

Philippians 2. 1-11
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This passage asks the question: what lies at the heart of the gospel?

Let us ask again, who are the Philippians?

- Deep loyalty owed to the Emperor of Rome. The colony has many privileges.
- The Roman's believed that what made them great was their piety. Their regard for the gods.
- Paul's message is about serving a different kind of God. Rome has established Philippi because it is colonizing Europe. Ironically, here are the Philippians (and Paul in Rome) establishing another kind of kingdom that doesn't look as powerful, yet had a much longer lasting impact.
- This means the Philippians and Paul will suffer, which is a "gracious gift". It means we are on God's side, because he chose to suffer, not make others suffer. This is how the world was changed.

What is it that helped to change the world?

Philippians 2.1-4

- In Christ we have comfort. His death led to the conquering of death. When we participate in this suffering it means we are helping to bring life too. What can Rome do when Christians win either way?
- God's love is the grounding for all of this. God's love does not mean we miss out of suffering, it might mean the opposite. God's love led him to the cross.
- To be daily filled with the Spirit is to be in Christ. Compassion, mercy, comfort, love.
- Compassion was not at the heart of the ancient world, it was not smiled on. It was at the heart of Israel's story and God's heart toward them. This means the Judeo-Christian story is we don't give people what they deserve, we give them what they need.
- Psalm 145.9 – Compassion and mercy is what we should be known for!
- "Fulfill my joy" – Joy was not seen in the "great ones" of the ancient world. Joy is only the result of what God has done in Christ.
- All this stems from humility, not selflessness or arrogance.

2.5-8

- "Form" was the stuff you could touch, in the original language. Even though Jesus was God's equal, he didn't hold onto what he deserved, but lived amongst us in our form. He didn't make demands. This changes friendship in the ancient world altogether.
- Jesus' first temptation from Satan was to "use this God for yourself" (make bread). He rejected this, he had a different relationship with the Father. This is where God's selfless love comes from.

- We use equality to exploit but to encourage. We don't make demands, we serve.

2.9-11

- The last thing you want is someone in power who is selfish and ego driven. This is not God's pattern amongst us and we must model.
- We don't come with swords (or harsh words or attitudes) or AK47s. We come with kindness.

Discussion Questions

- Who do you know that embodies God's attitude of kindness and humility?
- What did you learn in this teaching?
- How is God helping you grow in this area?
- How does kindness and humility transform people, organization and places? Why?