

Joy Of The Journey - Joy In Being Like Jesus

Philippians 2:1-18

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Recap

It's been a couple of weeks since we were in our series, "Joy Of The Journey." Because of this I want to just remind us of a few things about this little book we have been making our way through.

As we have already learned in our previous studies that Paul is writing this letter to the Philippian Church from a prison cell in Rome. He is waiting to hear as to whether or not he will be executed or released. He has not been able to see his friends at the Philippian church for over a year and is writing to them in order to instruct them in the faith. We have learned the Joyful Prayer of A Pastor for his people, we have talked about the Joy of Partnership and how to have Joy In the Midst of Suffering. Today we are going to look at Philippians 2:1-18 and talk about "The Joy Of Being Like Jesus: Discovering Humility."

Scripture Focus

READ Philippians 2:1-18

Introduction

It was twenty-one minutes past noon in Switzerland when the envelope was opened, its contents withdrawn and Fifa President Sepp Blatter's long-awaited words, barely audible above the noise, were spoken.

At 12:21 on 15 May 2004, history had been made: it was the time of Africa and South Africa to stage the world's greatest sporting festival.

"I am delighted that an African association has earned the right to host the Fifa World Cup", said the head of world football's governing body as the South African bidding delegation embraced before a press conference at the World Trade Center in Zurich.

Meanwhile elated journalists, many sporting workman's helmets, blew "vuvuzela" plastic horns and sang the traditional African "Shosholoza" anthem in the packed auditorium.

The South African team, including former president Nelson Mandela, bid chairman Irvin Khoza and chief executive Danny Jordaan, were invited onto the stage to answer questions.

Over recent months, Nelson Mandela had campaigned tirelessly to promote his nation's bid.

Sitting next to Blatter, South Africa's former president, who spent 27 of his 85 years in prison under the apartheid regime, could not hold back his tears, and they fell freely down his cheeks.

*"I feel like a young man of 15", Mandela said to laughter. **But, typically, his first thought was for others - the people of Morocco, Egypt, Libya and Tunisia.** "You must not be discouraged", Mandela said. "It is no reflection of your efforts. Next time when you compete, you may be luckier."*

"South Africans should treat this decision with humility and without arrogance because we are, after all, equal", Mandela said with a booming voice that sent a shiver down the spine, prompting one Egyptian journalist to stand up and say: "We love you Nelson Mandela".

What Is Humility?

When Mr. Madela says that South Africans, "should treat this decision with humility," what does he mean by humility. All of us have ideas of what humility is and unfortunately most of those definitions would be incorrect. Why? Because most of us think humility means that we become a "welcome" rug and just let every one walk on you. To be humble simply means to not be arrogant or proud. It means that our behavior reflects the fact that we understand that no matter how much we have it is just a gift from God. Under the leadership of the Spirit Paul defines what Biblical humility is:

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look

not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

(Philippians 2:3-4)

Paul is telling the Philippians, "True humility is considering others better than yourself." That definition flies in the face of the way most people in the 21st Century think. Today's world thrives on competition...

Just the other day Dylan came to me and told me of a young man in his class. It was athletics time and everyone was required to run races to see who would be selected for the inter-house team. The little boy told Dylan, "I am better than anyone here. I can run faster than you so you might as well not even try!" Dylan then asked me what he should do. I told him, "The next time that little boy says that too you just tell him that is great and that you will be in the stands cheering for him!"

From the early ages there is something pushed upon us to declare that we are better, that we can do something better or run better. But in God's world the opposite is true! Jesus told us that those who want to be great should be LAST! He tells us that those who want to have everything in life should be willing TO GIVE TO OTHERS FIRST.

Time and again I have people come to me with money problems. Usually my first question to them is, "Are you giving?" If people are not giving then God has no channel by which to bless their finances.

Folks, there is something we have to understand – we are naturally selfish. All of us had to be TAUGHT how to share and give things to other people. Don't think that just because you have reached adulthood that this natural selfishness has disappeared! We have to ask the Lord to help us to PUT OTHERS FIRST. What does this look like?

It can be as simple as:

- Opening the door for someone who has his or her hands full.
- Letting somebody else have the last piece of dessert.
- Humility means that we SHOW UP ON TIME TO APPOINTMENTS that we have set with others.
- Acts of humility means that sometimes we give money away BEFORE WE GET WHAT WE WANT.

Let me give a little advice to our parents here today. PLEASE, PLEASE do not fall into the trap of giving your children everything they ask for...(illustrate the child in the store – screaming.) All you are doing is reinforcing the natural tendency to be selfish and when they grow up they will struggle on their jobs and in their relationships. Why? Because the first time they don't get WHAT THEY WANT they won't be able to handle it.

Teach them to think about others. Teach them the value of working in order to obtain the things that are needed (not wanted) in this life.

To Be Like Jesus

But how do we do, “consider others better than ourselves?” Well, I think Paul anticipated this same question and began to give us the example of the attitude that Jesus had...

READ 2:5-6

Notice Paul says that our attitude should be the same attitude that Jesus had while on this earth. Why would this word “attitude” be used in here? I think it’s because we show our humility or the lack of humility in our attitude! So Paul says, let’s look at the attitude Jesus...

1. Jesus was unconcerned about personal position

Paul tells us that Jesus was “in very nature God” but He did not, “consider equality with God something to be grasped...” This word “grasped” has the meaning of “seizing something.” So just think about this: Jesus who is God never forced himself on anyone, He never demanded that others treat Him in a special way, He never looked at someone and said, “That’s mine! I’m God and I created so I want it, now!”

