



The Strength of the Church: Humility

PHILIPPIANS 2:1-8 | PASTOR JOSHUA WRAGG

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Well, I'm thankful to be here this morning. I hope you've had a wonderful Thanksgiving week with your family and friends. Hope it's been encouraging to you.

Last week, if you were here, you know I kind of abruptly stopped and it was actually good. If you can't tell this morning, I lost my voice, but I lost it right at the end of service. Literally when I went down, I couldn't speak anymore.

So the Lord cut me off, but I'm glad you're back and I'm here to finish. I pray that my voice holds out through this service. Please grab your Bibles and turn back to Philippians 2. That'll be our text this morning.

Again, we're gonna be in Philippians 2, covering verses one through eight. Follow along as I read. Therefore, if 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, fulfill my joy.

That you think the same way by maintaining the same love, being united in spirit, thinking on one purpose, doing nothing from selfish ambition or vain glory, but with humility of mind, regarding one another as more important than yourselves. Not merely looking out for your own personal interest, but also for the interest of others. And have this way of thinking in yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus, who although existing in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.

But he emptied himself by taking the form of a slave. By being made in the likeness of men, being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. If you were here last time, you remember that we were looking at the strength of the church.

The strength of the church, this is the part two, this is the concluding part, which I know a few of you were joking, am I gonna turn my two-part series into a three-part series? I'm not planning on it, but I might do that. What we have here in the strength of the church is two mandates from our Savior through the Apostle Paul, as he's speaking to this Philippian

church, two mandates being part of a biblically sound church, a biblically healthy church. This is what you should look for in the distinction of any church you would ever want to be a part of.

It should be the distinctions of what you want to see here at our church. It's a distinction you want to be a part of, because this is what our Savior calls you to. It's a call to unity in verses one through four, and it's a call to humility in verses five through eight.

These are the two mandates that we're going to be seeing and setting before us, and by way of reminder, let me just refresh us of where we've been at. Right at the start of chapter two, we are able to identify this therefore that's bringing us from something from before. It's these prerequisites.

It's what must take place in order for the rest of it to be true, right? This letter was written to a context. It's a context of the church of believers, from the leadership down to the saints. It's basically saying everybody's included.

You're all getting this command here, no exceptions, and the focal point for everyone comes out of chapter one, verse 27. Only live yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Hey, this is the call that we place upon ourselves as believers in Christ, that you are to live in a manner worthy of which you've been called.

Your life is not your own. You don't get to go and do what you want to do. You are now part of something because God has called you, and Paul gave us these four statements coming out of verse one of chapter two, and he does it to kind of prime the pump for us, to kind of set the scene, to help us remember about what that calling looked like in Christ Jesus, and as we walk through those, we would say it like this.

Have you been lifted up in your spirit based on what Christ has done for you? Do you dwell on the overwhelming solace of being the recipient of God's merciful love? Do you realize that you've been made inseparably connected by the Holy Spirit with the other believers in the body of Christ? You're part of one body, and have you known and experienced that you're taken care of by God himself? Right, and these, we would expect the answer of yes, yes, yes, and yes. I expect all those to be true of us for those who call upon the name of Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and Paul's expecting those to be true, so he's priming the pump saying, okay, therefore, because of all this that has been done for you and to you, here's what I want you to do. Here's something now I'm placing upon your shoulders.

Not as obligation by force, Paul could command it by force, but he's basing it on the reality of what God has done for you. Because of that, here's what I want you to do. Fulfill my joy.

Now, Paul's not being selfish, saying, hey, just make me happy. He's just saying, I know what would actually take away from my joy, complete joy, fulfilled joy, but what would that be? Paul says he wants us to live in unity with one another. Live in unity with those around you in the body of Christ.

Live with the brothers and sisters who God has placed alongside you. You didn't get to choose them, you didn't get to pick them, but they are there, right there with you, alongside you. Live in unity with them.

And Paul, as we saw last time, gave us four indicators to make sure that we're actually pursuing this accordingly. It's not pursuing unity according to your own way, your own standards, your own mindset. And he gave us four of them.

