

Philippians 2:8 Commentary

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LIFE IN CHRIST

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Charts from [Jensen's Survey of the NT](#) - used by permission
[Philippians - Charles Swindoll](#) = Chart on right side of page

Account of Paul's Circumstances Php 1:1-30	Have the Mind of Christ Php 2:1-30	Have the Knowledge of Christ Php 3:1-21	Have the Peace of Christ Php 4:1-23
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Philippi in the Time of Paul

The city plan above shows those features of the city of Philippi that archaeologists have so far identified as dating from the time of Paul. "Paul's Prison" is not believed to be an authentic site, but was a cistern later associated with Christian worship. (ESV.org)

Philippians 2:8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled (3SAAI) Himself by becoming (AMPMSN) obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: kai schemati heuretheis (AAPMSN) os anthropos etapeinosen (3SAAI) heauton genomenos (AMPMSN) hupekoos mechri thanatou, thanatou de staurou

Amplified: And after He had appeared in human form, He abased and humbled Himself [still further] and carried His obedience to the extreme of death, even the death of the cross! ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Barclay: And when he came in appearance as a man for all to recognise, he became obedient even to the extent of accepting death, even the death of a cross. ([Westminster Press](#))

KJV: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Lightfoot: Nor was this all. Having thus appeared among men in the fashion of a man, he humbled himself yet more, and carried out his obedience even to dying. Nor did he die by a common death: he was crucified, as the lowest malefactor is crucified

Phillips: And, having become man, he humbled himself by living a life of utter obedience, even to the extent of dying, and the death he died was the death of a common criminal. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: And being found to be in outward guise as man, He stooped very low, having become obedient to the extent of death, even such a death as that upon a cross. ([Eerdmans Publishing](#))

Young's Literal: and in fashion having been found as a man, he humbled himself, having become obedient unto death -- death even of a cross,

AND BEING FOUND IN APPEARANCE AS A MAN: kai schemati heuretheis (AAPMSN) os anthropos

- Mt 17:2; Mk 9:2,3; Lk 9:29

Spurgeon on appearance as a man - A great marvel is that Incarnation, that the eternal God should take into union with Himself our human nature, and should be born at Bethlehem, and live at Nazareth, and die at Calvary on our behalf. He was the Creator, and we see Him here on earth as a creature; the Creator, who made heaven and earth, without whom was not anything made that was made, and yet He lies in the virgin's womb. He is born, and He is cradled where the horned oxen feed. The Creator is also a creature. The Son of God is the Son of man. Strange combination! Could condescension go farther than for the Infinite to be joined to the infant, and the Omnipotent to the feebleness of a newborn babe? Yet this is not all.

Tony Evans on appearance as a man - That simply means that even though Jesus was much more than just a man, those who saw Him would think He was just a man. Jesus didn't go around with a halo around His head. He looked like a man. Luke 2:52 says

Jesus grew in the same ways as other people: physically, spiritually, emotionally, and socially. Isaiah said Jesus had "no stately form or majesty" in His human appearance that would make people stop and look twice (Isaiah 53:2). (Who is this King of Glory?)

Being found (2147) ([heurisko](#) gives us English word [eureka](#) which is from the exclamation attributed to Archimedes on discovering a method for determining the purity of gold) means learn location of something, either by intentional searching or by unexpected discovery.

Appearance (4976) (**schema** gives us English "scheme") refers purely outward and appeals to the senses.

The contrast here is between what He was in Himself, God, and what He appeared in the eyes of man. "**Likeness**" states the fact of His real resemblance to men in mode of existence. (**Derivative words of schema** = metaschematizo, suschematizo)

Schema "always refers to what may be known from without." (Schneider, TDNT 1:954)

Schema in this verse signifies what Jesus was in the eyes of men. Schema describes the entire, outward, perceptible mode and shape of Christ's existence as a man.

Thayer says **schema** is "the habitus, as comprising everything in a person which strikes the senses, the figure, bearing, discourse, actions, manner of life, etc."

