

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

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.

YOUR ATTITUDE

If you had a video recording of yourself on day 1 of your “stay at home” experiment, and you compared it to a recording from yesterday, what would you learn? Have things gotten better or worse? My guess is you’ve found a mix. If you like alone time, some of this isn’t so bad. If you like family time, you’ve had some fun. But have you learned anything embarrassing about yourself? I saw a study showing that as stay-at-home orders increase, at the very same rate access to pornography increases.¹ That’s embarrassing. Has your bickering increased at that rate? How about your faithless worrying?

Many people have proposed that people are acting badly because of the stress, but scientific studies show something else.² Stress doesn’t *cause* bad things. Stress simply *reveals* the bad things. That’s what the Bible teaches too. **“Out of the overflow of the heart, the mouth speaks.”** (Luke 6:44) Someone paraphrased this, “There’s nothing that comes out of the mouth of a drunk that wasn’t already there.” There’s nothing that comes out on day 14 of quarantine that wasn’t already there.

If you’re like me, your bad attitudes are leaking out lately. Have you thought in your house, or in an online meeting, “*My* idea makes sense, but *your* idea could only come from an idiot.” Philippians says, **In humility consider others better than yourselves.** That’s embarrassing. Have your selfishness been showing, “I realize other people have needs, but I handle that now. I’ve got to look out for myself.” Philippians says, **Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.** That’s embarrassing. In fact, Philippians says, **Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.**

So we’ve got a few options. We could deny that we have any problems. We could ignore it until the stress goes away. But that’s not going to help us. So here’s my message of hope for you during these troubled times. Fix your attitude. If I could find a folksy way to say that, I’d make millions like Dr. Phil. But that’s not real helpful is it. So how about this: let’s not focus on fixing

¹https://www.reddit.com/r/dataisbeautiful/comments/fmoptw/oc_total_coronavirus_cases_and_worldwide_pornhub/

² <https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-018-05994-9> or https://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2018-09/osu-sfy090418.php

ourselves. Let's think a while about Jesus, like that crowd on Palm Sunday. The Bible describes it like a frenzy: people cutting tree branches, laying out their clothes, chanting ancient songs in unison. It seemed like the whole world came out for Jesus! Have you ever been in a crowd like that? Maybe a sporting event, a rock concert, a political rally. You can forget all about yourself in those moments. Let's forget ourselves this morning and get all caught up in Jesus.

JESUS IS TRUE GOD

But we're actually studying a Palm Sunday story. We'll read from Philippians 2, because passage in gives us x-ray vision on Palm Sunday. Imagine being in that crowd straining to get a glimpse of Jesus, and then you suddenly zoom in on him, you zoom in right through his cloak, right through what eyes can see, and you see into the very heart of the Son of God. You see who he really is, what he's like, what is the attitude of the King.

The cloak, the beard, the donkey were all disguising his true identity. He's the Almighty Lord. Or as Philippians says it **in very nature God**. When a lightning bolt strikes in the desert, it can be 50,000°F.³ That's hot enough to turn the sand instantly into glass. Who makes that happen? Jesus. You know how he does it? Like this: (nod.) That's it, just a thought... BOOM! 'Cause he's God. In 1980 Mt. St. Helens erupted and sent 1.5 cubic miles of mountain into the sky. The rocks went 15 miles up. It blocked out the sun. They found ash in Minnesota.⁴ Who did that? Jesus. How? (nod) Just a thought... BOOM! 'Cause he's God. This morning your house zipped through space at 1000 mph which means that at 6:27 AM the sun was hidden but by 6:29 the whole thing was visible. Who is twirling us? It's the man who sat on a donkey on Palm Sunday, because he's God.

JESUS ATTITUDE

With just a thought, he could have ascended off that donkey and levitated into Jerusalem. He's ascended before. He could have shown off for the crowd as God! And it would be no exaggeration—if anything that would be an understatement! But that's not Jesus' attitude. **He did not consider equality with God something to be grasped.** Think of Jesus divinity like a trophy. At an awards ceremony the MC congratulates the champions and then what do they do? They grab the trophy and show it off. Jesus' trophy is he is equal to God. He doesn't use that to show off. **He made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.** What is the attitude of the King? Not a show off. A servant.

