

A Gospel Driven Model

1. Intro

- There's nothing more off-putting than a person who is proud
 - Not taking about being proud of your kids > proud of someone you know
 - Talking about an arrogance, conceitedness, vanity, self-importance, air of superiority or self-righteousness
- Examples of it all the time on our TV screens
 - Over paid footballers strutting around the field like they're gods
 - Musicians, rappers and singers getting around with over inflated egos
 - Shock jocks on the radio thinking only their opinion is valid and squashing anyone who dares to disagree with them
- It's ugly, distasteful, foolish

- But of course, we don't need to scratch too far below the surface to see that pride is an issue for us as well
 - We may not reveal our pride in such overt ways as those celebrities we see on our TV screens
 - But for most of us / all of us ... pride is character trait that often sits brewing in our hearts and that will rear its ugly head on a regular basis

- We all reveal our pride in different ways
 - Angry when we are criticised > spouse > boss > friend
 - Unwillingness to take advice > men and directions!
 - Wanting to tell people of your success in something
 - Wanting to tell others of your child's success in something
 - Letting all your Facebook friends know how great your life is with that photo or status update
 - Guiding a conversation so people will congratulate you on something
 - A project ... even a sermon
 - Unwillingness to get involved in helping others who are

- Not as well educated as you
 - Not as well off as you
 - Not as organised as you
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- Deep down I think we recognise our own pride and we desire to be humble
 - We know humility is a virtue
 - It's a good thing > it's a character trait that is worth having
 - We want it ... but our pride keeps bubbling to the surface

 - How do you squash your natural instinct to be proud?
 - How do you cultivate the virtue of humility?

 - In Philippians 2:5-11 Paul gives us the ultimate model of humility
 - It's the model of Jesus Christ and his self-humiliation
 - And this model of humility is meant to melt our hearts and change our minds

 - If you want to deal with your pride and you want to grow in your humility ... then this passage will, God willing, help you deal with that

2. Jesus Divinity

- If the Bible were a mountain range v5-11 would be one of the highest peaks [SLIDE]
 - This is one of the glorious passages in all scripture
 - Tells us with such depth yet such simplicity all about Jesus > all about who he is and what he's done
 - Wonderfully poetic expression of Jesus life, death and resurrection

- But it not only gives an insight to the work and person of Jesus
 - Also gives us an insight into the mind of Christ
 - v5 says – *"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus"*
 - Literally = let this mind be in you that is also in Christ Jesus

- These verses give us an insight into the mind of Christ > why he became human > why he went to the cross > why he lived like he did
 - As you get insight to the mind of Christ ... Paul says it ought to transform your own mind > it ought to change your life

- First thing Paul wants us to understand is Jesus divinity
 - v6 – “Christ Jesus who being in very nature God ...”
 - Paul wants us to know Jesus is God > he is God himself
 - Jesus is the ‘very nature’ of God
 - Jesus is not just ‘like’ God > not just has some attributes of God
 - No! He’s the very essence of God > he has the exact qualities of God

- **Illustration – Kids have my attributes**
- Look at my kids and you’ll see they have some of my attributes
 - Liam has my height
 - Jordan has my ears
 - But they’re not me ... we share attributes, but we’re still very different people

- Paul’s not saying that
 - He’s saying ... Jesus is the very nature of God
 - He’s making a very strong statement about deity and divinity of Jesus Christ

- Over the centuries many people try to dodge the truth of Jesus divinity by saying that Jesus never really was God
 - Just a teacher > healer > good man
 - They’ll say over the years ... through distance of time and location ... stories about Jesus got embellished and ppl started saying that Jesus was divine and eventually God himself

- Say Jesus didn't claim to be God > his original followers didn't claim him to be God ... this doctrine of Jesus deity developed over many, many years
- Here's the problem with those arguments

- General consensus from scholars and commentators is that v6-11 were not written by Paul but was written well before Paul's time and that Paul is quoting this in Philippians to help make his point
- What these verse are, are an early Christian creed / statement of faith
 - Poetic nature of it
 - Beautiful summation of who Christ is and what he's done
 - Point to it being a creed / confession / statement of faith used by Christian church

- Here's the point
 - Paul wrote his letters within 30 years of the death of Jesus Christ
 - And if he's quoting here an earlier Christian confession ... this means that from the very earliest days, the Christian church recognised Jesus is God
 - Which means the disciples and the earliest followers of Jesus must have understood Jesus to be divine because Jesus taught them he is divine¹

- If it weren't true it could have easily been contradicted by others
 - If Jesus had never claimed to be God and yet here it was being proclaimed all around the Mediterranean, then it would never have got off the ground
 - Christianity would never have got off the ground
- This shows us right from the start, Jesus disciples and early followers recognised and understood Jesus to be divine

