

Good morning. Merry Christmas. Merry Christmas. All right. Felice Navidad in German.

Frohke Weihnachten. Whatever. Merry Christmas. We say it all the time. I looked up this week because I thought merry means cheerful and lively.

So I'm wishing for you. We wish for one another. We have cheerful and lively Christmases. But let's be honest, sometimes holidays are stressful, usually involving people. Right?

Relational tension. So we say Merry Christmas, but we always know there's this potential or maybe already a reality of tension. You ever notice in Christmas movies, lot of relational tension? It's Wonderful Life. George Bailey has tension with Mr. Potter in a Christmas Story.

Ralphie has tension with his parents about whether they would buy him the Red Rider BB gun. Rudolph the Red nosed Reindeer. There's tension because sadly, all the other reindeer never let Rudolph play the reindeer games. Charlie Brown Christmas. Charlie Brown says he's sad and depressed and for some reason he has relational tension with about everybody.

Right. In Elf Buddy, the elf has relational tension with his biological father, Walter Hobbs in A National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation. The Griswolds have relational tensions with everybody. If you've seen that movie, you've seen the big dinner table at Christmas and it's like there's just tension flowing all over the place. And if you're a Die Hard person, Bruce Willis has like violent tension with everybody.

Right? But that's reality, right? Yeah, we want a merry Christmas. We usually try to make things, but the reality is we have relationships that have the potential to cause us stress, or they already are. And we see those people at Christmas.

I'm a son, I'm a brother, I'm a husband, I'm a dad. So there's people in my life and everything's not always merry like it's not for you. And we're going to look at a passage today that Paul talks about kind of the Christmas stuff, but in the context of how do we handle relationships in a sense? So we did last week we started, if you watch the online, 11 o' clock, he became. Is the series talking about Jesus becoming.

Last week, Sean talked about Jesus became flesh, God became flesh. Christmas Eve, it's Jesus became light. And today we're talking about Jesus becoming a servant. And so as he became, the challenge is how do we be like him? And we'll talk about this relational stuff, how that all fits.

So we're going to. The passage today is the book of Philippians, Philippians Chapter 2. Philippians is in the New Testament. Philippians is a letter Paul wrote to The Christians in the Greek city of Philippi. Paul was most likely in a Roman prison when he wrote it, but he is encouraging them to become like Jesus in the context of their relational world.

He kind of has a statement where we often talk about at Christmas, but what does theology about Jesus have to do with my conflict with my friends, family, and relational stuff? Right. So I'll put it on the screen. Here we're gonna look at Philippians, chapter 2, verses 5 to 8. Again, this is part of a letter Paul wrote in. In the preceding part of this letter, he's talking about relational tension.

And then he writes this. Go to the next one.

Next slide. Yeah, next slide. Read the very first line. Just the first line, not the first sentence, the first line that ends with another. All right, read it out loud with me in your relationships with one another.

One more time in your relationships with one another. So Paul just went from talking about their relationship stress, and now he's saying, here's how you deal with that. Now read the whole thing with me from the beginning. We'll go through the whole thing. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ.

Jesus, who, being in very nature, God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage. Rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness. Stop here for a second before go back. So this is where it starts. Who being this was Paul writing the lyrics to what was then known as probably one of the first worship songs.

So the people in Philippi likely knew this, and they likely knew the tune. So he's reminding them, this is what we sing about Jesus. So if this is how we sing about who Jesus is and we can be like him in your relationships, have the same attitude as Jesus. And that's, like, easier said than done, Right? But that's what he's talking about.

All right, now go to the next slide. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross. Therefore. And we'll read the therefore later. But Paul's saying, you know, you have this relational stuff going on, but have the attitude of Jesus in those situations.

And this passage just has the mindset. But the whole idea is, have the attitude of Jesus. So how do we have the attitude of Jesus? And what does that mean? That especially when we're talking about some of the things about Jesus being a servant and Jesus humbling himself, what

does that look like?

When I'm in tension with my Wife or one of my kids or somebody. What does it mean?

So three things we're going to look at. Three gifts I'm going to ask you to give back to Jesus. And I'm saying that because this is with other people. But sometimes I don't wanna give. I don't wanna do it for.

I don't wanna do it for their sake, but I wanna do it for Jesus sake. He won't. I wanna do it for him, not. Cause sometimes it's hard to do it for them. So what does it mean to become like Jesus?

