

Introduction:

- The second candle of Advent is the candle of preparation. How many would like me to help you prepare for His arrival? Or, as our title states, to Shine as lights?
 - Philippians 2:1-18. 1-9; end of vs.15 (*shine as lights*).
- People are drawn to lights—Christmas Lights. We decorate with lights, we walk the neighborhoods looking at lights. There are so many kinds of lights. They all get our attention and they all stand out. Maybe this why Paul calls us to shine as lights in this dark world.

I. The Call To Consider Others vs. 1-8

- A. Stake yourself up to Christ. verse 1. The word encouragement means to draw strength from. IE. When you encourage someone they draw strength from you. When a coach speaks to his team at half time he speaks to encourage them. He speaks so they draw strength from his words. IE. You put a stake beside a fragile plant and tie it to the stake. It draws strength from the stake so it can withstand the winds of life.
1. Notice that Paul is telling the Philippians to find strength in Christ. So as we go on you are going to hear Paul say to you just as he told the Philippians how and what kind of strength is available for them to live the life of Christ.
 2. There are four 'any's' found in verse 1.
 - a) any encouragement in Christ
 - b) any comfort from love
 - c) any participation in the Spirit
 - d) any affection and sympathy
 3. Be of one mind and you will make me and Jesus very happy. "We will shine!" To be of one mind is to be of one understanding, in unity or of the same mind set.
- B. The call or the charge to us is twofold:
1. to do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit
 - a) Selfish ambition – comes from a word speaking of those who demean themselves for immediate gratification. They are seeking to please themselves. It is putting 'number 1' first.
 - b) Vain conceit – one who talks big, delusional, about themselves.
 2. Count others more significant than yourselves.
 - a) Count others-" to think, believe, regard as" ¹
 - b) Significant - to tower over, to surpass, to stand out. It is not to be translated 'better' as some translations read. 'Significant' is a much more accurate

¹Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume (p. 303). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.

- translation. Webster defines significance – “the quality of being important : the quality of having notable worth or influence.”
- c) And you do this (count others more significant) by looking not only after your own interests but by looking after the interests of others.
3. So the call is to count others more significant by looking after their interests. This is totally opposite of what fallen human nature does. This is life beyond the stable! This is what Paul says will make he and Jesus Shine! Because when we do that we are loving!
- C. So the question becomes: “How do you do verses 3 and 4?” How do I count others more significant than myself and at the same time look to their interests too? It has everything to do with Christmas/the incarnation. Be like Jesus! Watch this downward progression. He did not count equality with God something to hang on to. We are called to count others more significant just like Jesus counted us more significant than Himself.
1. He was God!
 2. He did not count his position/God/deity as something to hang on to.
 3. He emptied Himself of all the rights of God
 4. He took the form of a servant rather than God.
 5. He was born in the likeness of man rather than God.
 6. And as a man He humbled himself
 7. Became obedient
 8. To the point of death
 9. Even a shameful, humiliating death on a cross. His love went beyond the stable.
- D. Jesus did this to empower us and to envision us on how to love fully. So that if you are staked up to Him, comforted by His love, empowered by His Spirit, filled with affection and sympathy for others we would have no selfish ambition or conceit. We would count others more significant than ourselves.

II. The Power To Consider Others

- A. Two major things stand out in our passage.
1. As God Jesus Emptied himself of all His rights of deity or His God rights.
 - a) Gr. *kenóō*. This word means “to make empty” (passive “to be desolate”) and “to nullify” (passive “to come to nothing”) *“The point, then, is that Christ does not selfishly exploit his divine form but lays it aside to take the form of a servant.”*²
 - b) As God He had rights! He did not have to do this ...He chose to do it. It was

²Kittel, G., Friedrich, G., & Bromiley, G. W. (1985). *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament, Abridged in One Volume* (p. 427). Grand Rapids, MI: W.B. Eerdmans.

- Romans 5:8. It was demonstrating love to us. This is the 'mind' we are to have.
- c) When we empty ourselves of our 'rights' and consider others more significant than ourselves we are now demonstrating love to them.
2. As man Jesus humbled himself by becoming obedient to God the Father...to the point of death...even a shameful death on the cross.
 - a) Humility supports the interest of others.
 - b) *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich."* (2 Corinthians 8:9, ESV)
 3. Humility is at the very heart of Christmas! It is our call to humble ourselves.
 - a) Tim Keller wrote: *"Humility is so shy! If you start talking about it, it leaves."*³
- B. Where do we get this humility? IN CHRIST.
1. *"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,"* (Philippians 2:5, ESV) This is the mind of Jesus and if I am in Him it is available to me!
 2. Watch how this call we have spoken of became visible in Paul's letter to the Philippians. *"I hope in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you soon, so that I too may be cheered by news of you. For I have no one like him, who will be genuinely concerned for your welfare. For they all seek their own interests, not those of Jesus Christ. But you know Timothy's proven worth, how as a son with a father he has served with me in the gospel."* (Philippians 2:19-22, ESV)
- C. Our call to 'humble' ourselves is the same act that Jesus did when he humbled himself. If you want to be like Jesus ...this emptying and humbling himself give us 'strength' or encouragement to do the same.
1. He was moved by love to empty himself and humble himself.
 2. We to, in Christ are moved to empty ourselves and humble ourselves like Christ.
 3. We do have to take note here:
 - a) We humble ourselves because we are filled with pride and selfishness.
 - b) He humbled Himself out of love alone! He took off His heavenly form to take on the form of man.

III. Stand Out and Stand Up For Others

- A. *"... children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world,"* (Philippians 2:15, ESV)
- B. When we are staked to Christ (starts with the new birth) we lose ourselves in Him in order that we might find others who lost in darkness. When you get born again, you start shining!

³ Christianity Today; December 2008, p 51

1. *"the people dwelling in darkness have seen a great light, and for those dwelling in the region and shadow of death, on them a light has dawned."* (Matthew 4:16, ESV)
2. *"to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace."* (Luke 1:79, ESV)
3. *"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden."* (Matthew 5:14, ESV)

Conclusion:

- Will this help you to prepare for His arrival?
- Empty yourself and in humility consider others more significant than yourself. Look out for the interests of others. In so doing, His love goes beyond the stable!

ADVENT SCRIPTURES:

Day Eight: Zephaniah 3:14-17

Day Nine: Isa 60:1-9

Day Ten: Isa 52:7-10

Day Eleven: Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:5-25

Day Twelve: Luke 1:57-80

Day Thirteen: Luke 1:26-56

Day Fourteen: Micah 5:2-5

Day Fifteen: Isa 11:6-10

Day Sixteen: Mark 13:32-37

Day Seventeen: Mt 25:1-13

Day Eighteen: Luke 21:25-36

Day Nineteen: John 12:20-36

Day Twenty: Titus 2:11-14

Day Twenty-one: Psalm 96:1-13

Day Twenty-two: Matthew 1:18-25

Day Twenty-three: Luke 2:1-20; Isa 52:7-10

Day Twenty-four: John 3:16-21; Romans 5:6-11; Eph 2:1-10

Day Twenty-five: Luke 2:1-20