Turning Point I don’t care how much education you get, how great of a job you might have, what color of your skin is or the house what kind of house you live in...none of us have the right to make others feel inferior about what they do not have.

If we are going to be like Jesus then we seek what is best for the other person and we don’t use our position to make everyone else our servant. If anyone could have rejected Mary Magdalene it was Jesus. After all she was a

prostitute and everyone else looked down their religious noses at her. When she came into the house where Jesus was and broke that Alabaster box filled with perfume others tried to stop her but Jesus accepted her offering. He knew her sin – He knew her reputation – He knew her problems but he did not make her feel inferior – He treated her with kindness and grace!

2. Jesus was a servant first.

READ 2:7

I think this beautiful story in John 13 illustrates Jesus' ideas about being a servant.

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

I know what some of you might be thinking. You are saying, "How can I find joy in being a servant." One of the reasons you may ask this is because most of us have a negative idea of what a servant is. Some of you older folks remember a day when the lady who cleaned houses for others was called a "maid or servant" and not "domestic worker." You remember the days when your

mothers and fathers were forced to serve for little pay and not benefits. The colonization of South Africa forever implanted in the minds of many that a servant was someone who had no real life, no real purpose other than to be someone's "boy" or "girl."

I beg you to ask the Lord to help you see this differently. Jesus is telling us that the joy that we receive from serving others comes because we make a CHOICE to serve. We are not compelled but we CHOOSE to be a blessing to others by serving them. But I can still hear some of you saying, "How can be that if you want to have joy in life it is somehow bound up in choosing to be a servant?" Let me put it this way...

If your joy and happiness in this life is based upon having others serve you, then if you are ever deprived of such honor, your life will take a turn for the worse. However, if you make the choice to serve others; if, by your own choice, you make yourself nothing, then no longer will your joy be built upon how others treat you – which, in the end, you really have no control over anyway!

3. Jesus obeyed even when it was difficult.

READ 2:8

If anyone here has ever been asked to do something they did not want to do you will understand what I am about to say – SOMETIMES OBEDIENCE IS HARD! Think, however, at what Jesus was faced with: obedience that would mean losing His life on a cross.

How many of us have been put in a place where we knew being obedient would mean sacrificing our own life – none of us! But Jesus “humbled” himself and was “obedient” even when He knew what was ahead of Him. So, I have to ask myself this one question, “How far does my obedience go? How far would Jesus ask me to be obedient?”

- Should I obey the Word of God even if it means that I am going to lose?
- Should I obey the Word of God even if it means that my family and friends will not understand?
- Should I obey the Word of God even when I don’t like what it says?

When we are faced with these questions is when we truly demonstrate our attitude and humility. It is when we are faced with obedience that will bring adversity to our life that we must HUMBLE ourselves. This is when we have to TRUST THAT THE WORD OF GOD IS TRUE.

Sometimes what we do is say, “Well God I know your Word says this but I just don’t think it applies too me and my situation!” Well I have some news for you – the WORD of GOD does apply to all of us and it is our obedience to that Word that will determine our success or failure.

Putting It All Together

Now that we have an understanding of what humility is and how Jesus gave us the answers to acting in humility we need to see how this all fits together. In other words, “How do I take what the Word says about humility and make it happen in my own life?” I think the answer can be found in the following verses...

READ 2:12-13

1. Work hard and let God change your will.

Now understand that there is nothing you or I can do to earn our salvation. The precious gospel was preached to us and we responded in faith and the gift of God was our salvation. This verse is not telling us that we can EARN our salvation.

I want to talk about two ideas this morning that are expressed in really big words. The first word is "JUSTIFICATION" and the second word is "SANCTIFICATION."

Justification – is an act of God where He says to us NOT GUILTY! Even though we have sinned and failed God when we come to Him in repentance God declares that we are NO LONGER GUILTY OF THOSE SINS. In other words it's "just-as-if-we-never-sinned."

Sanctification – is a process by which are made to be more and more like Jesus in our thoughts and actions. This is a LIFELONG process of surrendering our will to the will of God and learning to walk in agreement with God and His Word.

With these two words in mind think about what Paul is saying. He is telling us that we have been forgiven (justification) and because of that we must keep on obeying God's Word. We do our part by being obedient and God does His part by helping to change our will. When our will is changed then no one can change our mind because we have now discovered the joy of knowing God's will.

This is how God helps us to “work out our salvation.” To really discover joy in the journey of this life and to walk in humility will require HARD WORK on our part. We are going to have to stop and think before we ACT. We are going to have to ask ourselves tough questions and let the Word of God speak into our lives!

2. The result will be a true witness for Christ.

READ 2:14-16

Paul tells us that when we put all of this together we will, “shine like stars in the universe,” and we will, “hold out the word of life.” In other words, by living lives of humility we will be able to show others the beauty of living for God and how they too can find joy.

Our world is “star-struck.” All you have to do is look at all those “stupid” magazines that line the shop shelves. Every magazine is filled with the latest news about someone who is supposed to be a “star.” Why do you think people read that stuff? It is because they want to be like those people. In the end though most of the “stars” fade into history and are forgotten. But there are those who have committed their life to service who will forever be remembered in history...

- Mother Teresa
- Nelson Mandela

There are a whole host of people who SERVED their countries and SERVED different causes and these are the people who have truly made a difference in the world.

Conclusion

Do you want to have JOY in life? Then choose to be a servant. I want to challenge this church to do something this week.

I want to you seek to live in the shadow of Jesus. Will you think of something you can do to be a servant to someone else? Is there someone that needs a helping hand? Is there someone around you that needs a friendly word and a kindness? All of know someone we can choose to serve this week. NOW GO DO IT!