**Indeed, let this attitude be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. 6Though he was by nature God, he did not consider equality with God as a prize to be displayed, 7but he emptied himself by taking the nature of a servant. When he was born in human likeness, and his appearance was like that of any other man, 8he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. 9Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, 10so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

Our verses start with a gospel motivated encouragement from the Apostle Paul. **“Indeed, let this attitude be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”** The attitude Paul talks about is an attitude of humility. And then in our verses he points to Jesus as the perfect example of what humility looks like.

We’ll take a closer look at those verses today, but before we do that, how would you define humility? I’ve always found it kind of hard to define, its kind of a “you know it when you see it kind of thing” which is why these verses are so awesome because they are perfectly showing us in the person of Jesus. But if we have to come up with a working definition, one that I have always found helpful is “humility is not thinking less of yourself, it’s thinking of yourself less.” It’s putting the needs of someone else and the care of someone else above you. Being willing to put someone else first and not be first yourself. Something like that could be a working definition of humility.

And if humility is hard to define, it’s even harder for us to put into practice. Seek the best for someone else even at my own expense. And part of the reason we have such a hard time with humility, is because we have such a hard time believing that things will be ok if I don’t put me first.

Our lives often reflect that – probably more than we even realize. What in our lives shows we have a hard time with humility, putting someone first? I’m sure there are a lot of different answers, because the devil is pretty creative and our sinful self is pretty creative too, not in a good way – but one thing I thought of was listening.

What does our listening look like? How well do we put someone else first to really hear what they have to say? How often do we listen to someone when we’re not also looking at our phones at the same time? How well do we listen without just jumping back in with a counterpoint to win the argument? How well do we listen without interrupting? How often when we listen… are we really showing I don’t need to listen to you, you need to be quiet and listen to me?

Listening is just one example that I thought of. And if we don’t want to use that as an example, I’m sure we could come up with so many more. Because that’s what sin does. That’s what Satan does, and our sinful nature does, and the sinful world we live in does. It ultimately makes things about me. And humility, putting someone before yourself just doesn’t make sense. If you have power and prestige, if you’re important – then other people should treat you accordingly. And if you don’t have those things – then you better figure out how to get them. That’s the mindset of the sinful world we live in, and whether we like it or not, our attitudes and actions often reflect that mindset too.

Now compare that mindset, that attitude – with the mindset and attitude of Jesus. **Though he was by nature God, he did not consider equality with God as a prize to be displayed, 7but he emptied himself by taking the nature of a servant.**

Consider the power and prestige that Jesus had. He had it all! He is true God! As God no one is above him! He didn’t consider equality with God something to be grasped – it was already his!

That Greek word also has the flavor of “something to put on display like a trophy.” So, when it came to Jesus having all the power and prestige of God, he didn’t have to reach up to try and get it, because it was already his. And having the power and prestige of God, he didn’t flaunt it or Lord it over people. He didn’t treat it as a prize to be displayed.

How different that is from how the world views privilege and power! Using your position not to *get* from those under you, but to *give* to those under you. To help those subordinate to you. Jesus had all the power and privilege of God, he was second to none as true God, and what did he do in that position? He “emptied himself” by taking on the nature of a servant.

When our verses say Jesus emptied himself, that *doesn’t* mean that when he came to earth, he stopped being God – that he dumped all his divinity away. No – Jesus showed again and again in Scripture that he was truly God, he did things only God could do. He *had* to be God to be our Savior, because only the holy precious blood of God is priceless enough to pay the eternal price for our sin – nothing less will cut it.

But what this does mean is that Jesus emptied himself of the full use of his power and glory. He willingly chose to set it aside. And true God humbled himself to take on another nature. He who was completely God also became completely human. He lowered himself to be one of us.

Now that’s incredibly counterintuitive and surprising just by itself, that God loves us so much to set that power and prestige of God aside, but even more so when we see the kind of human Jesus came to be. He came to be a servant.

How many people would choose the life of a servant? Would you choose the life of a servant? Now maybe some people would, and perhaps some in our world would gladly say they do. “Yes, I’m a civil servant, I’m here for you, I’m here to help, I’m a philanthropist.” And giving them the benefit of the doubt, maybe their heart really is in the right place. Maybe they really do care

But sin is a serious thing. And apart from faith, even the most praiseworthy act of civic righteousness is like a filthy rag. Sin stains everything. And even as Christians, even when we have the best of intentions, we can still see the taint of sin on our acts of service. “Yes, I want to help you, I want to be there for you in Christian love, awesome!” but because I have a sinful nature, there is a part of me that wants to be recognized for the good I’m doing. The common term is virtue signaling. Wanting others to see you doing something good so you get the recognition, the prestige for it.

Even as Christians with the best intentions we still have a sinful nature that wants recognition or credit or reward for our good deeds. We are not perfect servants.

