

## **Recording – Philippians 2:1-11 The Attitude of Christ**

**Thank you, Jacqui, for your reading! Today we are looking at Philippians 2:1-11, so you might like to turn to it!**

**Do you like a challenge? How about a seemingly impossible challenge? The more I look at this passage of Scripture, the more I realise how far I fall short of God's standard for my life! V.5 of our reading tells us that our attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus! When we think about that, I think our twenty-first century selves would recognise that we are far, far away from the attitude of Jesus, so this morning let's see what we can draw from his attitude as described by Paul. We can also see how Paul describes what our approach might be in the first four verses of our reading.**

**So let's start from v. 5. Jesus is God, and as John tells us in the first verses of his gospel, he was there at the very beginning of everything, long before the Big Bang and the creation of the universe, with God the Father. But Jesus, in God's rescue plan for the human race, did not in any way come to earth riding on a cloud as a spiritual version of a conquering hero! He did not hang on to the fact that he was in all ways equal to his Father God. Instead, in total contrast, he made himself nothing. The Greek for that phrase says: 'He emptied himself'. He laid aside his majesty, as a modern song reminds us, and became a nobody, born into a humble family who, soon after his birth, had to flee for their lives as refugees.**

**And there is more – he took the very nature of a servant. Actually, it's worse than that – he took the form of a slave. In the Roman Empire, about a third of the population were slaves who had no rights, no freedom of employment or housing – that's how the Empire financed all their grandiose building projects that we marvel at today. They were built with slave labour!**

**So Jesus came to earth as a baby who grew up into a man who had no status in society. He, Lord of all, never became a member of the Jewish ruling council, the Sanhedrin, nor a Roman citizen! And because of that, when he died the death that would save us all, he laid down his life on a Roman cross, submitting to the death of a common criminal. It's difficult to comprehend just how far Jesus humbled himself to do what he needed to do to save the human race!**

**But that death was not the end! God raised Jesus from that shameful death, and from the lowest possible place he raised him to the highest possible place in heaven for eternity. His name, scrawled on the criminal's cross, is now the name above every other name, to be worshipped and adored.**

**And now follows a promise from God. At that name of Jesus, one day every knee will bow before him, and every tongue will confess, will acknowledge that Jesus is in fact Lord. Let's think about that for a moment. All those people in the world who are terrorising Christians, who are persecuting them because of their faith in Jesus, will have to bow before him in submission! Doesn't that encourage us when we seem to have a government which doesn't value the churches any more, and especially when we think of our brothers and sisters living under oppressive regimes!**

**So now, having considered what Jesus has done for us, we need to think how in practical terms we can have an attitude which is that same as Jesus. So let's look at the first four verses of our reading. In verse one Paul reminds his readers what their discipleship means in practice – how precious it is. When we are united with Christ, we are encouraged and comforted by his love – what amazing love that was, that was prepared to go to the cross for us! No wonder we are comforted by it! And that comfort isn't the comfort of a cuddly duvet, but looking at the meaning of the word, something that makes us strong to face whatever life throws at us. Our discipleship also means that we have the fellowship, the gift of the Holy Spirit which transforms our lives and makes it possible for us to follow Jesus. It will also give us tenderness and compassion through that same Spirit.**

**So Paul goes on to tell us to be like minded, like Jesus, being one with him in Spirit, and in the purpose with which we aim to live our lives. So here is the challenge – to do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit! Do we sometimes think we know better than other people – you know, the sort of thought that if I were Prime Minister I would be able to sort everything out!!**

**So we are told to have this attitude of humility, of considering others better than ourselves. And we are to look to the interests of others, of their needs rather than our own. We are to be one in spirit and purpose – our unity is vital! Then Paul goes on to say that our attitude should be the same as that of Jesus, which is where we started!**

**Jesus' life was one of total self-giving. During his ministry he had no permanent base, no home of his own to go to – he went where he needed to go. He spent his days in ministry, either to the crowds or teaching his disciples. He spent whole nights in prayer.**

**Now we are not called to do what he did, but we are called to have an attitude of self-giving, of being prepared to live for others, whoever they may be. We are called to do the jobs that need doing, even if they are not prestigious or glamorous. And even Jesus needed to spend much time in prayer – what a challenge that is to us all!**

**So perhaps what we all need to do is to meditate on this passage, to see how it shines a spotlight on our Christian lives, and where it challenges us to have an attitude to our calling as Christians which is more like Jesus. After all, we have been shaken out of what we thought was normal life into something very different. So let us look to Jesus to guide us into our new lives of true discipleship, that as a church we may shine as a beacon in our parish. Let our love for one another, and our unity in Christ, shine out into our town and our world.**

*Let us pray.*

**Father God, help us to grow in grace and in the likeness of Jesus, that we may serve you as you desire. Amen.**

**And now back to Jeremy for our next song, after which Elaine will lead us in our prayers.**

## Home Group Notes.

1. What is your attitude to life? What does Paul suggest it should be (v5)?
2. What was the relationship between Jesus and God the Father? See verse 6, and John 1:1-4.
3. How might you expect God to appear on earth to rescue the human race? What did Jesus actually do?
4. What were the characteristics of the life of a servant - slave, to be more accurate – in the 1<sup>st</sup> century world?
5. What was the life of Jesus on earth actually like?
6. What sort of people died on a cross?
7. So what did God do after Jesus' death?
8. Who (v10) are the people who should bow before Jesus and confess that he is Lord?
9. So how does that encourage us?
10. Going back to vv.1-4, what are the characteristics we should strive for? How do we encourage our congregation to take them on board?

