

Consider

Since we've always been man, we do not comprehend how becoming a man can be so humbling. For Jesus it was a step of humility for him to become a man and remain a man forever. It would be like us taking on another form of existence, while at the same time maintaining our humanity. We would always remember what we once were and had given up. Jesus becoming a man was humbling enough, but then Jesus became a man to die. The purpose of his life was not to enjoy life or to fulfill the "American Dream". He was born to die. However not only did Jesus die, he was executed as a criminal. Further not only was he executed, but the type of death he endured was a curse. His execution was designed to humiliate the person being executed and reveal how little he was worth. Jesus being crucified revealed the Jesus submitted to the lowest form of death. This type of death revealed how humble Jesus was. He did not seek out at all his own self-interests. He could have died a quiet peaceful death in a comfortable bed, but his was a violent and humiliating death expressing his love for men.

Saturday, December 10, 2011

Daily theme: Jesus' humility led to his exaltation by the Father.

Questions

Read Philippians 1:9-11

1. Why did God exalt Jesus?
2. How will Jesus be exalted?

Consider

The depth of Jesus' humility reflected the corresponding exaltation that the Father gave to him. Jesus left behind glory in heaven, but the Father restored the glory that he set aside when he became a man. God the Father honors humility. This is why Peter reminds us to humble ourselves before the mighty hand of God and he will lift us up (1 Peter 5:6). Above all other men, Jesus will be honored. All other men will honor Jesus by declaring him to be Lord and kneeling before him to physically show honor to him. It is not Jesus who needs to receive honor, but it is us who need to give to Jesus honor. What Jesus set aside, the Father restored to him. In this we see the generous nature of God the Father. He will honor those who honor him. Jesus honored the Father with his dependent humility. Jesus lived his life to please the Father, not to please himself or men. Therefore the Father will honor Jesus when the proper time comes. Reflect on ways in which you can show honor to God the Father.

Kingdom living reflects Jesus and contrasts the world.

Philippians 2:1-11

Sermon Series: Christmas 2011

Devotional Notes December 5-10, 2011

Monday, December 5, 2011

Daily theme: Five benefits a Christian receives.

Questions

Read Philippians 1:1-2

1. How would Paul's joy be made complete?
2. How do the benefits of verse 1 lead to unity?

Consider

Paul began his exhortation as a continuation of what he had written earlier. Paul urged the Philippians to both believe in Jesus and engage in suffering for him (Philippians 1:29). To do so he listed five benefits of being a Christian. To empower us to both believe and suffer, we receive encouragement from Jesus himself. Jesus' example motivates us to follow his example. Paul will explain Jesus' example later in verse 5-11. Second Paul referred to the consolation that we receive from love. When we both love and are loved, we are motivated to make sacrifices, even suffer for the person whom we love. Love is the most powerful motivator known to man. When we suffer from a motivation of love, we are consoled in the midst of our difficulty. Our sacrifice and difficulty takes on new meaning. It has the purpose of communicating love to Jesus or anyone else for whom we are making a sacrifice. Third, we do not engage in difficulty alone, we have the presence (fellowship) of the Holy Spirit with us. The Holy Spirit's presence overcomes loneliness in our life as he reminds us of his presence and reminds us that our difficulty connects us with Jesus, just as the disciples rejoiced after being beaten because they were counted worthy to suffer for Jesus. Two final motivators that sustain us in difficulty are affection and compassion for others. When we have affection and compassion for others it is easier to make sacrifices on their behalf. As we deepen our belief in Jesus through suffering reproach and even physical difficulties on his behalf, we are drawn into a closer relationship with both Jesus and others who are experiencing similar difficulties. One of the outcomes of shared experiences is a closeness of relationship, because we know by experience what the other individual is feeling. In this section, Paul is inviting the Philippians to join him in suffering for the sake of Jesus, as they do so they will experience increased unity with Jesus, Paul and each other. The next time you encounter difficulty in your life, rather than defining it as a problem, see it as an opportunity to draw into a closer relationship with Jesus who suffered on our behalf.

Tuesday, December 6, 2011

Daily theme: Cooperation rather than competition defines the Christian.

Questions

Read Philippians 1:3-4

1. How does selfishness and conceit fuel competition?
2. How does Paul's instruction to look out for the interests of others fulfill Jesus' new command of John 13:34-35?

