
STAND ALONE MESSAGE

LIVING WITH OPEN HANDS

PHILIPPIANS 2:3-16

3 Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. 5 Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, 13 for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

14 Do all things without grumbling or questioning, 15 that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, 16 holding fast to the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain.

INTRODUCTION

“He is no fool who loses what he cannot keep in order to gain what he cannot lose.” Jim Elliot spoke these words from a steely resolve to live a life utterly given to Christ and others. He was determined to make Christ known to a people who were abysmally lost in sin and ignorant of the Gospel. Jim did lose his mortal life at the murderous hands of the very people he endeavored to evangelize, but the Gospel broke in upon this dark tribe in spite of such a grievous loss. Jim gained an eternal reward, and a tribe of sinners gained a Gospel hearing. May God create in all Christians the same kind of resolve – to live a life utterly given to Christ and others.

MESSAGE OUTLINE:

(1) CHRIST IS THE MODEL GIVER

(2) CHRISTIANS GIVE THEMSELVES AWAY – TO CHRIST & TO OTHERS

(3) ETERNAL REWARD IS THE NECESSARY PERSPECTIVE

EXPOSITION:

(1) CHRIST IS THE MODEL GIVER

“though *he* [God the Son] *was in the form of God*, did not count *equality with God a thing to be grasped*, 7 but *made himself nothing*, taking the *form of a servant*, being born in the *likeness of men*. 8 And being found in human form, he *humbled himself* by becoming *obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross*” (v6-8)

◆ CHRIST IS GOD THE SON – THE SON OF GOD

- Christ “*was in the form of God*” and “*equal with God*” (v6)
 - Paul says elsewhere that Christ “is *the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation*. For *by him* all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created *through him and for him*. And *he is before all things*, and *in him all things hold together*” (Col. 1:15–17).
 - Jesus Himself said, “*I am the light of the world*” (Jn. 8:12); “*I am the truth*” (Jn. 14:6); “*I am the King of a transcendent kingdom*” (Jn. 18:36); and “*I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end*” (Rev. 22:13).

◆ CHRIST HUMBLING HIMSELF IN THE INCARNATION

- Christ “*made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men*” (v7)
- In spite of His perfect right to all glory and honor, God the Son humbled Himself by becoming a man.
 - John used poetic and profound language when he wrote the opening of his Gospel account of Christ.

- John said, “1:1 In the beginning *was the Word*, and the *Word was with God*, and the *Word was God*. 2 *He was* in the beginning *with God*... 14 And *the Word became flesh* and *dwelt among us*, and we have seen *his glory*, glory as of *the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth*” (Jn. 1:1-2, 14).

◆ CHRIST HUMBLD HIMSELF IN DEATH

- “being found *in human form*, he [Christ] *humbled himself* by becoming *obedient to the point of death*” (v8)
 - The scandal of all scandals! The God of the universe cannot taste death! What ridiculous notion is this?!
 - Ah, but the God/man (the incarnate deity), He has indeed humbled Himself beyond compare!
 - This is that which is a stumbling block to the Jew and foolishness to the Greek, but it is the wonder of all wonders to those who are being saved by this humiliated Priest-King (1 Cor. 1:23).

◆ CHRIST HUMBLD HIMSELF BY BEING ACCURSED

- Christ not only died, but He endured “*even death on a cross*” (v8).
 - What is the further humiliation of “*death on a cross*”?
 - Oh, this is the depth of humiliation indeed!
 - Paul said, “*Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree’*” (Gal. 3:13).
 - This is a direct quote from the laws in Deuteronomy (21:22-23). The “tree-hung” criminal is accursed by God.
 - Here, then, is the Mariana Trench of Christ’s humiliation.
 - Christ took upon Himself the curse of God on behalf of all those who trust and love Him. These He redeemed from the curse by enduring it Himself!

◆ CHRIST, THEN, IS THE MODEL GIVER

- “Have *this mind* among yourselves” (v5)
 - What Mind? The mind, posture, view that Christ exemplified!
 - Give without holding back!
 - Give without expected return!
 - Give without thought of what anyone deserves!
 - Give without consideration of what you might lose!
 - Give with utter trust and dependence upon God the Father!