¹ See also Mark 2:7; John 1:1; 5:18; 17:3; 20:28

- In addition to that ... of all the people on the face of the earth, the last group of people who's world view would allow them to believe that a human being could be God, were the Jews
 - For them, the Lord God was one > God was transcendent, in heaven
 - No concept of God being three persons and becoming human
- And if there was a Jew who would be least likely to proclaiming Jesus was God ... it would be Paul
 - Pharisee > religious zealots of his day
 - Vehemently opposed Christians and the Christian movement
 - He had people put in jail, watched over their executions
 - He was the great adversary of Jesus Christ and his followers
- But Jesus Christ changed him ... he came to know ... just as thousands of other followers of Jesus knew ... that
- Jesus Christ is God ...
 - He is not a demi-God ... he is God
 - He is not under the Father ... he is equal with the Father
 - He is not created ... he is the creator
 - He is God himself

- If you're a Christian, you probably already get that
- If here today and you're not yet a Christian ...
- And this claim that Jesus is God is true as this passage claims to be true...
 - Then you realise you can't be apathetic towards Jesus
 - You can't ignore him > you can't be agnostic > can't be like "Whatever"

- John Stott said in his book - Basic Christianity
 - If you read the Bible you'll see that nobody whoever met Jesus Christ ever had a moderate response to him
 - Either they hated him and tried to kill him; or
 - Afraid of him and tried to run away; or
 - Absolutely were in awe of him and they gave their lives to him

- But nobody ever had a moderate reaction to him

- You see what Stott is saying ...
 - You can't just ignore Jesus
 - You can't be apathetic towards Jesus
 - You can't just think he's a real man of history
 - You can't just think he was a good moral teacher

- If he claimed to be God ... and he's not, then he's a lunatic and you shouldn't trust him a bit
- But if he is **God** ... then everything about your life needs to revolve around him

- If you want to chat more about that, or investigate that more, chat with the person you came with or come and see me afterwards

3. Jesus Humility [SLIDE]

- That's almost an aside to the main point ... because the main point Paul wants us to see in v5-11 is how Jesus is a model of humility
- To help us see this point Paul explains that Jesus is not just divine ... but he's also human

- Philippians 2:6-7
 - *Jesus Christ ... who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.*

- Even though Jesus is God ...
 - "did not consider equality with God something to be grasped"
 - Grasped = keep / hold on to

- Jesus is equal with God and **yet** he decided not to hold on to his position of authority in heaven

- A couple of things to note here
- Firstly, Jesus does this voluntarily
 - No one forces him to do it
 - No one takes it from him
 - He made **himself** nothing

- Secondly, he doesn't **exchange** his divinity for his humanity ... rather he retains his divinity **and** took on human likeness
- He didn't exchange his God-ness > he kept his God-ness / divinity and added to that human-ness
 - He made himself nothing by putting on the form of a man ... not taking off the form of God
- So we can rightly say Christ is both fully God and fully man > 100% God and 100% man

- So Jesus totally humbles himself
 - Willingly lets go of his position at the right of the Father in heaven to become a man!
 - Creator becomes like one of his created

- But his humility is even greater than that ... because he doesn't come to earth as a king or Caesar or a President or a CEO
 - He comes as a servant > literally a slave
 - How humbling is that?!

- **Illustration – Downton Abbey**
- DA starts tonight > 9pm **[SLIDE]**
 - DA set in early 1900's in Yorkshire

- Earl of Grantham ... owns huge estate, huge mansion
- He has a huge staff of servants working for him
 - Butler, housekeeper, valet, ladies maids, footmen, maids, cooks, gardeners, chauffeur
- Jesus coming as servant ... would be like Lord Grantham going down to the servants quarters in the basement of the mansion and serving the servants
 - cooking the servants dinner
 - cleaning the servants shoes
 - making the servants beds
- The lowliest position in the entire household

- That's what Jesus did
- But he not only humbled himself by becoming a slave ...
 - he humbled himself to the point of death
 - The creator gave up his life for those he created
- And not only did he humble himself to the point of death
 - But it was death on a cross
 - Hung like a criminal ... semi-naked
 - Mocked, ridiculed, shamed
 - In agony ... for all to see
 - The ultimate humiliation!

[SLIDE]

- When we understand the heights of where Christ came from ... he's God to Son
 - And then the depths he was willing to plunge to ... death on a cross
 - Then we begin to see how Christ is the ultimate model of humility

- But in verses 9-11 we see Christ's humiliation is replaced with his exaltation
- The Father completely reverses his humiliation

- ⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

- The Father totally glorifies the Son
 - Jesus is exalted him to highest place
 - Where's that? The right hand of God in heaven
 - No longer rejected by men
 - No longer consigned to a grave
 - No longer a mockery of his enemies
 - Now ... **every** knee will bow before him
 - And **every** tongue confess his Lordship ... whether voluntarily or involuntarily
 - **All** mankind will bow down and acknowledge his Lordship ... his friends **and** his enemies
 - Pilate will do it
 - Nero will do it
 - Hitler will do it
 - Stalin will do it
 - Every soul from every age will bow before Jesus and confess him as Lord

