

## Gems From Philippians

### 2 – Live as Jesus lived (Phil 2.1-11)

**vv. 1-2:** Paul is concerned that the life of Christians preaches the spirit of Christ just as much as their words do. They are to preach Christ by the quality of their fellowship and love for one another as much as by their words. The 4 "ifs" speak of the ground of their fellowship: the encouragement of being united with Christ, the comfort of His love, the fellowship of His Spirit, His gift of tenderness and compassion. These things are to be the foundation of their life together as a church.

**vv. 3-4:** The local church is like a ladder of grace. Some have only their first foot on the ladder, some half way up and some very near the top (and some perhaps coming down the other side!). Our calling as Christians in fellowship is to help and encourage one another to grow in the spirit of Christ.

**v. 5:** "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus". It is the spirit that we saw in Him that is to be our spirit. (Cf. His washing of the disciples' feet. John 13.1-15).

**vv. 6-8:** Most commentators say these verses are an early Christian hymn (Cf. Col.3.16). Some think maybe even written by Paul himself. Christ Jesus was one with God but the very nature of God is that He is not self-absorbed or self-centred. God's nature is such that His loving care streams out to all He has made. We saw that in Jesus who put aside all His glory and privilege and came as a servant (Mark 10.45). As the Suffering Servant of the Lord (Isaiah 53) He suffered death on the cross for our sins, not for His own wrongdoing.

**v. 9:** He didn't stay dead! God raised Him from the dead (Acts 2.32). "Death could not hold Him". He is now exalted to the highest place at God's right hand - there as our representative, our Lord, with all power given to Him.

"**Jesus is Lord**" is the great confession of the early Church (1 Cor. 8.6., Rev. 17.14; 19.16 etc.). He is the Creator and Head of the new humanity (v.10 & 11). This is to be our confession and rule for life.

#### Questions for discussion:

1. Like people today the Greeks and Romans exalted the lifestyles of the rich and famous. Humility had no place in their thinking. Does humility mean likeness to Uriah Heap, grovelling and abject? If not, what does it mean?
2. Look at Micah 6 verse 8. What does that say to us today?
3. Is it wrong to want to be the very best that we can be – teacher, athlete, worker or whatever? How does that fit in with humility?
4. Real care, service, honesty and ethical standards are often at a low ebb today. In a recent survey, bankers and politicians gained very few points indeed, doctors only 53% and clergymen only 64%. Why is this?
5. Care and love towards one another in the church and from the church to those outside is the true spirit of Christianity. How well, do you think we are doing in showing that? What more could or should we do?
6. Could it be said of us as a church that we are here not to be served (and become a nice, large and prosperous church) but to serve in the loving, caring spirit of Christ? When people look at us do they see Jesus? Do they see and feel the love of Jesus towards them?
7. When Paul and Silas were in prison in Philippi, their feet in the stocks, they prayed and sang hymns to God. What do you do when trouble or hardship comes?
8. Hymns and praise have always been at the heart of Christianity (Cf. Col. 3.16). What hymns does this passage bring to mind?