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In this second of five lessons on Philippians we recover some territory studied during the Forty Days of Purpose emphasis earlier this year. The material below is largely a reproduction of that material with some editorial updating. The Formations quarterly suggests using verses 1-13 but then comes back in a later lesson to treat verses 12 and 13. Thus we will not cover these two verses, since they more properly belong with 2:12-18, which forms a natural literary unit of material.

Some foundational attention should be given to the "imitation" motif that is found in the New Testament, although not directly in our passage. The Greek verb μιμέομαι (miméomai; 'I imitate') occurs some four times in the NT: 2 Thess. 3:7, 9; Heb. 13:7; 3 John 11. The noun form μιμητής (mimetés; 'imitator') is found six times in the NT: 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Eph. 5:1; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2:14; Heb. 6:12. Our English word 'mimic' is ultimately derived from this Greek word. Additionally, several words are used in the NT related to the idea of 'example': δείγμα (deigma; Jude 7), συμμιμητής (summimetés; Phil 3:17); τυπικῶς (typikós; 1 Cor. 10:6, 11); ὑπογραμμός (hypogrammós; 1 Pet. 2:21); ὑπόδειγμα (hypódeigma; John 13:15; Heb. 4:11); ὑποτύπωσις (hypotýposis; 1 Tim. 1:16).

The imitate concept in the NT ranges from Paul encouraging Christians to imitate him (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2 Thess. 3:7, 9) to imitating either Christ or God (Eph. 5:1; 1 Cor. 11:1). Sometimes groups of people are to be imitated, either other churches (1 Thess. 2:14) or other Christians (Heb. 6:12). Elsewhere the emphasis is sometimes on imitating something, rather than a person: faithfulness (Heb. 13:7); the good rather than the bad (3 John 11). In the ancient world with a major emphasis upon relationships, the personal example that could be observed and copied by others, especially new Christians, played in an important role in helping define Christian behavior. Particularly was this significant in a culture that followed very low moral standards, as did the ancient Greco-Roman culture. This is still important in our world.

Thus the theme of 'becoming like Christ' has particular significance against this backdrop. Paul's more detailed treatment in Phil. 2:1-11 provides an invaluable insight into what this should and can mean to us as followers of Jesus today.

I. **Context**

Again, context is important for deeper insight into this passage.

a. **Historical**

Paul's letter to the congregation at Philippi is part of the later writing ministry of the apostle that is often labeled The Prison Letters. Traditionally, these letters (Philemon; Ephesians; Colossians; Philippians) are thought to have been written from Rome in the early 60s after Paul arrived there to stand trial before the emperor (see Acts 28). More recent scholarship, however, is inclined to separate out Philippians from the other three letters, which are closely related to one another, and perhaps see Philippians written

at a different place and time, perhaps while in Caesarea Philippi before traveling to Rome in the late 50s of the first Christian century. Although some aren't convinced that this letter was written by Paul, most New Testament scholars will attribute it to either Paul or a disciple of Paul's. The situation of Paul is described in [1:12-26](#). He is a prisoner being held by the [Imperial Guard](#) awaiting legal action. But his opposition is coming from inside the local Christian community as well; some have taken to preaching the gospel in the hope that this will eventually lead to Paul's execution (vv. 15-18). Timothy and Epaphroditus are close by, assisting Paul ([2:19-30](#)) and awaiting his instruction to travel to Philippi. Although caught up in very depressing circumstances personally, this letter is one of the most upbeat and joyous letters he wrote. Part of this was the deep concern for Paul that the Philippian church had shown ([4:10-20](#)).

b. Literary



Our passage, 2:1-11, comes as a major segment of the [body of the letter](#) (1:12-4:20). After the traditional Praescriptio (1:1-2) identifying the sender and recipients with a greeting and the Proem (1:3-11) expressing thanksgiving to God, Paul reassures the readers with a positive depiction of his personal situation (1:12-26). He then moves into encouraging the readers toward living a worthy life of unified service (1:27-2:11). This is followed by another set of admonitions for Christian living (2:12-18) and then a personal note about Timothy and Epaphroditus (2:19-3:1). A third set of admonitions (3:2-4:1) is interspersed with autobiographical material (3:4b-16). A final set of admonitions comprises most of chapter four, with another personal note inserted in 4:10-19. The traditional Conclusio finishes the letter in 4:21-23.