He says that joy is fulfilled when we think the same way. Right, this means that the church here is to strive in everything that they do to agree with one another in doctrines, in morals, in the values of life, in the judgments of life, in the opinions of life. You're not an isolator or a rogue Christian.

This is directed at how one thinks about life, what you dwell upon, how you ponder it, that you think the same way as those around you. We also looked at, he says that joy is fulfilled when we maintain the same love, right? Maintain it, which means that we actually don't produce it, we just get a good opportunity not to mess it up, because we would mess it up. We would do that by pursuing something sinfully.

We're reminded of passages like 1 John 4, 19, we love because he first loved us. Right, we go out and we love others, we maintain that same love because we recognize what God has done for us in Christ Jesus. Next, joy is fulfilled by being united in spirit.

This is a desire to be one souled with those around you, to live in harmony with your brothers and sisters in Christ and other believers. It's not to be connected in this emotional, like evisceral way, but it's to say I'm striving to make sure I do nothing that would disrupt the harmony of those around me. And we look through the eight deeds of the flesh that actually would be practicing living like the world, all of which would disrupt unity in the church.

There's eight of them that come out of that list, over half of them would cause a problem with unity. There's enmities, there's hatred towards somebody, there's strife that's struggling with others. There's jealousy, fearing to lose what you have.

There's outbursts of anger that's fighting to control. There's selfish ambition, which is just pride on display. There's dissensions causing quarrels, there's factions, which is causing separations.

And then there's envying, that's ill will towards others who have something. All these things, if you are pursuing any of those, you're not being one soul with those around you, you're not living in harmony with those around you, you're not loving those around you. See, to be united in spirit means we long to put off the practices of the deeds of the flesh and we long to put on the fruits of the spirit.

And then there was one more, joy is fulfilled when we think on one purpose, one singular purpose. The purpose here is to have that opinion with careful consideration. I'm not just running around doing what I want, however I want, in the manner I want.

But again, placing the mind at the forefront of unity, it's saying, I'm thinking carefully about what I'm dwelling upon, and I'm thinking carefully about how I'm even using that amongst the body of Christ. This is a call to deliberate and intentional striving to be in agreeance with your brothers and sisters in Christ. And what does this take of us? It takes time, patience, enduring with others, enduring with their opinions that are different than ours, practicing those things, but also being careful about what I dwell upon, what I'm thinking about.

And all this was motivated upon the common connection that we have in Jesus Christ, right? The same way, the same love, one way with one purpose all united, right? This is what Paul is priming us for, this is what he's saying, this is the call, is that you're to be unified with those that God has placed around you, that you're striving to do these things together. And we saw those four indicators kind of as a warning light on a dashboard. If you're not living to them, it kind of goes off and you go, uh-oh, I might have a problem under the hood.

I might have a disunity problem. Now, this brings us up to speed where we left off last time, right? The call to unity is bound to our connection in Christ. The call to unity is indicated by our singular identity with others in the body of Christ.

And then the call unity is demonstrated in our preferential treatment towards others in Christ. This is the means to unity. This is practically how we flesh it out.

If the others were about the motivations and the desires that kind of keep us on the right path, this is actually doing the work. This is how it looks in your life, in my life. And Paul gives five of them for us.

Means number one in verse three, doing nothing from selfish ambition. Do nothing from selfish ambition. And it's kind of self-explanatory, right? Do nothing from selfish ambition.

You can't be unified in the body of Christ if all you think about is yourself. And yet what do we have? We have Paul here writing it, so we do need to highlight it a little bit more. Doing nothing here is actually a strong prohibition.

It's a, do not even think about it. Kids, you know this sound when you have your parents around and they just stop you and they say, what you just did, I don't want you to ever think about doing that again. They're not just giving you a suggestion, they're saying, knock it off, period.

Here's what we have from the Lord. Don't even think about it. Don't even entertain the idea that you can go and be selfish and be unified in the body of Christ.

It's an impossibility. See, selfishness is this ugly sin and we so often concede in other people pretty easily, and yet we so struggle to see it in ourselves. We dismiss it, we justify.

This is why it's good for us to be here. To trust those around us, to shape us. And I would say this against popular belief, selfish ambition is not just for teachers.

