

Sermon outline notes: Philippians Chapter 2 v 8. “He humbled himself”

Introduction

Take any 10 chickens. Put them in a pen together and spread a little chicken feed. In a short time you will witness an amazing phenomenon. In a matter of minutes, the chickens, previously strangers, will form a hierarchy based on dominance; or in everyday language, they will determine the Pecking Order. Instinctively they will determine through a series of skirmishes, who the number one chicken will be; then the number two; the number three; all the way down to the unlucky number ten chicken.

Our Culture

Most of us subconsciously develop a Pecking Order, figuring out where we fit in. For each of us the natural tendency is to treat those above us on the Pecking Order with admiration, cordiality and honour. Those who are below us we treat with insensitivity, callousness or even contempt. Its understandable as Pecking Orders provide some order in our lives. In a world filled with chaos, there is a sense of comfort in knowing where we fit. When we know the structure, we know when and where to choose our fights. We know when a peck is to be accepted– the pain swallowed with quiet dignity– and when we should exercise our rights and peck back with slightly greater force.

Pretension verses Humility

- In all of history no one was a more qualified candidate for number one in the pecking order than Jesus Christ.
- But Jesus hated the Pecking Order. He spent his whole ministry ripping at its foundations.
- The problem was one of focus. Some viewed life from the perspective of pretension—totally interested on externals.
- Jesus’ perspective was shaped by a deep sense of humility. It was a humility where none was called for! Yet Jesus “did not consider equality with God something to be grasped”. “He humbled himself”, and humility was at the heart of his philosophy.

The Teaching of Jesus

- “You will be great in my sight when you demonstrate servanthood to the least of those around you.”
- He talked about visiting those in prison, inviting orphans and widows to banquets, caring for the elderly, the blind and the sick.

Pride and Prejudice

Philippians 2v3 “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.”

- The phrase “in humility” provides an undergirding philosophy.
- Humility is the wisdom to know that each of us, in the eyes of God is the same: deeply flawed, yet precious.

A Costly Revolution

The implications are staggering. Can you imagine what would happen if everybody in a company treated everybody as a VIP. But such behaviour carries a cost. Anyone who really loves learns the pain of rejection, hatred and anger. Some people especially those the system treats with favour do not take well to the thought of unconditional love.

Points to Ponder

- 1) Share reactions to the sermon. How would you define the word ‘Humility’?
- 2) Matthew 18 v4; Matthew 23v12; 1 Peter5v 5-6; James 4 v6; What is being said in these verses?
- 3) Please read the article: “What is Mindless Christianity” before your fellowship group meeting. What do you think about the views expressed?