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Spiritual Food and Encouragement for Believers in the Lord Jesus Christ

The Impeccable Christ

Review of Philippians Chapter 2

Steve Hulshizer

Excerpts from "The Impeccable Christ"

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It is not uncommon for erroneous doctrine to confine itself to one verse, or a few isolated references. This is nowhere more true than in the Kenosis theory. For this very reason we review the setting in which its key text is found.

It has been well said, "For any one to pick out certain statements in that tradition which emphasizes the humanity of Jesus and on the basis of those, to represent Him as merely human, is as erroneous as to pick out certain other statements which emphasize His Divinity and to represent Him as purely Divine."

Philippians presents Christ as the believer's joy of living. The following is one possible outline of the epistle.

Chapter One – The Christian's Aim (v.21)

Chapter Two – The Christian's Attitude (v.5)

Chapter Three – The Christian's Appetite (v.10)

Chapter Four – The Christian's Ability (v.11)

In Philippians, the mind, or attitude is mentioned a significant number of times (12). The central theme of the second chapter is, *what should the mind, or attitude of the Christian be?* The primary attitude is to be one of unselfishness as stated in verses 2 to 4.

Paul goes on to present the attitude of Christ Jesus. He was in His very essence God, and as such it was His right to be glorified. However, He divested Himself of this right, and took upon Himself a form in which His glory was hidden. Paul was thus saying, "Do not seek vain glory at the expense of other's welfare, but have the same attitude as Christ, who was even willing to cover His rightful glory for the sake of others." He then presented three additional examples. Paul himself was "poured out" for them (v.17). Timothy is then seen as one who seeks, not his own interest, but the interest of others (vs. 19-21). Lastly, Epaphroditus was also concerned about others, (v.26).

Likeness of men

Verse 7 also states that He was made in the *likeness* of men. Here the Holy Spirit leads Paul to use the word *homoioima*, meaning "resemblance." Christ was like men in that He was true humanity, but he was *more*, in that He also possessed the Divine nature. The same original word is used in Romans 8:3. Notice that He is *not* referred to as the "express image" of man, as He is in Hebrew 1:3, "Who [Christ] being the brightness of his [God's] glory, and the express image of his person...."

Glory-Humiliation-Glory

The sequence of glory, humiliation, and glory, is beautifully illustrated at the last supper as recorded in John 13:1-17. Here the Master lays aside His outer garments, and proceeds to take the place of humiliation, that of washing the disciples' feet. After the work is complete, *He again takes up His outer garments*. The sequence parallels that of Philippians 2:6-11. Note that in verse 14 of John 13 He never ceased to be the Master during the period of humiliation. It was a question of *position*, not *possession*.

Hidden Glory

The Scripture often presents God as "light" (1 Jn. 1:5, 1 Tim. 6:16, Hab. 3:4, Acts 9:3, John 1:7,8; 3:19; 8:12, Rev. 1:14, Ex. 34:29, Heb 1:3, Lk. 2:9). Since sinful man could not exist in the presence of the Divine Light it was necessary that God's glory not shine forth in all its radiance when He was manifested in the flesh (Heb. 1:2). This was marvelously accomplished, not by extinguishing it, but by containing it within the veil of Christ's holy humanity (Heb.10:20). However, the Light was sufficiently manifested to expose the deeds of man (Jn. 3:21). Nowhere was this inner glory more evident than on the mount of transfiguration (Mt. 7:12, 2 Pet. 1:16,17).

Summary

In summary, it is evident that Philippians 2 does not present a diminished God, but rather the remarkable example of the proper Christian attitude, that of Christ's willingness to leave His rightful position of glory in order to redeem lost men at the awful cost of the cross. Certainly no one less than God could reveal God, or be a perfect expression of Him. Christ as the "Word" was God in the flesh, and the perfect "expression" of Him. However, we rejoice today that He has returned to that position of glory. ✱

Looking Through Rose Colored Glasses

Steve Hulshizer

Those outside of Christ are familiar with looking at the world through rose colored glasses. The glasses cast a lovely hue across the landscape, hiding in most cases the true condition of things. Political and financial leaders would tell us that things look bright for the future, when any who look realistically through clear, well focused lenses can see the handwriting on the wall. The nation is falling apart morally. We are moving rapidly toward days similar to those which preceded God's judgment in Noah's day.

