

PALM SUNDAY ~ April 1, 2012



PHILIPPIANS: To Know Christ and Make Him Known

“He Humbled Himself”

Philippians 2:1-11

It is fitting that during Holy Week we spend some time meditating on Philippians 2:1-11. Contained in these verses are poetic words that describe the incarnation and glory of Christ.

It would take far more than a week to plumb the depths of verses 6-11. Whether the apostle Paul adapts a well-known hymn about Christ or writes this himself, it is a beautiful tribute to the One who came to earth in humility and rose again in glory.

Whether you study this passage by yourself, with your family, or with your Life Group, take your time and let it enrich your experience of the Passion of our Lord.



KNOWING GOD

Read Philippians 2:1-11. The hymn of praise to Christ in vss. 6-11 is one of the most moving and theologically rich in the entire Bible. It follows Christ from his pre-incarnate state (vs. 6) to his incarnation (vss. 7-8), to his resurrection and ascension (vs. 9), and hints at his return in glory (vss. 10-11). What words does Paul use in this hymn to communicate the full deity of Christ? Why is it important to believe that Jesus is fully God as well as fully man?

What does Paul mean in vs. 7 when he says that Christ “made himself nothing” (some translations read “emptied himself”)? Does this mean that Christ ceased being God or gave up some of his divine attributes when he was on earth?

What is the difference between Christ’s active and passive obedience, and why were both necessary for our salvation?



GROWING TOGETHER

Paul’s rich description of Christ’s humility is intended, among other things, to stir up aspirations of humility and service in ourselves. What traces of pride or self-absorption have you seen in your life lately?

Verse 2 is a beautiful description of Christian unity: “being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose.” How well do you think we at UPC are experiencing those ideals? How might we improve?



SERVING OTHERS

What needs to change in order for you to “look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others” (vs. 4)?

What will you do to serve your church family this week?



IN YOUR FAMILY...

- a) Holy Week is a great time to reach out to your unchurched neighbors. Is there a family in your neighborhood you could invite to worship with you on Maundy Thursday or Easter Sunday?
- b) Is your family engaged in meeting needs in your neighborhood or city? What is one project you could tackle in order to make a difference in the lives of others?

SERMON NOTES