On Palm Sunday, with just a thought Jesus could have shed his opaque human skin. He could shine like he was made of lightning. He'd done it before! He would have been famous, and it would have been true. Yet that wasn't Jesus attitude. **And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself.** What is the attitude of the King? Humble.

On Palm Sunday, Israelites watched Jesus ride a donkey. The clever ones among them knew the prophecy. **Your king comes to you righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a**

³ <https://www.weather.gov/safety/lightning-temperature>

⁴ <https://pubs.usgs.gov/fs/2000/fs036-00/>

donkey. (Zechariah 9:9) He was a king, and they hoped he would save them from the Romans. Jesus could have done it with nothing more than a thought. He could have usurped the throne of Pontius Pilate, and Tiberius Caesar, and every other ruler to become the king of earth. That would be right and true! Yet that wasn't his attitude. **He humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross.** Did you hear the Apostle Paul stutter over that idea? **Even death on a cross.** That's because he was one of the clever ones. He knew the prophecy. **Anyone who is hung on a tree is under God's curse.** (Deuteronomy 21:23) Paul stuttered because on the cross, Jesus, who is God, was cursed by God. God the Father looked at God the Son and said, "What Son? I don't have a son." Jesus knew that was coming, and he could have stopped it with nothing more than a thought. But he chose it. What is the attitude of the King? He'll die for you. He'll be cursed for you. He'll do anything for you!

OUR NEED FOR JESUS

And you need it. So do I. When we look down on others and when we put ourselves first, it doesn't seem like much, but it is the worst thing in the entire world. Human sin is the worst thing in the entire world. It is so bad that God does not simply whisk it away with an all-powerful thought. No our sin has to be paid for. And so Jesus, who is in very nature God, came down. He came down and became a human. Then he went lower and became a servant. Then he went lower and Jesus became your sin. And then your sin died. Your sin died so that I could stand here on behalf of God and tell you this thing that will change your quarantine—it's the only thing that can change your attitude: You have no guilt. Your selfishness is buried. Your pride is gone. It was paid for by the King.

JESUS GLORY

There is nothing God likes more than what Jesus has done. Three days later God raised his Son from the dead, beaming with joy. "My Son! That's my Son! My Son did the best thing ever. He has the best story ever. He gets the best reputation and the best name ever!" **Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the Glory of God the Father."**

The day is coming, friends, when every person sees Jesus coming in the sky and everyone acknowledges that Jesus is the best! He's always been the King. And yet he served, he was humble, he died, all to save us. That's the attitude of the King.

So what would it be like to be quarantined with Jesus? I know he's with us always, but what if he was with you visibly, bodily, as a member of your family? You can guess board games he'd like, or what he'd do on a video conference, but you don't need to guess about his attitude. He would serve you. He would be humble. He would look out for you. You know how I know that? Because he made himself nothing for you! He took the curse of God for you! What would he NOT do for you?

YOUR ATTITUDE

I can hardly even imagine what it would be like to live with Jesus. But I can find out. As Philippians says, **Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus.** And *my* attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus. You and I can learn from one another what it's like to live with Jesus when we **do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of us should look not only to our own interests, but also to the interests of others.**

If tomorrow some stress forces your inside thoughts to come out, you'll want to have the same attitude as Jesus. That's going to take more than a personal commitment to kindness. It's going to require that I have a Palm Sunday every day. Every day forget yourself and ask, "What is the attitude of the King?"

This is perfect timing because the whole next week is about Jesus. On Maundy Thursday, it's obvious Jesus is God. He knocked down an entire angry mob with nothing more than a thought. But what his attitude? He was arrested for you. On Good Friday it is obvious that he's God. The world went dark in the middle of the day when he died. But what was his attitude? He took God's curse for you. On Easter Sunday, it's obvious Jesus is true God. He rose from the dead! Yet what does he do? He comforts and encourages us.

If Jesus was quarantined with you, he'd walk to the computer on Thursday and start the livestream of the Maundy Thursday service.⁵ He'd open his Bible after breakfast to re-focus our attitudes for the day. He'd share his service, humility, and forgiveness with us so that our attitudes can be the same as the King.

Amen.

⁵ <https://www.mountoliveappleton.com/>