

This morning: compare 2 songs (date, author, worldview, 'God', glory, treasure)

1974: a year that changed the world

- ⇒ Culmination of the Watergate scandal: Nixon 1<sup>st</sup> president to resign
- ⇒ C. Indians stage an ill-advised 10-cent beer night, having to forfeit the game to the T. Rangers after alcohol-induced mayhem spread from the fans to the field.
- ⇒ The first time a UPC code is used: a pack of Wrigley gum is scanned in Ohio.
- ⇒ Rosenkowitz sextuplets born in S. Africa: 1<sup>st</sup> ever for all to survive.
- ⇒ Tim Horton, aged 44, dies in auto accident from Buffalo to Toronto (alcohol)
- ⇒ M. Ali defeats G. Foreman, regaining his world heavy-weight title.
- ⇒ Production of Volkswagen Golf begins (over 22 million sold since)
- ⇒ Some of my favorite songs written (e.g. Sweet Home Alabama).
- ⇒ The year that Canadian rockers BTO dominated the charts (background of R.B.)

Every day is an endless train / You've got to ride it to the end of the line  
Be a troubleshooter / Blow the bad luck away / You'll make it to your station on time  
You'll find out every trick in the book / That there's only 1 way to get things done  
You'll find out the only way to the top / Is looking out for number one  
Keep looking out for number one / I mean you  
Every night is a different game / We gotta work for our fortune and fame  
Success is a ladder; take a step at a time / And the people will remember your name  
Yes I found out all the tricks of the trade / That there's only one way that you'll get things done

These lyrics sum up the spirit that has dominated every age since the fall. There is nothing new under the sun. With these song lyrics in mind, let us now consider a song that the apostle P wrote some 2000 years ago (Phil. 2:5-11 an antonym). Note the stark difference b/w the way of the world & the way of the Master (*polis*, 1:27).

Homiletics: importance of illustrations to make pts stick. P the great preacher uses the greatest illustration to hammer home *1:27-2:4* (esp. 2:3-4). He is the epitome of these verses. Christ is both the greatest illustrator & greatest illustration ever.

2:5 – Links (merge ramp) 1-4 & 6-11 by way of illustration (Christ = the example)

- ⇒ “This mind” = 2:2-4, but is expanded in 2:6-8
- ⇒ Cf. *frone, w*: I define it as the expression or manifestation of our heart’s attitude
- ⇒ A key word in this letter: 1:7; 2:2; 3:15, 19; 4:2; 4:10 (23 X in P; 10 X in Phil.)
- ⇒ If this definition is true, we see why our solution in cultivating such an attitude is a steady and healthy gaze at the cross of Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 3:18). It is true, you become like what you worship (cf. You are what you eat).
- ⇒ Jesus is thus the ultimate model for Christian behavior & action, the supreme example of the humble, self-sacrificing, self-giving service that P has been urging the P’s to have towards one another. Better “conform” than “imitate”.
- ⇒ Remember, inherent in the word is the aspect of volition or will. There is a battle going on in every decision you make. Will your attitude towards each other resemble the world or Christ? Also, the imperative is in the present tense,

indicating that such an attitude is to become the norm for believers, *especially* in times of suffering & persecution. Jesus Christ endured suffering & hardship in obedience to God, keeping focus on “the one thing” in the midst of hardship.

Let us now consider from this text what exactly the mindset of X in 2:5 was. As we progress through this hymn, I want you to think of Christ descending down His ladder of glory. Before the incarnation He was at the top, immersed in the glory of the Father; but in humility, He willingly climbed down rung after rung until He was crucified, where He was immersed not in the glory of the Father, but His wrath.

## 1. How Christ Acted in His Divinity: He emptied Himself (6-7)

A) Christ’s Divinity (*o|j evn morf| | qeou/ u`pa,rcwn*)

- ⇒ *u`pa,rcwn* – shows us the preexistence of Christ before the incarnation.
- ⇒ John 17:5 – X asks 4 the glory He had w/ Father b4 the world existed
- ⇒ Hebrews 7:3 – Christ has neither beginning of days nor end of life.
- ⇒ Rev. 22:13 – X is *the* Alpha & Omega, 1<sup>st</sup> & last, beginning & end.
- ⇒ *Morphe* is the essential form which never alters; *schema* is the outward form which changes from time to time & from circumstance to circumstance. For instance, the essential *morphe* of any human being is humanity, & this never changes; but his *schema* continually changes. A baby, child, youth, adult, senior always have. He lost no divine attributes.
- ⇒ It was in the state of “being one thing” that He at one point in time “emptied Himself” by taking another *form*. Here, P pictures the pre-existent Christ as clothed in the garments of divine majesty & splendor; He was in the form of God, i.e. sharing God’s glory (Heb. 1:3; Jn 17:5)
- ⇒ John 1:1 – “What God was, the Word was” (Christ shared the *essence* of the Father, though they differed in person).

B) **Why** He Pours Himself out (6b) - *ouvvc a`rpagmo.n h`gh,sato to. ei=nai i;sa qew/|*

- ⇒ B/c the very essence of God is not to exploit or take advantage of His divine rights as sovereign of the universe. To be = to God is *ouvvc a`rpagmo.n*, contra the Gentile rulers and pagan deities that the readers likely worshipped before their conversion.
- ⇒ Thus, the true God-likeness found in X’s mind-set or attitude reveals God to be self-giving rather than self-serving, loving rather than exploiting. Divine equality meant sacrificial self-giving.
- ⇒ X refused to use for His own gain the glory He had from the beginning.
- ⇒ The pre-existent Son regarded equality w/ God *not* as excusing Him from the task of redemptive suffering & death; rather He voluntarily chose the path of obedient humiliation that led to His incarnation & death.