One of the major emphases in this letter is the theme of unity. In writing while fellow Christians were trying to get him executed, Paul underscored the importance of Christians finding ways to work together in true harmony and unity. The Philippian Christians had exhibited unity in their support of Paul. Epaphroditus had brought a love offering from Philippi to Paul (4:18) and most likely carried this letter back to Philippi (2:28-30). The role of women in this church had been significant since the outset when Paul first preached the gospel at Philippi on the second missionary journey in the early 50s ([Acts 16:11-40](#)), and a church was formed from these women and they met in Lydia's home. Paul would pass through Philippi again briefly on

the third missionary journey in the middle 50s (Acts 20:1-2). Now several years later, two ladies in the church were at odds with one another, Euodia and Syntyche, and urged them to reconcile their differences (4:2-3). This leadership role of women in the church was probably at the heart of the intently missionary orientation of this group.

Our passage contributes to this theme of unity and bases it on the example of Christ. The internal structure of these verses is rather clear. Verses one through four comprise one long sentence in the original Greek text with the core emphasis (main clause) in verse three: “fulfill my joy.” The second emphasis comes in verses five through eleven and the core admonition here is in verse five: “set your mind on this.” The expansion elements are developed from an ancient Christian hymn. See the diagram of the Greek text in [Appendix 1](#) or details. As Leander Keck states the issue well in the *Interpreter’s One Volume Commentary on the Bible* (online, iPreach):

This passage could hardly have been composed by Paul, for some of its terminology is not Pauline and Paul’s characteristic ideas are missing. Its phrases fall into vs. patterns, and it is doubtless a hymn of the early church. In the 19th cent. some thought that an editor added the hymn; now scholarly opinion agrees that Paul quoted it and that the hymn is thus older than the letter. Whether the hymn has 2 or 3 parts is not altogether clear but most prefer to see it in 2 parts divided by the therefore in vs. 9.

By using this piece of existing Christian tradition, Paul re-enforced his emphasis on unity by appealing to an already familiar musical affirmation of the self-sacrifice of Christ as the model to be followed.

II. Message

Becoming like Christ in this passage means developing a closeness with one another inside the community of faith. Our model for this is none other than our Lord who by his example demonstrated how we’re supposed to live.

a. Achieving Oneness, vv. 1-4

Comments:

The Greek New Testament

<2:1> Εἴ τις οὖν παράκλησις ἐν Χριστῷ, εἴ τι παραμύθιον ἀγάπης, εἴ τις κοινωνία πνεύματος, εἴ τις σπλάγχνα καὶ οἰκτιρμοί, <2:2> πληρώσατέ μου τὴν χαρὰν ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε, τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, σύμψυχοι, τὸ ἐν φρονοῦντες, <2:3> μηδὲν κατ’ ἐριθείαν μηδὲ κατὰ κενοδοξίαν ἀλλὰ τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ ἀλλήλους ἡγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν, <2:4> μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστος σκοποῦντες ἀλλὰ [καὶ] τὰ ἐτέρων ἕκαστοι.

NRSV

1 If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, 2 make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

NLT

1 Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender and sympathetic? 2 Then make me truly happy by agreeing wholeheartedly with each other, loving one another, and working together with one heart and purpose. 3 Don’t be selfish; don’t live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself. 4 Don’t think only about your own affairs, but be interested in others, too, and what they are doing.

As mentioned above, the core admonition in this long sentence is in verse two: “make my joy complete” (NRSV). A series of assumptions are attached to this admonition in verse one: the ‘if’ statements. Next, Paul’s joy is defined in verse two by the admonition (indirect command in the appositional Greek ἵνα clause): “you should set your minds on the same thing.” What Paul intended by this is subsequently defined in a series of eight qualifying statements from the middle of verse two to the end of verse four. These are logically grouped together into three sets of traits that define the unity called for in the core admonition.