Schema should be distinguished from the Greek word **morphe** which signifies "form" in Phil 2:7. **Vine** (quoting from Gifford's work "The Incarnation") says that

morphe is therefore properly the nature or essence, not in the abstract, but as actually subsisting in the individual, and retained as long as the individual itself exists.... Thus in the passage before us *morphe Theou* is the Divine nature actually and inseparably subsisting in the Person of Christ.... For the interpretation of 'the form of God' it is sufficient to say that (1) it includes the whole nature and essence of Deity, and is inseparable from them, since they could have no actual existence without it; and (2) that it does not include in itself anything 'accidental' or separable, such as particular modes of manifestation, or conditions of glory and majesty, which may at one time be attached to the 'form,' at another separated from it.... "The true meaning of *morphe* in the expression 'form of God' is confirmed by its recurrence in the corresponding phrase, 'form of a servant.' It is universally admitted that the two phrases are directly antithetical, and that 'form' must therefore have the same sense in both."

Expositor's adds that **morphe** "always signifies a form which truly and fully expresses the being which underlies it...the words mean 'the being on an equality with God.'"

KJV Bible Commentary - The word form (Greek **morphē**) differs from fashion (Greek **schēma**) as that which is intrinsic from that which is outward. The contrast is between what He is in Himself (God) and what He appears to be in the eyes of men (man). Christ had all the qualities which Adam had before he sinned, but not the sinful nature which came through Adam's fall. ([KJV Bible Commentary: Nelson](#))

Radmacher explains that **schema** "is the third word Paul uses to show the Philippians that Jesus Christ who is fully God from all eternity is also fully man. In the previous verses, Paul describes Jesus as possessing the nature of God and taking on the nature (*morphe*) of a servant. Jesus came to the earth with the identity of a man (*homoíoma* = likeness). Here the word **appearance** points to the external characteristics of Jesus: He had the bearing, actions, and manners of a man. ([Nelson Study Bible: NKJV](#))

Barclay writes that "There are two Greek words for form, **morphē** and **schēma**. They must both be translated **form**, because there is no other English equivalent, but they do not mean the same thing. *Morphē* is the essential form which never alters; *schēma* is the outward form which changes from time to time and from circumstance to circumstance. For instance, the **morphē** of any human being is humanity and this never changes; but his **schēma** is continually changing. A baby, a child, a boy, a youth, a man of middle age, an old man always have the *morphē* of humanity, but the outward *schēma* changes all the time. Roses, daffodils, tulips, chrysanthemums, primroses, dahlias, lupins all have the one *morphē* of flowers; but their *schēma* is different. Aspirin, penicillin, cascara, magnesia all have the one *morphē* of drugs; but their *schēma* is different. The *morphē* never alters; the *schēma* continually does. The word Paul uses for Jesus being in the form of God is *morphē*; that is to say, his unchangeable being is divine. However his outward *schēma* might alter, he remained in essence divine. ([Philippians 2 Commentary](#))

NIDNTT has this note on the classic use of **schema** - (1) form, shape, figure; (2) appearance, as opposed to reality; (3) bearing, air, mien; (4) fashion, manner; (5) character. Greek thought did not sharply distinguish between the external and the internal. **Schēma** denotes the form that is seen. It could thus denote the role played by an actor which includes its essential character (Plato, Leg., 11, 918e). But the outward form can also be deceptive, and appearance become a sham. **Schēma** can thus mean mere appearance as opposed to reality. It can also mean a dancing figure (Plato, Ion, 536c), bodily attitude or bearing (Eur., Medea, 1039), clothing

(Xen., Cyr., 5, 1, 5), and occasionally semblance (Theophrastus, *Historia Plantarum*, 3, 12, 7). In studying the Greek word, one has to beware of the modern outlook which would relate **schēma** merely to external things, implying that the essential character was something different. To the Greek mind, the observer saw not only the outer shell but the whole form with it. ([Brown, Colin, Editor. New International Dictionary of NT Theology. 1986. Zondervan](#))

The only other NT use of **schema** is

1 Corinthians 7:31 and those who use the world, as though they did not make full use of it; for the **form** (schema) of this world is passing away (cp similar statement in 1Jn 2:17).

Comment: In the context of 1Cor 7:31, schema signifies that which comprises the manner of life, actions, etc., of humanity in general. There is one use of schema in the Lxx in Isaiah 3:17 where it refers to the "*proud bearing of women.*" (Schneider, TDNT).

Appearance in summary defines the outward mode and expression. While on earth, Jesus did not give expression to the glory of His deity except on the Mount of Transfiguration. He appeared as the Man Christ Jesus to the world around Him. He was in His humiliation. And of course in contrast to the occasional nuance of schema meaning deception, Jesus' schema never for an instance presented even a suggestion of deception. He was fully Man, just as other men saw Him. Indeed John records Jesus' schema as interpreted by Nathanael...