- **Application**
- **Humility Before Others**
- Paul's point in highlighting all this for us is to show us the mind of Christ
 - To see the total willingness of Jesus to humble himself for the sake of sinners like you and me
- He says in v4 ...
 - "You're attitude should be the same as Christ Jesus"
 - "Let this mind be in you that is also in Christ Jesus"
 - Paul wants us to have the same mind > the same attitude as Christ

- The same humility
- That humility is to be expressed in the way we deal with one another
 - v4 – *Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*
- Seeing Christ's humility becomes a model for us and our humility
 - It gives us a model / example to follow
 - To not hold on to our rights ... but be willing to let go of those things for the sake of others
 - To be willing to take a lower position in social setting
 - To be willing to do a lowly job
 - To be willing to humble ourselves ... because that's what Christ did for us
- Whether it be
 - in your relationship with your spouse
 - in your relationship with your kids
 - in the way you conduct yourself in the work place
 - in the way you consider the needs of others here at church
- True humility is what being a good husband or wife is all about
 - It's to look to the interests of the other
 - To serve them and love them
 - It's other person centred not self-centred
- True humility is what being a good parent is like
 - Fathers protecting and providing for their family
 - Mothers nurturing their children
 - Both humbly serving their children under their care
- True humility is what being a good church member is about
 - Seeking to serve others

- Coming to church to play your part in the body ... not seeking to have your felt needs met

- ***Humility Before God***
- But even before we can consider imitating the model of Christ's humility in our relationships with others ...
 - We have to imitate the model of Christ's humility with God
 - Because unless we humble ourselves first and foremost before God ...
 - Then either won't be humble at all > we'll continue to be filled with pride
 - If we do show humility, it will be motivated by the wrong reasons

- Here's why
- By nature us human beings are so opposite to Jesus
 - Jesus didn't consider equality with God something to be grasped
 - Jesus became a servant ... even to death on a cross
 - Though he is equal to God he totally let go of his equality with God
 - He became a servant > he took a lower position
- But we do the opposite
 - Though we're not equal with God ... we count equality with God something to be grasped
 - Adam and Eve started it in the garden > grasping for equality with God ... and we've been doing it ever since
 - That's totally the opposite of Jesus

- You might say ... "When do I do that?"
 - Any time we say
 - "I know what the Bible says ... but I've got to do what makes me happy"
 - You're grasping equality with God
 - Though you're not equal with God ... you're trying to hold on to it

- Though Jesus is equal with God ... he was willing to let go of it
- And he made himself nothing and took on the nature of a servant

- But God lifted him up
 - v9 - *Therefore (because he did that) God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,*
 - After humbling himself ... God glorified Jesus > highly exalted him

- Here's the irony
 - You and I desperately want to become somebody
 - We want to be king of our life
 - We want to make a name for ourselves
 - We want to leave a legacy in life
 - We want to be somebody who matters

- But what does Jesus do
- This tells us Jesus made a name for himself by losing it
 - Jesus got up by going down
 - Jesus was glorified through service
 - Jesus became somebody because Jesus served something bigger than himself
 - He came and lived the life we should have lived and died the death we should have died

- What's it mean for us?
 - If you want to be saved ... if you want to be raised up by God the Father ... you've got to go down
 - If you say ...
 - "I'm trying very hard to be a good person
 - "I'm starting to come to church
 - "I'm starting to read the Bible

- "I'm hoping that because I've turned over a new leaf ... God will really accept me"

- But that's us trying to exalt ourselves and go up
 - That's not humility like Jesus
 - That's self-exaltation
 - That's saying ... it's all about me and what I do
 - That's saying I have a righteousness of my own

- Instead, Christ's model of humility teaches us you have to humble yourself
 - You have to say
 - I have no right to go up
 - I've got no righteousness of my own
 - I've got nothing that would allow me to grasp onto God
 - That's to go down

- What happens is when you humble yourself before God like that and go down
 - Only when you do that ... will God raise you up to new life

- The minute you humble yourself and go down on your knees in humility before God
 - He forgives you
 - He accepts you
 - He adopts you as his child
 - He brings you into his eternal family he blesses you with all the spiritual blessings that come from being in an eternal relationship the sovereign creator and ruler of the heavens and earth

- But if you want to go up
- If you say

- "I've got to do what I got to do"
- "I've got to find out what makes me happy"
- "I've got to find out who I am"
- If you try and go up ... God will bring you down
- But if you have the mind of Christ and you're willing to humble yourself ... God will lift you up

- We need to be humbled by Christ's humility before we can show humility with each other
 - Unless you're humbled by all that Christ has done for you ... you won't show humility or it will be a false humility

- But when Jesus model of humility grips your mind and melts your heart
 - Your pride gives way
 - You're free to
 - humble yourself before others
 - humble yourself before God

PRAY