

Hymn for Us

We are back in Philippians, back in the very same passage/hymn we considered last time... a few Sundays ago. If you were with us, or are *keeping up* online, you may remember that I set out to work on this same, important passage from Chapter 2. Last time I called the message *Hymn for Him* since we focused on what this passage teaches us about **Him** (Jesus). Today I'm calling it *Hymn for Us* since we will focus more on what it means for **us**. Last time was more of a **theological/Christological** approach, today will be a more **ethical** approach. It is good to read Scripture out loud, together, so let's do so (Philippians 2:5-11)

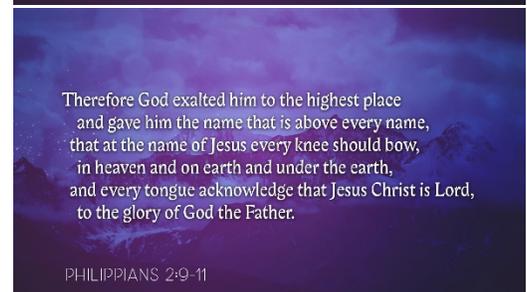
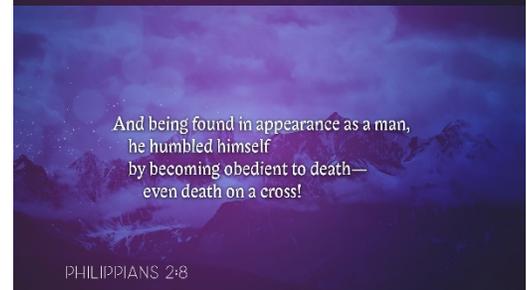
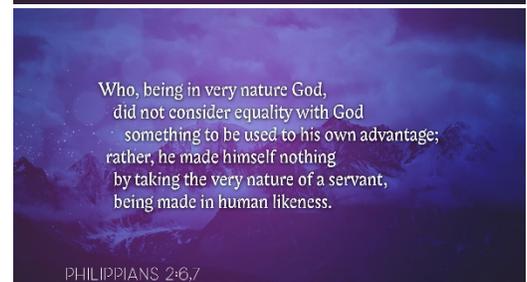
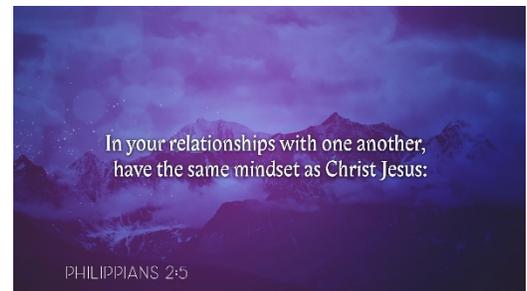
⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be
used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming 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 acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. ¹



¹ The New International Version. (2011). (Php 2:5–11). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

I don't often do this thing with sermons where there are 3-4 points that *rhyme*, or form an *acronym*, or start with the same letter... but I saw this in my studies, borrowing from Dr. Gordon Fee, so here's today's outline from the passage:

- The Principle is Love
- The Pattern is Christ
- The Power is the Spirit
- The Purpose is the glory of God

This is **the *Christian ethic***, the demand of Scripture on how Believer's should be guided in our behavior.

This passage starts with verse 5, setting the context for relationships... the horizontal, how people ought to relate to one another, perhaps *especially* how **Christian's** out to relate to one another.

This little phrase "in your relationships" could be understood as "in **these** relationships"... a summary of what we can read in the previous four verses, the beginning of chapter 2.

if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion,² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind

The principle is love.

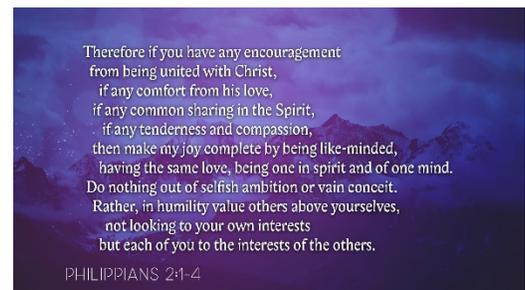
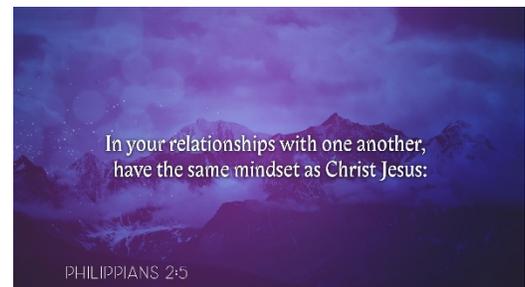
Christ first loved us:

God so **loved** the world that **he** gave his one and only Son²

God loves us first, and our right and best response is to love... to love God, and to love people.

God loves us first, undeniably demonstrates His love in Christ, and now calls us to be "like-minded, having the same love."

That same love is selflessness and humility.



