that servant doesn't serve according to his master's will. What do I mean? There are many churches and there are many believers who believe we have rights. "We have a right to serve Christ this way, we have a right to do this this way, we have a right to raise our kids this way" in contradiction to what God has shared in His Word. There's a Christian show on the radio where these lawyers help Christians who are being persecuted and their theme song is "We have the right given by God to live in freedom". Well, that's true maybe but do we demand these rights as believers?

Now, if you've been with us in the book of Philippians you'll certainly know that Paul is addressing the issue of unity. And at the core of this understanding of unity, as we will see today, is the mind of Christ as revealed in the Word of God. And we're going to see that Jesus, although He had rights to express His deity and use His deity according to His own will, He did not. But He humbled Himself, becoming an obedient bondservant.

## *Philippians 2:5-8*

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/17/2007*

And it's my prayer today that we will be pierced by the Word of God and our hearts will be changed, and we will think, (as the command as we will see today) like Christ. And we will be obedient bondservants, not desiring to have our rights and our needs met but desiring to obey our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Would you turn your Bibles with me to Philippians chapter 2 as we continue in our look in the book of Philippians. Now briefly, to go through the context again- the apostle Paul, about ten years earlier from writing this letter to the Philippian church, had come to Philippi as the Holy Spirit had directly led him there. And he met Lydia at the river and shared the Word with her and she was saved. And then he was put in jail for casting out a demon out of a slave girl, him and Silas, and they were singing hymns and praising God, and God caused an earthquake and set them free. And the jailer was about to kill himself because he thought his prisoners had escaped. And he saw that they were all still there, that Paul hadn't left, he hadn't sought his right to be free. And ultimately, we see, that he said, "What must I do to be saved?" And Paul said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved." And then it says he shared the Word of God with the Philippian jailer and his family, and we have the nucleus of the Philippian church as the Gospel was spread through difficulty in the city of Philippi.

In Scripture, we see that the Philippians and Paul were very close; that they were the only church that supported him numerous times when other churches did not support him. And they were very close, and they were very concerned evidently, as we will see in this letter, about Paul because Paul was currently under house arrest, in chains. Chained 24/7 to a Roman guard. And quite possibly, they were thinking, "Wow, the ministry is being hindered because Paul is chained." And Paul writes this letter back to share right in the beginning that, "No, God has used my chains for the pioneering advance of the Gospel. The whole praetorian guard has heard about Christ. That's thousands and thousands of Caesar's elite soldiers. And even there are those in Caesar's household; he says, "Give a greeting", later on in the letter implying that they had come to faith. And Paul shared within this context that he was so thankful for God's work in the Philippians, their faith and their love. And he was sure that God would complete that work in them, he was confident.

And in the context of these circumstances that man might have thought were hindering the Gospel, Paul praises God, understanding that to live is Christ. If he is going to live on in the flesh, if they're going let him go or keep him alive, it is for Christ and ultimately for the sake of the body of Christ. And to die (if he was to die at that moment), to die is gain because if you live for Christ and you die, you gain everything because you're living for Christ and you gain Christ when you die. And we saw the mindset of Paul, desiring to be with Christ. Desiring to be there as every believer should because this is not fun, this is difficult. There is suffering. But then, along with that mindset, the desire to serve Christ's body for their benefit and their good.

And at that point, we saw Paul share that he recognized that everything that was happening to him, God was using to magnify Christ and that was his desire, that whatever happened in any way, shape or form, that Christ would be magnified or glorified. And at that point, he changes the tone of this letter and directs now to the Philippians. And he desires them ultimately to, as we saw, to stand firm in the truth. To strive together for the truth and to not be afraid of the opposition of the truth. That they were to

# Philippians 2:5-8

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/17/2007

stand together, that they were to see the circumstance that God allowed- the persecution- as God's means of bringing glory and magnification to Christ.

And then we saw Paul exhorting them in the beginning of chapter 2 to have the same mind, to be like-minded, to be united in spirit. And we're going to review that as we get into our passage, which we'll see God was exhorting them to unity in Christ.

