

**May God's grace bring you peace and comfort through his Word. Amen.**

<sup>5</sup> Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: <sup>6</sup> Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. <sup>8</sup> And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! <sup>9</sup> Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. **This is God's Word.**

**Dear Fellow Children of God,**

As people hear the words of our sermon text they often come away thinking its all about humility. That certainly is part of what Paul is talking about in this portion of scripture but is it the main point? As Paul talks about humility he does it in the context of attitude. You can find thousands of quotes on the internet about attitude but I think Winston Churchill got it right when he said, **“Attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference.”**<sup>1</sup>

Our attitude is a little thing that makes a big difference in our lives – especially our spiritual lives as we seek to live for Christ. And so, as we consider the words of scripture before us today, we want to take a look at **“The pattern that Jesus established for us when it comes to attitude”** and then consider **“How we can reflect that same attitude in our lives.”**

**I.** The majority of this sermon text is about Jesus and that is appropriate because his attitude and actions are so important when it comes to our own. So what is the pattern Jesus set for us? First of all, Paul tells us, **“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.”** Paul wants us to understand that even though Jesus was born in humble surroundings, it doesn't mean that all his divine attributes were taken away or left behind. As true man, he set them aside but at times he did make use of them to heal, or to do miracles, or to read the thoughts and hearts of those around him.

Then Paul continues by pointing out, **“[He] made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”** His appearance reflected his true humanity while his works of service reflected his divine love and mercy. There are many examples in scripture of how Jesus served those around him with divine love and mercy.

Once he came upon a funeral procession where a widow had lost her only son who had been providing for her and taking care of her. The widow was devastated and Jesus knew this. In mercy he stopped the procession and brought the widow's son back to life. Last week we heard about how Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead and many of the Jews who came out to comfort Mary and Martha went away believing. Jesus served these people as he displayed his divine power over death.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.brainyquote.com/lists/topics/top-10-attitude-quotes>

Jesus also served the Samaritan woman at the well by offering her the Water of Life – the good news that he was the promised Messiah who had come to take away her sins. After sharing the gospel, he called her to repentance over her sinful lifestyle and as he changed her heart he encouraged her to change her sinful lifestyle as well. Jesus served this woman as he called her from unbelief to faith.

Many of you know the story of how Jesus served the 5000 who had followed him to a remote mountain by miraculously providing physical food in the form of bread and fish as well as spiritual food through the Word of God. I could continue with many other examples of how Jesus served different people through his Words and actions while he lived on this earth but his greatest work of love can be seen at the cross. That will be our special focus this coming week.

Paul tells us how, “[Jesus] **humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross!**” Jesus willingly accepted his role in his Father’s plan of salvation for us. In humility he let himself be arrested, beaten and crucified because he knew that this is what he had to do to pay the debt required for the sins of the world – for our sins. There is no greater love than the love Jesus displayed for us on the cross as our substitute. After declaring that he had finished paying for all sin for all time, Jesus died but he rose three days later just as he said he would. His resurrection assures us that our salvation is complete and even more Jesus has removed the sting of death for all believers.

Once Jesus completed his mission here on this earth we are told, “**Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,<sup>10</sup> that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,<sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**” God exalted him, not as a reward for completing his work, but as a sign that our salvation is complete.

Along with the exaltation of our Savior is the recognition that only faith in him – only his name – can bring us forgiveness, life and salvation. On the Last Day all will recognize him as Lord and Savior – believers willingly and with great joy and unbelievers reluctantly with great distress and despair.

Everything Jesus did, he did for you and for me. His attitude was perfect in every way He was humble and obedient to his Father’s plan of salvation for us. Every day we fall short of God’s commands and are prideful and disobedient but our Savior calls us to repentance and as we confess our sins, he assures us that he paid for them all and they are forgiven. He then encourages us to live according to his Word.

**II.** We do that by following his command at the beginning of this portion of scripture, “**Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.**” That sounds so simple and yet it is so hard for us to do. How can we be like Christ? He is perfect in every way. Just because this might sound impossible doesn’t mean we shouldn’t try. The 1<sup>st</sup> step might be to try and set aside our sinful pride and selfishness. Our human nature prompts us to put ourselves first but as Jesus talked about the greatest commands of God, the 2<sup>nd</sup> greatest is to love our neighbor as ourself and we can only do that because God has changed our hearts through the gift of faith and so his love for us prompts us to love those around us.

During the past few weeks we have been given opportunities to do this. I can love my neighbor by following the mandate to stay home and to not put others in danger. If we have to go to the store, we can ask our neighbor or maybe an older friend or relative if they need anything so that they don't have to expose themselves to risk. As time goes on, we might have to share some of our food and toilet paper with those that are running out. Maybe we can call our friends and neighbors or co-workers we know that are anxious and talk to them. Maybe you can stay connected with your friends through the phone as well. Maybe you can gather with your children and/or spouse to worship along with our live streaming service. If you don't get the internet you can request a copy of the sermon. And we can pray – ask God to watch over us and our family, ask God to watch over our church family and friends and to ask God to watch over our nation.

There are so many opportunities God gives us to reflect his love and to share how we find comfort in Jesus our Savior. It's all about our attitude and so every morning it's good to do an attitude check – to ask God to help you to have the right attitude today – a Christ like attitude – an attitude that reflects his love and mercy. And when our attitude slips, to ask God to forgive us and to help us get back on the right path.

Remember that it is all about attitude and our faith shapes our attitude. As you think about the words of our sermon text remember that our attitude can make a big difference in our lives and the lives of those around us. May we look to our Savior's life, his work and his love for us to help us shape our attitude to reflect him in all that we do. Amen.