

THIS JOY THAT I HAVE
A Journey Through Philippians
Philippians 2:4-12

Series Aim: To equip and encourage believers to embrace and choose joy in every season of life.

THE INTEREST OF OTHERS v. 4

Paul stresses that the believer must take the same concern that they have themselves and apply it to others. To “look out for” others mean to keep an eye out for their needs. We must be on the alert for the welfare of others.

THE SUPREME EXAMPLE vv. 5-6

Where do we look to see humility worked out in life? Paul points the Philippians to the supreme example of humility: the Lord Jesus Christ himself. He is not concerned with a merely outward religious façade. Paul is probing the depths of their spiritual life when he requires this kind of self-denying attitude. As Paul describes this state of mind, he starts with Jesus at the highest level. He begins by asserting the full deity of Jesus Christ: “who, being in the form of God”. Jesus was in the form of God from before the foundation of the world.

THE SUPREME SELFLESSNESS v. 7

The first step in humility of Jesus Christ was when he “emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men”. “Emptied” means abased. What is described here is not Jesus emptying himself of eternal deity. Nor does it mean that Jesus exchanged his deity for humanity. Rather, this asserts that he laid aside his prerogatives as God in order to take on the limitations of humanity.

THE SUPREME SERVANT v.7

The coming of the second Person of the eternal Trinity into the human race involved him, “taking the form of a bond-servant”. He did not come as royalty in shining majesty. Jesus came as a “bond-servant”. “Form” means “existing as” or “possessing the status of”. He assumed the position of a slave, which was more humbling than being a servant. Jesus, the Son of God, assumed all of the limitations of finite humanity. While He remained fully and truly God, He became fully and truly man.

THE SUPREME SHAME v. 8

Jesus came into this world knowing full well that it would end in death. He would suffer the worst of all deaths. Crucifixion was so despised that Roman law forbade any Roman citizen to be subjected to such cruel treatment. Jesus would hang naked, publicly exposed, viewed as an enemy of the empire, condemned as a blasphemer against God.

THE SUPREME EXALTATION v. 9

God resurrected His son from the grave, raising him from the dead. God exalted Him above the earth in His ascension. God exalted Him above the angels in His coronation. God exalted Him to His right hand in the glory above.

THE SUPREME SUBMISSION v. 10

Paul states the purpose of this exaltation: “...so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth.” Bowing is a sign of submission to a higher authority. It indicates the surrender of the lesser to one who is greater.

Who will bow?

- **Those who are in heaven:** Every elect angel and glorified saint in heaven throughout all the ages.
- **Those who are on earth:** All those in this life, both rescued and rebels, and Satan, who prowls about the earth as roaring lion.
- **Those under the earth:** The damned souls already imprisoned, and demon spirits already consigned to the pit of hell.

THE SUPREME CONFESSION v. 11

On the last day, “every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Every tongue will confess the lordship of Jesus Christ. “Lord” means Master, Ruler, Sovereign, Supreme One! The word “confess” means to make an open declaration!

THE PATH OF OBEDIENCE v. 12

Obedience to the word of God is the clearly marked path upon which sanctification moves forward. Any step of disobedience is a departure from the revealed word of God. The Philippians exhibited a habitual lifestyle of obedience. This does not infer perfection, rather a new desire to obey from a new heart that increasingly pursues obedience.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITYv. 12

In pursuing obedience, Paul urges the Philippians to “work out your salvation”. They are commanded to put effort into achieving their salvation. In the Bible salvation is represented in three different ways: as past, present, and future. These three designations involve justification, sanctification, and glorification.

Justification-Believers are saved immediately from the penalty of sin.

Sanctification-Believers are saved progressively from the power and practice of sin.

Glorification-Believers are ultimately saved from the presence of sin.

THE JOY OF FEAR AND TREMBLING v. 12

Sanctification must be carried out with reverential awe. Paul calls us to be sincere in our pursuit of holiness. The magnitude of God should push us not to be casual with our faith. In essence God should be taken seriously.