And so with this in mind, how can we have unity in the church? How can we maintain unity in the church? Do you remember what we saw in the last few weeks? I'll read verse 1 of chapter 2 in Philippians.

***<sup>1</sup> If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion [Philippians 2:1]***

And if you remember, we saw last week that these phrases were phrased in the Greek language in such a way that it was a condition that was fulfilled. If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, and yes there is. If there is any consolation of love, and yes there is. If there is any fellowship of the Spirit, and yes there is. If there is any affection and compassion, he says.

***<sup>2</sup> make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. [Philippians 2:2]***

Like-minded, same thinking. Ultimately, unity cannot be established apart from believers who are manifesting the same mind, the mind of Christ and we'll review what that means. Paul was saying, in motivating them to be united based on the truths that permeate every true believer, these wonderful truths concerning believers in Christ. And last week, we saw an evidence, an example of what like-mindedness really looks like when the rubber meets the road. Verse 3.

***<sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; [Philippians 2:3]***

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit. It literally says in the Greek, "Nothing from selfishness or empty conceit." We saw selfishness was simply the mindset of advancing one's own agenda. And empty conceit is a conceit or a pride that is really ultimately empty because if anyone thinks they are something when they are nothing, they deceive themselves. Paul says, "Never be motivated in any way, shape or form by these characteristics which ultimately are characteristics of those who do not know Christ." And if you do not know Christ today, that characterizes your life. You live for yourself and everything is designed around yourself. And the true believer is commanded to do nothing from selfishness. And then he says in contrast, "with humility of mind (lowness of mind) let each of you (every one of you) regard one another as more important than himself,"

## Philippians 2:5-8

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/17/2007

**<sup>4</sup> do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. [Philippians 2:4]**

Yes, you're going to look out, you're going to get up in the morning, you're going to get dressed, you're going to do some things for yourself but don't merely look out for your own personal interests but for the interests of others. It's the mindset of walking with the Lord Jesus Christ. We are to be continually regarding others as supreme. The word was surpassing. Rather than doing things from selfishness or empty conceit. And that word in the last phrase we saw "looking out" or "scoping", *skopeo*. Scoping out, looking for ways to exhibit love and good deeds. And I want to ask you, for those who were here last week, how did you do this week in the Lord? Did you do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit but with humility of mind regard each one as more important than himself? That's the desire, that's the command, that's what true believers should be doing by and large.

So now, with that in mind, we come into really how we can do this, how we can have this mindset, how we as believers can think the same way and not be the same. And not be robots or whatever it might be. How we can have the mind of Christ and yet still be who we are. Again, if you turn in your Bibles with me to Philippians chapter 2, and we're going to start with verse 5 now.

**<sup>5</sup> Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, [Philippians 2:5]**

You know, the church is full of redeemed sinners who still struggle with sin and our sin will inevitably bring conflict and disunity. And you've probably heard the saying, "To dwell with saints above, oh that will be glory but to dwell with saints below, well, that's another story." We know that we're not totally redeemed yet. And we have sin and there's conflict and there's disunity so how can we be united as believers? And we have the command here in verse 5, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus." And in the Greek, it's an imperative command. God is commanding His people to have this attitude in them, which was also in Christ Jesus. That's a pretty lofty command, isn't it? That's an impossible command to obey unless we totally understand our relationship with Jesus Christ. Now, just to remind you, this word "Have this attitude", this verb is present tense, it's constant. It's "continually think this way." And we saw last week that this verb translated "attitude" was the same word translated "mind" earlier, *phroneo*. It just means "think." You know, certainly our attitudes have to do with our thinking and that's why they've translated it this way. Some translations, "Have this mind in yourselves; have this attitude in yourselves which was in Christ Jesus also."

He's saying, "Think the same way." He said earlier we're to be thinking the same way; we are to be thinking the one thought. That's the same word that we see in our text. And here we are commanded to continually have this attitude. And now, before we look at the specific mindset revealed in Christ, we're going to get a glimpse into the mind of Christ during His incarnation. What a fabulous, wonderful passage of Scripture.