Oftentimes we look at this and say, oh, selfish ambition, that's just for people striving to be up on stage. People be teachers, people aspiring to positions of leadership. It's not what Paul's saying.

He's saying for the entire church, all of you do not be selfishly ambitious. This would be anybody who would try to gain an advantage over another by placing themselves over another. See, believers are not to see themselves as in a higher authority over another and thus looking down upon them.

This would include what you do, how you treat people, and how you think about people. This would be being careful on just how you even view and speak about that person based on your perspective. Some of you might be thinking, well, I might just be sharing a thought, but a careful mind will consider that how you talk about people, how you think about people, how you even set yourself above people actually shapes other people's opinions of that person that you're speaking of.

God doesn't want us to be selfishly ambitious. He doesn't want us to put ourselves in a position where we're putting ourselves over somebody else. He doesn't want us to put ourselves in a position where we're speaking down to somebody else as if we are in a higher authority.

MacArthur would say it like this, selfish ambition is often clothed in pious rhetoric. And it's accomplished by those who are convinced of their own superior abilities in promoting the cause of Christ. James would call this behavior selfish ambition.

He would call it earthly, natural, and even demonic. See that unity is threatened in the way that we think and treat others in the body of Christ. Unity is threatened when we seek our own way.

I gotta have it my way. My perceptions, my desires, my opinions, they rule, my comforts, they're master. We're just disrupting unity in the body of Christ.

Well, Paul gives us another one in verse three. He says, do nothing from selfish ambition or vain glory. This vain glory, it carries over that same emphatic idea of don't even think about it.

If selfish ambition is the pursuit of exalting self, it's the pursuit of making yourself above somebody else, then vain glory is actually the prize for having obtained it. It's what you get when you get there. It's this empty glory.

It's literally what it means. It means emptiness, empty glory. Now there is true glory.

There is a glory that is, we would call gravitas. It's weighty. It's true glory that comes from the Father.

It even comes later in this chapter two here, verse 11. But that's not the glory that Paul is talking about here. This empty glory, this vain glory, what he's talking about is glory that is produced for men, by men, for the praises of men.

It'd be like receiving an award and you walked up and you looked at this award and it says, loves himself the most, cares about himself the most. It's a worthless trophy. You just would have inscribed that on there by your own hand.

See, we live in a culture that loves self-exaltation. It loves promoting self. It loves to put self on display.

It says, go and seek your own desires. That's okay. Yet at the end of that worldliness, at the end of that road, that's just this empty glory.

It's vain glory. See, Christ saved you not to go live your own way, to live what you wanna do, but to go and live for his purposes, his causes. He would tell us in Galatians 6.3, for if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.

See, later in this letter, chapter three, verse 19, Paul's gonna talk about this vain glory. He's gonna say, those who reap it, those who actually benefit and gather, it is to their own shame. God doesn't want us pursuing this empty glory, this pursuing this fleeting thing of this world.

Solomon would call it in Ecclesiastes, vanity of vanities. It's like the steam off the top of a coffee cup. It's empty, it's worthless, it's vain.

So at the get-go, the two means, if he says, well, we're not to pursue a selfish ambition, we're not to pursue vain glory or those things that would harm unity, well, then what should we pursue? What would produce unity? Well, that's our third means that he gives us. He says, with humility of mind, regard one another as more important than yourself. With humility of mind, regarding one another as more important than yourself.

See, humility, this is the staple of the Christian character. This is actually the virtue and the heart of every Christian virtue. It's what's behind, it's what you should be striving for.

It's the only mechanism that actually would cause us to be unified with one another, is forsaking pride and living humbly. Matthew 5, three, Jesus calls humility blessed, or those who pursue humility blessed for they possess the kingdom of heaven. 1 Peter 5, five and six affirms that God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

So we have to say, well, what is this humility? What is it that God wants us to be producing? What is it that is unique about this that would help us even strive after it? In his wonderful book, it's really more of a pamphlet. It's a convicting book. It says, *From Pride to Humility*, Stuart Scott writes on this very subject.

He defines humility this way. When someone is humble, they are focused on God and others and not self. Even their focus on others is out of a desire to love and glorify God.

