

God's Glory or Vain-glory?

(Phil. 2:1-11)

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Note: The text below was prepared for oral delivery rather than for publication in print. As such, be aware that sentence fragments are intentionally used and that this document has not been edited to correct the errors in grammar, sentence structure, etc.

I. Introduction ó Announce text & title

II. Text ó (Read Phil. 2:1-11)

Text and Associated Scripture Review with Commentary:

- A. Vss. 1-2 identifies "Who" ó to whom He is speaking directly. Vs 1 ó "Therefore" in the text tells us that it is based upon what was said previously. Soí (Read Phil. 1:21-30)
- B. Vss. 3-4 ó Describes the mindset in which we are to be united
- C. Vss. 5-11 ó The supreme example of true humility ó the Person & work of Christ

III. Role Model (Example) and Redeemer (seen in the example to those to whom Paul is speaking)

A. 2 Categories of People will hear this message:

- 1. Sinners reading someone else's mail ó who merely imagine having an interest in Christ.
- 2. Sinners who truly find consolation in Christ (those written to in vs. 1) ó For them Christ is more than a role model ó but also a Redeemer.

B. Category 1 ó Religionists, many who imagine that they find consolation in Christ: But I want us to examine how to distinguish this "imagined" consolation from those who truly find comfort in Christ. In short, these still imagine (as we all by nature prior to God-given faith are prone to do) that what He accomplished (vs. 8) merely sets the stage, merely makes them savable, or their salvation possible. These should shudder in fear and distress when they read vss. 3 & 4:

1. Vss. 3 & 4:

- a. The requirement of Perfection ó "let nothing be done" (This is not a command of degrees but of perfection).
- b. In perfect humility:
 - (1) Strife ó means in contention
 - (2) Vainglory ó means empty glory; glory in self
 - (3) If they cling to the notion that salvation is conditioned on the sinner (in some way or to some degree), then we see manifested therein the height of self righteous pride. To think such is to indeed imagine or esteem your self to be better than others (not vice versa). The height of vain-glory is a denial of what Christ accomplished for it is to glory or boast in that which is vain ó the work of man ó to imagine that salvation is ultimately conditioned on the sinner in contrast to salvation being solely by one whose life and death were far more than a mere example but, rather, was an accomplishment for us that He endured as the finisher of our faith.

- c. So as long we cling to the notion that surely there must be something I can do to be saved, then any imagined consolation one thinks they have in Christ is just that ó imaginary.
 - d. But many draw an erroneous Conclusion from this scripture ó that is, that God really doesn't require perfect compliance with this command since none meet this standard. They fail to see that Christ's perfection (His righteousness) was MORE than a role model ó failing to see a Redeemer ó who got the job done. To redeem is more than an attempt made, it is a price paid!
2. They need to hear with spiritual ears vs. 8 (read) ó The Gospel ó Obedient unto death
- a. Persevered in perfection to death ó this refutes the idea that He became sin inherently, rather we know that He was made sin in the same way those He represented were made righteous ó by the charging of it, i.e. ó imputation.
 - b. This obedience unto death is no less than His perfect satisfaction to God's law and justice ó both in precept and penalty ó His righteousness.
3. Turn with me to Romans 15: We know from other scriptures that His death refers to more than a mere example. (Note: He was “... ***made under the law to redeem them that were under the law...***” (Gal 4:4)). (Read Rom 15:1-7) ó Note that He pleased not Himself but died as the bearer of their reproaches ó as a Representative and Substitute.
- C. Category 2 ó But what of those of us who truly find consolation in Christ ó that find a Spirit within us that moves us to bow in humility to see all of our salvation in Christ. Well, in the immediate context, He is indeed a role model for the unity we are to have, a oneness, a like-mindedness in Christ.
1. This motivates us to strive to conduct ourselves (our òconversationö) in accordance with the supreme example of Christ our Savior ó not in order to be blessed, but having been freely blessed in Christ and in seeing our comfort and consolation in Him, in is His love shed abroad in our hearts so as to cause us to desire the best ó particularly a love for the brethren in the household of faith.
 2. Regarding our supreme example of humility, Jesus Christ, Heb . 12: 2 says that we're to look “...***unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God.*** But listen to the verse that follows³
For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds. So we too should live outside of ourselves.
 3. This concern for others prompts us to enter into Paul's mindset with his competing desires ó knowing of our usefulness as a member of Christ's body in spreading the Gospel ó desiring the best for others, etc.

III. Role Model & Redeemer / C. Category 2 (Con't.):

4. But what of our remaining self interests & our inability to esteem others more important than ourselves. We are selfish, prideful part of fallen humanity ó the only difference being we've been delivered from the guilt and defilement of that ó but we continue with sin ever present.
 - a. Mixed motives ó in preaching, in prayer, in my desire for my kids vs. yours
 - b. It's not that growth in grace is accompanied by more sinning ó but rather as we grow in grace, we gain a greater recognition of just how truly sinful we are.

IV. Summary:

So what does this recognition of an unattainable standard mean to me, a believer? It does not diminish our responsibility and desire to follow our Lord's example. But it does draw us to worship and rejoice out of gratitude for our impeccable standing in Him.

While we all remain full of self, if there is any consolation in Christ, it's because He has glorified Himself in our hearts so that when it comes to this one area ó our acceptance and blessedness before God, we have no confidence in the flesh but look solely to Christ our Substitute. Therein we behold His glory in the face of Christ, His Person and work of establishing a perfect righteousness. This righteousness includes His perfect love, meekness, and holiness, all of which is accounted to those for whom He died ó to those who are õaccepted in the beloved.ö

How do I know He died for my reproaches? It is simply this: It is because when it comes to this one Gospel issue of my eternal blessedness, He has given, through His Spirit, this proud, consumed-with-self sinner a meekness, a humbling that causes me to see my desperate need for a righteousness (a perfection) outside of myself that I cannot produce or complement, yet I must have. He's made me, (a proud sinner by nature), meek in this most vital of issues. This is the meekness Christ was referring to when He said õBlessed (eternally) are the meek...ö (Mt. 5:5).

I pray that God will bless you as well so that you too might say with the Apostle Paul, ***õBut God forbid that I should glory, save <except> in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world.***" (Gal. 6:14). As we read in Jer. 9:24 ó ***õBut let him that glorieth glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth me, that I am the LORD which exercise lovingkindness, judgment, and righteousness, in the earth: for in these things I delight, saith the LORD.***" (That which He exercised is His obedience unto death and the very cause of His exaltation and glory).

Therein is His glory and to rest there shall not be in vain ó not vain-glory. To God be the glory!

Footnote from the author: While this sermon was prepared and delivered by me, I often utilize the commentaries, study helps, and teachings of others to supplement my own prayerful study of the scriptures. Since this document was not originally prepared for publication in print, please excuse and recognize that it was unfeasible to properly identify and credit all of the various original sources used to develop the content herein. Ultimately, it is my sincere and foremost objective to accurately present the gospel of God's grace found in the only infallible source, God's word itself ó the Bible.