So first thing is this. Learn how to give the gift of letting go. All right? Becoming like Jesus, learning how to give the gift of letting go. In this passage, it says Jesus, who, although he was God, did not consider equality God.

Something to take advantage of. And another way you could say it is he wasn't gonna grasp onto what he knew were his rights. Jesus wasn't gonna claim his rights as God. But then it says he emptied himself. He emptied himself.

What does that mean, that Jesus emptied himself, he made himself nothing. Well, it basically means when he became flesh, it was God who became flesh. He willingly gave up the privileges of being God. He emptied himself of those rights and privileges. So when he was in the manger, he wasn't like zapping miracles all over the place.

He willingly gave into the limits of humanity, but he gave away his rights of being God. He emptied himself so he could be one of us. So this whole idea of everybody just grasp both your fists right now, he wasn't gonna grasp onto something. And if you want to shake your, you know, that's what. So there may be some things you have to let go of that are rifle years.

Example, I'm one of five boys and when my parents would buy a bag of 19.2 ounce M&M peanut MMs, do you think it just sat in the kitchen and we ate it when we wanted to and kindly let it? Of course not. It was like, hey, I didn't get any. Hey, what happened? So what my dad decided to do, and I probably still think this way, and I shouldn't, he would get five coffee cups or big cups, and he would peanut M and Ms.

He would count them out. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. 1, 2, 3, 4. And if we were in the house, we were watching him, right, dad? You better not forget 1, 2, 3.

So I knew my brothers and I were all mathematical. There's 19.2 ounces

in an M and M bag. When you figure out how much each M and M Weighs, blah, blah, blah. It comes out to be 17.8m andms. Apiece.

Somebody has to get 17. Somebody gets 18. Right. And when. We were very aware of that, because that's my right as a son in this family.

I get one fifth of the M and Ms. Now, I could have. I didn't. I could have said, you know what? I have absolute right to this cup of M and Ms. But I'm gonna empty myself as a rightful son and rightful recipient of my M&Ms, and I'm gonna let my brothers have them.

Now. I didn't do that. Please don't. I mean, even today, I might not do that if my dad were, you know, but do I stop being a son? No.

Do I stop being an equal heir with my brothers? No. But I'm letting go of what's rightfully mine for the sake of others. That's what Jesus did. He let go of his godly realities for the sake of us.

And then here's my question. Is there something God's asking you to let go of? You know, it's not fair. It's my right to do it this way. Yeah, it is.

And yes, it's not fair. But maybe God's saying, let it go anyway.

Willingly give up your right. Stop grasping. You're right. Yeah, it was my right as a son to have my 18M and Ms. But is there a time where I might, maybe in my marriage, maybe with my adult kids, maybe with people I don't even know on the street, Maybe people I work with?

Maybe there's times where it's like, I have a right to do this or to have this, but I'm gonna let go of that right for the sake of them. Because that's what Jesus in me tells me to do. Now, it's not. I'm not saying be a doormat. Jesus doesn't.

But if Jesus is telling me in certain situations that I'm guaranteeing some of you, and I will, too, probably have a situation this week where inside my head, I'm saying, that's not fair. I have a right to want this this way. It's understandable that I should do it this way. But God might say, can you let that go for this situation? And can you let it go for myself, for Jesus?

You know, I might not think the person I'm letting my rights go to has earned it, and they haven't, but I'm gonna do it for Jesus. Jesus gives us that gift. I'm gonna give it back to him. So maybe this week, maybe Next week, maybe today there'll be a situation where the Holy Spirit might say to you, can you let that go this time for me, for Jesus? So give the gift of letting up.

Secondly, give the gift of servanthood. When Paul's talking about the relational stress and he recites this hymn, he says, you know who

Jesus in very nature, God didn't grasp it, but became a servant. So Paul's giving us that picture of Jesus taking the very nature of a servant. So how do I be like that? And what does that mean?

Well, we know that Jesus, when the disciples were arguing, they said, jesus, who's going to be right hand man, left hand man, you know, human nature, I want to see where I'm going to fit on the totem pole. And Jesus said, you know what, the way the world talks about power and position, it's not going to be true with you. Not so with you instead, whoever is like a child, whoever is the least and the servant of others, will be the greatest of all. It's this weird kind of flip. Those who serve are the great ones.

