

My boys have started going to wrestling practice along with a couple other kids from church a bunch other kids in town. It is chaotic because you are trying to corral 30 4-6 year olds and get them to wrestle each other but in a controlled way, at the right times. And wrestling is something that is not easy to teach. I especially can't tell a four-year-old just verbally what they need to do and then they can do it. I can't say ok go do a double leg takedown. Get in your stance, step with your lead leg and put your other knee down, put your hands around the knees, then lifted one leg and push with your head and then drive at an angle and make sure you end up on top chest to chest in a T. I can say all of those words but four year olds stopped listening immediately after I started talking. Which is why to teach wrestling you have to actually do it. The coach gets down on the mat and shows the kids what they are to do step by step. Instruction couldn't just be verbal it needed to be embodied. And it has to be done over and over. Because there are some things you cannot learn from a book.

So there's something very similar that happens here with the incarnation. We have been talking about the incarnation as we are in the middle of advent. We were talking about all of the different aspects of the incarnation. What I want you to see this morning is that in the incarnation this is like God getting down on the wrestling mat and showing us what life looks like. This is Jesus being our example of how we are to live.

Turn with me to Philippians 2.

I. Jesus humbled himself in the incarnation as an example (v. 6-7)

Now God obviously became man to deliver us from salvation.

OK, I am not denying that.

Even though there are some who actually will.

They will say well Jesus came down and was born to earth, but He didn't actually come to save us.

He just came to be an example.

He only died on the cross to show us how we should act towards one another.

To be clear, I am not saying that.

Jesus came to actually save us, not just to be an example.
But the example Christ sets for us in the incarnation is incredibly significant.

That might seem like a subtle distinction, but it's incredibly important distinction.

So again, let us look at the incarnation

Because verse five is really the key to understanding and applying this whole passage.

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus."

Because first we are told that we need to have the mind that Jesus had.

This seems kind of like a complicated phrasing.

How much simpler basic translation is Think like Jesus.

Choose to behave the way Jesus did.

Have the attitude that Jesus had

Live in the way that Jesus lived.

Act like Jesus did.

Treat people how Jesus did.

So this is part of the incarnation.

In becoming a man, Jesus shows us exactly what we are to do.

And then once we see it, we are able to live just like Jesus lives.

"Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,"

What does this mean when it's talking about equality with God.

Because there are some who are heretics who will twist this and make it say that Jesus was not equal with God.

It doesn't what this means.

What it does is that Jesus is equal with God and he is himself God.

And as a part of His free will,

and as a part of the plan of God

He willingly decided that He didn't have to act like God.

Jesus was willing to turn aside from His Godness.

Because Jesus could have just came down and came down in the full glory of God.

He could have came to minister and preach not as a man.

He could've shown up as the fire in the burning bush.

He could've shown up on a ladder descending from heaven with angels, ascending descending like with Jacob.

He could've shown up as the cloud of fire, the cloud of smoke .

He could've shown up like He showed up at Mount Sinai with the thunder in the fire and the waves in the trumpets

He could've shown up as he did furnace in the book of Daniel with a face like the son of God.

He could have revealed Himself in the fullness of glory like the transfiguration.

He could have shown with armies of angels

He could have shown up with a cherubim and with the heavenly creatures surrounding Him.

He could have done all of that.

And yet the miracle and the wonder of the incarnation, and the beauty of Christmas is that Jesus came and was God incarnate.

He came instead as a small newborn baby.

Verse 7, **"But emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men."**

He emptied himself, and He is born in the likeness of men

Emptying Himself doesn't mean that He stopped being God, but it means that He started being a man.

Jesus did not lose anything when He became human being

Instead He willingly set aside part of His goodness.

He could've picked it up at any moment, but He chose to embrace humanity truly.

Now there are parts of this are hard to understand.

Can be hard to understand how is Jesus truly God and truly man.

How His human nature and His divine nature exist in this hypostatic union. We don't have time to unpack all of that this morning. Although that simple fact is worth your study and contemplation. But what I want to see here is that Jesus came to be like us. One of the reasons He comes and is in our likeness so that we know what we are to be like. Jesus became like us so that we could become like Him. He gives us the example and the roadmap.

