

TRY THINKING THIS WAY!

Philippians 2:1-11

If ever a culture had a right to think of itself as superior, it was **Greek culture**. They had excelled for 300 yrs when Paul wrote Phil.

They're still the standard in **athletic competition**, as we're reminded by Olympics, a reminder of days of glory.

They set standard for **archi-tecture**, with majestic buildings & ornate columns.

They're still renowned for **philosophy & literature**.

Greeks had many accomplishments to be proud of.

Yet day came when Greeks were overpowered by **military prowess** of Rom. empire.

No 1 could overpower them

They considered selves gods; no one dared try to stop them

Romans also boast of highly developed **legal system**.

Also prevalent in Paul's day: **religious system** in Israel.

Initiated by God Himself, Jewish theologians developed regulations that controlled every area of life.

No one had a religious system like theirs.

All these movements took pride in their accomplishments.

No one could compete in their areas of expertise.

Each had much to brag about.

Paul comes to people accustomed to this kind of thinking with a revolutionary thought:

God isn't impressed by our accomplishments!

God seeks humble people who acknowledge that He's given us everything!

None of these cultures was impressed by humility.

But, GOD exalts the humble & humbles the exalted!

In his letter to the Philippians, Paul confronts...

Satan's 2 main weapons:

Discouragement Division

These are disturbing an otherwise ideal church!

Paul 1st addresses ***discour-agement*** as he gives a...

Report concerning imprisonment 1:12-26

God's at work to glori-fy Himself!

Paul then addresses 2nd Satanic attack: Division

EXHORTATIONS TO UNITY 1:27-2:18

5 imperatives reveal conduct Paul desires.

Most important: **unity** –reflected in all 5

Emphasis of these exhorta-tions is summarized in 1st:

Live in manner worthy of the gospel 1:27-30

Call to **UNITY**

Stand firmly together to

assist one another, when confronted by opponents.

Members of a family, should unite to face opponents

Stand firmly together...

*** United in one spirit**

*** Striving together for the faith**

*** Not intimidated by opposition**

BE OF ONE MIND 2:1-4

Motivation for unity 2:1

We're encouraged by being one in Christ.

We're comforted by God's love.

We enjoy the fellowship of the Holy Spirit.

We experience God's compassion and mercy.

1 thing is still needed:

Demonstration of unity 2:2-4

7 attitudes of people transformed by gospel:

We finish process by...

Members of God's family, ought to act like family!

- * **Agreeing wholeheart-edly with one another.**
- * **Loving one another.**
- * **Working together with one heart & purpose.**
- * **Not living selfishly.**
- * **Not foolishly bragging about ourselves.**
- * **Humbly considering o-thers better than selves**
- * **Not just fighting for what concerns us,
but also what concerns others.**

3rd command Paul introduces to encourage us to unity:

THINK AS CHRIST THOUGHT 2:5-11 5 *"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus."*

One of most radical thoughts proposed in proud, self-suf-ficient, culture of great accomplishments: God Himself, Who designed & made everything, didn't cling to *HIS* rights, but was willing to give Himself for us!

What's point of this ex.?

He let go of His rights & humbled Himself!

Jesus didn't cling to equality with God 2:5-6 *"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped"*

He IS God.

He's one with the Father.

Col.: *"All that God is (the totality of God) was pleased to dwell in Him."*

He lacks nothing.

Yet, He didn't consider equality with God something to cling to, even though

He was identical in form to God Himself.

Equality with God isn't treasure He had to hang on to.

McGee: "I wish we could grasp how high He was & how low He came."

Jesus gave up His rights 2:7 *He "made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness."*

"Made Himself nothing" =nlit. "He emptied Himself"

=> He let go of everything he had right to hold on to.

NOT that He became any *less* than God!

JDP: "He divested Himself of the prerogatives of deity & of the manifestation of the glories of deity, but His essential person was not changed."

He took form of servant.

Master of all was willing to become servant.

He became like a man.

Jesus humbled Himself 2:8 *"being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself & became obedient to death—even death on a cross!"*

He was willing to become a man

Existed eternally in form of God (His essence).

Yet He was willing to take the form of a man.

Creator became like one of His creatures.

He was willing to die.

He was obedient even to the point of dying,
according to the plan

Eternal One was willing to be terminated.

He was willing to die on cross. (= criminal)

Such an abhorrent form of death that even Rome forbid it, for
all but grossest criminals.

Incredible that people would demand it for Jesus.

Holy God became sin & died as a criminal.

Therefore, **God exalted Him!**

Jesus was exalted by God 2:9-11 *“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place & gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven & on earth & under the earth, ¹¹& every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”*

God exalted Him

Ultimate application of principle: **Lk 14:11**:

*“Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled
and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

=> **1 Pet 5:6** *“Humble yourselves under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.”*

God gave Him a name above every name.

Every knee will bow at mention of His name

Purpose: That every knee should bow at His name
 every knee –in heaven

–on earth –under the earth

Every tongue will confess: Jesus is Lord.

=> So that => God might be glorified.

God will be glorified through Him.

IMPLICATIONS FOR US:

Principle we're to imitate:

God *still* exalts people who humble selves

Humble ourselves

=> *God exalts*

**1 Jn 4:11 “Since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another
 If God loves us that much, we ought to love one another.
 If Jesus was willing to give up His rights for us,
 we should be willing to give up our rights for others.**

If anyone had a reason to “stand up for his rights,” it’s Jesus!

Yet He was willing to surrender His rights—for us.

How then should we respond to others around us?

We shouldn’t cling to our rights either.

If He had clung to His rights, where would we be?

If Jesus didn’t cling to His rights, why should we?

Paul tells us to *imitate Him*.

Give up our rights

Give up our agenda

...to pursue what will benefit others,

what will benefit the body of Christ