

Day 173, Philippians 2

by David Servant

The sermon emphasizes the importance of self-denying love, humility, and servanthood, as demonstrated by Jesus' example, and the consequences of not following Him.

Scripture: Matthew 22:37, Philippians 2:3-14

Topics: "Selfless Love", "Christian Humility"

Description

David Servant emphasizes Paul's focus on the importance of love in the lives of professing followers of Christ, highlighting the need for self-denying love as the single-most important behavioral trait. He explains that humble people, who prioritize the needs of others over themselves, exemplify true love, contrasting them with selfish individuals driven by pride. Servanthood, as demonstrated by Jesus, is the ultimate example of humility and love, urging Christians to follow suit. He stresses the necessity of repentance and obedience, cautioning against complacency in salvation and encouraging a life free of grumbling and disputes, reflecting a heart of gratitude and joy.

Transcript

As we have now read Paul's letters to the Galatians, Thessalonians, Corinthians, Romans, Ephesians, Colossians, Philemon, and now half of Philippians, would you agree that he was supremely interested in the lifestyles and behavior of his readers, who, for the most part, were professing followers of Christ? And what was the single-most important behavioral trait that Paul emphasized continually? If you said, "love," I agree with you. Christians, above all things, are supposed to be people of self-denying love, which should not surprise us, since the first and second greatest commandments are to love God with all one's heart and to love one's neighbor as oneself.

People who love others are humble people, because selfishness stems from pride. Selfish people see themselves as being more important than others, so they are always "looking out for #1." They cling to their money and spend their time on what serves themselves.

Humble people, on the other hand, view others as being more important than themselves, and they are always looking out for the needs of others. They give their time and money in service. And this servant's attitude is exactly what Paul prescribes in 2:3-8, an attitude that was best exemplified by Jesus, who amazingly humbled Himself to become a man, and not just any man, but one who served others in His life and sacrificial death. His example, and God's subsequent exaltation of Him, is a perfect reminder of what we should do to please God---humble ourselves in servanthood. In God's eyes, the greatest among us is

the servant (Matt. 23:11). More specifically, the greatest among us gives his time, treasure and talents in service to others.

Because God has exalted Jesus and given Him the highest name, one day every knee in heaven, earth and hell will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord (2:9-11). This is something we should tell the unrepentant to provoke them to consider their ways. They may refuse now to bow their knees willfully and humbly to Christ's lordship, but inevitably and eventually they will bow---although with reluctance---and at a time when there will no longer be any offer of mercy. The wise person would humbly repent now, while only a fool would not. Moreover, only a fool (as the apostle James declares) would imagine that he could have a relationship with Christ by simply believing in Him without obeying Him (Jas. 2:20).

Thus Paul admonishes his readers to obey and "work out" their salvation "with fear and trembling" (2:12). Clearly, the guarantee of ultimate salvation is not something that anyone has "in the bag," but rather, is something we must "work out" with the utmost concern. Salvation can be forfeited, and if not, Paul would have had no reason to admonish his Christian readers to "hold fast the word of life," lest in the end his toil in Philippi proved to be in vain (2:16). The best news in all this is that we are not alone on our journey, as we have God Himself---who certainly wants to find us worthy in the end---working inside us to help us follow His path (2:13). Yet He does not commandeer our free wills.

One way that we can "prove ourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation" is to "do all things without grumbling or disputing" (2:14). A grumbler is a rebel at heart, perhaps best exemplified in Scripture by the Israelites who grumbled in the wilderness (1 Cor. 10:10). Take note that in this little letter, the word "rejoice" is found eight times, and the word "joy" is found seven times.

Paul mentions a man named Epaphroditus in 2:25, who brought to him an offering from the Philippians (2:30, 4:18). If Paul was in Rome when he wrote this letter, Epaphroditus journeyed over 500 miles from Philippi, and his long journey had apparently taken its toll on his body. Although he had been deathly ill, "God had mercy on him" (2:27). That means he was healed, and that is another reason to expect that God will have mercy on you as well in your sickness.

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