But before we do that, let's review how we can have the mind of Christ. How we can think the same way, being so different. If you'd put your finger in Philippians here and turn with me to 1 Corinthians chapter 2. We're going to just be reminded of this passage that we've looked at in the last few weeks

## Philippians 2:5-8

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/17/2007

which helps us understand how we can have the mind of Christ. 1 Corinthians 2, and we're going to look at verse 12.

***<sup>12</sup> Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, [1 Corinthians 2:12]***

And in context, we're going to see the things freely given is the Word of God. We can know those things freely given, we can understand, we can cut straight the Word of God if we are believers. He's going to point out in a little bit that the natural man, the one who doesn't understand the things of God, they are foolishness to him. And if you don't understand the Word of God consistently, then you're not saved. But in that, the Lord wants you to be saved. Wants you to come to faith and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. And he says,

***<sup>12</sup> Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely given to us by God, <sup>13</sup> which things we also speak, (Paul the apostle speaking the Word of God) not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. <sup>14</sup> But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually appraised. [1 Corinthians 2:12-14]***

That's why we don't try to convince those who are not in Christ all about the different doctrines in the Bible. They can't understand it. We share the gospel, which is the power of God unto salvation. And he says, verse 15

***<sup>15</sup> But he who is spiritual appraises all things, yet he himself is appraised by no man. <sup>16</sup> For WHO HAS KNOWN THE MIND OF THE LORD, THAT HE SHOULD INSTRUCT HIM? But we have the mind of Christ. [1 Corinthians 2:15-16]***

He's saying we have the mind of Christ. It's not a prideful statement, it's a statement of reality that God has revealed His thinking to us in the Word of God. We have the mind of Christ.

So how can we be likeminded, how can we think the same? We need to have God's Word permeating our thought process. Not that we're robots, not that we're the same, not that we're all just mimicking one another. It's the Word of God dwelling richly in our hearts, prompting us, leading us, guiding us.

Romans 12:2,

***And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. [Romans 12:2]***

The will of God.

# Philippians 2:5-8

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/17/2007

Colossians 3:1-3

**<sup>1</sup> If then you have been raised up with Christ,** (this is the prerequisite- if you are in Christ, you've truly come to faith and you're raised with Him) **keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. <sup>2</sup> Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. <sup>3</sup> For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. [Colossians 3:1-3]**

There's that saying, I think, too heavenly minded to be earthly good. That's totally a bogus statement. If you are truly heavenly minded, you will be absolutely earthly good. Set your mind on the things above, not the things of earth. Colossian 3:16, we must have the Word dwelling richly in our hearts.

And I've mentioned that some of you have the Word dwelling poorly. You don't even think of what God says throughout the day. And that verse should be a rebuke to us. Let the Word dwell richly. The Word of God, the powerful living and abiding Word of God that prompts us and leads us and changes us and makes us more like Christ. We have the mind of Christ revealed in the Word of God, and today we'll see specifically what Christ was thinking during His incarnation. "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus."

Now, one other observation before we get to this passage concerning His incarnation, which is His coming to earth. Paul says "In Christ Jesus", and we need to ask the question, "Why does He say Christ Jesus rather than Jesus Christ?" All Scripture is inspired by God and every word is tested. So why does he do that? In Scripture, the apostle Paul is the only one who uses the term "Christ Jesus" in that order except for Luke describing it in the history of the church. Why does Paul do this? Why does Paul say "Christ Jesus" in this order? Well, first of all, we need to recognize what does the term "Christ" mean? We sometimes, we read through so fast we don't even give significance to the name that we have here in Scripture. Christ is the Anointed One, He is the Messiah and it clearly points to the fact that God the Son is King, King of kings and Lord of lords. I'm going to read a portion of Acts chapter 17 which demonstrates this truth.