We will take each segment in order.

The word ‘then’ (οὖν) in verse one ties these verses onto 1:27-30 as an implication now made explicit

in what was said in those verses. Paul had encouraged the Philippians to live a life worthy of the gospel: 27 Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, 28 and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. 29 For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well — 30 since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

The theme of unity is sounded especially in verse twenty-seven, particularly in the context of the community of believers facing opposition. With people opposing what Christians are doing, Christians need more than ever to stand together. We Baptists could learn a lot from Paul here in light of what has been taking place over the past couple of decades and especially in light of the impending SBC withdrawal from the Baptist World Alliance.

Against this backdrop, the aged apostle encouraged the Philippian church to make him happy by standing together. The motivation to stand together is drawn from several sources, as stated in verse one. Four 'if' statements define this motivation. Note that the nature of the Greek expressions (first class conditional protasis) assumes the reality of these elements, not raises the possibility of their existence. What are they?

First, "If there is any encouragement in Christ" (NRSV; *Εἴ τις οὖν παράκλησις ἐν Χριστῷ*). The assumption here is that when we are living in spiritual union with Christ, we have an unending source of encouragement. The word translated 'encouragement' (*παράκλησις*) is broader than just encouragement. It denotes encouragement, comfort, and admonition from the root idea of that which stands along side of to assist. From our relationship with Christ we find all these things, portioned out to us as we need them. Thus Christ's assistance motivates us to stand together as one.

Second, "if...any consolation from love" (NRSV; *εἴ τι παραμύθιον ἀγάπης*). Love has the ability to encourage and console. The text is not certain, but probably alludes to God's love and thus the idea is effectively captured in the *Message* translation as "if his love has made any difference in your life." Also, the *Today's English Version* renders this as "his love comforts you." Additionally see the *New International Version*: "if any comfort from his love." The idea moves along the lines that God's love has powerful persuasive ability.

Third, "if...any sharing in the Spirit" (NRSV; *εἴ τις κοινωνία πνεύματος*). The idea here moves along a couple of possible angles: (1) fellowship with the Holy Spirit; (2) fellowship with one another through the Holy Spirit. The NIV adopts the former, "if any fellowship with the Spirit." Also, the TEV: "You have fellowship with the Spirit." But other translations adopt the latter meaning. NRSV: "any sharing in the Spirit," NJB: "any fellowship in the Spirit," The *Message*: "if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you." Both meanings are legitimate and based on two possible functions of the word for Spirit. The point in either case is that as a community of believers, we have participation and fellowship based on relationship with the Spirit of God. He is the driving force that establishes relationships of giving and receiving. When His presence is acknowledged, the enormous resources of God are made available to that community.

Fourth, "if...any compassion and sympathy" (NRSV; *εἴ τις σπλάγχνα καὶ οἰκτιρμοί*). The first word (*σπλάγχνα*; *splagchna*) literally means 'guts' and was rendered as 'bowels' in the *King James Version*. In the ancient world this part of the human anatomy was seen as the source of emotions and feelings, largely due to digestive problems stemming from eating habits. In the [eleven uses of this word](#) in the New Testament, it serves as a word picture for tender care and concern. The [second term](#) (*οἰκτιρμοί*; *oiktirmoi*) stresses a similar concept with the emphasis on pity and mercy. Paul's assumption is that the believing community deeply cares for one another. *The Message* captures this idea well as "if you have a heart, if you care." The *New Living Translation* gets at the idea with its expression "Are your hearts tender and sympathetic?"

Thus four motives underlie the admonition to stand together. These are powerful spiritual dynamics that can overcome differences of every kind. They are assumed to be present in the Philippian congregation. When they are active in our congregation, we have a strong basis for coming together. Without them, any push toward unity becomes shallow and ultimately winds up being a coerced unity that won't last.