This is why throughout the gospels Jesus invites his disciples and says come and follow me. The beauty and one of the most profound things about the incarnation is that it shows us what we are to be like. It is Jesus getting down on the wrestling mat with us and showing us how we are to wrestle with Satan and with our sin.

You see everything that Jesus does in the gospels and in the gospels was not just for our salvation and was not just to teach us things, but to show us as well.

In the garden, Jesus showed us how we are to face our deaths. When Jesus is in the wilderness, he didn't just show us that he was without sin. He also gave us an example of how we can defeat the Temptations of the enemy, prayer, scriptures, and resisting Satan.

Jesus told us disciples don't keep the little ones to me, but them belong the kingdom of God
He wasn't showing us that He was showing us how to receive children and those who seem to have nothing to offer us .
Jesus preached the sermon on the mount and then He lived it.
How Jesus treated His disciples shows us how to treat believers who fail and sin.

Jesus got down on his hands and his knees and washed his disciples. He showed us how we are to serve one another.

And I can go on and on and on and on.

But one thing that we need to remember as we read the gospels. And we read, and we see the teaching of Jesus understand as well that Jesus is showing us how we are to be like him.

We have the mind of Jesus, the heart of Jesus

This is one of the reasons the church is called the body of Christ.

Because we don't follow and be like Jesus individually, we are to do community and to do it as a church body.

We follow his example.

And just possible to be like Jesus.

Of course, we will not be on this side of eternity.

Of course you are going to fail into stumble and to get some stuff wrong.

There will be times to do most of it right at the end.

There will be other times we try to do the right thing and then we don't do it in the right way.

But I want to see, and to know is that we can still be like Jesus

My sons are not me, but they are like me in many ways.

Just the other day at the bookstore, I told Calvin he could pick out one book.

And I looked back and he had a stack of 15.

I told him he could only have one and he said, "But I want all of them and they are only a few dollars.

Just like me.

Because I also had a stack of ten books I wanted that were only a dollar.

And in many ways I am just like my dad.

I hope one day you get to hear him preach because you'll see how similar we both are.

But I'm still me

My sons are still themselves.

And we are still ourselves and in similar way, we can be like Jesus.

We are not turning into Jesus we can become more like him.

II. We should follow Christ's example (v. 1-5).

We got it follow His example we have to copy them.

If we want to be like Jesus is then we need to do what Jesus did.

This is one of the reasons that we read the scriptures.

This is one of the reasons that we meditate on God's word because we need to keep seeing Jesus over and over and over and over again.

I guess I'm going to just keep talking about wrestling today.

In wrestling you have to practice the same move over and over thousands of times.

I practiced the same move from the time I was four till high school over and over again.

My sons have only just started, but they get annoyed when I say to watch me and lets do the move again.

Calvin told me he is an expert and already doing it perfectly.

Sometimes that is just how we act towards Christ.

We think we are an expert.

We think we have already mastered part of the faith and don't need to keep practicing the basics again.

But we need to do the same thing with Jesus.

We need to keep following and keep looking at the example of Jesus.

Because we have not yet mastered the faith.

This is why we study the Scriptures daily.

This is why we are to regularly pray.

This is why we are to regularly and often to participate in communion.

This is why we are to not neglect the gathering of God's people for worship.

We need to do all of these things so that we regularly see Jesus.
So that we can watch Him.
And so that He can continue making us like Him.

Look at verse 5 again.

Verse 5, **"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,"**

We are to have the mind of Jesus.
We should be thinking like Jesus.
We should be deciding to live like Jesus.
We should put our minds into being like Christ.
This is how we follow Jesus.

Verse 1, **"So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy."**

All of these things are obviously in Christ.
They are especially ours as we follow the example of Jesus.
As we walk with Christ, He encourages us.
As we walk with Christ, He comforts us with His love.
As we walk with Christ, we participate in the Spirit.
As we walk with Christ, we feel Christ's affection and sympathy.

Verse 2, **"complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind."**

We need to continue in following Jesus.
And we do that by having the same mind as Christ.
By thinking the way Christ does.
But notice who Paul is addressing.
He is not just addressing individuals.
He is talking to the Philippians church all together.
And he wants them to have the same love.
He wants them to be of full accord and one mind.

Following Jesus is not an individual event.

Following Jesus is a team sport.

It is something we are meant to do together.

The American church has a problem with this because we love our individualism.