**<sup>1</sup> Now when they had traveled through Amphipolis and Apollonia, they came to Thessalonica, where there was a synagogue of the Jews. <sup>2</sup> And according to Paul's custom, he went to them, and for three Sabbaths reasoned with them from the Scriptures, (from the Word of God) <sup>3</sup> explaining and giving evidence that the Christ had to suffer and rise again from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus whom I am proclaiming to you is the Christ." (And later on we'll see) <sup>4</sup> And some of them were persuaded and joined Paul and Silas, along with a great multitude of the God-fearing Greeks and a number of the leading women. <sup>5</sup> But the Jews, becoming jealous and taking along some wicked men from the market place, formed a mob and set the city in an uproar; and coming upon the house of Jason, they were seeking to bring them out to the people. <sup>6</sup> And when they did not find them, they began dragging Jason and some brethren before the city authorities, shouting, "These men who have upset the**

# Philippians 2:5-8

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/17/2007

**world have come here also; <sup>7</sup> and Jason has welcomed them, and they all act contrary to the decrees of Caesar, saying that there is another king, Jesus." [Acts 17:1-7]**

When Paul proclaimed the Christ, he was proclaiming that there was another king; it is King Jesus, the Messiah, the Anointed One, He is the Christ, He is the King of Kings, Lord of Lords. And most of us know what His human name "Jesus" means, Yeshua, "The Lord is Salvation". In the book of Matthew, we see the angel shares to Mary,

**"And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins." [Matthew 1:21]**

Yeshua, Christ the King of Kings, Eternal Son, the King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the Anointed One, and then His human name Jesus. I think Paul is already beginning the process of explaining this passage by pointing out right away Christ's pre-existent deity, the King of Kings and then His humanity Jesus. That's what I think the order's for. And he's sharing it in that way to prepare us for what he will share in Christ.

So, we're commanded to have this mind in us. We're commanded to be thinking like this. Well, what did He think? What did Christ think and what did He thus do because of that mindset?

**<sup>5</sup> Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, (now he's going to explain) <sup>6</sup> who, (speaking of Jesus) *although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,* <sup>7</sup> *but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.* <sup>8</sup> *And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. [Philippians 2:5-8]***

Have this attitude in yourselves, this mind, this thinking which was also in Christ Jesus and here it is. I think the first thing we're going to see is He didn't cling to His equality with God. Verse 6, "Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, (and it says) but emptied Himself."

Many unbelieving scholars will say, "Well, He couldn't be equal with God, He couldn't regard it because He wasn't equal with God." But we'll see in this passage, this passage proves that wrong. In the very beginning, "...who, although He existed in the form of God". What does he mean by that? The word "existed" is not the word "to be". It's not "he was in the form of God"; it's a different word, *huparco*, which means, which stresses the essence of a person's nature, continuous state. He continually existed in the form of God. A continuous condition of something.

And we wonder, what does the word "form" mean? What does it mean, existing in the form of God? The Word translated "form" in the Greek is *morphe*. And we get our English words from that. And the

# Philippians 2:5-8

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/17/2007

word *morphe* in Greek really means an outward manifestation of what truly something is in its essence. An outward manifestation of what something truly is in its essence. Certainly, we have that understating in our English word. When someone morphs into something, they're morphing into what they truly are. And we see here that God continually existed, Christ in the form of God. He manifest Himself as He truly was.

One scholar, 19<sup>th</sup> century M.R. Vincent shares in his word studies (and I think he does an excellent job concerning this word *morphe*),

*We must here dismiss from our minds the idea of shape. The word is used in its philosophical sense to denote that expression of being which carries in itself the distinctive nature and character of the being to whom it pertains, and is thus permanently identified with that nature and character ... As applied to God, the word is intended to describe that mode in which the essential being of God expresses itself. . . It is the perfect expression of a perfect essence. It is not something imposed from without, but something which proceeds from the very depth of the perfect being...*

What he's trying to say is, He existed in the form of God; He manifest, as we will see, Who He really was before the incarnation. When you saw the Son of God before the incarnation, you saw God, you saw His glory ultimately. And we'll see that as we look in Isaiah 6 and Ezekiel 1.