Now we need to consider exactly what Paul meant by his admonition to stand together.

The core expression is the main clause of this long sentence and is found at the beginning of verse two: “make my joy complete” (NRSV; πληρώσατέ μου τὴν χαρὰν). A very pastoral posture is taken by Paul with this admonition. As the one who founded the church and who had had deep concern for its welfare over the ensuing years, he indicated that nothing could make him happier than for them to stand together. This is legitimate concern. Every spiritual leader of a group of believers should long for that group to exhibit basic harmony and unity. In fact, the promotion of divisiveness is frowned upon severely in the New Testament. Interestingly, the word translated as heretic (αἵρετικός; hairetokós) basically means to cause divisions in a group, as is reflected in its use in [Titus 3:10-11](#), “After a first and second admonition, have nothing more to do with anyone *who causes divisions* [αἵρετικός], since you know that such a person is perverted and sinful, being self-condemned” (NRSV).

What is unity, as described in our passage?

The core depiction of unity comes in the indirect command expression “be of the same mind” (NRSV; ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε). Literally, the biblical text admonishes: “set your minds on the same thing.” The NLT captures the essence of the idea with its expression “agreeing wholeheartedly with each other.” The point is that the members of the community of faith share common commitments to serve Christ together.

The series of expansion elements that follow in the remaining verses elaborate some of the details of what Paul intended by this foundational injunction.

First, the three expansions in verse two define the first segment with the third one coming back to the core admonition as a boundary marker: “having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind” (NRSV; τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, σύμψυχοι, τὸ ἓν φρονοῦντες). What is stressed here is a posture of genuine commitment to each other. We share a self-giving love (τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην), we are ‘soul-mates’ (σύμψυχοι), and this brings us back to ‘set our minds on the one thing.’ We can stand together as believers only in the context of genuine commitment to one another. Remember, the dynamic enabling this is described in the motivating assumptions in verse one.

Second, the next three elements in verse three define action, first negatively and then positively: “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves” (NRSV; μηδὲν κατ’ ἐριθείαν μηδὲ κατὰ κενοδοξίαν ἀλλὰ τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ ἀλλήλους ἡγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν). Here, interaction among members of the community is the emphasis. The first two negative traits depict interaction stemming from a bloated ego that is self-centered [κατ’ ἐριθείαν] and arrogant [κατὰ κενοδοξίαν] to the core. No sense of oneness can take place where a ‘me-first’ attitude prompts interaction. To the contrary, the positive side stresses both humility [τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ] and a conscious elevating [ἡγούμενοι] of the value of the other person [ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν]. The NLT captures the idea well: “Don’t be selfish; don’t live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself.”

Third, the last two elements in verse four finish out the depiction of unity: “Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others” (NRSV; μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστος σκοποῦντες ἀλλὰ [καὶ] τὰ ἐτέρων ἕκαστοι). Somewhat related to the second set, this negative/positive admonition shifts the perspective from ‘doing’ to ‘looking out for’ (σκοποῦντες; the source of our English expression ‘to scope out’). The [idea](#) is to pay close attention to. In the [four uses of this verb](#) in Paul, Gal. 6:1 contains a somewhat similar emphasis: “My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care [σκοποῶν σεαυτὸν] that you yourselves are not tempted.” The temptation is always to look out for ourselves first. But standing together demands that we take the risk of valuing the welfare of others in the community of faith above our own.

One issue not directly addressed in this text, but typically a concern in our modern discussion of unity: Is there room for diversity of viewpoint in such unity? The model of Paul’s example, especially as depicted in Acts, would answer that question with a ‘yes.’ The Jewish Christianity orientation of James and Peter had different tones to it than Paul’s Gentile focus. This is brought out clearly in Acts. But as [Acts 15](#) and [Gal. 2:1-10](#) both stress, there was agreement on the basics. The challenge is finding the common ground and also respecting the diverse viewpoint on the peripherals.

