

Yateley Baptist Church, Sunday 17 May 2020

Opening Prayer

Hymn: Praise! 287

At the name of Jesus
every knee shall bow,
every tongue confess him
King of glory now;
this the Father's pleasure,
that we call him Lord,
who from the beginning
was the mighty Word.

2 At his voice creation
sprang at once to sight,
all the angel faces,
all the hosts of light;
suns and moons in orbit,
stars upon their way,
all the heavenly orders,
in their great array.

3 Humbled for a season,
to receive a name
from the lips of sinners
unto whom he came;
faithfully he bore it
spotless to the last,
brought it back victorious
when from death he passed.

4 Name him, Christians, name him,
with love strong as death,
but with awe and wonder,
and with bated breath;
he is God the Saviour,
he is Christ the Lord,
ever to be worshipped,
trusted and adored.

5 In your hearts enthrone him;
there let him subdue
all that is not holy,
all that is not true;
crown him as your captain
in temptation's hour,
let his will enfold you
in its light and power.

6 Christians, this Lord Jesus
shall return again,
with his Father's glory
evermore to reign;
rulers of the nations
at his throne shall bow,
and our hearts confess him
King of glory now.

Reading: Philippians 2:1-11, ESV

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, ²complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Hymn: Praise! 430

Jesus Christ, I think upon your sacrifice;
you became nothing, poured out to death.
Many times I've wondered at your gift of life
and I'm in that place once again,
I'm in that place once again.

2 Now you are exalted to the highest place,
King of the heavens, where one day I'll bow.
But for now I marvel at this saving grace
and I'm full of praise once again,
I'm full of praise once again.

*And once again I look upon
the cross where you died.
I'm humbled by your mercy
and I'm broken inside.
Once again I thank you,
once again I pour out my life.*

Matt Redman

Prayer

Hymn: Praise! 315

Meekness and majesty,
manhood and deity,
in perfect harmony,
the man who is God.
Lord of eternity
dwells in humanity,
kneels in humility
and washes our feet.

O, what a mystery,
meekness and majesty,
bow down and worship,
for this is your God,
this is your God.

2 Father's pure radiance,
perfect in innocence,
yet learns obedience
to death on a cross.
Suffering to give us life,
conquering through sacrifice;
and as they crucify
prays, 'Father, forgive.'

3 Wisdom unsearchable,
God the invisible;
love indestructible
in frailty appears.
Lord of infinity
stooping so tenderly
lifts our humanity
to the heights of his throne.

Graham Kendrick

Sermon: Philippians 2:5-11 – Have This Mind

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus ...” (v5)

We might have thought competition and egotism would have disappeared with lockdown but it has simply gone online.

Since the first sin was committed, we have all wanted others to recognise us for being as important as we ourselves know we are.

Rather than fix the problem of his unacceptable offering, Cain simply killed Abel.

Even in the New Testament, James and John fought over the best seats in heaven. “When the ten heard it, they were indignant at the two brothers” (Matthew 20:24). It then caused arguments amongst the disciples, but Jesus’ response was in stark contrast:

“You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and

whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:25-28).

Hearing the truth and making it a part of our lives are two different things, even when we love the Lord Jesus.

In making preparations for the Passover, the Disciples forgot about feet washing – the most menial task and none of them wanted to do it. They had forgotten Jesus’ message already. But Jesus put his words into practice and humbled himself to wash their feet.

“If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him” (John 13:14-16).

What Christ called his disciples to, Paul calls the Philippians to – to live a life, worthy of the gospel (1:27). Easy to say, but it can seem impossible to do. How do we live a life that is worthy of the gospel?

Paul takes us on a journey to before the world began, down to the cross and then back up heaven. As he does so, he urges us not just to follow along in our minds, but to let this shape our whole lives. “Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.”

Alec Motyer says, “As we take up the mind of Christ, it is not for the satisfaction of our curiosity, but for the reformation of our lives.”

1. Christ’s Condescension (6-8)

Verses 6-11 are a poem, or a hymn about the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul begins by taking us right back to the beginning before anything existed – Christ Jesus, “who, though he was in the form of God, did not consider equality with God a thing to be grasped.”

a. Heavenly Humility

Christ Jesus existed in the majestic “form of God” from all eternity, as he shared in the glory of God. He showed this in his prayer: “And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed” (John 17:5).

John Calvin says, “The form of God means here his majesty. For as man is known by the appearance of his form, so the majesty which shines forth in God is his figure.”