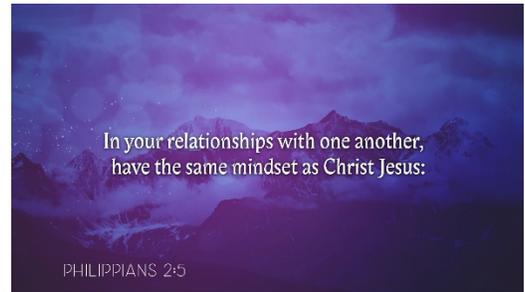
² The New International Version. (2011). (Jn 3:16). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,
⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.³

⁵ In ~~your~~ [these] relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:⁴

The pattern is Christ... *and what a pattern it is.*

This is how we know that we are His... that we find ourselves being formed into His likeness.



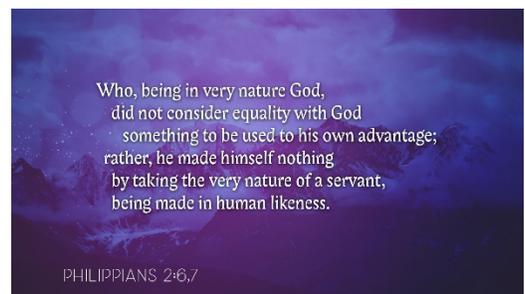
Parents *get this*, right? There are all sorts of reasons that I know that my sons are mine, I was there, and you can just look at them. But there are regular reminders in the way that they act and behave. We see ourselves in our family members. In our mere-human cases it is both good and bad (do you find it *super difficult* to correct your kids when they are behaving just like you did, or still do?).

Parents *get it*, and children get it too... even grown children. Laurie and I were with my parents in the Chicago area a few weeks ago; there were several times when we were reminded “oh yeah... this is where Dan comes from” as I heard myself sounding like my dad or thinking like my mom... both good and bad.

Of course when we find ourselves following the pattern of Jesus, seeing that we are His, it is all **good**.

Jesus is the pattern of perfection; He is the Sinless One, the perfect human (all the while fully God). And while we will not achieve that same perfection, flawed and limited as we are, it is that perfection to which we aspire.

⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be
used to his own advantage;
⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.⁵



This is the pattern for **love**: *servanthood*.

If we allow ourselves to take the pattern for love from our culture, or even our own natures, we will get it upside down.

³ The New International Version. (2011). (Php 2:1–4). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁴ The New International Version. (2011). (Php 2:5). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁵ The New International Version. (2011). (Php 2:6–7). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

We often use the word **love** describing how we feel about **things**. (I love my car, or my phone. I love pie. I love music.)

When we use the word love about **things**, it always means how those things serve us.

When we say we love things, we are talking about the pleasure we get from those things.

And when we use the same word, love, for people... we often mean that very same thing. We love people for how they serve us, for what they do for us, for the pleasure they give us.

But that is *upside down* from how Christ defines love by the way He showed us the Love of God. Love is not a matter of being served; love is serving.

Hear how it is stated in 1 John 4:10

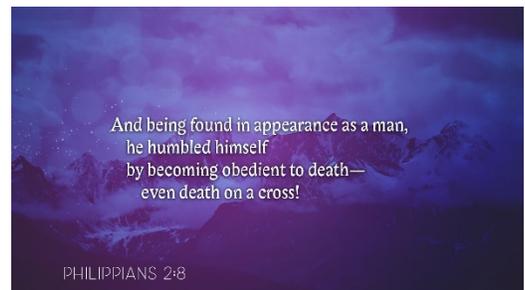
¹⁰ This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.⁶

God loves us by serving us... sending His Son.

God, in the Son, set aside His privilege, “taking the very nature of a servant.”

When we are following the **pattern** of Christ, we must be **servicing**.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!⁷



How far does that love go? All the way. To what extent did Christ serve us, demonstrating the love of God? All the way.

This is the extent to which we are called to serve. All the way.

I have some *bad news* for you. I probably ought to be embarrassed, since I'm the pastor and all... but let me *give it to you straight*: **I can't do it.**

⁶ The New International Version. (2011). (1 Jn 4:10). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁷ The New International Version. (2011). (Php 2:8). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

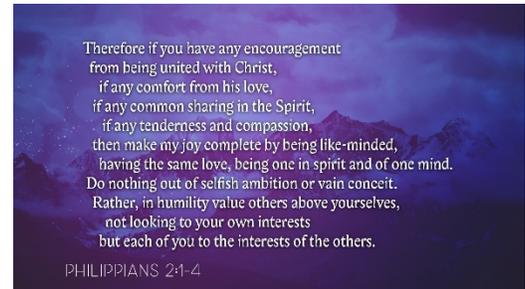
This pattern is too hard. Maybe I can manage to serve you and all people in some way that is *pretty good*, maybe *better than average*. But the pattern of **Christ** is ***too much*** to expect. My selfishness and laziness and weakness and such keep me far from attaining such a goal.

I can't do it. And neither can you.

The Principle is love. The Pattern is Christ. And here is the good news: The Power is in the Holy Spirit. The **Father's** Love, patterned in the **Son's** Sacrifice, is **possible** in and through us by the power of the **Spirit**.

