Study Three: Philippians 2. 5-11 Be Aware

Only 7 verses tonight. But what verses! This is viewed as one of the great Christological (study of Christ) passages of the NT. It is poetic in form and many scholars think Paul is quoting from an ancient hymn about the person of Christ.

It speaks of Christ’s divinity, and then pivots at v.9 to describe his exaltation.

Yet this majestic theology is quoted by Paul to show how the Christians at Philippi were to behave in their daily lives! What Jesus has done is to be a pattern of how you and I are to live,

When we realise that in Rome the Emperor was viewed as divine and often worshipped as a divine being, we can see how revolutionary this passage was. ‘Caesar is Lord’? No. ‘Jesus is Lord.’

So, we need to put on our theological hats. Don’t be afraid. It will be fine. Read the verses carefully and slowly, turning over each phrase in your mind.

1. V. 6 *‘being in the nature of God’*

Dwell on the truth that Jesus is God. To believe anything less of Jesus is heresy. The creed says he is ‘very God from very God, begotten not made, one in being with the Father…’ (Colossians 1. 15-20)

1. V.6 *(He) did not consider equality with God to be something to be grasped.’*

Q: Compare the attitude of Christ in this passage with the typical attitude of worldly leaders.

1. v.7 *He emptied himself.*

Q: What do you think this means? Does it mean that Jesus was less than divine when he came to earth? Heb. 5. 7,8

‘He *didn’t* give up his deity, but laid aside his glory’

‘*Veiled in flesh the Godhead see,*

*Hail the incarnate deity*.

*Pleased as man with man to dwell,*

*Jesus, our Immanuel.*

Fabulous theology in our Christmas Carols!

1. *V.8 ‘ He humbled himself and became obedient to death*

This is the very heart of our faith

*He died that we might be forgiven,*

*He died to make us good.*

Spend a few moments worshipping God together for his great plan of salvation! Gal 3.13 Heb. 12.2

1. *v. 9 ‘Therefore God exalted him…’*

What does it mean to say that Jesus is exalted?

Chapters 4 &5 of the book of Revelation paint a wonderful picture of the throne room of heaven.

The name he is given refers to his exalted position Eph.1,21

1. *v.10,11 At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess…’*

One day, all creation will come to acknowledge that Jesus is Lord!

Psalm 75

Q: How does this stunning truth change your perspective on the world?

Does it fire you to keep on confessing your faith to others?

‘And God held in his hand

A small globe…

On a bare

Hill a bare tree saddened

The sky. Many people

Held out their thin arms

To it, as though waiting

For a vanished April

To return to its crossed

Boughs. The son watched

Them. Let me go there he, said

(from RS Thomas, The Coming)

You may now need to go and lie down in a darkened room. But I hope it will have been worth it!