

Series: Side by Side
Message Title: ***The Attitude of a Servant***
Date: Sunday, March 18, 2018
Scripture: Philippians 2:1-5
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Location: Warren Baptist Church, Augusta, GA

Introduction

Take a moment and look around. The most important thing about you—more important than your posture, your age, your background, your education, your skin color, your height, your weight, your fashion, etc.—is your attitude.

Attitude affects perspective, problems, patterns and people.

“The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, the education, the money, than circumstances, than failure, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftedness or skill. It will make or break a company... a church... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we will

embrace for that day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude. I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it." —Charles Swindoll

In a church, attitude is everything. A church can have right theology and practice biblical orthodoxy, but if the attitude of that church is focused inwardly and personally instead of submissively and outwardly, that church will not advance the kingdom of God.

This why Paul in writing to the church at Philippi and said this to them:

"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind [attitude] among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus" (Philippians 2:3-5 ESV).

The beauty of the book of Philippians is that it was written to express appreciation and affection for the Philippian believers. They served Paul. They were his partners.

But Paul wanted to reinforce and to highlight what was needed to keep partnership strong and hold fellowship together. The answer is a *mindset or an attitude of humility and honor.*

The greatest need in the life and ministry of Warren is what was most needed in the life and ministry of Paul at Philippi—a mindset, an attitude of care for the well-being of others beyond our care and concern for ourselves.

The reason I am standing in this building and sharing in this moment with you is because in 2012, a group of people from Warren decided to go out, to give over and above, and to take ground in a community far removed from our historic location. This effort that was extended became known as Warren Grovetown. It was an attitude long before it was an action.

“Outlook determines outcome and attitude determines action.” —Warren Wiersbe

The attitude that determines the greatest action for the kingdom of God is the attitude of a servant. Look to Jesus!

Paul said, “Let this mindset be in you... Jesus.”

“There can be no joy in the life of the Christian who puts himself above others.”

—Warren Wiersbe

This is antithetical to the work of Christ within us and the work He desires to do through us.

So let’s look at some instruction regarding how to guard and gain the attitude of a servant that is becoming of Christ.



Confront the Attitudes that Divide and Disqualify Us

Some think, “Do nothing! Quit!” Why? This is so much the natural bent of man. In particular, this passage is among the most radical and cross cultural in all Scripture.

- **Rivalry**

(Knocking someone down) That's what we want with rivalry—to put them down. Rivals are typically more interested in advancing their record and defending themselves than others.

Illustration: SEC football in our area! It is a win/lose mentality.

One of the great issues in the church in Corinth was factionalism.

“So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth” (1 Corinthians 3:7 ESV).

Application: We will have multiple voices in our ministry looking forward. God has given a variety of gifts to His people and we will not suppress gifts, but rather use them to serve Christ together.

- **Conceit**

(Setting yourself up, lifting yourself above, concentrating on self)

Self-preservation, self-accommodation, self-affirmation and selfish-ambition dominate our lives and our homes.

In each of these, the crucial issue is that of self-directed living that is common in our culture.

I am not saying you do not matter or that you are not important, but you are not all that matters and you are not all-important!

Through many years of ministry, I have found this by far to cause more strife and division in the church than doctrinal issues. It is the issue of self and selfishness—an orientation that dominates us apart from a living and growing relationship with Christ.

Concentrate on the Attitudes of Humility and Harmony

If you have ever counted anything, you know you have to concentrate. Have you ever started counting something and had to start over due to interruptions?

Questions:

- Do you fight for your rights or focus on your responsibilities?
- Do you think more about what you can get or what you will give?

- Do you excuse in yourself what you accuse in the lives of others around you?
- Do you reflect pride and prejudice rather than care and compassion for others in need?

What is humility? The humble and servant-hearted Christian is not the one who thinks lowly of himself/herself, but the one who simply does not think of self.

“Humility is the displacement of self by the enthronement of God.” —Andrew Murray

Humility is the way we enter the kingdom of God and humility is necessary to be great for the kingdom of God.

“But Jesus called them to Him and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many’” (Matthew 20:25-28 ESV).

This is humility: acting out service rather than running over others.

Some think and say, "I'm not going to be anyone's doormat." We don't like the idea of standing down for others. For us the word, *down*, has negative connotations. We think of down-hill, down-hearted, down-fall, etc., but Philippians 2 puts *down* in a different category. Jesus came down and God, the Father, exalted and lifted Him up.

"Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you" (James 4:10 ESV).

Look (looking out for others) = a disposition of harmony. This means there is an awareness of and sensitivity to the needs and desires of others beyond your own.

Leonard Bernstein, famed orchestra composer and conductor, once answered this question: "What is the most difficult instrument to play?" In response, he said, "The second fiddle. I can get plenty of first violinists, but to find someone who can play the second fiddle with enthusiasm—that's a problem. And if we have no second fiddle, we have no harmony."

The church has that problem too. Many want to be the “first seat,” but too few the “second.”

Here Paul is referencing “outlook” for JOY: Jesus, Others, You.

This is so vital for us to see and understand because of the dominant mindset of self-absorption in our culture. So much of the movement of our culture is toward sovereignty in our own worlds. The many options, selectivity and individuality have made us think life is all about us.

“It’s not about you.” —Rick Warren

Contemplate on the Attitude of Christ and the Agony of the Cross

Mind in you—mindset.

- **Think about Christ’s decent from Heaven.**

Christ stooped so low as to wash dirty feet.

“During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon’s

son, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He had come from God and was going back to God, rose from supper. He laid aside His outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around His waist. Then He poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around Him" (John 13:2-5 ESV).

"When He had washed their feet and put on His outer garments and resumed His place, He said to them, 'Do you understand what I have done to you? You call Me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them'" (John 13:12-17 ESV).

"Here is the path to the higher life: down, lower down! Just as water always seeks and

fills the lowest place, so the moment God finds men abased and empty, His glory and power flow in to exalt and to bless.”

—Andrew Murray

• **Think about Christ’s placement on the cross.**

Jesus could have called angels to deliver, but instead, He emptied Himself, sacrificed Himself, and gave of Himself for us.

Contemplation of the cross will change your attitude about you and your greatness. Seeing God’s holiness and righteousness, seeing the seriousness and ugliness of our sin, and seeing the magnitude of God’s grace and love will prompt an attitude adjustment.

“Humility is honestly assessing ourselves in light of God’s holiness and our sinfulness.”

—C.J. Mahaney

People often like being seen as a servant much more than they like being treated like a servant! Why? They want to have Christianity without the cross. The cross requires death to self to live for Christ. Just as Jesus became

“obedient to the point of death,” so must we!

“And calling the crowd to Him with His disciples, He said to them, ‘If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me’” (Mark 8:34 ESV).

Salvation and service both begin at the cross.

Recognize today what Christ did on the cross, what Christ did for you to deliver you from the dominion of your own despotism and to free you to discover the power His life.

... “who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:6-8 ESV).

How do you see it? Have you responded to it? What is your attitude toward it?

Heartless?... careless?... or gratitude and humility?

By the way, you can't separate those two. To be truly grateful is to be humble and to be humble is to know true gratitude in life.

"And calling the crowd to Him with His disciples, He said to them, 'If anyone would come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me'" (Mark 8:34 ESV).

Humility is the first step toward salvation. We have to confront the self-directed attitudes of the heart—stubborn sinfulness that is so strong in us.

While I believe many of us as a part of this church would stand firm on the foundation that salvation is found in Christ-alone doctrinally, I fear too many of us have been unwilling to embrace the impact of the crucified life personally. I'm asking you, calling upon you, challenging you to do this today.

Get out of the zone of your life and into the stream of God's kingdom priorities and plans for your life. Most of the apps are not big platforms, but small places and spaces that need your attention and mine.

It's time to wash feet at home by serving your family. Do common daily tasks with tenderness, thoughtfulness and love. Make a bed, brew and serve coffee, take out trash, put gas in the car, clean the house. "If you know these things, happy are you if you do them!"

It's time to wash feet at church by serving fellow believers. It's time to take on roles and responsibilities you expect to see covered, but haven't been willing or available to volunteer to do.

Pray for your pastor and staff, teachers and leaders, not just saying, "Bless them," but fervently hospitable. Greet others around you, sit close to the front, smile a lot, invite a friend, help care for children, give weekly, park away, etc. Are you like the disciples in the upper room—somebody else's job?

It's time to wash feet, friends, and it all begins with an attitude adjustment so desperately needed in our hearts and our lives.

"God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." —1 Peter 5:5 ESV