And covid really accelerated this.

People think they can just worry about their own relationship with Christ and the church is optional.

But it is not.

We are to follow Jesus together.

We do it as one body.

Verse 3, **"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves."**

One of the best ways to follow Jesus is through humility.

And it takes humility to follow Jesus.

It especially takes humility to try and follow Jesus together as a church.

We have to consider not just our own following of Jesus.

We should be trying to follow Jesus with our families.

We should be trying to follow Jesus with our children and grandchildren.

We should be trying to follow Jesus with our friends.

And we should be trying to follow Jesus with our church.

We count them as more significant than ourselves.

Verse 4, **"let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others."**

We have to look towards their interests and their faith.

We cannot just be concerned about what we want and what we like.

This church should not just do everything exactly as we want.

We need to do things as a corporate body that are in the best interests of everyone.

To do things that help all of us follow Jesus together.

And as we follow Jesus, we become more like Christ.

Second Corinthians 3:18 tells us We are **"being transformed into his image"**

We can only be like Jesus because he is a human being.

We only even know what it looks like because of Jesus.

Christ demonstrates what it is supposed to mean to act like the image of God.

We were all made in the image of God.

We are supposed to reflect and image God in the world.

But we get it wrong all the time.

And at least some of the time it is because we do not even know how to act.

But Jesus gives us an example.

Romans 8:29 tells us **"For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed into the image of his son, that he might be the first among many brothers and sisters."**

What it means to be a Christian is to become more and more like Christ. No more should be conformed to the world, but be transformed into the image of God.

It is the desire and purpose of Christ to make us His brothers and sisters.

This is a part of our sanctification that will become more holy we are becoming more and more like Jesus .

To follow Jesus means that you will become more like Him.

Not just in some mystical and spiritual sense,

Although that is undoubtably true.

But it means that you will begin to act more like Christ.

We will begin to forgive others like Christ forgives.

We will begin to care for the weak and those who have nothing to offer us as Christ did.

We will begin to love our enemies as Christ loved us.

If we are going to call ourselves Christians, we must follow Christ.

But some people call themselves Christians, but don't actually want to follow Jesus.

They are like someone about to go into a wilderness.

And they claim they have this great guide who is just the best and they recommend to everyone.

He knows the best paths and the way to get through safely.

But they aren't actually going to listen to his advice this time.

And they won't follow him because they will just do it on their own.

If we are going to call ourselves Christians,

If we will bear the name of Christ, then we must also bear Him in our lives.

On our bodies and by our actions.

Follow Christ's example.

And the more we follow His example the more we walk as Christ walked.

The more we begin to talk like Jesus.

And the more we begin to have the mind of Christ.

III. Because following Jesus is the way to salvation (v. 9-11)

There is only one path to salvation.

And it is through Christ.

Earlier in Church history our faith was called the way.

Christians called themselves Christians.

But they did not refer to our faith as Christianity, early on we called it the way.

Because the Christian life is not just a set of beliefs.

It is a way of life.

It is a path that we walk down.

And we see this throughout the Scriptures.

Jesus calls His disciples to come and follow Him.

We still describe our faith in this same way often.

We talk about our walk with Jesus.

Our spiritual life uses a lot of this same language.

We believe that Christ is the only path to salvation.
We receive it not just through faith.
But we also have to follow Jesus.
Because still today, we must follow Jesus.
Because no one can see God the Father without following the Son.

Verse 9, **"Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,"**

Jesus showed us the path.
He came and lived a life following God.
He especially lived a life of quiet humility.
And His obedience to God was rewarded.

He who died has now been exalted.
He who was raised on the cross by the Romans has been raised to the heavens by God.

And He has been bestowed with every name.
Kings and rulers like to give themselves titles.
The more titles the better.
The more places they conquer the more places they can call themselves king of.

The Emperor of the Ottoman Empire called himself, Sultan Han, sovereign of the Sublime house of osman, sultan of sultans, khan of the khans, commander of the faithful and successor of the prophet of the lord of the universe, custodian of the holy cities of Mecca, Medina, and Jerusalem, caesar of Rome, Padishah of the three cities.
And then it goes on to list 55 other places he was ruler of.
And that is just the short title.

There is one sense in which Jesus' name is like that.
He is adding titles to His name.
But His titles are not like conquests.
He is the king of kings.