He continues with that quote. He says, Humility is seeing yourself as no better than others. A humble person understands the sinfulness of his own heart and he would never see himself as better than anyone else, no matter who the person is.

I would just say this, the longer you're a Christian, the harder this is to do. The more that God actually causes you to grow and mature and be Christ-like, the harder it is to be

humble. Not because you're not understanding what humility looks like, it's because you're recognizing just how sinful you are.

Lord, keep me from myself. When you're considering other people, do you often speak critically and condemning of them? While at the same time saying of yourself, I'm just being cautious, I'm being concerned for them. It's not humility of mind.

And this is what we said earlier, it's a self-righteous pride in hiding. See, what Paul is saying is when you go after tearing people down, you're destroying the body as of being humble and saying, you know what, I'm actually the cause of the problem here. Maybe I don't understand, maybe my perception's wrong.

Maybe I'm not seeing all the factors here. When you talk ill of others, when you think ill of others, when you speak ill of others, when you only see them in a bad way, this destroys unity. William Barclay would say it this way, a Christian love is that unconquered benevolence and goodwill which will never know bitterness and will never seek anything but the good of others.

A man lives in disunity with his fellow man, he has thereby given proof that the spirit is not his. Some pretty strong words from a theologian. When you're pursuing tearing down brothers and sisters in Christ when you're not living humbly, he's saying, I don't even know if the spirit of God is alive in you and at work in you.

See, to make others more important means that you seek their best, not your own. It means you filter your mind through passages of scripture like 1 Corinthians 13, right? All the effects of love, I want to put those on, I want to put on every characteristic of love as I interact with people. And the fight of the flesh here in this very passage where it says, put on humility, it's a continual, ongoing fight.

It's not a one-time thing. Oh, I put on humility back then. Remember Christmas last year? I was so humble.

This is an ongoing, continuous battle. You don't get to look back and say, I used to do this, or I've been striving for it before. It's a daily thing.

Each and every moment we strive to be humble. And it's not that you personally are not important, but to pursue others in biblical unity is to say that I want to consider you as more important. God's not calling you just to be a dad, He's not calling you to be a martyr.

He's saying, I want you to consider others as more important than yourself. It's highlighted in the commandment, right? When they're speaking to Jesus in Luke 22, it says that, what is

the greatest commandment? He says, love the Lord God with all your heart, mind, and soul. And the second is like it, love your neighbor as yourself.

John 13, 35, Jesus says, the world will know that you are my disciples by your love for one another. When you consider others as more important than yourself, the world, the watching world, the unbelieving world will know that you're different than them. Parents in the room, your unbelieving children, they will know you are gods by your biblical love for one another.

Your demonstration of humility saying, I don't need to have it my way. I don't need to go about promoting my own path, my own ways, my own standards. It's gotta be done this way.

I always like to ask people, how do you empty a dishwasher? How do you load a dishwasher? Everybody's got their own way. Here's where we say, you know what? It doesn't have to be my way. Frankly, it's better that it's not my way.

We demonstrate humility by living biblically and loving one another in unity. To live in unity means we prioritize and prefer people no matter how much they disrupt your life or day. Oh, that one's hard.

You kids in the room, it's hard for parents when you disrupt our day. You will know one day. But here's what humility looks like.

You know what? It's okay. God has allowed this to be for my good. Former pastor of mine, Brian Arnold out in Florida, he said it this way, love is a selfless and sacrificial commitment to seek the highest good of another regardless of their merits.

What does that mean? It means you don't have to go and get your life better before I actually start loving you and pursuing your best and considering you as more important than me. It means I can demonstrate it right now even when you're a completely messed up sinner still trying to figure it out. This is what Paul is calling us to do.

And due to the fallenness of man, the world has no problem seeing or identifying self-seekers and self-promoters. I mean, that's all they care about. But for us to live set apart, for us to be living for God, to be chosen by God, when they walk through those doors, when they go into your homes, when they interact with you, the world should see that these people are different.

They live in a way that says they love others around them even when those people don't even warrant it. What means number four, Paul gives us. Verse four, he says, not merely looking out for your own personal interests.

