



#4 Choosing What NOT To Be

TEXTS: Philippians 2:5-11, Mark 9:2-9, Joshua 24:14-27

Philippians 2:5-11

In your lives you must think and act like Christ Jesus who in his true nature was God. But he understood that being equal with God was NOT something he had to latch on to with an iron grip.

Instead, he gave up all his divine privileges and emptied himself to be born as a human baby. He grew up to a life that was like being a slave. Throughout his whole life he obeyed God completely, even though it led to his death on a cross.

So God raised him to the highest place and made his name greater than every other name. His name is so great that every knee will bow to the name of Jesus—everyone in heaven, on earth, and under the earth. And everyone will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and bring glory to God the Father.
—Philippians 2:5-11

This is a composite of several translations as well as my own intent to emphasize the GREEK words: katalego and kenosis.

Illustration: Travel through any major city and you will see a person pushing a grocery cart filled with an odd assortment of items. Some items are the necessities of their meager life. Other items are the small valuables they have scavenged that they can sell for small sums to supplement their limited resources.

In a certain way, that is a picture of how we all live... endlessly searching for scraps. Many of us have to do that in order to have important things we need in life.

But, all of us do that in our minds as we gather ideas and concepts we need in order to understand ourselves, others, God, eternity... all those questions that we never can fully answer.

In my youth, I decided to defer for a little while making a choice about my career and going to a college where I would get the education I needed to pursue that.

Instead, I decided to go to Bible College in order to get some answers to questions I thought were even more important. It was a good thing to do... I did discover a whole new world and I loved studying the Bible.

In those early years of my life, I gathered some precious scraps from God's word, scraps that are still in my cart, they will always be there.

One of the greatest of them was this insight by Paul about the role Jesus played and how we can begin to understand him...

There was more to Jesus than most people knew.

Mark 9:2-9 (cf. Matthew 17:1-13, Luke 9:28-36)

Only a few people knew the greater picture of Jesus' identity during his lifetime. Most people were curious, many had the right inclination that Jesus was a prophet.

Mark 8:27-30 (cf. Matthew 16:13-20, Luke 9:18-20)

Not long before, Peter dared to profess Jesus was the Messiah. But at that time Jesus commanded his closest disciples NOT to tell others (not yet) what they were aware of.

Later, of course, he told them to go and boldly proclaim his true identity and purpose.

Understanding Jesus is wrapped up in 2 Gr. words: katalego, kenosis

v. 6 – katalego – hold down, i.e., to grab a falling object (like when you have something slip out of your hand and you instinctively and quickly reach down to catch it before it falls and breaks.)

Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. (NLT)

who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God (NKJV)

He did not think that being equal with God was something he should hold on to. (NirV)

This speaks about the attitude of Jesus. It shows what he values most... Not his own privileged position, but his mission, his purpose

v. 7- kenosis – empty

He gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. (NLT)

He made himself nothing (NIV)

He emptied himself (NewAmerStd)

He made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. (NKJV)

He made himself nothing. He took on the very nature of a servant. He was made in human form. (NirV)

II Corinthians 8.9 - For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.

This shows the will of Jesus.

Will is what you choose to do based on what you know is true.

Choose Your Life – It Won't Choose You

One of the silliest excuses ever given was a parody in the 1970s TV series by comedian Flip Wilson's character Geraldine. Remember her famous line... "the Devil made me do it"? It became a national expression. It was also probably an imitation of that attempt at avoiding responsibility for bad behavior.

Hebrews 12:1-3

A huge cloud of witnesses is all around us. So let us throw off everything that stands in our way. Let us throw off any sin that holds on to us so tightly. Let us keep on running the race marked out for us.

Let us keep looking to Jesus. He is the author of faith. He also makes it perfect. He paid no attention to the shame of the cross. He suffered there because of the joy he was looking forward to. Then he sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

He put up with attacks from sinners. So think about him. Then you won't get tired. You won't lose hope. (NirV)

Did you get all four of those points?

- put aside the things that don't matter
- run until you are tired, and then keep running
- keep your eye on the prime motivator and goal – Jesus
- be ready to suffer

All this discussion about the attitude and actions of Jesus on our behalf is not Paul's main point in this letter to his friends at the church in Philippi.

This is one of the greatest and most informative passages about the nature and purpose of Jesus. But... here Paul is using that great teaching to get them to live peacefully with one another. In order for that to happen, they must all adopt the attitude of Jesus...

Phil 2:2 – be likeminded (with each other and with Jesus) because we have the same hope, the same Holy Spirit as a

gift to every one who believes, therefore the same purpose, the big purpose in life.

Phil 2:3-4 – Indulging in selfish ambition or being conceited must be denied. Think of others as better than yourself and pay more attention to their needs than your own wants.

Phil 2:5 – Adopt the same attitude that Jesus had. (KJV – have this mind in you.)

There is nothing new about this idea that every person who will follow God's way **MUST MAKE A KEY CHOICE... TO PUT GOD'S WAY FIRST, TO LET GO ANYTHING WE DEEPLY CHERISH IF IT STANDS IN THE WAY.**

The idea goes way, way back. Joshua at the end of his life as leader of the Hebrews as they began to conquer the land of Canaan saw how the people were losing their dedication to make God's purposes first and foremost.

Josh 24:14 –

He challenges the people to change the very core principles of their lives... to throw away the gods (charms) they could see and which they often turned to for good luck. Instead they must rely in the invisible God in their hearts alone. He dares them to do as he has.

The people reply they will do it. But Joshua repeats the dare... citing their many transgressions. But they insist they really will trust God.

So Joshua, warns them, they have made this a very public promise. Are they still sure they will do it?

And again the people declare, "We will serve the Lord our God and obey Him." (NIV)

So that day, they set up a monument there as a lasting reminder of the covenant they made with God.

What monument to your will to serve God, to choose a life of following Jesus have you made?

Jesus chose NOT to be what people expected of him but to be who and what he really was.

We have the same challenge.

WE have the great benefit of Jesus example.

Never let our picture of Him fade from our memory.

Continue to model our lives after His life.

As Paul said, have this mind in you, or discipline yourself to adopt the same attitude he has

We have been given the power of self direction.

Use the power!

When Peter preached to the Jews of Jerusalem shortly after they had joined with the crowd calling for Jesus death they realized their terrible misdeed.

To their question, what shall we do, he instructed them...

Repent and be baptized. (Acts 2:36-41)
3000 were.

That, my friends is the same monument we all need to set up as a never ending reminder that we have **CHOSEN** to follow Jesus. And we have made a commitment to continue to choose living with the same attitude and dedication that Jesus lived.

When we choose to be a disciple of Jesus we receive grace greater than our sin.

If you already made that choice, revisit your commitment and renew your dedication to do it.

If you have not yet made a public declaration that you will be a follower of Jesus why wait any longer...