Before the incarnation, Jesus existed in the form of God. His outward expression corresponded truly with His inward reality of deity. Before the incarnation, Christ existed and manifested His deity. Now, if you're wondering concerning the deity of Christ, Scriptures are clear concerning the deity of Christ.

John 1:1

**<sup>1</sup> In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things came into being by Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. [John 1:1-3]**

And we know specifically that the Word came among us and dwelt among us and became flesh.

Hebrews 1:1

**<sup>1</sup> God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, <sup>2</sup> in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. <sup>3</sup> And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; [Hebrews 1:1-3]**

# Philippians 2:5-8

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/17/2007

Colossians 1:19 **For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him,**

Colossians 2:9 **For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form,**

All the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form. It is clear that God the Son manifested His deity before the incarnation. Isaiah chapter 6.

**<sup>1</sup> In the year of King Uzziah's death, I saw the Lord sitting on a throne, lofty and exalted, with the train of His robe filling the temple. <sup>2</sup> Seraphim stood above Him, each having six wings; with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his feet, and with two he flew. <sup>3</sup> And one called out to another and said, "Holy, Holy, Holy, is the LORD of hosts, The whole earth is full of His glory." <sup>4</sup> And the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the temple was filling with smoke. <sup>5</sup> Then I said, (this is Isaiah) "Woe is me, for I am ruined! Because I am a man of unclean lips, And I live among a people of unclean lips; For my eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts." <sup>6</sup> Then one of the seraphim flew to me, with a burning coal in his hand which he had taken from the altar with tongs. <sup>7</sup> And he touched my mouth with it and said, "Behold, this has touched your lips; and your iniquity is taken away, and your sin is forgiven." <sup>8</sup> Then I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for Us? [Isaiah 6:1-8]**

Ezekiel chapter 1. When we went through Ezekiel, we saw this. Verse 26.

**<sup>26</sup> Now above the expanse that was over their heads (this is those cherubim) there was something resembling a throne, like lapis lazuli in appearance; and on that which resembled a throne, high up, was a figure with the appearance of a man. <sup>27</sup> Then I noticed from the appearance of His loins and upward something like glowing metal that looked like fire all around within it, and from the appearance of His loins and downward I saw something like fire; and there was a radiance around Him. <sup>28</sup> As the appearance of the rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the appearance of the surrounding radiance. Such was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. And when I saw it, I fell on my face and heard a voice speaking. [Ezekiel 1:26-28]**

Before the incarnation, Jesus fully manifested outwardly Who He truly was inwardly. He continually existed in the form of God. The outward expression matched Who He was inwardly. And that's what Paul is saying here- He existed in the form of God.

But the amazing thing is He didn't cling to His equality. Verse 5 again, back in Philippians, "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."

## *Philippians 2:5-8*

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/17/2007*

And here we start to see the mindset of the living God. What an amazing statement, "Did not regard equality with God as a thing to be grasped."

The word "regard" is the same word we had earlier where we're to regard one another as more important than ourselves. It's to make a decision after weighing the facts. And Jesus did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped. Some of your Bibles will say "Did not regard it robbery or something to be clutched". This word "grasped" actually had two meanings in Greek. One is something a thing unlawfully seized, like by robbery. Grasping something unlawfully; robbing someone of something. The second meaning is a treasure to be clutched and retained at all costs. And I think context leads to the second meaning. In the incarnation, Jesus did not consider equality with God, or in context, the outward expression of His deity a thing to be retained at all costs. Jesus didn't think He had to retain the outward expression of His deity at all costs. What humility. What absolute humility. Let me say that again. The incarnation of Christ Jesus, in the incarnation of Christ Jesus, Christ Jesus did not consider equality with God, and in context I believe he is speaking of His outward expression of His divine attributes and the independent use of His deity a thing to be clutched or retained. He let it go. He voluntarily released His right to reveal His glory. His right to independently act as God. He didn't stop becoming God. He didn't hold on to that prerogative of revealing that.

