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Sermon notes – Rev D Blandford
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The Big Meet A Healthy Attitude



**Think this way among
yourselves, which also you
think in Christ Jesus
Philippians 2.5 (Grayston)**

At our West of England Baptist Association Imagine events we are exploring what it means to become missionary congregations or missional churches. Since the Autumn Phil 1.27, 2.5-11 is the passage selected for us to relect upon together. Whereas the passage for last year was Luke 10 and was about engaging in mission, the focus here is about how our inner lives impact how we serve.

Phil 2.6-11 is believed to be a hymn about Jesus. It describes his amazing humility or expressed in a different fashion it describes the God who stoops and helps us to consider what this can mean for our lives.

A Healthy Attitude towards God

- **The God who stoops 2.5-11**

The Collins English dictionary has a number of definitions for the verb Stoop It can mean:

- *to bend, (the body, or the top half of the body forward and downward,*
- *to carry oneself with head and shoulders continually bent forward*
- *to abase or degrade oneself*
- *to condescend*
- *a lowering from a position of dignity or superiority.*

The Bible says of God

5 Who is like the LORD our God, he One who sits enthroned on high, **6** who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth? **7** He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the needy from the ash heap; Psalm 113:5-7 (N.I.V.)

John the Baptist says of Jesus

*And this was his message: "After me will come one more powerful than I, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to **stoop** down and untie. Mark 1.7*

Jesus when a woman who was caught in adultery was brought to him we read

Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground. At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. John 8. 8-9.

We see therefore we have a God who is humble, we have a God who stoops, and it is important to remember that God, the Father, Jesus the Son and the Holy Spirit all express this quality it is a part of God.

God is not too great to bend low even when that means death on a cross.

- **The reason for God stooping**

*2.1-2 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, **2** then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.*

This hymn speaks of the lengths to which our God will go in order that we may be a member of his family and a recipient of his love.

A Healthy Attitude towards Yourself

Phil 4.23 *Receive and experience the amazing grace of the Master, Jesus Christ, deep, deep within yourselves. (The Message)*

Eph 2.4 *But God is so rich in mercy, and he loved us so much, **5** that even though we were dead because of our sins, he gave us life when he raised Christ from the dead. (It is only by God's grace that you have been saved!)*

To exercise humility is not to devalue ourselves but to be confident in our own value and worth. In Jesus we have who God who considers us worth dying for in order to bring healing to a fractured world.

A Healthy Attitude towards the Church

***2** then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. **3** 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.*

Discovering our worth to God does not devalue other people, each person is of infinite worth to God. This has practical implications; we are not simply to think of our own needs but to consider the needs of others. Demonstrating true humility in the same way as Christ has done with the same mindset is a healthy corrective to selfishness, and to an over inflated view of ourselves. Peter one of the disciples of Jesus expresses this well when he says

All of you, clothe yourselves with humility towards one another, because, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. 1 Peter 5.5

A Healthy Attitude towards the World - Being a missionary congregation –

Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel 1.27

Paul in citing the example of Christ and his mindset is urging us to act upon our unity as members of God's family and to engage together as we communicate the gospel – the good news of Jesus. Jesus not only had plenty of attitude but expressed his attitude in his actions – what's more God recognized this and has given him great honour.

For Small Groups – Dwelling in the World Phil 1.27-2.1-11

Philippians 1.27-2.11 Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. Then, whether I come and see you or only hear about you in my absence, I will know that you stand firm in one spirit, contending as one man for the faith of the gospel 28 without being frightened in any way by those who oppose you. This is a sign to them that they will be destroyed, but that you will be saved— and that by God. 29 For it has been granted to you on behalf of Christ not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for him, 30 since you are going through the same struggle you saw I had, and now hear that I still have. 2.1 If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3 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. 5 Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death— even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Read this scripture through together; then allow 10 – 15 minutes to individually reflect upon these verses. Please make available paper and pen/pencil, encourage group members to write down ideas or draw them etc.

Share how these verses have spoken to you. Let them be an impetus for prayer, pray for one another, think about Jesus and how his attitude is to impact how we view ourselves, one another and others within the wider world.

Are there any practical acts that individually or corporately you feel the Lord is prompting you in. Explore ways to take this further.