It’s easy to think about Jesus the man but harder to begin to grasp his eternal existence and glory.

Hebrews 1:3: “He is the radiance of the glory of God, and the exact imprint of his nature.” He is “the radiance”, that is the one who radiates the glory of God - Jesus himself shines forth in godly glory along with the Father and the Spirit in the mystery of the Trinity.

Celebrities use their vast wealth to stay out of contact with the public as much as possible – unless it is at a carefully curated event.

Jesus is eternally humble as he dwells in heavenly splendour! Although Jesus did have something to boast about and to lord over others, Paul tells us, “he did not count equality with God something to be grasped”. Instead of using his equality with God as means to better his own cause, Jesus prepared to hold it in a loose grip.

b. Earthly Humility

Verse 7: “he did not count equality with God something to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”

Jesus’ emptying himself actually involved him adding something. He took the form of a servant. That is, he adopted the appearance and the being of a slave – just as he washed the disciples feet.

“Being born in the likeness of men” describes the fact that he became a man so that he could fully identify with the human race. He didn’t pretend. He became one of us, participating in our frail humanity.

c. Humility in Death

Verse 8 shows the ultimate display of humility, as the Son of God is put to death as a criminal: “And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

He was a real man who experienced all the things that we do – even temptation – but with the marvellous exception of sin. He always remained pure and spotless.

Jesus became humble, not because someone else humiliated him, but because he chose to become humble. He didn’t consider equality with God something to be grasped. He emptied himself. He took on the form of a servant. He chose to enter humanity. Everything that happened was his doing, his own choice.

This makes the challenge even more real: “In humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” (3-4).

Christ’s self-humiliation brought the ultimate obedience – “by becoming obedient to the point of death.” He knew what his death would entail – his becoming sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21). He knew that to save us, he had to propitiate (or turn away) the wrath of God against our sin from us and take it upon himself.

And so we hear him pray words that are almost too harrowing to read: “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death” (Mark 14:34). “And there appeared to him an angel from heaven, strengthening him. And being in agony he prayed more earnestly; and his sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground” (Luke 22:43, 44). And yet in spite of all that he had been through – and that he knew he would

face – he prayed: “Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done” (Luke 22:42). His self-humiliation meant total obedience, even when it terrified him.

Christ is the example – and crucially, by his Spirit, the power – that we need to be able to live a life that is worthy of the gospel.

2. Christ’s Exaltation

Nobody was in any doubt as to what had happened to Jesus – he was truly dead. On the third day, he rose up, triumphant over sin, death, and the devil. Then he ascended to the highest place, in glory.

Paul wanted the Philippians and us to meditate on this.

From the beginning, Jesus was equal with God and reigned with him in heaven. At that time, and until he came to earth, he was the highest of the high.

It was from that high and exalted position that Jesus humbled himself, stooped down and came to the very lowest and lowliest place on earth.

“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed upon him the name that is above every name”.

d. The Name above all names

Names for children are often given because we like the name or to remind us of a relative.

Verse 10, “Jesus” - Acts 4:12 “there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.” The name Jesus is his human name, refers to his work of redemption.

Verse 11: “and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” The name, “Lord” is Jesus’ divine name.

e. Every knee will bow

“At the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth”.

Paul is speaking of that great day towards which the whole Bible points – the day of judgement. All will recognise the glory and beauty of the Son of God in all his heavenly, victorious, splendour – in heaven, on earth, in hell.

Paul has written these things that we might believe them – not to just acknowledge them as being true but so that we might really believe them because what we believe about Jesus determines how we live.

“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than [y]ourselves”? Following Christ in this way means that we will naturally, “look not only to our own interests, but also to the interests of others.”

As God's people, we are to emulate our Saviour and look out for the interests of others. And that we can do, because we have the example – and the mind – of Christ, who really did it.

Hymn: Praise! 810

May the mind of Christ my saviour
live in me from day to day,
by his love and power controlling
all I do and say.

2. May the word of God dwell richly
in my heart, from hour to hour,
so that all may see I triumph
only through his power.

3. May the peace of God my Father
in my life for ever reign,
that I may be calm to comfort
those in grief and pain.

4. May the love of Jesus fill me
as the waters fill the sea,
him exalting, self abasing,
this is victory!

5. May I run the race before me,
strong and brave to face the foe,
looking all the while to Jesus
as I onward go.

6. May his beauty rest upon me
as I seek the lost to win;
and may they forget the servant,
seeing only him.

Katie B Wilkinson (1859-1928)

Closing Prayer