

*Philippians 2:5-11. <sup>5</sup> Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! <sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

### **Praise Jesus by holding onto an attitude of humility.**

It's one of those life lessons, which is more effectively caught than taught: humility. A young man grows up to live a humble life of service not because his parents shook their finger at him and told him to be humble, but someone modeled such a life for him. A mother who never seemed to sit down for a meal but was always making sure that her children and her husband were taken care of first - her life is a model of continual service, a life of humility that leaves an impression and makes its mark on the lives of those around her. A father puts the needs of the family first, but he still is willing and gladly able to give his time to a neighbor in need, to church or charity. He is a quiet model of humility and service that makes others around him want to follow suit. A single mother gives of herself never asking for the extra credit and praise that is perhaps due her, a co-worker who never seems to get the recognition that he probably deserves but is still willing to regularly put in the extra hours, or a teacher that is always ready to help and support and encourage even though he serves in a position that isn't always as highly regarded as it should be. Models of continual humility and perpetual service are all around us and they quietly instill that same type of attitude without much flash or spectacle. Maybe you can think of a few people in your life who have been such examples and you were led to admire and imitate these models of humility and service. Their humble service makes a wonderful impact on our lives. Their humble service helps us to have and to hold onto a similar attitude of humility and service.

Today we have before us the ultimate example of one who came and quietly modeled a life of service and humility. But more than just an example, this is our Jesus. This is our Lord who saves us. He lived his humble life to serve as our

substitute. He willingly laid down his life to rescue us from sin and death to supply us with eternal life. The mighty King of heaven and earth set aside his glory and power and majesty, and he willingly made himself nothing to serve our needs. Today we view with eyes of wonder and amazement the one who rides into Jerusalem on a donkey and humbles himself to die for the sins of the whole world.

We praise him! Out of thanks to God we praise the Lord Jesus by having and holding onto an attitude of humility and service. We bow to him and confess his name as we serve our Lord. We give him glory as we model his wonderful example in our service to our neighbor.

All of us have served another in some way or some fashion. We serve and humble ourselves daily even. We set the table. We take out the trash. We give of our time and our energy to a family member or a friend or at work. We take care of the needs of others - for a time. But then that selfishness it surges up from our gut. It erupts out of our mouths. *Now serve me! I did this for you now do something for me! Look at me! Pay attention to me! Praise me at least!* Of course it doesn't come out that clearly; it doesn't come out in so many words, but so often that is our attitude. That is the volatile mindset that we carry, because we have this innate selfish desire to be served, to be praised. We have a human nature that is so twisted and turned inward and so this selfishness, which is always there right below the surface, boils over and erupts out of us. We become angry with our kids and we yell at them when they don't listen right away and serve us immediately. We become visibly frustrated with our spouse when our needs are not met the way that we think they should be. We grumble under our breath and we sneer and speak spiteful words about our boss or our friend because he or she *"Doesn't give me the credit I deserve"*. These outbursts and actions confess and make public the attitude that so often rules and reigns in our hearts.

Dear friends, be on guard for this pride, this selfishness, and this desire for power and recognition that constantly lies just beneath the surface of our sinful lives and then so often quickly erupts into plain sight. As the apostle Paul addressed the Philippians he recognized the problem that our sinful natures have with humility. The real challenge of humility is not just humbling yourself in service occasionally, but it is maintaining that attitude of humility continually. And so Paul points the Philippians, he points us, to the perfect model of steadfast humility and service. He points us to Christ. ***Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, (Philippians 2:5 NIV)*** or as another translation puts it, ***Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5 ESV)***. Paul speaks of having and holding and maintaining a mindset of humility like the mindset Christ maintained throughout his entire life. From birth to death and every second, every moment in between, he held onto this attitude of humility and service. He did not just serve us when it was convenient or beneficial for him,

but in love our God and Savior took on human flesh and lived a life of service and died a humble death as our substitute. This spectacular being -who was by his very nature God - humbled himself to be born of a woman. God himself humbled himself to be one of us, to live the life of an ordinary human being, so that he could serve as our substitute. Jesus submitted himself to his Father's will. He submitted himself to the same commands of God that we break so regularly and he willingly obeyed the commands of God in our place every day, for his entire life; and then he was willing to submit himself to death in our place. And not just any death, but the most terrible of deaths: death on the cross.