Southern Baptists have come through a period of increasing conformity developing after World War II. Whether that conformity reflected any sense of biblical unity is an open question. But the events of the

past twenty-five years during the so-called SBC Controversy have exploded both any conformity and unity that may have existed. In my estimation, a major cause for this mess stems from our not paying attention to what Paul is declaring in these four verses of Philippians two. By exhibiting more often the negative traits mentioned in these verses rather than the positive traits, we have successfully destroyed any semblance of oneness in our denomination. Consequently, everything in Southern Baptist life these days is on a downward swing with declining revenues, constant fussing over secondary issues, substantial departure of Christians from Baptist ranks to other denominations etc.

b. Christ's Example, vv. 5-11

The Greek New Testament

<2:5> τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, <2:6> ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἄρπαγμόν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, <2:7> ἀλλὰ ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβών, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος <2:8> ἐταπείνωσεν ἐαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ. <2:9> διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα, <2:10> ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων <2:11> καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς.

NRSV

5 Let 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.

NLT

5 Your attitude should be the same that Christ Jesus had. 6 Though he was God, he did not demand and cling to his rights as God. 7 He made himself nothing; he took the humble position of a slave and appeared in human form. 8 And in human form he obediently humbled himself even further by dying a criminal's death on a cross. 9 Because of this, God raised him up to the heights of heaven and gave him a name that is above every other name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Comments:

The second part of this passage continues the theme of ‘setting our minds’ on something (φρονεῖτε). In 2:1-4, the central thrust was setting our minds on the same thing (τὸ αὐτὸ φρονεῖτε, v. 2a). Now the content of what we’re to passionately commit ourselves to changes. It is to be the same thing that Jesus was committed to (ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ).

And what was that? By incorporating an ancient Christian hymn into the text (vv. 6-11), Paul defines what Jesus was committed to through the use of familiar words that were sung in worship. This *Christus Hymnus*, as it’s frequently labeled, revolves around two motifs: humiliation in incarnation (vv. 6-8) and exaltation in resurrection (vv. 9-11). Although the word ἀγάπη (agape; love) is not directly used, this passage provides one of the best definitions of the concept found anywhere in the NT. Jesus’ willingness to give up the splendors of Heaven to become a human with the humiliating treatment he received stands as the supreme depiction of love. The exaltation of Jesus in resurrection and lordship reaffirms the Heavenly Father’s commitment to the same principle.

One additional point needs emphasizing here. The resemblance of this hymn to [Isaiah 53](#) is striking and probably reflects the originating source for the core ideas of the hymn. The humiliation and exaltation of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53 is here reproduced in application to Jesus as the prophetic fulfillment of that prophecy.

The first segment in vv. 6-8 revolves around three declarations about Christ: (1) “did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited” (NRSV; οὐχ ἄρπαγμόν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ); (2) “emptied himself” (NRSV; ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν); (3) “he humbled himself” (NRSV; ἐταπείνωσεν ἐαυτὸν). Everything else qualifies these three core declarations in some way.

(1) Equality with God (v. 6). The contrastive “though he was in the form of God” (NRSV; ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων) affirms Christ’s deity prior to the incarnation. In spite of this status, which is then defined as “equality with God” (NRSV; τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ), this glory wasn’t something that Jesus selfishly clung onto in steadfast refusal to give it up in order to fulfill a task.

(2) Self-Emptying (v. 7a): “emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness” (NRSV; ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος). The emptying of himself has occasioned considerable discussion over the past couple of centuries and is related to the study of what is called [Kenotic Theology](#), based on the Greek word here for ‘emptied.’ Without going into the complicated discussion of this topic, let me just say that whatever the extent of the self-emptying that Jesus underwent in incarnation, what is affirmed here is that it meant taking on the form of both a slave and a human being. The point is to contrast the drastic change of status as a voluntary act for the good of others. Here is Paul’s point contextually. Christ gave up so much for us; this challenges us to give up self-interest for the sake of others in the community of faith.