Now, although Jesus didn't cling to His equality, He still claimed to be God and those who didn't believe in Him knew that's what He was claiming to be. John chapter 5 verse 18. The Jews were seeking to kill Christ because He was not only breaking the Sabbath but He was also calling God His own Father, making Himself equal to God. John 10:33,

***When Christ asked the leaders why they wanted to stone Him, they answered, "For a good work we do not stone You, but for blasphemy; and because You, being a man, make Yourself out to be God." [John 10:33]***

They knew what He claimed.

Ultimately, we'll see that He manifest Himself in the form of a man, a bondservant ultimately. And He veiled His glory and His privilege to act independently using His deity. He didn't think of that as something to be clutched and held on to at all costs. Today, some people want to deny that Jesus is equal to God, that He is God the Son. Yet, even at that time His worst enemies understood what Jesus claimed about Himself. Jesus was willing to, and did, give up His right, His right to outwardly express His deity. And independently use His divine attributes, for our sake. He had the right to do that. He had the right to manifest His glory. He had the right to act independently as God the Son. But He gave that right up. This is the mindset of humility. And we have it all engrained in our hearts and minds that we have rights, don't we? Yet we are to have the mind of Christ. We are to yield our minds and our rights to the sovereign hand of God. Yielding our will to His, as revealed in the Word of God. So that He can work through us like He did in Christ, accomplishing His redemptive purposes. Maybe you think you have a right to a specific job, a specific place to live, a certain amount of kids, a right to have certain friends or free time or a right for a certain position or a way to serve in church. By the power of the Holy Spirit, in

## Philippians 2:5-8

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/17/2007

your thinking submit your rights to God. You don't have the right to choose the church that you go to! It's Scripture that determines what we do; it's what God has commanded us. We don't have a right to choose what career we go into. We don't have a right to choose anything. But God is a gracious God who will lead us in the right way. A good God who will not leave us nor forsake us. By the power of the Holy Spirit, in your thinking submit your rights to God. Have the attitude of Christ. Although He existed in the form of God, He did not consider His manifestation of that deity during this time something to be held onto, but He gave it up. Ultimately, for our sakes.

You have in your bulletins a passage in 2 Corinthians.

***For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, (speaking of His glory, manifestation of God completely) yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. [2 Corinthians 8:9]***

Folks, God wants to have us be like Christ. That through the manifestation of the life of Christ in us, by yielding up our rights to His sovereign hand in obedience, that He would work out His redemptive plan as we faithfully share the gospel to an unsaved world.

Now folks, as we continue in this text we see the incredible humility of the incarnation as Jesus willingly and voluntarily emptied Himself. Back to our passage in Philippians 2.

***<sup>5</sup> Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, (the command to think that way) <sup>6</sup> who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, (or to be retained at all cost) <sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. [Philippians 2:5-7]***

Here we see Jesus emptied Himself. The word "empty" is *ekenosen* or *kenoo* in Greek, and that's where we get the word *kenosis*. People say this is the *kenosis* passage and all sorts of scholars write all sorts of stuff about this passage but miss the main point. The main point is that we're to think like Jesus, and here's His thinking. He emptied Himself, or some translations say "made not reputation". The word just means "make void/make empty". It's a pretty simple word. And some liberal scholars will say He emptied Himself of His deity, but that's impossible because God cannot cease to be God and also, as we have seen, this passage proves them wrong. "Although He existed in the form of God."

So what does this mean, "Jesus emptied Himself"? Notice the term in verse 7; "But". But emptied Himself. Instead of grasping on and holding to His prerogative to reveal His deity, to manifest His glory, He emptied Himself. Instead of doing that, He emptied Himself, taking the form of a bondservant. He did not grasp His absolute prerogative to express His true divinity, and when people looked at Him in the incarnation, they saw a man. He was not expressing His divinity.