Consider

The world is fueled by selfishness and a desire to personally get ahead. Selfishness and self-concern drives competition. If man were not sinful and selfish, then there would be no reason to compete. At the earliest ages we learn competition. Games are driven by competition, winners and losers. Sports exist to identify the winner/champions in a given area. Even school promotes competition; those who get the highest grades are recognized. Competition then extends even to the business world as businesses, companies and corporations compete for a larger market share in their field. Competition fueled by man's selfish desires is so engrained in us that we find it difficult to imagine, games, sports, school and business without competition. Yet Paul offered the kingdom model, cooperation. If cooperation were the model in the world and in the church, things would look very different. We would honor those who assisted others, rather than those who did the fastest or nicest job. The member of the honor roll would be those who assisted others to improve rather than those who received the highest grades themselves. Companies would share technological breakthroughs with other companies so that they could work together to improve the product. Christians would talk about what they have in common with one another rather than their differences and what they don't agree with. If what Paul wrote here were truly practiced by the church, Christian schools and in businesses run by Christians, our society would look very different than it does now. Paul urged the Philippians to give relationship a higher priority than personal success, recognition and winning. Paul's instruction was based on Jesus' teaching. Jesus told his disciples to live out a new command. They were to love as Jesus loved. Competition does not fulfill Jesus' new command, but cooperation does. Jesus came not to be served, but to serve others and give his life as a ransom for many (Mark 10:45). When Jesus died on the cross he was not considering his own interests, rather he was considering our interests. How would Paul's instruction to cooperate rather than compete change the way that you live your life?

Wednesday, December 7, 2011

Daily theme: Our example, Jesus, did not demand to maintain his position.

Questions

Read Philippians 1:5-6

1. What attitude does Paul urge us to take?
2. What did Paul mean by Jesus existing in the form of God?

Consider

In order for us to understand what he meant by cooperation and considering the in

interests and needs of others before our own, Paul directed the Philippians' attention to Jesus. It was not in Jesus' best interests to leave heaven and become a man, but he did come. When Jesus left heaven to take on human flesh and live on earth, it was our interests that Jesus considered. Paul urged the Philippians to take on that same type of attitude. We are to live life with an open hand ready to give rather than a closed fist to hoard and protect ourselves. Paul used the same word to describe Jesus' existence as God (form of God) (1:6) as he does to describe Jesus' existence as a man (form of a bond-servant) (1:7). In other words, if Jesus became a real man, then he is also real God. The same Greek word "morphe" is used to describe both Jesus' deity and his humanity.

Thursday, December 8, 2011

Daily theme: Jesus took on a role that was far beneath his position.

Questions

Read Philippians 1:7

1. How did Jesus empty himself?
2. In what way did Jesus become a bond-servant?

Consider

Paul's words that Jesus' "emptied himself" have generated much dialogue. Some think that Paul meant that Jesus emptied himself of his deity or emptied himself of his divine attributes. However the context helps us understand the natural meaning. Jesus didn't empty himself of his deity, but of his rightful position. Jesus took on humanity and placed himself in a dependent relationship to the Father and the Holy Spirit, just as his followers now live. In so doing, Jesus modeled exactly how his followers are to live. In Matthew 4:1 we read that Jesus was led into the wilderness by the Holy Spirit. In Hebrews we read that Jesus learned obedience, even though he was the Son of God (Hebrews 5:8). Jesus followed the leading of the Holy Spirit and learned to obey through the difficult situations he faced in life. This is exactly how Christians are to live. During the Lord's Supper Jesus prayed that the Father would restore the glory that he had before he became a man (John 17:5). These passages help us understand what it meant for Jesus to empty himself. Jesus not only became a man, but he became a bond-servant. Jesus explained the meaning of this verse, when he said that he came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom (Mark 10:45). Although Jesus is God, king, prophet, priest and savior, he came to serve rebellious man, doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. How does Jesus' example encourage you?

Friday, December 9, 2011

Daily theme: Humble in life, Jesus humbled himself further in death.

Questions

Read Philippians 1:8

1. How was being a man humbling for Jesus?
2. What did Jesus being obedient to death on a cross reveal about him?