

# Being Disciples: Practicing the Way of Jesus

A STUDY OF PHILIPPIANS

## Practicing the Way of Jesus Together For Brooklyn

Dear RPS family,

Just on the heels of Paul's exhortation to the Philippian church to live in humility and count others more significant than yourselves, Paul now shows us both the example and the way in which we as the church can live like this. Philippians 2:5-11 serves as the thematic and theological center of Paul's letter. It is Jesus, his humility on the cross and his exaltation, that offers the way and the power for Christians to look to the interests of others. Humility is not something we develop by ourselves, it is a gift that we have already been given, this is why Paul starts this passage in v. 5: "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus." Christians already have access to this way of life because we are united to Jesus in his life, death, and resurrection. This means as we dwell with Jesus we will reflect more and more his humility and share in the hope of his exaltation.

Paul's poetic account of Jesus and his humiliation on the cross is not to suggest that Jesus is simply a really good person who has lots of character traits, one of which is humility. Rather, Paul is highlighting the fact that Jesus' humiliation on the cross was not a decision to stop being God but was in fact the full display of what it really means to be God. God went all the way down, even death on a cross for our sake, and now we, following the way of Jesus, can live lives marked not by grasping for power but humble obedience to the God who died for us.

But the exaltation of Jesus, where he is lifted up above every name, is also an invitation to humility. Now, because now as Jesus reigns over heaven and earth, we can trust in his rule in our lives and in our world and seek to serve one another in humble reliance upon Him.

This is the beautiful paradox of Christianity. That only as we humbly bend the knee in obedience to Jesus do we find true glory. This means we confess the ways we all grasp after false glory and fix our eyes on Jesus, the one who offers us life and glory in him.

In Christ,  
Chris

### LOOKING AHEAD:

10.18 | Philippians 2:12-18  
The Way of Love

10.25 | Philippians 2:19-30  
The Way of Friendship

11.1 | Philippians 3:1-11 The  
Way of Worship

11.8 | Philippians 3:12-4:1  
The Way of Citizenship

11.15 | Philippians 4:2-9 The  
Way of Leadership

11.22 | Philippians 4:10-23  
The Way of Stewardship

# The Way of Unity

Study for the Week of 10.11 | Philippians 2:5-11

*Our God is not about grabbing but about giving, not about self-glorification but about self-sacrifice, not about predetermining all things, but about making possible the salvation of all things, not about repeatedly demonstrating his sovereignty in some self-absorbed way, but rather revealing the divine character through the shock and awe of death on a cross.*

*Ben Witherington*

Look to the Scriptures

- Open in prayer ask God to for wisdom to discern, for eyes to see and ears to hear.

Look to the Text

- What is happening in this passage? How does this passage connect with the end of chapter 1 and the v. 1-5 of chapter 2 in Philippians? What phrases jump out at you? Why do you think many refer to this as a Christ hymn or poem?
- Faith - Philippians teaches us what to believe about Jesus. Paul says in v. 5 that we have been given the mind of Christ. What do you think he means? What does Jesus' humility reveal about God's character? How ought that to encourage our faith in Him?
- Love - Philippians teaches us how to love. How does the humiliation of Jesus show his love for us? How does Paul intend for this love to shape our life together?
- Hope - Philippians teaches us how to hope in Christ. After unpacking Christ's humility in the servanthood of the incarnation and the cross, Paul turns in verses 9-11 to Jesus' subsequent exaltation. Why do you think he added that? We are called to share in Christ's humility, how might we share in his exaltation? How does his exaltation give us hope for our world?

Listen to one another

- Consider sharing places where you are facing hardship in this season of your life.
- Or pray a version of the Examen such as sharing the following:
  - Consolation: A time in the past week where you felt close to God.
  - Desolation: A time in the past week where you felt far from God.
  - Looking ahead: What are you looking forward to or most worried about in the coming week

Pray

- Spend time praying for one another and our world incorporating both what you have studied and prayer requests in your time of prayer.

Practice

- Paul encourages the Philippians in Phil 4:9 to “practice these things”, so take this time over the next few weeks on 1 or 2 spiritual practices that you would like to work on. It could be something you are currently doing or a new practice you want to take up. You can do this as a group together or as individuals, but consider how you can practice the way of Jesus together during this time. Some suggestions: Daily Scripture reading, keeping Sabbath, fixed-hour prayer, memorize Philippians 2:5-11 together, etc. Talk about how what you have discussed in your group might help your daily/weekly practices.

How are your spiritual practices helping you to have the mind of Christ? How do they lead you out thinking first about yourself and instead thinking and serving others?