

Scripture: Philippians 2:1-11  
Title: Honour and Glory

Theme: Do not seek honour and glory for yourself  
Purpose: Seek God's glory. Put others first.

15-18 Minute Sermon for Thursday April 29,1993.

Commentaries and Sources consulted:

**Fuller, Daniel** "Exegetical Notes on Philippians 1-2 for Hermeneutics Winter Quarter 93", *Sixth Revision*, Fuller Theological Seminary 1986.

**Fuller, Daniel** "Greek Sentence Diagrams of Philippians 1-2 for Hermeneutics Winter Quarter 92", *Seventh Revision*, Fuller Theological Seminary 1987

**Hawthorne, Gerald F.** "Philippians" in *Word Biblical-Commentary*" Vol. 43, Word Books, Waco, Texas, 1983

**Murdoch, Paul** "Philippener-Brief" in *Bible-Kommentar Band 16, Edition C*, Hänssler Verlag, Stuttgart, 1987 (German)

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### **1. Reading of Phil 2:1-11 from NRSV (1-2 Minutes)**

The Text for this Sermon is by the Apostle Paul. It is written in his letter to the Philippians Chapter 2:1 to 11.

Pause. Get Bible and open it. Read Phil 2:1-11]

### **2. Introduction (1/2 Minute)**

Have you ever thought about why Jim Bakker failed? Why did Jimmy Swaggart fall, then ask for forgiveness and still continue his highly public TV-ministry until he fell again into sin?

And just last week: Why did David Koresh in Waco act so strangely and finally caused a disaster?

What motivated Saddam Hussein when he invaded Kuwait?

What is the source of many conflicts on our world and in our Churches?

What isolates us from each other and destroys fellowship in our Christian communities?

### **3. Seeking Honour and Glory (6 Minutes)**

Is it not our concern about *our own* honour, *our own* glory, *our own* acknowledgement, *our own* standing in the community?

#### **3.1. David Koresh**

It is interesting to see what David Koresh's demands were when he gave the impression of cooperating with the FBI. First he wanted one of his sermons to be broadcast on TV. Then he was writing a book.

What is this if not an attempt to get recognition from others? And seeking to be honoured by others?

At the End, he could not stand his inevitable defeat. Instead he wanted to die in honour and glory for God. And so it happened, but was it *his* glory or was it God's glory?

Honour and glory is the name of the game for many people.

#### **3.2. Saddam Hussein**

Saddam Hussein is a good example too. Was there ever a concern of his for something else than honour and glory? He wanted to be the big chief that reunited the Arabs under one - his - government. He was their saviour from the "infidels" the "unfaithful". He managed to declare his defeat a victory.

#### **3.3. Jimmy Swaggart**

Jimmy Swaggart was a preacher admired by many. His Fan-Club adored him and so again he was given lots of acknowledgment "Honour and Glory" again. So much that he was not able to see his own sinfulness anymore. It was painful for all when his sins became evident. But he did not give up. He asked publicly for forgiveness. He continued enjoying the live in the "Honour and Glory" of his congregation until he fell again.

#### **3.4. We**

Are we different from them?[Pause]

No we are the same although we cannot do this *honour and glory game* on such a big scale than the bad guys I mentioned before.

Who has not felt the sting in his heart when others were given positions that we deserved?

Or when somebody did not acknowledge our talents and gifts? When we were ignored? When somebody criticized us, was not our pride hurt?

We are just the same as them. And we need to be careful not to do the same things they did. Do we not delight in "important" positions? Responsibilities? Acknowledgement of our talents? Money as a proof of our importance and ability? Our knowledge and understanding of Christianity as a student or a pastor?

### **3.5. I and the company**

Before I came to California I was caught in such a situation. Some friends and me had started a company back in 1983. We developed and sold computer-software for accounting in the German-speaking area of Europe. At the beginning business was very slow. All of us had other jobs besides this one to earn money to make a living. We were quite close to each other and we discussed all sorts of private things with another. We felt like a team that worked together.

The computer-market developed and our company prospered. We became the dominating company in this special market. We were proud of our product and proud of our accomplishments. Our "glory" and reputation grew. Strange incidents began to happen. Once I told a friend of many years about our company and he was very fascinated. He told others that he knew one of the famous guys who wrote that product. It got around and finally my partner's accused me that I had told someone that I had developed the product solely on my own. I learned to be sensitive and from then on tried to keep my private life totally separated from my business life.

People are very sensitive when their "glory and honour" becomes endangered.

At that point my partners "friends" were largely business associates. I tried to keep my business life secret, because I had already experienced trouble with some of my friends when they knew what we were doing.