(3) Humiliation (vv. 7b-8): “And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross” (NRSV; καὶ σχήματι εὐρέθεις ὡς ἄνθρωπος <2:8> ἐταπείνωσεν ἐαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ). The core expression “he humbled himself” is qualified by two modifiers: (a) “being found in human form” and (b) “became obedient to the point of death.” The first simply reiterates the last statement of the preceding statement “being born in human likeness” while using different words. Jesus could be ‘discovered’ as a human being. In that existence He humbled himself, that is, submitted Himself utterly to the will of God. This submission to God’s will is measured by Christ’s obedience, and that obedience is unconditional, “to the point of death.” Even more, it was a crucifixion kind of death -- the worse way possible for a human being to die in that ancient society. What we see here in the context is Paul’s use of Christ’s total submission to God’s will as a challenge to members of the community of faith to be equally committed to God’s will in regard to their participation in that community.

The second part of this *Christus Hymnus* (vv. 9-11) focuses on God’s acknowledgement of this obedience of Christ. These verbs revolve around two actions of God: (1) “God also highly exalted him” (NRSV; καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν); and (2) “gave him the name” (NRSV; ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα). These statements are connected to the preceding by the conjunction denoting strong inference, “Therefore” (διὸ). As an outgrowth of what Christ did, the Heavenly Father responded positively since His nature and character prompts response.

The exaltation idea grows out of the ancient world’s political structures with kings and emperors who claimed royalty. In order to stand in their presence in acceptance, one had to meet specified qualifications. The image here is thus a word picture of dramatic acceptance and approval. God responded to Christ’s self-giving with dramatic approval. Secondly, God gave Jesus the name. The verb translated “gave” is more the idea of to favor someone. That is, God showed his favor by granting Jesus the right to the name above every name, that is, the name “Lord.”

The purpose of this divine acknowledgement is so that eventually there will be complete human acknowledgement (vv. 10-11) of Jesus as Lord as well. To be certain, this will only be fully realized at the return of Jesus at the end of human history. But to believers, this confession already made in conversion forms the basis of their daily living in this life.

The point of this second segment of the hymn contextually seems to be at least that when we follow Christ’s example in self-giving we can be certain that the Heavenly Father will respond in approval. Just as He approved Christ’s self-giving for the sake of others, He will likewise approve ours. Particularly, when it grows out of our commitment to Jesus as Lord.

Thus we return to the early question, What does being like Christ mean? In Phil. 2:1-11 it means primarily the sacrificing of personal interest for the sake of the community of faith. We have the necessary resources and the right example. Now we just need to do it!

Appendix 1: Diagram of the Greek Text

2:1	οὖν	Εἰ τις παράκλησις ἐν Χριστῷ, εἴ τι παραμύθιον ἀγάπης, εἴ τις κοινωνία πνεύματος, εἴ τις σπλάγχνα καὶ οἰκτιρμοί,
(1) 2:2	πληρώσατέ μου τὴν χαρὰν	ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε, τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, σύμψυχοι (ὄντες), τὸ ἐν φρονούντες,
2:3		μηδὲν (ποιούντες) κατ' ἐριθείαν μηδὲ (ποιούντες) κατὰ κενοδοξίαν ἀλλὰ τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ ἀλλήλους ἡγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν,
2:4		μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστος σκοποῦντες ἀλλὰ (σκοποῦντες) [καὶ] τὰ ἐτέρων ἕκαστοι.
(2) 2:5	τοῦτο φρονεῖτε	ἐν ὑμῖν
2:6	ὁ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ,	ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων ὅς...οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἡγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, ἀλλὰ -----ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβών, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεῖς ὡς ἄνθρωπος -----ἐταπεινώσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, δὲ θανάτου σταυροῦ.
2:8		
2:9	διὸ	καὶ

(3) ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν
καὶ

(4) - ---- ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα

τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα,

2:10

ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ
ἵνα...πᾶν γόνυ κάμψη
ἐπουρανίων
καὶ
ἐπιγείων
καὶ
καταχθονίων

2:11

καὶ
---...πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται

ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς
εἰς δόξαν
θεοῦ πατρὸς.