To look out is to be on guard for, to be watchful, to be deliberate, to be paying attention. We usually don't have to convince anyone to care for ourselves, right? You don't have to convince me to care for myself. I naturally do that.

But what's being expressed here is this constant vigilance, this daily repetition of saying, I want to make sure I'm caring for you over me. I'm not gonna look out for my own interests. It's to give an emphatic, careful, close attention to what I am doing to make sure I don't mess it up.

Not spending my time figuring out how the ways you guys are doing things wrong, but say, Lord, what am I doing that's causing harm? Again, Paul's not calling people to fatalism. He's not calling us to be martyrs. He's just helping us understand it is easy to realize how quickly it is to disrupt unity in the body.

All we did is go around and focus on what we want. Instead, here's what he's saying. We're gonna protect unity by taking all those things, our personal interests, our opinions, our judgments, and we're just gonna hold them loosely.

So as anybody comes along and they say, you know what, that's actually not helpful, we quickly let go of them. You know what, I don't need them. We strive to hold on to what the scripture says.

We fight for what the scripture say. We hold dogmatically to what the word says, but our own personal opinions, let it go. It's okay.

I don't have to have them. I don't need to look out for my own personal interests. I can give them up if necessary.

1 Corinthians 13, five plainly says that this way, love does not seek its own. Like if you need me to give that up, not a problem. It's okay.

Well, Paul gives us one more means here. He gives us a final contrasting means, right? In verse four, he says, not merely looking out for your own personal interests, but also the interests of others. If we're gonna be connected in ministry, and we are being part of this church, we're gonna strive to be intent on one purpose, which I hope we are.

We must be on the lookout for that which blesses the body of Christ and not just ourselves. I need to be intentional thinking about what would bless you in the body of Christ? What would care for you in the body of Christ? What would meet your needs in the body of Christ? James Montgomery Boyce said it this way. The unbeliever naturally puts himself first, others second, and God last.

He thinks he merits the order. The Bible teaches that we should reverse the series. God is to be first, others must be second, we must come last.

See, to help the weak, we must be strong for them. We must recognize, you know what, it's gonna take me to be strong for you when I see that you're weak. To bear one another's burdens, we actually have to know them.

We actually have to say, will you let me take that from you? We actually need to place them upon our own shoulders and carry them. To not be a stumbling block means we need to set aside that which we have a right to in our freedom as Christians. To love others means we need to be patient, enduring, believing the best in them, and hoping the best for them.

See, when we get to the end of these means here, when we are not focused on bestowing the outpouring of love that God has outpoured on us, that he has granted us, when we don't look at life and what God has done for us, we are dangerously flirting with disunity in the body of Christ. And not just being caught up into it and being part of it, but being the driving force behind it, you cause the disunity by the way you were thinking about yourself and not others, by the promotion of what you wanted and not giving it up. Now, what Paul has just called every believer to do is no small thing.

And I don't want you to think I think it's a small thing. It's a mighty thing to do what he's calling us to do. And in fact, he's about to anchor it to our Savior to help us understand just how we are able to pursue this.

It's to keep us from turning inward or even on each other. Verse five, have this way of thinking in yourself, which was also in Christ Jesus. The strength of a biblically healthy church, the strength of what cornerstone Bible church should be should be found right here in this verse.

It's the full call to humility. This is a command here. I want you to place this thinking in your mind that was in Christ Jesus.

This is not just casual, this is actually deliberate. You must think the way he thinks. You must process it the way he processes.

See, the reason we often struggle to be unified with us around us and to think of them as more important than ourselves is because we are not looking at life through the lens of Jesus Christ. We're looking at it through our own lens. You remember those bracelets? What would Jesus do? People walk around with them.

I think they'd be a little bit more accurate. What would Jesus think, right? Because it says, have this way of thinking in yourselves. But I do get it, the way you think is the way you make your decisions.

But this is the command here, right here. Verse five, have this way of thinking in you. And the reason it's a command here is because it's not natural to ourselves.

God wants us to match our thinking to Christ Jesus, to literally mimic it in every way. And God is not asking you to walk a road that is impossible. He's not asking you to do something that's so extreme that nobody else can walk it.