Now again, we have the same word, *morphe*, which means "an outward manifestation corresponding to something that is true in the inside." And here, we have Christ emptying Himself of His prerogative to relay His deity. But taking on the form (*morphe*) of a bondservant, instead of outwardly manifesting the

## Philippians 2:5-8

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/17/2007

inward reality of His divine attributes, Christ outwardly manifested the inward reality of His servant hood. For Him to display and serve, He needed to empty Himself in that fashion. To display an attribute of God that we would've never seen, an attribute that was only seen in the incarnation, an attribute of being a bond slave. And the word here is *dulos*. It's a servile term, completely of one who surrenders his will to the authority of another. And here we have a beginning of the description of the incarnation which Christ humbled Himself. Instead of manifesting His deity, He manifested the inner attribute of servant hood by taking on human flesh.

Christ Jesus emptied Himself by becoming a servant. And that's what He told people when He was here. Matthew 20, verse 25.

***<sup>25</sup> But Jesus called them to Himself (this is His disciples) and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. <sup>26</sup> "It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, <sup>27</sup> and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; <sup>28</sup> just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." [Matthew 20:25-28]***

Paul had the mindset of Christ. He didn't consider his life as dear to himself of any account, that he may finish the course, the ministry that the Lord had put before him. The mind of Christ, to be a servant. And we're going to see that the mind of Christ is not just a servant on one's own terms; it is a servant through obedience. Verse 8,

***And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. [Philippians 2:8]***

The end of verse 7—"being made in the likeness of men". Being made like man, mankind. Men, plural. And being found in appearance as a man.

The word at the end of verse 7, "likeness", *homoïoma*, speaks of being made like something, simply. Having become like men, literally in the text. And if you hold in your passage here, we're going to go quickly to Hebrews chapter 2. We're going to look at verse 14.

***<sup>14</sup> Since then the children share in flesh and blood He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil; <sup>15</sup> and might deliver those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives. <sup>16</sup> For assuredly He does not give help to angels, but He gives help to the descendant of Abraham. <sup>17</sup> Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. [Hebrews 2:14-17]***

## Philippians 2:5-8

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/17/2007

Since we're flesh and blood, He took on flesh and blood. He partook. Now, the incarnation can become confusing, but before the incarnation, God was fully God and He fully expressed it. During the incarnation, although He is fully God, He did not express His deity but He expressed His attribute of servant hood. He became fully man and thus expressed this internal attribute of servant hood. Jesus didn't become a new person when He took on human flesh. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and, yes, forever. We just saw in a brief moment of time the expression of God's love and His servant hood as He gave Himself for us. God the Son took on human flesh, became a man like us, He entered humanity, born of a woman. Like all of us. He emptied Himself; the mindset of not holding on to His prerogative but giving it up to be a servant.

Now, when Jesus came to earth we see He emptied Himself by becoming a bondservant, but what did that look like? Verse 8, "And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Now, here's that word Paul shared with those earlier- humble yourselves; lower your mind. And Jesus humbled Himself.

And being found in appearance; *gaama*. An outward appearance; when you look at Christ you saw a man when He was on the earth. You didn't see glory, you didn't see His deity; you saw a man. "And being found in appearance as a man." When Christ was on earth, everyone who looked at Him saw a man although He was fully God. What humility.

Isaiah 53:1.

***Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? <sup>2</sup> For He grew up before Him like a tender shoot, And like a root out of parched ground; He has no stately form or majesty That we should look upon Him, Nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. <sup>3</sup> He was despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; And like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised, and we did not esteem Him. <sup>4</sup> Surely our griefs He Himself bore, And our sorrows He carried; Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, Smitten of God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup> But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, And by His scourging we are healed. <sup>6</sup> All of us like sheep have gone astray, Each of us has turned to his own way; But the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all To fall on Him. [Isaiah 53:1-6]***

How did Christ humble Himself? He says here, in the middle of verse 8, "He humbled by becoming obedient." Bob read earlier in Hebrews chapter 5, where we see that He learned obedience through the things that He suffered. He humbled Himself by obeying, by doing what God said. The word "obedience" in Scripture has the word of "listening to" in a sense, the sense of hearing and obeying. Hearing and submitting. It was through Christ's submissive obedience, this giving ear, that Christ completely obeyed

## *Philippians 2:5-8*

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/17/2007*

the Father. He lived the perfect life, He gave Himself up as an offering, a sacrifice. That is how He humbled Himself to the point of death, even death on a cross.

