

Philippians 2:1-11

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, ²make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. ³Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ⁴Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. ⁵Let the same mind be in you that was* in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, ⁷ but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

REFLECT & DISCUSS

Context & Review

There are fundamental relationships that we each navigate. We have explored our relationship to our selves, to each other, and to God through three spiritual movements:

From loneliness to solitude (self)

From hostility to hospitality (others)

From illusion to prayer (God)

The final movement of the soul speaks to our discipleship in and for the world. This final movement gathers the other three within it, and in each of the other movements we can sense this one.

Quotes

“In and through Christ we receive a new identity that enables us to say, ‘I am not the esteem I can collect through competition, but the love I have freely received from God.’”

- *Henri Nouwen*

“Paul’s hymn of Christ does not ask us to look upward, away from our condition, but to look in our midst and discover God there.”

- *Henri Nouwen*

Big Idea

The Christian life requires effort, but it is an effort to *receive and reveal* rather than conquer.

Reflect

1. Read the scripture passage carefully and slowly. What word or image stands out to you? Why?
2. Philippians 2: 6-11 is called the "Hymn of Christ." From Henri Nouwen's quote (above), what do you think it means to stop looking up for God and instead look around (or perhaps down) for Christ?
3. In what way, if any, are you a competitive person? Recall a story of competition from your life.
4. Why might competition and comparison be toxic to the Christian life and the vitality of the Church?
5. How might a life of compassion be different from a life dictated and defined by competition? Do you see this in the life of Jesus? If so, how?

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