Jesus saw Nathanael coming to Him, and said of him, "Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no (not *'me*" but "*ouk*" = absolute negation) guile (**dolos**)!" (Jn 1:47)

Spurgeon's Exposition...

He had not descended low enough yet, though he had come down all the way from the Godhead to our manhood: "he humbled himself."

What a cruel and ignominious death for the Son of God to suffer! Did he lose anything by all this wondrous condescension? Will you lose anything by any dishonor that may come upon you for Christ's sake, for the truth's sake? No; listen to what followed our Savior's humiliation:—

He humbled himself, so be you not unwilling to humble yourself. Lower than the cross Christ could not go, his death was one of such extreme ignominy that he could not have been more disgraced and degraded. Be you willing to take the lowest place in the Church of God, and to render the humblest service, count it an honor to be allowed to wash the saints feet. Be humble in mind; nothing is lost by cherishing this spirit, for see how Jesus Christ was honored in the end.

D A Carson explains this section noting that Jesus Christ...

"made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant [literally, slave] . . ." (Phil 2:7). But Paul does not tell us that Christ exchanged one form for another; he is not saying that Jesus was God, gave that up, and became a slave instead. Rather, without ever abandoning who he was originally, he adopted the mode of existence of a slave. To do this, he (literally) became "in human likeness (morphe)" (Phil 2:7). The idea is not that he merely became like a human being, a reasonable facsimile but not truly human. Rather, it means that he became a being fashioned in this way: a human being. He was always God; He now becomes something He was not, a human being. "And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!" (Phil 2:8). (Basics for Believers : an Exposition of Philippians)

Bob Utley - In Greek philosophy **morphē** meant "the inner form of something that truly reflected its inner essence," while "**schēma** " meant "the outer changing form of something that did not fully represent its inner essence" (cf. 1Cor. 7:31). Jesus is like us in all ways except fallen mankind's sin nature. ([Philippians 2 Commentary](#))

Marvin Vincent says that when we consider **morphe** "We must here dismiss from our minds the idea of shape. The word is used in its philosophic sense, to denote that expression of being which carries in itself the distinctive nature and character of the being to whom it pertains, and is thus permanently identified with that nature and character. Thus it is distinguished from **schema** = **fashion**, comprising that which appeals to the senses and which is changeable. **Morphe** or form is identified with the essence of a person or thing...As applied here to God, the word is intended to describe that mode in which the essential being of God expresses itself."

Alexander Maclaren - Equally emphatic in another direction is Paul's next expression, 'In the form of God,' for 'form' means much more than 'shape.' I would point out the careful selection in this passage of three words to express three ideas which are often by hasty thought regarded as identical, We read of 'the form of God' (Phil. 2:6),' the likeness of men' (Phil. 2:7), and 'in fashion as a man.' Careful investigation of these two words 'form' and 'fashion' has established a broad distinction between them, the former

being more fixed, the latter referring to that which is accidental and outward, which may be fleeting and unsubstantial. The possession of the form involves participation in the essence also. Here it implies no corporeal idea as if God had a material form, but it implies also much more than a mere apparent resemblance. He who is in the form of God possesses the essential divine attributes. Only God can be 'in the form of God': man is made in the likeness of God, but man is not 'in the form of God.' Light is thrown on this lofty phrase by its antithesis with the succeeding expression in the next verse, 'the form of a servant,' and as that is immediately explained to refer to Christ's assumption of human nature, there is no room for candid doubt that 'being originally in the form of God' is a deliberately asserted claim of the divinity of Christ in His pre-existent state. ([The Descent of the Word](#))

Lightfoot in his commentary on Philippians has a lengthy discussion of **schema** as it differs from **morphe**...