We read earlier Jesus quoted from the Old Testament, "Behold, I have come to do Thy will." Folks, the mindset of Christ is to be wanting to do the will of the Father, submitting, obeying. Have this attitude in you which was in Christ Jesus, not holding on to your rights but as a servant obeying your Master and doing what He has said. The mind of Christ, the core of this is obedience to the Word of God. "Behold, I have come to do Thy will." And I praise God Jesus did not take His prerogative of deity and say, "Forget this, I'm going to wipe out my enemies right now." I praise God He did not claim His own rights but He followed through in perfect submissive obedience to the plan of God to send His Son to die for our sins. And I wonder what would happen in the church if we thought the same way, if we yielded our rights and simply obeyed God.

Oh brother, sister, are you thinking like Christ? Do you have this mind which was in Christ Jesus? A negation of one's own rights for the sake of others. We think we have rights, that's why we get angry because we think we have a right to something. The way to be treated or whatever it might be, but God is using our response in Christ to bring about the manifestation of Christ for His glory and the redemption of people. That's the mind of Christ. And only Christ can enable you to think this way. And only Christ can give you the power to think this way. And if you want to live like a Christian, you need to have Christ in you. Which means you need to submit to Him and His Word, and by His power do what He says. If we want to have unity in the church, have this attitude which was in Christ Jesus.

So in a nutshell, this passage is commanding us to be thinking like Christ who did not hold onto His absolute right to display and use His deity but instead became a bondservant. An obedient bondservant. And through that obedience, God brought salvation. And through our obedience, servanthood to the living God, He desires and begs through us as though He was begging through us, "Be reconciled to God."

Well, some of you do nothing but hold onto your own rights. That's how you live. And it's exhibited in every time you get angry because you think you have the right to be treated a certain way. And you don't have the mind of Christ because you can't understand the mind of Christ because you don't have the Spirit of God. You know what you need to do right now is come before God and repent of your sin. "Lord God, I've lived my way; I've been the Lord of my life and I'm sorry. And Lord Jesus, would you be the Lord of my life? I'm sorry, I repent of my sin, I believe you died on the cross for me. That you paid the penalty for all my sins."

***Whoever will call upon the name of the LORD will be saved. [Romans 10:13]***

And for those of us who are believers, God wants to use our dependent obedience in Him as part of His redemptive plan. When we hold onto our rights, we are not used by God. We need to let it go. Are you an obedient bondservant? Or do you serve Christ in your own agenda and way? And we have it going on all the time. We have people who preach from their own wisdom. We have people who go to churches based on their own desires. We have people who live based on their own thoughts rather than what

## *Philippians 2:5-8*

*Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/17/2007*

God says in His Word. And I'm amazed how tempted I am, and how many people say they follow Christ and yet hold on to their rights. We need to die to ourselves and let Christ live through us, the mind of Christ. "Have this attitude in yourselves which was in Christ Jesus."

### **Prayer**

Father, thank You for Your Word. And Lord, we recognize we fall so short. We fall so short in thinking the way You want us to think. So often, Lord God, we just demand our own way and we put Your name on it at times, Lord God. And Father, I just pray for those here who don't know You, that they would be convicted of their position before You. And that they would repent and trust in Your Son Jesus. That they would not harden their hearts. For today is the day of salvation. And Father, for those of us who do know You, may we recognize when we don't have this attitude in us we are disobeying You. Help us, Lord God, to be obedient bondservants for Your glory. Help us to obey You. Help us to submit to You. We praise you, that You were so gracious to save us unto this for Your glory. Father, help us to have this mind which was in Christ Jesus. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.

Available online at: <http://www.vancouverbible.org>

COPYRIGHT (C) 2013 Vancouver Bible Fellowship

You may reproduce this sermon transcript in its entirety for  
non-commercial purposes in accordance with

Vancouver Bible Fellowship's Copyright Policy (<http://www.vancouverbible.org/copyright.pdf>).