He is the Lord of Lords.

The prince of peace.

He is the I Am.

And He conquers not through the sword, but through love.

He is the God who defeated death.

And finally, He is the name above all names.

Whatever random titles you want to throw on your name.

Whatever nickname you want to give yourself.

Christ's name is better.

His name is higher.

Verse 10, **"So that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth."**

Because His name is the only one that has any power.

His name is the only one over the whole world.

Jesus is the one whose name is above every other name.

What is it the name of Jesus that one day every single knee will bow.

Although in the heavens will bow.

All those in earth will bow.

And even those who were under the bow.

The end of the Earth appears to refer to those who are in hell.

Even though God fought against God and resisted, God will bend their knees to Jesus .

Verse 11, **"and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."**

Every single time we have to confess it admit, Jesus is Lord.

They will have to acknowledge that Jesus is God .

They will have to admit that Jesus truly is God incarnate, and God in flesh.

In the early church, the cry of Jesus is Lord was a rebellious cry.

Christians were killed because they would not say that Caesar was Lord, but that Jesus was Lord.

They would not say that Caesar was the ultimate authority they would say that Jesus was.

There will be Roman soldiers.

There will be a whole lot of Roman emperors.

There will be plenty of people who killed Christians, who will then have to bend the knee and acknowledge Jesus is Lord .

One day, everyone is going to have to do that.

And so we can choose that we will do it now gladly or we will do it then under compulsion.

We can call Jesus Lord today and receive salvation and redemption or we can wait until that day when it is too late.

Everyone will bow and everyone will confess.

It is only up to us when we do so.

Ultimately, all of this about the incarnation is not meant to be cute idea.

This is not a nice intellectual exercise to help us work out our theological muscles. Though, I hope that we are.

At the end of the day we need to stand and we need to admit that Jesus Christ is Lord.

We have to give our lives to Jesus.

This is the first step of being like Christ

Following Jesus is the only path to salvation.

This is the only path to redemption.

It only comes through Jesus by Jesus from Jesus.

So if you have not, I ask you have you confess that Jesus is Lord?

Have you been the need to Jesus and surrender your life to Jesus?

There are some who are Christians who have grown up in church and maybe they thought that Jesus is God and Jesus is great, but they have not wanted to call Jesus Lord. They have not wanted to surrender to Jesus.

That was me for a long time I believed in Jesus, but I did not want to surrender to Jesus.

There are plenty who like the politics of Jesus or the values of Jesus but they don't want Jesus as God.

You cannot be a Christian if you are not surrendering to Jesus.

You cannot be a Christian if you are not giving your life to Jesus.

You cannot be a Christian unless you were also trying to be like Jesus.

Imagine if Peter told Jesus no, he did not want to leave his nets to follow Jesus.

And yet Peter then still tried to claim to be a disciple and apostle.

Yet that is what some do today.

That's what this is about.

The first thing is that we've been to Jesus we had admitted Jesus Lord asked for his salvation and his forgiveness.

And then we stand up and we follow him for the rest of our lives.

So some of you need to bend the knee and you need to confess Jesus Christ is Lord before it is too late.

You are already followers of Jesus you need to continue following Jesus and you need to look to him as the example.

Don't follow Christian leaders who aren't also following Jesus.

The apostle Paul said, follow me as I follow Christ.

We need to try to continue to be like Jesus.

Because that is the only way that we will find eternal life.

And if you have been following Jesus, keep going.

Don't stop and don't quit. This is the path to eternal life.

Why do we want to be like Jesus?

Because this is the only way to salvation.

Christ is the one we will bow down to.

But He invites us to be like Him.

CONCLUSION:

1. [Summary] Jesus humbled himself in the incarnation as an (example) (v. 6-7). We should follow Christ's (example) (v. 1-5). Because following Jesus is the way to (salvation) (v. 9-11).
2. [Challenge] My hope and prayer is that we would all follow the example of Jesus. And that when we fail we would get back up and try again. Thousands of times until He comes again or until we pass from this world. Asking What Would Jesus Do? used to be fairly popular. It's not a bad question. It can be a helpful guide for knowing what to do next. But a lot of the time we don't need to ask or wonder what Jesus would do if He was in our situation. Instead, we need to look at what Jesus actually did and then go do likewise.