He understands your circumstances and the trials of your circumstances. And frankly, he's about to give us the example of the greater to the lesser. He's gonna say, I want you to look to Christ.

I want you to look to the Savior who walked the greater thing, the suffering, even to the point of death, death on a cross. I want you to look to him to help you understand your situation, the lesser, the one that's not as great as what Christ took on. I want you to do that so then you can live humbly in a manner worthy of the gospel.

So what is this kind of thinking that Paul wants us to put on by looking at Christ? First, Jesus did not use his position to get what he wanted. Verse six, have this way of thinking yourself, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although existing in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped. Now, what does it mean to exist in the form of God? This is where you get a little bit of the Greek behind you.

And just to help us in our English, there are two words for form in the Greek. There's the word *morphe*, right? The word *morphe* and then the word *schema*. Now, William Barclay describes the difference between these two.

Morphe is the essential form of something. It never alters, it never changes. *Schema* is the outward form, which changes from time to time, from circumstance to circumstance.

A baby, a child, a boy, a youth, a man of middle age, an old man, all have the *morphe* of mankind. They're the same, they are always man. And yet they have the *schema* that changes over time as they grow old.

See, the morphe never alters, the schema continually alters. So what is being described about Christ is that he is the morphe of God. He is the unalterable thing of God.

He is the unchanging thing of God. He is the exact and essence of the divine always. I believe the NIV actually captures this translation the best.

It says, who being in very nature God. They don't diminish who Jesus Christ is in this passage. See, Jesus is always equal to God and exactly God, and his status is above all things and over all things and sustainer of all things, and it never diminishes and it's never cast aside.

But it says here in this passage, who although existing in the form of God, the exactness of God, he did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped. He did not regard it. He did not count it.

He did not consider it. He did not take it into factor as he was thinking about this. Thinking about what? His equality with God.

He did not say, hey, let me remind you of who I am over all things to use that over you. This term here, something to be grasped, it is like claiming a title or seizing property. It's really like snatching at it.

It's grasping at it pretty intently. And while Christ had every right to as the supreme one, he chose not to. He chose not to.

And he chose not to engage with something greater for something that had a greater purpose. He was not making much of his position here, but he was setting it aside. One systematic theologian, he explains it this way.

He is telling us and what he is and who he is and these things he did for us that we may appreciate the great things that he did for us. John Kitchen quoting another man says, the point is this, that Christ did not use his equality with God in order to snatch or gain power or dominion. He wasn't trying to climb up the social ladder.

He wasn't trying to climb up the religious ladder. He wasn't trying to be the most. He already is the most.

Louis Choffer would say this way, Christ emptied himself of self-interest, not clutching his exalted state, however rightfully his own as a prize too dear to release on behalf of others. So if Christ did not use his position to protect himself or put himself over others, then what

did he do? Right, this is what God is calling us to do is not to use our position, not to use our status to put ourselves over others. But secondly, he would say this, Jesus set aside his position and willingly took on another's.

Verse seven, but he emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, by being made in the likeness of men, being found in appearance as man. Emptying himself here, this is the work in Echeneo. It's where we actually get this theology called kenosis theory, came out of the late 1800s by this German theologian.

And he basically is saying this word means like a glass, if you put a bunch of water in it and you pour it out, the glass was now empty, he emptied himself. It's actually not true. Jesus Christ is in the form of God, he's in the morphe of God, he never changes, he doesn't pour out his attributes, he doesn't diminish his attributes, he doesn't cause them to be less than what they are.

And actually something else is going on here, he's not becoming less than what he is, he actually is doing something different, who although existing in the form of God, he emptied himself by taking on the form of slave. This is where mathematicians really don't like it, it's because it's subtraction by addition. What's he doing? He's emptying himself, he's making himself nothing, he's making himself of no regard by what he's taking on.

And he's taking on something very rich here, he's taking on the morphe of man, the completeness of man. That's why we say in our theology, Jesus is fully God and fully man, he's never less than either one of them. Here we have in this amazing verse, God Almighty, the creator, the sustainer, the upholder of all things, he's stooping low and becoming a man who is made in his own image.

It takes emptying of yourself to do such a thing. In a very picturesque way, Jesus did this in John 13, when he washed the disciples feet and he laid aside his position to be the servant. Here in Philippians 2 is the most magnanimous way it's described.