Over the years the relationships between the partners began to deteriorate. No open talk anymore. I felt that I was sitting in a golden cage, with nothing to do. My plans for further development of our product were rejected. I had planned to attend seminary some time ago and I now took steps towards it. The others began to notice and suddenly were concerned about me. They tried to give me "recognition" or "honour" so that I might feel accepted and not leave. They ordered me a new Mercedes with all extras and suddenly I had the best computer-equipment possible on my desk.

[Quiet down] I decided to leave anyway but it was a very hard decision. I had to leave all business relations and all that I had worked for since I was a teenager behind. I lost the "glory" and acknowledgment of the work I had done. I was not prepared how difficult that was. It taught me how addictive "glory and honour" can be. [Pause]

But today I am happy that I got out of it in time. I doubt that I could have gotten out of it had I stayed just one year longer.

## **4. Christians and Honour and Glory (5 Minutes)**

### **4.1. Then in Philippi**

When Paul wrote the passage to the Philippians which we read at the beginning, they had a problem of "honour and glory" in their church. Some people had conflicts since a long time and Paul saw that a split in the church was threatening. The leaders of these factions were two accomplished women named Euodia and Syntyche (Chapter 3:2). Both had worked together with Paul and therefore they had made themselves a name and had their reputation to defend. Their own "honour" was at stake! How could any one of them give in in such a situation?

### **4.2. Paul's advice**

Therefore Paul brings up his basic teaching on how to live as a Christian here. These quarrels have to stop and Paul shows them what the root of this behaviour is.

It is interesting to see how Paul approaches this problem. He asks them a series of Questions. Read from verse one again if you want to follow me:

You are claiming, that you have comfort in Christ?

that you have the consolidating love of Christ?

that you have fellowship in the Spirit?

that you have compassion and sympathy?

Then why do you not you love each other? Why is there selfishness and boasting? Why is every one just taking care of his own affairs?

#### **4.3. Christ's example**

Take Christ as an example. He was God and could have insisted on his importance and his "glory and honour". But he was not seeking honour for himself.

He became limited and humbled himself. He became like a slave and was born as a human.

When he was human he again did not insist on his own "honor and glory", but he was obedient to the Father. He was even obedient when he had to give his life on the cross.

Because he was obedient, God the Father exalted him above all others so that everyone must acknowlegde him to the glory of the Father.

#### **4.4. Interpretation**

Christ was exalted because he was not insisting on his own "honour and glory", but he sought the honour and glory of the Father and was even ready to die for it. Christ was given his position as a result of his obedience and humility, not just because he was the son of God.

The very word "humility" is often seen as negative. But the meaning of "humility" includes modesty and taking yourself earnest. With an attitude of Serving instead on insisting on being right and important the church of Philippians and our churches will have peace.

Christ is our example. We as Christians are living for God and for God's glory not for our own. Like Christ we will be exalted by the Father, because of our obedience and humility.

Jesus said in Mark 8:25:

For those that want to save their lives will lose it and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the Gospel, will save it.

This means that we are not to seek "honour and glory" for ourselves. We are Christ's disciples. Even Christ did not seek "honour and glory" for himself, but honour and glory for God.

[Pause]

##### **4.4.1. Following Jesus for the honor**

There is no following Jesus in order to be honored on this earth. There is a danger in being a preacher. One is tempted to be the star of one's own congregation. Look at the famous preachers that have fallen. All of them were elevated to a high position of "honor and glory" by their congregations. They were not able to cope with this and developed into a kind of Gods for their churches.

Be careful! Being a Pastor - especially a successful one - can be tempting.

This is often forgotten in our time of self-realization and building of self-confidence. We are taught to fight for our own recognition in our society today. One has to bring attention to himself to get somewhere, but rarely does anybody see the consequences.

##### **4.4.2. Insulted honor**

There also is no following Jesus and clinging to ones own "honour". Be ready that people with treat on it!

One of my friends - a Fuller Alumni - pastored his first church when some members of his congregation started gossiping about him that he was gay because he was "still not married". He could not take that!

He held them a fiery sermon about what they had done to him and left the church for good in the midst of the service.

He never ministered in that denomination again.

Be ready to give up "honour and glory" for Jesus. You cannot seek "honour and glory" for yourself and neither can you keep the "honour and glory" you have. Jesus died without "honour" on the cross. What can you expect more than God's honour for your dishonour.

### **5. Conclusion (1 Min)**

Take Jesus as an example, do not seek that you shall be exalted and recognized and given honour. Serve as Jesus Christ has served and let the God whom you love give you honour and glory in his time. Trust in God's grace to reward you and honour you. Christ was a Servant and you are not better than your master.

**Pause**

You are a Christian? You have compassion? You have love? You have fellowship? **Pause**

Then also do not put yourself on a pedestal and think how powerful you are and what good deeds you have done. How many people came to Christ because of you and how many people you have served.

