

Friday- Feb 28

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

Here's the real struggle with Pride. So far, everything sounds fairly reasonable, right? Well... It's impossible for you to choose both God and yourself. It just doesn't work. As Jesus once taught, 'You can't have two masters.' You either choose yourself, or you choose God. One, or the other. Now... Jesus was willing to make Himself into OUR servant... so... it's a real problem for us, if we aren't willing to do the same. We have been given the freedom to choose (free will), and our salvation is contingent on our own willingness to be able to sacrifice that freedom to become servants of God. If we choose ourselves, then we are slaves to ourselves... which gets us nothing. If we choose Christ, our King, then we are given the gift of salvation!

Prayer- Holy Spirit of God, free us from our bondage.



Saturday- March 1

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

There is that word again, ταπεινοφροσύνης (tapeinophrosune)! Christ 'humbled' Himself. Jesus could have chosen Himself at any stage of the game, but instead He valued everyone above Himself, which is what gives us a value! Without Christ, we are worthless, but WITH Christ- we are PRICELESS!

Prayer- Holy Spirit of God, free us from our bondage.



Philippians 2 : 3—8

New International Version (NIV)

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. 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!



“Since arrogance is born from a misplaced lie... a belief that you are grander than God... arrogant people are driven without mercy. They can never get enough power to fill their soul's need for belonging, and they can never get enough respect to overcome the fear that they deserve less than they are getting. They are alone, because they have made themselves alone... and they loathe the whole world for being 'less than' them.”

~Lewis B. Smedes
1953

Shame and Grace

Monday- Feb 24

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit.

Pride is the first step... the foundation, of any sin. The Greek word used here is κενοδοξία (kenodoksia), which means an 'empty pride' (translated as 'vain conceit'). The Greeks had a solid concept of what this fatal human flaw of 'empty pride' was. To them- it was the selfish choice to put oneself above others, and when this kind of pride showed up in a person's life, it marked their end. Selfish Pride (hubris), to the Greeks, was the cause of all tragedy, pain and suffering in the world. To the Greek and Roman readers of this letter from Paul to the Philippians, selfish pride was a great evil and a deplorable sin. Leaders had fallen from Pride... whole Empires had dissolved! In our society, arrogance is often seen as a popular mask to wear. Celebrities and those in the "social elite" openly flaunt their belief that they ARE better than those around them. Our most popularized 'stars' have taught us to put ourselves FIRST. Meanwhile, who does God put first? Who does Jesus (try to) teach us to put first, if we want to find true happiness? We are taught to put 'the least of these' first. We are taught to SERVE others before ourselves.
Prayer- Holy Spirit of God, free us from our bondage.

Tuesday- Feb 25

Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,

The word used here for 'humility' is ταπεινοφροσύνης (tapeinophrosune), which is LOT tougher to translate. This is the understanding of 'one's littleness' in the scope of the universe... an understanding that one is PART of the whole... not ABOVE the whole. A good way of defining this word (here translated as 'humility') is accepting one's dependence on their creator, or the created order. See, when Paul wrote this, although people knew of the dangers of Pride, they didn't really have anything to work towards in the opposite direction of Pride. Paul is honestly offering some pretty good stuff here. Instead of falling into Pride, you need to put OTHER PEOPLE above yourself... and even further, Paul asks his readers to VALUE others above themselves. Wow! Asking people to not just put others first, but to VALUE them more than themselves. That's a TALL ORDER- Amen? I wonder what the benefits of living that way might be? That's always the catch, isn't it? "What's in it for me?" Well, let's see what Paul has to say.
Prayer- Holy Spirit of God, free us from our bondage.

Wednesday- Feb 26

⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. ⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

Well... there's the answer! We should try to have the same mindset as Jesus. We have been forgiven, so we should forgive others. Christ took an interest in us, rather than following His own interests... so we should do the same with those around us. We read several different times in the course of Jesus' life when He could have EASILY chosen a different way for Himself. During any of several key points along Christ's ministry, He could have chosen a path to serve His own interests, but time and time again, Jesus chooses US! It is His dedication and willingness to sacrifice Himself that brings Him to the cross- which brings OUR salvation... why can't we do the same? A more specific consideration is, if WE aren't willing to do the same as Christ (by choosing to serve), what does that mean for our OWN forgiveness? In our Lord's Prayer we are pretty plain to ask to be forgiven ONLY as 'we forgive those who trespass against us.'
Prayer- Holy Spirit of God, free us from our bondage.

Thursday- Feb 27

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

This is a tough thing to hear. I mean... it's hard to hear during those times when I want to whine about how difficult life can be. It's during THOSE times that Jesus reminds me of this passage... not to give me a hard time, or to make me feel ashamed, or guilty. I get reminded of this passage, because of the strength it gives me. Too many people read this passage, and figure they should feel guilty, because while Jesus COULD have used His Godliness to make His life easier- He didn't. People feel shame, because of Jesus' sacrifice for us.
I know that Christ didn't die for me to make me feel bad. That's silly. Christ died for me, because He loves me. There is an amazing strength in this, knowing that while Christ COULD have chosen an easier way, He didn't... and the REASON He didn't was to show us that the way COULD be walked by US! We CAN do this! We just need some help! Christ came to show us that we CAN succeed and that He is ready, willing and able to help.
Prayer- Holy Spirit of God, free us from our bondage.