But Jesus *was*. Compare that virtue signaling servants attitude with Jesus servants attitude. Think of what Jesus life looked like. It was never for him. It was always for us! The Apostle’s Creed makes that so clear as it lays out Jesus humiliation for us. How Jesus willingly chose to set aside his power and prestige and position as God for us.

Conceived by the Holy Spirit. The almighty eternal limitless God, limiting himself to the absolute smallest least powerful human existence there could possibly be. A baby at the instant of conception.

Humbling himself even more to be born of the Virgin Mary. To live a human life on this earth with everything that comes with it, good and bad – being hungry, being tired, going through puberty, stubbing your toe, having diarrhea. You name it, Jesus did it. **For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are, yet was without sin.**

And of course Jesus went even further than that. For our sake, he chose to endure things that most humans won’t ever have to. He suffered under Pontius Pilate. This Friday we’re going to see what that means, what that looked like. Jesus tortured for us. And going even further than that, dying for us. Even death on a cross, our verses say.

There’s another bible verse where Paul says the cross is a stumbling block to Jews and foolishness to Greeks. And that’s because the death by crucifixion was reserved only for the lowest of the low. The worst of criminals. People who weren’t Roman citizens. The Jewish people saw someone hanging on a tree as someone who was cursed by God. So why would God put his Messiah there?? Why would God subject himself to this?

Because that’s how wide and long and high and deep his love is for us. God lowering himself, making himself a servant was the only thing that could make us right with God again. Jesus lived a perfectly humble, perfectly perfect life as one of us, for all of us. He thought of himself less to put us first.

And in his humility, he not only lived for us, he died for us too. He suffered death, even death on a cross! The Jews were right in thinking that Jesus was cursed by God as he hung on the cross because he was. Paul says in Galatians 3, **“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.”**

On the cross, Jesus endured physical agony that we can’t really even imagine, but even more than – unimaginably more than that – he took the full price of sin in our place. He was abandoned by God – forsaken by his father. But at that moment on the cross he didn’t find his heavenly father – just a holy God’s full wrath for our sin. Jesus paid that in full for us. God, the author of life, died for us. Physically and spiritually. He gave up his life in our place.

We see that kind of humility and love, and we have a lot of different thoughts and emotions that go with it. Guilt and sadness because that is what my sin cost. Awe at the fact that this is how much God loves me, that he willingly chose to pay that cost. Surprise at the counter-intuitiveness of it all – on the cross Jesus didn’t look like a winner! But how did God respond to Jesus’ humility? His humiliation as one of us and for all of us? The Father exalted him! **“Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, 10so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”**

Emotionally, Holy Week brings us the lowest lows and the highest highs. On Good Friday we are brought low as we see what our sin cost and what Jesus willingly gave to pay for it – everything. But on Easter we see what Jesus’ life of humiliation won – everything! He did exactly what he came to do – and paid the price for our sins in full. Your sins are forgiven!

Jesus perfectly did what he came to do. And because he did, the Father exalted his son! Jesus took back the full use of the glory and power that were always his. He had no reason to set them aside anymore. And everything that happened from Easter morning on, is God showing us that. God showing us that his son did everything right and everything for us. The Apostles creed talks about that too, Jesus exaltation – taking the full use of that power and glory back.

Jesus “Descended into hell” – this sounds like this should go in the other section, but no. This isn’t taking about Jesus paying hell for us, this is talking about Jesus proclaiming his victory over Satan. After he rose, Jesus descended into hell and told Satan, “I won. I destroyed your work. I destroyed the claim you have on people because of sin.”

“He rose again from the dead” – Death had no claim Jesus either. Jesus had no sin. He broke the power of death. And on Easter God shows us that that is true for us too. He shows us an empty tomb and a risen Savior. I can’t wait for next Sunday, but for now let’s keep going

Jesus “ascended into heaven” – Have you ever thought about how awesome Jesus ascension really is? When we see God welcoming his son back home to heaven, we’re seeing him welcome humanity into heaven. Look at Jesus, fully God, and fully human, welcomed into heaven. Humanity is welcome in heaven, with God. You are too– because of Christ.

“Seated at the right hand of God the father almighty, from there he will come to judge the living and the dead” – this is similar to our last verses here in Philippians 2. Verses that point to a day when everyone will acknowledge Jesus for who he is and what he did. Where every knee will bow and every tongue confess Jesus is Lord. Some with joy, some with shame and regret

Jesus humbled himself as one of us and for all of us. God exalted his son as one of us and for all of us. Because of Christ and his humiliation, God exalts you too. He raises you up. He calls you his own dear child. He has a place prepared for you in heaven. You are not lacking *anything*! You have everything you need – an eternal future with God in heaven forever because of Christ!

Think of what that means for right now. It means we can “**let this attitude be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”** It means we can be ok with being humble! We can be ok with putting others first for the sake of the gospel. We don’t have to worry about scoring more points, getting more for ourselves, using the power and prestige we have here to build ourselves up. Because in Christ God has already built us up in the most incredible way. He has made us his own. Your sins are forgiven in Christ! Go in peace. Amen.