From birth to death Jesus maintained an attitude of humility and service. Even when the people hailed him on Palm Sunday, even when the children shouted his praises and grown men cut down palm branches and took off their cloaks and put them before him, still he came in gentleness and humility. He came into Jerusalem riding on a donkey, into a town that would soon reject him, and towards the very men who would kill him because he was doing this for us. His was a life of constant service and perpetual humility and his final days would be no different. How remarkable this life of service that ends in a life laid down for us! How remarkable this attitude of love that Christ Jesus would do this for us!

Think of this the next time that you demand to be served. Think of this the next time that you sulk and pout because you didn't get the recognition that you think you deserved at work. Think of this the next time that you snap at your wife because she didn't have dinner ready on time, or your friend or husband asks you to do them another favor and your roll your eyes and sigh. If Christ Jesus held onto and maintained an attitude of service, if God himself held onto the attitude of a servant for his whole life, who am I that I should demand to be served? Who am I to push others out of the way and demand center stage and high praise? Instead let us look to Christ and instead of demanding to be served, let us have and hold and maintain this attitude, this mindset of service to God and to each other.

Today we marvel at this wonderful humility of Christ, but by no means is his humility an example that shames us into obedience. Today we look at the humility in which our Savior came into Jerusalem and we are blessed with the ability to see into the mind of God. We are able to see the love that dwells deep within him and emanates from him. It is a love that is continual and perpetual. It is a love that is so high, so deep, so wonderful that our Savior was willing, freely willing, to take on this task for us. Pride and arrogance do not erupt from his mouth like it does from ours, but instead he rides on that colt, that donkey, and he comes in humility to save us. Love and service surge up from his heart and spill out into plain sight. He gladly goes to the cross to shed his blood for us. He gladly rides toward a sacrificial death to wash away our sin. He cleanses us from our pride. He forgives us for our selfishness. His humility causes us to stand in humble awe.

Rejoice, dear Christians! See your humble King who is like none other! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. Christ's love and his humility compel us to praise him. Christ's life of love and service makes an impact on our lives. The blessed salvation that comes from his sacrificial death makes it mark on how we live now and for all eternity. And so we praise our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ with lives of humble service. In praise to God we resist our sinful selfish urges. We are patient with each other and serve one another in love. We empty ourselves of those selfish thoughts and impulses and instead we think of Christ who became nothing for us. We praise him as our matchless King and we serve him as our gracious Lord!

Dear friends, may your attitude be the same as that of Christ. Humble yourself, and do this more than just occasionally, but rather have and hold and maintain this mindset of service. Let the humility of Christ Jesus reign in your hearts and lives for you have been united to him in faith. He came and lived and died for you and now through faith you have been united to the mind of Christ. Have and hold steady the mind of Christ in your life and think of your King Jesus this holiest of weeks. Consider who he is and meditate daily on what he did and how he served you. Our Lord and Savior did not forcefully demand that you praise him and that you serve him. But instead he came to this world; he emptied himself of the full use of his divine power and glory, and he came to serve you and me.

The king of Glory, who was by nature God, became a servant. He took the form of a lowly man. He became one of us to serve us. He did not do this for a few hours, or a few days in order to perform for us some menial tasks, but he humbled himself for a lifetime to rescue us from sin and death. He lived a life of service and obedience for us and then became obedient to death so that we might have eternal life. The God of the entire universe humbled himself to the lowest of places and that has left its mark on our lives.

That is why his is the name that is above every name. That is why we gladly bow to his will! That is why we proclaim his glorious name and confess with our lips and our lives that Jesus is Lord! No, he did not simply tell us to be humble, but he also lived a life service and died a death of humility for us. May our hearts and minds continually be transformed by the remarkable life of service and humble death that Jesus offered up for us! Amen.