God himself took on this role, the king who is unalterably the king, he's always the king, but yet he took on the form of a slave, a servant, part of his own creation. Isaiah 53 verse two would say this way, for he grew up before him like a tender shoot and like a root out of the parched ground, he had no stately former majesty that we should look upon him, nor appearance that we should desire him. Louis Chafer again says, he being Jesus is the God man, mysterious indeed to finite minds, but nonetheless, actually according to the testimonies of the scriptures, if he is to serve as the mediator between God and man, it is to be expected that he will be complex beyond human comprehension.

Here's what's on display here. The most glorious thing, God Almighty, who's ruler of all things, he's literally taking on the lowest that he can to serve another. And he's being found in the appearance of man in the beginning of verse eight.

This is not the word *morphe*, this is the word *schema*. Yes, he is God Almighty, he's in human form, exactly both of those. And yet here's what we have, this *schema*, that which looks different.

This is how the disciples could be around him and not completely consumed. This is how they can look upon the face of Jesus Christ and not be immediately put out of existence. He made his *schema* different.

Here God is making himself like his creation so that he could be the ultimate servant and sacrifice himself for the sins of all those who would believe in him. And it says that he did this willingly. He did this willingly, he did this voluntarily, he did this on his own accord, nobody's forcing him to do it.

He emptied himself, he took on the form of a slave, he came in the likeness of man. He was found in the appearance of man. MacArthur would say, he left the worship of saints and angels to be despised and rejected by men, submitting himself to misunderstandings, denials, unbelief, false accusations, and every sort of reviling and persecution.

John Frame would say, this is an ethical point, not a metaphysical one. Paul is not telling them to behave differently, he's not saying set aside those things that make you uniquely you. He's saying, I want you to live in the way Jesus Christ lived.

Grudem would say it this way, he's not asking them to give up their intelligence or strength or skill to become a diminished version of what they are. Rather, he's asking them to put on the interests of others first. This is why Paul is bringing us here, not to say, did God set aside some attributes or other attributes, that's an impossibility.

He's saying, I want you to recognize the greatest one ever took on the lowest position ever to serve another, you go and do the same. You think like you're the greatest one, you're a savior. Why did he do this? Why did Jesus do that? Well, he tells us at the end of verse eight, Jesus stayed in this lowly position because this is what was God's plan for him.

He humbled himself by becoming obedient, obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Jesus humbled himself. That is, he cared more about others than he cared about himself.

He became obedient to the point of death. Jesus in Luke 22 would say, Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me, but not my will, yours be done. This is the kind of thinking Jesus wants us to put on as he tells the apostle Paul to write these things.

You go and say, not my will, but God, yours be done here. I need to have my way, or what is it you want me to do here? Jesus' life is serving others. It was a call to give of himself, and it took him all the ways it says, to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Now, the cross is not just a symbol of death. I mean, it was, but it's the ultimate in torture and humiliation, and you're gonna go through physical suffering like none other. It was excruciating, but for the believer, we recognize the cross as something more than that.

The cross is where the payment and penalty of our sins, my sins, he bore. He didn't just die. He died to pay for my sins.

He died to pay for your sins if you would believe in him as Lord and Savior. Colossians 2.14 says, "Having canceled out the certificate of debt "consisting of decrees against us, "which was hostile towards us, "he's taken it out of the way, "having nailed it to the cross." The cross is where Jesus humbly went to pay a penalty, to cover all the sins of all who would believe, and he did it willingly to be obedient to God the Father. Someone would say, why, why would you do that? Why would you do all this for the sinner, the enemy, the undeserving, the person who hurt me? He says, why would you do that? Why would you call me to go do that? Well, in Jesus' case, it tells us, "Therefore God also highly exalted him "and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, "so that at the name of Jesus, "every knee will bow at those who are in heaven "and on earth and under the earth, "and that every tongue will confess "that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." This is what God's glory looks like.

I don't have to trust in my own way. I trust in God's way, why? Because he's got a better plan for me than me fighting and clamoring to get my little opinion, my little preference in my way in this world. Lord, if you want me to go and suffer for you, let it be, why? Because you know what's best for me and you know what's better for me, not just in this life, but in eternity.