Not only is there an opening of the floodgates to immorality of the worst kind, but there is a corresponding increased hatred for the things of God. Citizens are now free to boldly flaunt their "alternate life-style," while others openly denounce Christianity.

We as Christians need to take off the rose colored glasses as well. Somehow we are lead to believe that politically we will preserve the nation, and in some eyes, even stop the world from collapsing. We need to be realistic. God, in His Word, tells us clearly of dispensation after dispensation which were committed to man's charge that failed. This includes the church age. Truthfully, most of what Christians fight for politically is to maintain their comfort zone.

If we take off the rose colored glasses we see failure all around us, and yes, even in the Church! In addition to the many divisions that have been introduced down through the ages, we now see clearly the world making its way into the church in a variety of ways. Sadly, many who are wearing their tinted glasses of various shades, see little or none of it. Music no different than the world's, and in many cases worse, in that it bears the name of Christ, fills the churches, and the ears of our teens. Dress that appeals to the flesh and which saints not many years ago would have immediately associated with the world is prevalent. The casual approach to holy things is seen in the actions, words, and dress of many. Buildings which rival the world's stadiums, both in size and technology lure thousands to a gospel often void of sin, judgment, repentance, and conviction. The activity and social schedules are often larger and of greater importance than the spiritual gatherings of the church. Of course, if one wears rose colored glasses all of these things have a beautiful and appealing tint to them!

Sadly, it isn't just Christendom, or the evangelical churches that view things with rose colored glasses. Assemblies do as well. Perhaps taking their lead from the atmosphere of the charismatic movement, "everything is great

and wonderful." We all love each other and agree not to allow doctrinal differences to disrupt our unity. Sadly, when looking through the tinted lenses, most, if not all discernment is lost. They are unable to see the true spiritual condition of things as they focus on the present, ignoring the long term impact of their decisions and emphases.

Some view the good number of young people playing volleyball or softball, and enjoying the other youth activities provided, and they sit back in ease, seeing the future as bright for the assembly. With discernment diminished by the rose hue, they fail to see the lack of conversion and/or commitment in many of these young people. The little interest in Bible study or assembly spiritual gatherings, the horrid music plugged into their ears, and the disdain shown for the older generation is somehow hidden by the excitement associated with them playing sports together. Sadly, I fear in far too many cases, in just a few short years many of those same young people will have lives filled with activities and will have no spiritual interest, and may not even fellowship at the assembly. Lack of conviction will allow them to simply slide away to a fellowship where commitment and spiritual exercised are not required. Worse yet, they may simply fade away into the crowd who sink into the quicksand of the entangled life.

We need to see things the way they truly are. We need to ask the hard questions. "What is the true spiritual condition of our assembly?" "What is the true spiritual condition of our young people?" "What spiritual growth do we see in them that is manifested in a daily walk?" "Are there any potential godly leaders among the assembly youth?" "Could the saints, including the youth, give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in us." (1 Pet. 3:15) "Is there any interest in doctrine, or is that considered heavy, unimportant, or perhaps even as divisive?" "Is *separation* a forbidden word, and often equated with legalism?"

What is needed is to face reality, and if necessary, take off the rose colored glasses, and look at the real spiritual condition of the assembly and/or its youth. Many have surprisingly found that there are young people, who when given exposure to sound teaching of the Word, found it enjoyable and wanted more time devoted to it, and less to the physical activity, which in time always fades with age. (1 Tim. 4:8)

The Lord allowed some to depart in order that He may find those in whom He could invest Himself. His emphasis was on the spiritual, not entertainment (John 6: 66-67). While not desirable, we too may find those seeking activities also leaving when spiritual activities are emphasized.

Is all hope lost? Far from it! We need to get back to the plan the all wise God has given us in His Word. We need to concentrate on spiritual training. Training that builds spiritually minded saints! (1 Tim 4:8; 2 Tim. 3:15)*