We didn't call it out, but it is there in the first verses of Philippians 2; we **share** in the **Spirit**.

The Scripture calls us to a high standard of obedience, truly an impossibly high standard. The pattern of Christ is impossibly high for us *mere mortals*.



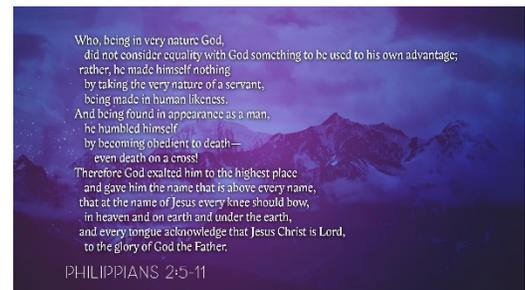
We might even think of it as *unfair*... except for a few key considerations.

First, it is not unfair in that we who believe are empowered to pursue and live these lives. The power is not our *grit and determination* alone, our strong *wills*... the power is the Holy Spirit, God Himself working in us and through us.

The high standard patterned by Christ is not unfair because God provides the power in the Holy Spirit.

And, perhaps more importantly, the high standard patterned by Christ is not *unfair* because the **purpose** is not to somehow *qualify* us for salvation.

What we see as the pattern is not a **way** to our salvation; it is a **response** to our salvation. We don't follow this pattern so that God **will** love us; we follow this pattern **because** God loves us. This pattern is not work toward our salvation, but rather it is a labor of love *out of* and *because of* our salvation.



The **purpose** is the glory of God.

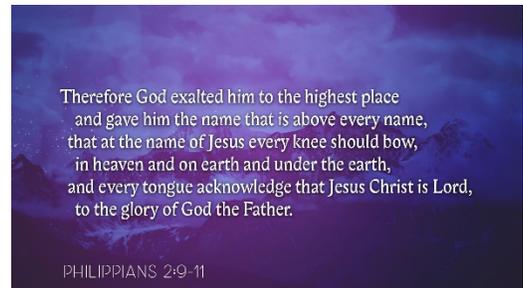
And there are those four points:

- The Principle is Love
- The Pattern is Christ
- The Power is the Spirit
- The Purpose is the glory of God



Let's not miss that there is some **pattern** in that last section of the hymn:

- ⁹Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father. ⁸



Now, of course, we will not find ourselves in a place where knees are bowing to or tongues are confessing anything about *our* greatness... but there is a promise of a *sort of* exaltation in eternity. There is promise in the pattern in that we certainly have a place in eternity with Jesus, in resurrected bodies suited for eternity.

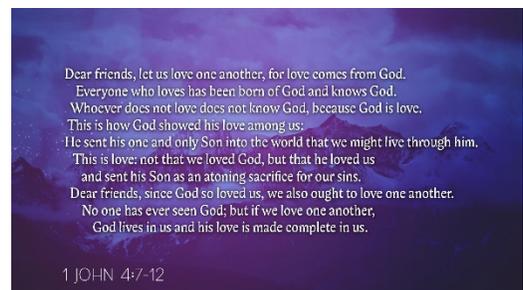
But that purpose is not merely that eternal reward, just as the exaltation of Jesus was not the purpose in itself. But rather, all of this is for the **glory of God**.

We love for the glory of God. Hear again how it is put in 1 John 4:

since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

¹²No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. ⁹

God is glorified when God is seen... and the way God is seen in our times and in our days is through love. We see God in His love demonstrated through His people... people who are following the pattern of Christ, showing love through service... extraordinary service.

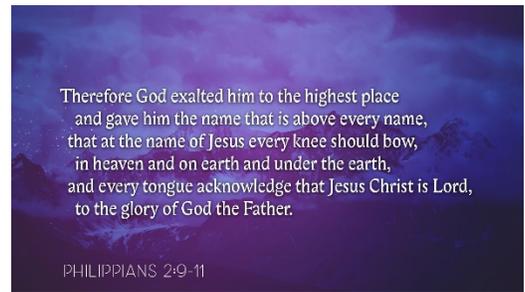


This is how the world sees the love of God, when His love is made complete in those who believe, in and through those in whom God is alive by the power of the Holy Spirit.

⁸ The New International Version. (2011). (Php 2:9–11). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

⁹ The New International Version. (2011). (1 Jn 4:11–12). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

The pattern of Christ is that God is glorified. This is our pattern and purpose too, that God would be glorified... that His beauty would be known and seen more fully, more perfectly, more meaningfully. Not that anything we do can add to the glory of God, but that all that we do acknowledges the glory of God.



This is the extraordinary call of the Scripture before us today... so let's call on God to make it so in our lives.

God help us to live in such a way, with

- The Principle being Love
- The Pattern being Christ
- The Power being the Spirit
- The Purpose being the glory of God



We've reserved a few moments here at the end of today's service to call on God and see what He might do in us and through us.

As we sing, declaring our need of Him, let's be overwhelmed with this principle of love, dedicated to the pattern of Christ, and empowered with the presence of the Spirit, all for the glory of God.