C) **How** Christ, as God, *avlla. e`auto.n evke,nwsen*, “poured Himself out” (7)

Note: He did not empty Himself of any divine attributes (i.e. a ‘lesser God’)

- ⇒ 4 of 5 uses are metaphorical, not literal. Also, no D.O. This is the strongest possible way of expressing His total self-renunciation.
- ⇒ Means rather that Christ poured out Himself, putting Himself totally at the disposal of *others*, for the *salvation of others*!

i) By voluntarily taking the form (μορφή) of a slave (7a)

- ⇒ Christ was not merely wearing a slave's uniform. In essence He was a slave; He became one, adopting the nature & characteristics.
- ⇒ Slavery was the extreme example of deprivation of rights & the most foul stench to the elitist society of free Rome.
- ⇒ In Greek culture, the distinctive feature that they prided themselves in, over and against the other barbaric cultures, was the notion of one's personal freedom, independence and autonomy (something very similar to our culture). In that culture, one found their personal dignity in the fact that they were free. It is no surprise then that the notion of one being a *doulos* was reprehensible and repudiated to the highest degree. In *doulos*, stress is laid upon the slave's absolute dependence on his lord. Slaves had no right of personal choice; they had no choice in what was to be done, or how it was to be done. Hence the Greek thinking mind can only reject and scorn any designation that bore even the slightest resemblance to that of a slave.
- ⇒ In fact, by the time of Aristotle, the *doulos* became a derogatory insult, for if one cannot live w/o the support of another; he is not worthy to be a part of the *polis*, in which the free man finds his supreme self-fulfillment. Thus to be a *doulos* was an intolerable notion, for the individual was characterized as having no will of their own; their will was their master's will.
- ⇒ Christ so completely stripped Himself of any of His divine rights (rather than grasping to hold onto them).

ii) By voluntarily being born in the likeness of men (7b)

- ⇒ *genō, meno j* stands in sharp contrast to Christ's true essence as God
- ⇒ The eternal God enters the state of humanness: Christ always existed in the 'form of God'; here He comes into the existence 'in the likeness of man.'
- ⇒ Paul is speaking of Christ's essential identity w/ the human race
- ⇒ He became in all respects like human beings (Heb. 4:15; Rom. 8:3)
- ⇒ Though Jesus 'truly Man', He is not merely Man.

Illustration: As Canadians, we have certain unalienable rights (speech, to live, health care). This is like a Cdn freely giving up these rights not only to help, but to become a slave to others in a 3<sup>rd</sup> world country. By love, our rights are divested. Likewise, X divested Himself of the glories of heaven, becoming like us, s/t He might save us.

2. How Christ Acted in His Humanity: He humbled Himself (8)

A) Christ's Existence as Man (8a)

- ⇒ Cf. What it means to be God: He emptied Himself
- ⇒ Biblical anthropology: what it means to be man → Humble Obedience

B) HOW Christ, as Man, "humbled Himself" (8b)

- i) By becoming obedient unto death (8c)
- ii) Even death on a cross (8d) – the climax of X's humility & obedience
- ⇒ Not only lived a slave, but died one too! The pinnacle of abasement. He emptied Himself in becoming human, and then becoming human, He humbled Himself even further.
- ⇒ Himself → again shows Christ's voluntary willingness
- ⇒ By a simple death, He would have truly identified Himself with mankind. Here, His identification w/ men reached the lowest rung of the ladder.
- ⇒ Public crucifixion was a degrading ceremony for the lower classes, especially slaves. In polite Roman society, no experience was more loathsomely degrading, and its very utterance was obscenity.
- ⇒ The great plan of redemption: Christ became human being *in order to* die a shameful death on a cross.

Application:

1. *This* is the kind of love that accomplishes God's purposes of redemption for His people (cf. 'gospel love'). If we want to see those whom we love saved, it is very likely that God will use this kind of humble, sacrificial love to them what His very nature looks like through us.
2. Positions of authority are meant for the good of others. E.g. husbands, wives, bosses, pastors, elders, deacons, etc. P uses > to < argument here. If Christ...
  - ⇒ What are some of the 'rights' that you need to be emptied of? Comfort, status, acceptance, DIGNITY, etc.
3. The 2 humbling actions of Christ: the Incarnation & the Crucifixion. Let us follow
4. Those who are most like God are not necessarily those who know the most about Him, but rather those who in humility empty themselves for the salvation of others. If you have absolutely no desire to see the gospel change the lives of other people, you need to make your calling & election sure & test yourselves to be sure you are really in the faith.
5. In Jesus Christ, God has displayed to His creation His true nature. Selfless, sacrificial & costly love. Indeed, God *is* love.
6. Beloved, Christ did all this for you & me. It is no wonder that when P surveyed the wondrous cross, he was absolutely constrained by X's love for him (2 Cor. 8:9).

Conclusion: Some songs have lasting power. The radio is still littered w/ songs written by the Beatles some 40 years ago. However, they, like this temporal earth, will one day be forgotten. There is only one song that will remain forever: the Song of the Lamb. And the reason we will praise the Lamb is because of what He has done for His people in Philippians 2.

Or, Mark 10:35-45 → Disciples may have just listened to BTO's hit single on their iPod. Jesus shows them how citizens of His kingdom ought to conduct themselves.