And in that culture and in that time, even in our culture, in our time, that doesn't fit. The great ones are the ones who kind of climb the ladder. He's like, no. And then he. And then in John when he actually, the night of the last supper, he washes the disciples feet.

That was not his job. That was the job of the lowest servant on the totem bowl. To wash dirty smelly feet, the that had walked on dusty roads and maybe stepped in human excrement, I mean animal excrement or whatever. It wasn't his job to clean their feet. And Peter even kind of protest, don't wash my feet.

It's not his job. It wasn't even Jesus problem. They had dirty feet, but he washes their feet and he basically says, you've seen what I've done for you. You do the same, wash dirty feet. Well, it's not my job, right.

So when I was in seminary, that was a long time ago actually, I lived in a home of a single mom and her two teenage boys. And in exchange for living there, I had to drive the kids to school and stuff like that. And I would often go away on the weekends cause I had a brother that lived nearby. And one time on a Monday, she started yelling at me and her two boys about how messy the kitchen was. I mean they were dirty dishes, they were a messy family.

I'm just telling you, I was a messy person too. But let me just finish the story all right, they were. The kitchen was messy, and she was yelling, look at this mess. I get. I mean, she was kind of an angry woman in a lot of ways.

But what's frustrating for me was I hadn't even been there the last couple days. So one of those dishes was mine. And I was kind of mad, like, you know, so the next weekend, I'm gone for the weekend again visiting my brother and his wife. And I come back late Sunday night, and the kitchen is like tornado, like messy dishes. And I walked.

It was like 10 o', clock, and I walked in there and I thought, I hope she says to me tomorrow and complains about the dirty dishes. Cause

I'm gonna tell her not one of those is mine. I wasn't even here the last 48 hours. I was ready, had my rebuttal ready. It's not mine, not my job, not my dishes.

Not a single one. I went downstairs getting ready to bed, and unfortunately, the spirit of God found me and he said, you need to go up there and wash those dishes.

Don't you know where I was the last 48 hours? God, I wasn't here. Those weren't mine. Yeah, you need to go up and wash those dishes. It's like, I don't think you understood what I just said.

They're not mine. They are not my dishes. I was ready to kind of come at her the next day with, it's not mine. Stop complaining about. That's okay.

God said, I want you to go up and do the dishes. So 10:30 at night, I went up. Everybody else was asleep. I did the dishes. I didn't tell her the next day.

I didn't tell anybody. I did the dishes, and they weren't mine. So please pat me on the back for being a good servant. I just did them reluctantly at first. But then something changed in me.

I thought, this is. I'm glad Jesus, maybe, maybe something this week or something already has hit you where your first response is, that's not my job. It's not my problem, not my mess.

And Jesus might say to you, Jesus in you. If you have the spirit of Christ in you, he loves to kind of speak up in those situations. He might say to you, can you go take care of that mess? Whether it's a relational mess, a dishes mess, can you take care of that situation? Well, it's not my problem.

God, it's not my job. I'm not gonna do that. And Jesus might say, yeah, I get that. But that's what I do. I'm a servant.

Jesus said, I wash feet and I'm in you. So I'm asking you to become like me and wash feet. And if you do that, something in you will be changed. Don't do it with resentment. I mean, at first you might have resentment.

I was washing the dishes. I wanted to break them or whatever, but I didn't. But at first you might have resentment. But then something in your heart starts to soften and you're like, this is who I want to be, right? This is who I want to be.

I don't want to be somebody who's clinging on to my rights. I don't want to be somebody that says, not my job, not my mess. I'm not serving there. I'll serve when I want to, when I can kind of control

it, and when I can pat myself on the back for serving. But don't ask me to serve some kind of dirty situation relationally or realistically.

Last one is this.

Giving the gift of humility. So maybe you can give the gift this week to somebody of letting go of your rights. Maybe you give the gift of washing their feet or doing something that's not your job, but this last one is Maybe also they're all difficult. Maybe. Maybe give the gift of humility to something.

Now, the attitude of Jesus was he humbled himself. That's what Scripture says. And Jesus even said when the disciples were talking about. Again, talking about power, and he just said, the great. He said it again, the great ones among you will be the ones that humble themselves like a child.

They will be the great ones. And. And I'm sure the disciples, like we were like, what? What do you mean? Cause if Jesus said he humbled himself, he took a lower position.

