

Lives Lit Up by Jesus

Thomas Robinson, *Lives Shaped by Jesus 5*, November 4, 2012

Philippians 2:5-18

¹ So if there is any encouragement in Christ/Messiah, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any deep feeling and compassion, ² fill up my joy that you think the same thing, having the same love, together in soul and thinking the one thing. ³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or empty glory, but with humility of thought consider others even more valuable than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

⁵ **Think this** in/among yourselves, which also means in Messiah Jesus, ⁶ who,

Though he was in the form of God,
he did not consider that equality with God
a thing to be exploited,

⁷ rather he emptied himself,
by taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in human shape,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross.

⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him
and graced him with the name
that is above every name,

¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus
every knee should bow,
of those in heaven and on earth and under earth,

¹¹ and every tongue confess
that "Jesus Messiah is LORD,"
to the glory of God the Father.

¹² Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, ¹³ for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.

¹⁴ Do all things without grumbling or disputing, ¹⁵ that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, ¹⁶ holding fast to a word/message of life, so that in the day of Christ I may be proud that I did not run in vain or labor in vain. ¹⁷ Even if I am to be poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrificial offering of your faith, I am glad and rejoice with you all. ¹⁸ Likewise you also should be glad and rejoice with me.

Matthew 20:25-28

²⁵ But Jesus ... said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them.... ²⁶ It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, ²⁸ even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

Isaiah 45:22-24a

²² "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. ²³ ... To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance. ²⁴ Only in Yahweh (LORD) ... are righteousness and strength...."

Fill Your Mind and Heart with This

So much always opposes our really being grasped by the truth of the Gospel and living it fully! The believers were a small group within powerful cities (Philippi & Ephesus) in Rome's great empire. Jesus was an obscure man making outlandish claims, horribly humiliated and executed by Rome within their lifetime. How could it possibly be true? To Paul it obviously could not. Except! Jesus had been raised up and exalted (ascended) after his death, and Paul knew it! Others also had seen that astonishing reality. It changed everything. He had conquered death through dying! Only God could do that! Jesus' story, his identity, his teaching, his promises and challenges had to be seen in the light of that reality. Who is this? (Mt. 8:27) When you really realize who Jesus is, your own identity is brought into focus. Jew, Greek, Roman all are united in one love, one humanity, one story. They shine as lights revealing true humanity in a corrupted world. Today, faith is fine as long as it is kept private, personal, without 'truth claims.' Nothing could be further from this passage. This is the Truth of the world; all will one day know it. Thus "Think this"— Jesus' story/God's story. It remakes you, turns on your light.

God Reveals Himself

Paul, like every Jew/believer, knew that the God of Scripture, Yahweh/LORD, is God alone. There's no other God. But who is that God? "Let us ..." Elohim (pl.), Wisdom, Spirit. Profound, complex. Known to Abram. But a new revelation in the Exodus: Yahweh/LORD. Phi 2:6-11 says that in Jesus we are allowed to look into the heart/deep reality of God. The one who became Jesus was always in that one God (Jn: Logos/Word). Because of God's unimaginable depth he is able to show God's heart in an astonishing self-revelation. He used that 'equality with God' for the sake of humans rather than for his own power. He came among us as a finite human, emptied of universal power, indeed a slave, humbling himself in obedience. He was the true human being unbroken by human sin but suffering human death. He became the true Messiah/Son of God/embodying Israel, obedient, deliverer. In this he was truly God doing what only God could do, giving life. Jesus' resurrection/exaltation was not God rewarding Jesus for a hard job well done. It was God's mighty shout, "That is me!" "That is who I am!" Thus the emphasis on the name. LORD / Kurios is the Greek for the name Yahweh, who alone is God. Jesus (who recently was crucified) receives not a title but the Name revealing who he is and what an astonishing revelation of God he has embodied. He has that name because his whole life, ministry, teaching, self-giving death, resurrection, reveals God as never before.

Working Out Your Salvation: the God You Worship Shapes Your Life

Many are troubled by *"work out your salvation with fear and trembling."* Paul is not denying grace (the hymn) or teaching salvation earned by good works or trying to scare them. "Fear..." means knowing that the living God is really present, not an abstraction. "Work out..." – Paul or another teacher can't always be with them. Every believer has to come face to face with God in Jesus and open their life to God's work. But then God truly does work (1:6). We're never alone struggling with our own broken strength. When the Gospel shapes our lives, we become part of God's ongoing self-revelation. God's children learning and practicing God's generous love and self-giving service in a twisted, selfish generation. Life is lit up and shines in the world giving a "word of Life" to others.