The word **schema** corresponds exactly in derivation, though but partially in meaning, to the old English 'haviour.' In its first sense it denotes the figure, shape, fashion, of a thing. Thence it gathers several derived meanings. It gets to signify, like the corresponding Latin 'habitus,' sometimes the dress or costume..., sometimes the attitude or demeanor.... **Schema** is used also for a 'figure of speech,' as the dress in which the sense clothes itself or the posture which the language assumes. It signifies moreover pomp, display, outward circumstance....**Morphe**, like **schema**, originally refers to the organs of sense. If **schema** may be rendered by 'figure,' 'fashion,' **morphe** corresponds to 'form.' **Morphe** comprises all those sensible qualities, which striking the eye lead to the conviction that we see such and such a thing....the great and entire change of the inner life, otherwise described as being born again, being created anew, is spoken of as a conversion of **morphe** always, of **schema** never. Thus 'He fore-ordained them conformable (summorphous) to the image of His Son' (Ro 8:29); 'Being made conformable (summorphizomenos) to His death' (Phil. 3:10); 'We are transformed (metamorphoumetha) into the same image' (2Cor. 3:18); 'To be transformed by the renewal of the mind' (Ro 12:2); 'Until Christ be formed (morphothe) in you' (Gal. 4:19). In these passages again, if any one doubts whether **morphe** has any special force, let him substitute **schema** and try the effect. In some cases indeed, where the organs of sense are concerned and where the appeal lies to popular usage, either word might be used. Yet I think it will be felt at once that in the account of the transfiguration metaschematizesthai would have been out of place and that metamorphosthai alone is adequate to express the completeness and significance of the change (Mt 17:2, Mark 9:2). Even in the later addition to Mark's Gospel here our Lord is described as appearing to the two disciples *en hetera morphe*, though **morphe** here has no peculiar force, yet **schema** would perhaps be avoided instinctively, as it might imply an illusion or an imposture. It will be observed also that in two passages where Paul speaks of an appearance which is superficial and unreal, though not using **schema**, he still avoids **morphe** as inappropriate and adopts morphosis (**Ed**: "the state of being formally structured, embodiment, formulation, form...In 2Ti 3:5 the idea of mere outward form is derived from the context" BADG) instead (Ro 2:20, 2Ti 3:5). Here the termination denotes the aiming after or affecting the **morphe**.

And the distinction, which has thus appeared from the review of each word separately, will be seen still more clearly from those passages where they occur together. In Ro 12:2 (*suschematizo...metamorphoo*) the form of the sentence calls attention to the contrast, and the appropriateness of each word in its own connection is obvious: 'Not to follow the fleeting **fashion** of this world, but to undergo a **complete change, assume a new form, in the renewal of the mind**'...

Thus in the passage under consideration the **morphe** is contrasted with the **schema**, as that which is intrinsic and essential with that which is accidental and outward. And the three clauses imply respectively the true divine nature of our Lord (μορφ Θεο), the true human nature (μορφ δούλου), and the externals of the human nature (σχήματι ς νθρωπος). (Saint Paul's Epistle to the Philippians), ([St. Paul's Epistle to the Philippians - page 125-131](#))

Joseph Beet - Fashion (in NT only 1Co 7:31) differs from **form** as any occasional appearance or visible clothing differs from an expression which corresponds to actual inner reality. The **form** of God is the appropriate self-manifestation of the Son's essence, of His equality with God. The **fashion** as a man was the outward guise of humanity, a visible clothing bearing only a distant relation to the actual nature of the Son. It is practically the same as in the likeness of men, except perhaps that it recalls more conspicuously the outward aspect of Christ as an individual man. In this outward guise, by those who sought Him, the Incarnate Son was found. This last word keeps before us, as does the conspicuous repetition of the word form, the self-presentation of the Son both as God and as Man. ([Philippians 2 Commentary](#))

James E Rosscup writes that Jesus "did not rid Himself of the essence in which He was God, or relinquish the attributes of God. He always remained God but also became man. He was fully God and fully man, in one Person. He did not exchange the "form" of God (let it go), but always had this, and simply added or took the form also of a man in being fully humanity. What He emptied Himself of was the exercise, use, or expression of the prerogatives of being God. As a servant, He showed perfect submission to the Father to

do His will as the God-man. This is as other humans also can obey whatever is God's will for them, as in many things it varies for each person. Christ worked miracles only as these served the Father in His will and timing, and many times bypassed showing the power He could have asserted, never making His own way easier. He lived as a true human, experiencing thirst, hunger, and weariness in His treks instead of moving from one place to another in an instant. (An Exposition on Prayer in the Bible: Igniting the Fuel to Flame Our Communication with God)

HE HUMBLD HIMSELF: etapeinosen (3SAAI) heauton:

- Acts 8:33; Heb 5:5, 6, 7; 12:2

In **Proverbs** we read that...