He took a seat at the table, the card table in the kitchen. Instead of seating at the big dining room table with the adults, he took that seat. Why did he do that? And sometimes to define humility. I did a sermon here, I don't know, in the last year or so, on humility and meekness in the sermon of the mouth.

So I thought, I'll just. I'll pull out of that sermon and stick it into this one. And pastors do that. So I'm just saying I didn't do it this time. Cause I thought I'm.

Maybe there's a different way to look at humility. So instead of borrowing from past sermons, I'm like, let's figure. Let's compare and contrast humility and its opposite, which is pride. Because if we're supposed to humble ourselves, it's maybe. Good to see that.

Oh, okay. That's what that looks like. So I'm going to read a list of statements that actually came from a sermon that a woman named Nancy Lee DeMoss preached probably 30 years ago at a national ministry event. I wasn't even there. I've listened.

I listened to the sermon multiple times on a cassette tape. For those of you who don't know what a cassette tape is, ask somebody over 50 and they will tell you. They might even have a cassette tape player in their house. I'm guessing no one has one in your car anymore, right? Anyway, but it was a.

It was powerful to me. I'm just going to read through contrasting what a proud heart looks like, what a humble heart looks like. Because

we're supposed to humble ourselves like Jesus, we want to know what it looks like, right? Proud people are self righteous. They have a critical fault finding spirit.

They look at others faults with a microscope but their own with a telescope. They look down on others. Humble people are compassionate. They forgive much because they know how much they've been forgiven. They think the best of others.

Proud people have an independent, self sufficient spirit. Humble people have a dependent spirit and recognize their needs for others. Just as I'll say this too as I read this, I'm guessing some of these might zing your heart a bit, might resonate. There's certain ones that do with me at certain times. So just pay attention to the spirit of God in you.

All right? Proud people need to prove that they are right. Anybody wanna raise their hand on that one? I know I Humble people are willing to yield the right to be right. Proud people have a desire for self advancement.

Humble people desire to promote others. Proud people have a drive to be recognized and appreciated. They are wounded when others are promoted and they are overlooked. Humble people do not seek the spotlight. Proud people feel confident how much they know.

Humble people are humbled by how very much they have to learn. Proud people keep others at arm's length. Humble people are willing to risk getting close to others. Take the risk of loving intimately. Proud people are quick to blame others.

Ouch. Humble people accept personal responsibility and can see where they were wrong. Proud people are defensive when criticized. Humble people receive criticism with a humble open spirit. Handful more Proud people are concerned with being respectable.

They're concerned with what others think and they want to protect their own image and reputation. Humble people are concerned about being real and they're concerned most about what God thinks. Proud people, when they have sinned, want to be sure no one finds out so their instinct is to cover it up. Humble people, once they're humble, don't really care who knows who finds out. Proud people have a hard time saying, I was wrong.

Will you forgive me? Humble people are quick to admit their failure and to seek forgiveness when necessary. When there's a misunderstanding or a conflict in a relationship, maybe over the holidays, proud people wait for the other to come and ask them for forgiveness. Humble people take the initiative to reconciliation.

Proud people don't think they have anything to repent of. Humble people realize that they have a continual heart attitude of repentance. And this last one, which is my favorite one, but it's my not favorite one, because proud people don't think they need revival, but they're quite sure that everyone else does, right? So maybe something resonated there. But it's like when we humble ourselves, it shows up in our behaviors, it shows up in conflict, it shows up in all kinds of situations.

And if scripture says Jesus humbled himself, and Jesus said to the disciples earlier on, and now Paul sang this through this song in Philippians, if Jesus is that way, so should you be. And then you might think, as I think, well, that's just hard. It might even be impossible. And the answer to that is, it is humanly it's impossible to be somebody who lets go of your rights, who washes feet like a servant, and somebody who's willing to humble themselves. It's humanly impossible.

If you try and try harder and try harder and try harder, I guarantee you will fail. But it's not a human thing. It's a willingness to ask the Holy Spirit in those moments, I wanna be like that. I don't. Right now, I don't want to wash these dishes.

It's not my job. But I want a change of heart, God, so will you change my heart right now? I really don't want to humble myself. I want to defend myself. They were wrong.

I wasn't wrong. But, God, I want to have a. I want your spirit in me. I want the spirit of Jesus in me. So change my heart. Help me know how to go about this conversation.

