

The Shrinking Christian

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Text: Phil. 2:1-11

Main Point: It's really huge to be small

Key Ideas:

Rivalry is how our self interest negatively affects relationships. Rivalry is about both a tendency to exalt ourselves above others on the one hand, and being jealous of others being exalted above us on the other.

This passage is a call to humility (v. 1-4) followed by the most amazing motivation possible (v. 5-11)

How can we catch a vision to embrace smallness?

1. Perceive how Christ counted himself (v. 5-8)

- Christ emptied himself for us in a way we can never empty ourselves. His is an unrepeatable emptying of his glory to carry our guilt.
- But we can follow his example of emptying himself in ways that bring him glory. We can empty ourselves of our presumed rights, our expected privileges and our need for the esteem of others.

2. Count others higher than ourselves (v. 3)

- Our concern for others should never be overshadowed by our concern for ourselves.
- We can count others needs as important
- We can count others opinions as important
- We can count the correction of others as important

3. Make it a goal to help others be counted as successful (v. 4)

- We should live with a vision to make those under us successful (children, younger siblings, employees, folks serving with us in ministry, etc.)
- We should live with a vision to make those over us successful (parents, employers, coaches, ministry team leaders, etc)
- Let us liberate our agenda for ourselves so that it includes the success of others. God's interest includes both our interests and the interests of others.

Take It Home

Applying the Preached Word



Fellowship Starters

Treasure - Application to stir our love for Christ

1. Is there anything you heard in this message that seemed as if God was speaking to a specific issue in your life?
2. How has becoming a Christian changed your view of comparison with other people?

Grow - Application to stir our obedience to Christ

3. Have you ever found yourself in rivalry with others in the past:

- By seeking to promote yourself in social climbing?
- In letting competitive desires get the best of you?
- In struggling with jealousy over what somebody else has that you don't have?
- In struggling with resentment over not being recognized for something you've done?
- In struggling with discouragement by comparing yourself with somebody else?

4. How can we tell when a desire to achieve things or succeed at something can be pursued without selfish rivalry?

Proclaim - Application to stir our witness for Christ

5. How could this message apply to your situation at work or school, etc. where you might have an opportunity to count an unbeliever as greater than yourself or pursue their success?