(2) CHRISTIANS GIVE THEMSELVES AWAY – TO CHRIST & TO OTHERS

◆ CHRISTIANS GIVE THEMSELVES TO CHRIST IN RESPONSE TO HIS GIFT

- Because of Christ’s gift of Himself, those who believe/trust in Him must give themselves away to Christ.
 - “[Do] you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? **You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body**” (1 Co 6:19–20).
 - The Christian has no “rights” no personal “expectations”
 - He/She is completely resigned to the will of Christ, the purposes of Christ, and the rule of Christ.
 - Christ is THE Savior! Christ is THE Treasure!
Christ is THE Reward!
 - *Let all goods and kindred go... This mortal life also...* For these losses are not to be compared to the reward of Christ Himself!
- If you really believe that all I have said so far is true, then you cannot help but give yourself over to this Christ who has redeemed you.
 - If you refuse to give yourself to Christ, then:
 - You do not believe that He is ruler and judge of all.
 - You do not believe that He did actually die under the curse of God for sinners like you.

- You do not believe that you are actually sinful and worthy of the condemnation you now endure from God.
- Christians give themselves over to Christ, for He is the trustworthy one in the relationship

◆ CHRISTIANS GIVE THEMSELVES TO CHRIST SO HE WILL WORK GIVING IN THEM

- “Have *this mind* among yourselves, which *is yours in Christ Jesus*” (v5)
- “it is *God* who *works in you*, both *to will* and *to work for his good pleasure*” (v13)
 - The “mind” of selfless giving is “willed” and “worked” into the believer by God, and for “His good pleasure.”
 - You will never be a more giving person because you decide to be more giving...
 - You will be more of what God calls you to be as you give yourself over to Christ, and He transforms you by His Word and Spirit.

◆ CHRISTIANS GIVE THEMSELVES TO OTHERS TO BE LIKE CHRIST

- Think of how Paul describes what Christians ought to be in verse 15!
- “you may be *blameless* and *innocent*, children of God *without blemish* in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom *you shine as lights in the world*” (v15)
 - Who is the blameless One? Innocent?
 - Who is without blemish?
 - Who is the Light of the World?
 - And all of this is what Christians are to be!
 - We are to be like Christ, on this side of glory, giving ourselves to others for Christ’s sake and for theirs.

(3) ETERNAL REWARD IS THE NECESSARY PERSPECTIVE

◆ ONLY AN ETERNAL PERSPECTIVE WILL CAUSE ONE TO GIVE AWAY THE TEMPORAL

- “Do nothing from *rivalry* or *conceit*, but in *humility* count *others more significant* than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to *the interests of others*” (v3-4)
 - It is routine and common to see humans fight over earthly kingdoms – even super small ones.
 - This is mine! That is not yours!
 - Even in homes, corporate offices, back yards, school houses, jobsites, and church buildings, people often merely want to carve out their own little kingdom.
 - And yet, Christians are to be marked by a distinct care for others and a humility that places the value of others above ourselves.
 - “in *humility* count *others more significant* than yourselves” (v3).
 - This is a command, and not a suggestion... from the Word of God... in the New Testament.
 - How can we possibly have such a posture?!

◆ CONSIDER THE ETERNAL REWARD

- “[hold] fast to the **word of life**, so that in **the day of Christ** I may be proud that **I did not run in vain or labor in vain.**” (v16)
 - Christians understand that there is a day coming...
 - There is a day, when Christ will come in glory!
 - There is a day, when Christ will bring His reward!
 - There is a day, when Christ will destroy all sinful powers!
 - There is a day, when Christ will wipe every tear from the eyes of those who mourn the sorrows of this world!
 - AND YET... That day is only to be enjoyed by those who “hold fast”
 - Paul said that he would consider all his effort pointless if those who professed to love Christ under his ministry in Philippi did not “hold fast to the word of life.”

- There is a moment during Jesus' earthly ministry when He made a hard statement about discipleship. He said that one must abandon everything to follow Him. As is so often the case, many who professed to be disciples departed and followed no more. Jesus turned to the 12 and said, "**Do you want to go away as well?**" Then, Peter said something profound! Peter said, "**Lord, to whom shall we go? *You have the words of eternal life...***" (John 6:66-69).

APPLICATION:

- (1) Is this passage addressed to believers, unbelievers, hypocrites, doubters, etc?
- (2) What is this passage asking me to believe about the world and the world to come?
- (3) Is there an example here I am being urged to follow or avoid?
- (4) Does this passage admonish, rebuke, convict, or warn me? Why and how?
- (5) Does this passage encourage, comfort, console, or promise me? Why and how?
- (6) What is this passage intended to change in me? My family? My church? My workplace? My world?
- (7) What is there in this passage to lead me into worship?

MY PRAYERS

- May God convict us where we sinfully cling to the temporal things.
- May God forgive us as we humbly approach Him for renewal.
- May God transform us, so that we may shine as lights in the world as we await the day when Christ will make all things new.