You see, because those three gifts, giving the gift of letting go, giving the gift of serving and washing feet, and giving the gift of humbling yourself before others and before God. Those are pretty powerful gifts to give back to Jesus. You become this changed person, your relationships. I'm not saying relationships, tension goes away. But the way you respond to it becomes totally different.

And then scripture says, at the end of this passage of Philippians 2, it says, when you live this way, you shine like stars in the universe. You live this way, you shine like stars. People notice, huh? That person's different. When those kind of situations come up, that's different.

They handle conflict differently. So I told you, when we first read the first part of the passage, it talked about all the things Jesus was, you know, let go of his rights, he serves, he's humble. And then it said, therefore. And then go put that up on the screen. This is the rest of the passage.

Because Paul's saying, you know, this is what Jesus was like, and this is what you can be like. But because this is who Jesus was, this is what happened. Because when somebody's that way, which seems very lowly, it seems counterintuitive. This is what happens. And this is what.

Read this out loud with me, the whole thing. Here we go. Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth. And every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. So wait a minute.

You're telling me the way to this exalted state of Jesus. He's on the throne. He's. There's name above every name. People are.

The way of Jesus is letting go of your rights, washing dirty feet and humbling yourself. Cause that wasn't the way of the culture at that time. It's not the way of our culture. Our culture says, create your own brand, promote yourself, defend yourself. Right?

But Scripture says that's not the way of Jesus. And actually what was interesting, when that passage, when it says, and every tongue confess, Jesus Christ is Lord in that culture at that time, they were under Roman rulership, and they were required in certain situations to declare Caesar as Lord. The way that Caesar does things is the way to go, the way of reputation, the way of power. To humble yourself and to wash feet. That was despicable.

You don't do that. And actually, Christians at times were. Were forced or asked to say Caesar is Lord as their loyalty to the state. And they would not say it. Sometimes to their own getting arrested, sometimes to death, because they would not proclaim, the way of this world is the way I'm gonna live.

They would say, no, I'm gonna live. I'm gonna proclaim Jesus as Lord. The way of Jesus will lead me to life and joy and peace and fullness. That's the way of Jesus will change the world when his people follow his way. So when, when Paul ends that way, Jesus is Lord.

And sometimes at Christmas what we end up doing, and I do this too, there's a manger over there somewhere. We kind of look, Christmas is looking back to the Christmas story in manger. But Christmas really is the advent of the coming of Jesus. But we're then looking to him coming even now coming into my life in these situations, God, Jesus, come into my spirit when those situations arise where I need to serve other people. Because it's about him welcoming.

What we sang earlier, I wrote him, I jotted him down in the hymns we were singing. We were saying, let every heart prepare him room. Let

every heart prepare him room. You're prepared Jesus room to kind of challenge you in some of these ways. And we sang receive the king.

Are you going to receive Jesus when he's telling you wash those dishes, wash those feet? Are you willing to prepare room for him? Cause that will change your life if you do, it will change your life, will change your heart, will change your life.

We always finish the service with response time. And I'm walking over here because part of the response is communion was what Jesus, the night he was betrayed, the night he washed his disciples feet. After he did that, he said, now every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, I want you to remember me. There's a lot of things we get to remember. But I'm gonna ask you, when you take this, whatever vision you have in your head, remember Jesus washing dirty feet.

Have that image of Jesus in your mind, remember that. Cause that's who he wants you to be. That's who he knows you can become. And that's how he knows you're going to be full of joy and peace because you serve. So there's also people going to be on the outside of the room with lanyards on there to pray for you.

And maybe you just need to ask somebody, hey, I want to be like Jesus in those ways. Maybe that's all you say. Or I've got some relational stuff I'm trying to figure out. But I want to go the way of Jesus this holiday season.

And maybe somebody's here who's saying that. I don't follow Jesus thinking about it and. But if that's who Jesus is, I want to follow him because I want to be that kind of person. Then you can talk to the people in the land, you can come talk to me. But there's nobody, there's nobody like Jesus.

You choose to follow somebody. Nobody like Jesus. Let me pray and then we'll sing. And you can take communion once we start singing. So, Jesus, there is no one like you.

And although we love to praise and worship, kind of victory and dominion and all those things, but with you, we also find a weird kind of joy in watching you serve and humble yourselves, humble yourself and let go. And we want to be those kind of people. We want to change the world because we're like you, Jesus. We want to change the world because we're like you. Because there's nobody else like you.

And we love you. And we ask this all in your name. Amen.