How much people you shepherd as a pastor.

Remember you are not in control of your life but God is. **Pause**

All the glory and power and honour belongs to God.

To him be glory and power and honour forever and ever. Amen.

# Bits and pieces:

Brainstorm: Necessity of being obedient, not searching for our own honour.

MP 79 People often think of the elevation of Jesus as a self-evident thing. But it is conditioned by his obedience and was not automatic.

Focus on 3-11 1+2 Intro of theme of Unity

Endurance vs. Running away from problems

Self-Realization. Demands on Society and on the State.

Danger of Preacher searching their own glory.

Following Jesus to be honored.

Fellowship with Christ causes Pain to go away.

Reference to Mt 10:39;16:25;Mk 8:35;Joh 12:25 Seeking and losing life.

My own problems with the company

wrote his letter to the Philippians when he was in jail. He had to face a trial that could result in his being sentenced to death. Most likely this was his trial in Rome, which is also covered in the book of Acts. Paul was continuing his evangelism from his jailhouse and large numbers of people came to Christ as a result of this ministry .

Paul was proud of the Philippian church, but there still was some trouble in his favorite Church. Some people just could not stop quarreling. A

[slow down] Seeking your own [Pause]acknowledgment, recognition, honour, attention. Somebody's [emphasis]big I is at stake here.

## Text of Philippians 2:1-11 (Translation from Greek using Sentence diagrams and Vocabulary from Dan Fuller)

### Introduction: Be in Unity (Verse 1-2)

(1) If you have any encouragement (*exhortation*) in Christ (*assurance against failure? Fuller p.2-2. No doubt that this was present in the Church of Philippi, Hawthorne p. 65. Is Paul giving the exhortation?*)

If any incentive of love (*Christ's love inciting humility and unity, Fuller p.2-2*)

If any fellowship in the Spirit

(*Provocation, Murdoch p. 59 If these experiences exist, then they should also exist in the life of the Church!*)

any affection and sympathy, then make my joy complete,

(*If you have any compassion for Christ then do as I request, Hawthorne p. 67*)

(2) by your mind being set in this way:

Having the same love [toward each other]

(*Love bridges the Gap between people of different views. Demand are only based on God-given prerequisites, Murdoch p. 67*)

and being of the same mind. (*Connotation: Sharing the life with each other.*)

### Theme of not being egoistical by only seeking ones own glory

(3) Do nothing out of selfishness and boastfulness,

but in humility (*this is frequently regarded as negative. Hawthorne p. 69*) consider others better than yourself.

(*Set the needs of others higher than your own needs, Humility also means taking yourself earnest, Murdoch. Conflicts are expression of selfishness. Divisions because of personal reasons, Murdoch p.67. Persons arrogantly claiming to be right. Hawthorne p. 69*)

(4) Each of you shall not [only be] concerned about his own [affairs]

but each of you shall also [pay attention to] the [interests of] others.

(*"Also" is doubtful according to Murdoch p.70.*)

### Main thrust. The Example of Christ

(5) Have this attitude among you, that (*which?*) also existed in Jesus Christ.

(*Surely you want to be followers of Christ?. As a slave one has no property of his own. In the same way we do everything for Christ since we are slaves of Christ, Murdoch p.69. Do we live as Christ lived? Murdoch p.74. Christ as the ultimate example. Hawthorne p.80*)

(6) Who, when he was (*emphasizes the potentiality, Murdoch p.75*) in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as a prey to hold onto.

(7) But gave himself up, taking on the form of a servant, being born (*or becoming*) like a human (*man, but is sexist*) and was found in the nature like a human.

(*Christ did not loose anything. Rather he added humanity, Hawthorne p.88. In serving people he served God, Hawthorne p. 87*)

(8) He humbled himself becoming obedient (*to the father*) until death, a death on the cross (*Genitive*).

(*Christ's acceptance of death is the ultimate yes to God, Hawthorne p.89*)

(9) Because of this, therefore, God raised him to the highest position and graciously gave him the name that is above all names.

(*Exaltation only because of Christ's obedience. Not by Jesus himself!, Murdoch p.79. Name means authority, Hawthorne p. 91*)

### Worship of Christ

(10) so that in the name of Jesus all knees shall bow (*All shall worship him. Sign of surrender to him, Murdoch p.81*) in heaven and on the earth and under the earth.

(11) and all tongues shall acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord for the Glory of the Father.

(*Self-Realization is contrary. It demands and does not get rewards. Murdoch p. 84*)

"It was never the intent of Christ to fight for his own honor and right and credit, but through self-surrender, self-renunciation and self-sacrifice to strive for the honour, right and credit of others." (Hawthorne p. 95)