See, God's ways are not only not our ways, but they are better than our ways. For us to be humble, it says, I don't need to have it my way, Lord, I trust in you to lead me no matter where I have to go. See, to be unified in this body, to be humble in this body, it means that we have to put on the mind of Jesus Christ, "Not my will, but yours be done, Father." I have to actively think, Lord, I cannot be clamoring for my way.

Oh Lord, what would serve you? We need to have the mind of Paul, which he said in this very letter, for me to live is Christ. I wanna walk in a manner worthy of which I've been called and to die is gain. We need to remember that our lives are not our own.

I don't need to fight to have what I want. God has called me, he's literally placed me in his body so that I might live for him. And I might be able to seek to serve and love those around me, others around me, no matter what it's gonna cost me, and no matter the merit in them.

You know what? There is no merit in me when Jesus died for my sins. There is no merit in you when Jesus died for your sins, and yet he voluntarily, willingly gave it all. With the testimony of the Lord himself and with the testimony of his gracious gift of putting us in the body of Christ, would it say that you are a me first person or a Christ first person? Ask yourself this, what is being modeled by you as a member of Cornerstone Bible Church for all the world to see? Your spouse, your kids, your coworkers, your neighbors, and everyone you run into, do they see you trusting in God no matter how hard life gets? Or do they see you trying to get others to conform to your world? Would you just stop just being a little bit like that and just be what I want you to be? Are you willing to spend your life for the blessing and benefit of others no matter what the cost might be? See, the scriptures, they repeatedly point us to the cross as our hope, our example, and our access to spiritual blessings.

Do you see your sufferings as a hindrance in your life? Or do you see them as access to grace that comes from the Savior? Or this is a wonderful opportunity for me to receive grace from you. Are you willing to give and never receive? See, this world, it tells you that you are wronged if you are hurt. But our Savior, He models for us something different.

It's okay for you to be hurt if it's according to God's will. It's okay for you to suffer if God wants you to walk through this path. Do you trust in yourself and in the world? Or do you trust in Christ? Has your heart been sensitive to spot any way you're bringing disunity into the body of Christ? Are you sensitive of your thoughts, your attitudes, your actions towards others in the body of Christ? Do you use your position to get what you want? Dads, parents, leaders? Or do you desire to willingly set aside your rights to bestow blessings upon others? Willing to take on the lowliest of servants' positions.

It's okay if I get walked upon. Are you willing to be made low for Christ's sake even if the cost is every comfort and every desire you will ever have? That's why Christ modeled the greater to the lesser. He gave His life all the way to the cross.

We struggle sometimes to just give up just a little bit. Paul says, have this way of thinking in yourself which is in Christ Jesus. Put this on, follow Him.

When we consider this calling, we say, no wonder it takes humility. Because at the end of the day, in order to accomplish that, in order to be unified with others around me, in order to trust in God's sovereign plan, I must first and foremost die to self. And that is not an easy task.

Lord, give us the grace to be able to accomplish what you've called us to and Philippians 2. Let's pray. Father in heaven, I thank you, Lord, for one, holding my voice long enough to get through this service. Lord, and more importantly, I thank you for Philippians 2. If we but learn to live what verse five says, that we would just learn to think like you, to live like you, to be fully trusting in the Father as you are, to not fight for what we want in this world, to not use our position, to not regard it in some high esteem, to not clamor to get more.

Set all that aside, to willingly give it up, to run after laying it aside because Lord, there's a greater thing for us to do and that's to live in you and trust in you and follow in the model you've laid before us. Lord, may we not be proud here at Cornerstone Bible Church. May we not be causing disunity in the body with fighting with others, but Lord, may we truly learn to trust you and trust your word and love those around us and seek to serve them regardless of their merit.

Lord, we know they're sinners, we're sinners. There's nothing that would ever make them deserving other than the fact that you died to show us what it means to truly sacrifice for the undeserving, the sinner. May we, as we've proclaimed that in our lives, may we turn around and show that and extend that to those in the body of Christ for your name and your glory.

Amen.