The fear (reverential awe) of the LORD (Jehovah) is the instruction for wisdom, and before honor comes humility (Compare - the Cross, before the Crown!). (Pr 15:33)

STOOPING LOWER

He humbled Himself - We read later that God exalted Him but here it is clear that this was Jesus' voluntary choice. He willingly and graciously did this Himself. He was not forced. He offered Himself to death! While believers cannot humble themselves in the same way, they can humble themselves by dying to self. (Mk 8:34-35)

Spurgeon on humbled Himself - Our text does not speak so much of the humiliation of Christ in becoming man, as of His humiliation after He took upon Himself our nature. He had not descended low enough yet, though He had come down all the way from the Godhead to our manhood. What will not Christ do for us who have been given to Him by His Father? There is no measure to His love; you cannot comprehend His grace. Oh, how we ought to love Him, and serve Him! The lower He stoops to save us, the higher we ought to lift Him in our adoring reverence. Blessed be His name, He stoops, and stoops, and stoops, and, when He reaches our level, and becomes man, He still stoops, and stoops, and stoops lower and deeper yet....

Spurgeon adds that **Jesus Humbled Himself by Waiting** - I cannot pass over the thirty years of His silence without feeling that here was a marvelous instance of how He humbled Himself. I know young men who think that two or three years' education is far too long for them. They want to be preaching at once—running away, as I sometimes tell them, like chickens with the shell on their heads. They want to go forth to fight before they have buckled on their armor. But it was not so with Christ; thirty long years passed over His head, and still there was no Sermon on the Mount. When He did show Himself to the world, see how He humbled Himself. He did not knock at the door of the high priests, or seek out the eminent rabbis and the learned scribes. He took for His companions fishermen from the lake, infinitely His inferiors, even if we regarded Him merely as a man. He was full of manly freshness and vigor of mind, and they were scarcely able to follow Him, even though He moderated His footsteps out of pity for their weakness. He preferred to associate with lowly men, for He humbled Himself.

Jesus put aside all personal rights and interests in order to insure the welfare of others. In so doing He gave us His perfect example to follow **in His steps** (1Pe 2:21-note, 1Jn 2:6).

F B Meyer spoke of applying Jesus' pattern of living as a Man to our life as men and women who are now in Him (and enabled by His indwelling Spirit, the Spirit of Christ)...

I used to think that God's gifts were on shelves one above the other, and that the taller we grew in Christian character the more easily we could reach them. I now find that God's gifts are on shelves one beneath the other and that it is not a question of **growing taller** but of **stooping lower**.

Humbled (5013) (**tapeinoo** [word study]) from **tapeinos** = low, not high, figuratively of one's attitude/social position) literally means to level, to cause something to be lower or to make low (eg, to level off a mountain in Lk 3:5 from the Septuagint (Lxx) of Isa 40:4). **Tapeinoo** means to bow down, to make low, to humble. Most NT uses of **tapeinoo** are figurative and include the following meanings: To cause someone to lose prestige, to reduce to a meaner condition or lower rank, to abase. To be ranked below others.

Tapeinoo - 14x in 11v - **NAS** = brought low(1), get along(1), humble(2), humble means(1), humbled(4), humbles(4), humbling(1)

Mt 18:4; 23:12; Luke 3:5; 14:11; 18:14; 2 Cor 11:7; 12:21; Phil 2:8; 4:12; Jas 4:10; 1 Pet 5:6.

Humble in English is derived from Latin "**humilis**" meaning low and this word is in turn from "**humus**" meaning earth! Greeks saw humility as shameful but the NT sees humility as condition bringing man to right relation to God! The fundamental difference between the Greek and the biblical use of these words is that in the Greek world, with its anthropocentric view of man, lowliness is

looked on as shameful, to be avoided and overcome by act and thought. In the NT, with its theocentric view of man, the words are used to describe those events that bring a man into a right relationship with God and his fellow-man.

This was a "*voluntary humiliation on the part of Christ and for this reason Paul is pressing the example of "Christ upon the Philippians, this supreme example of renunciation."* (A T Robertson - Word Pictures) In this lowly estate He humbled Himself. The Greek word translated "**humbled**" is used in an early document, of the Nile River at its low stage, in the sentence, "*It runs low,*" a good description of the humility of our Lord, who said of Himself, "*I am meek and lowly of heart.*" (Mt 11:28KJV) He became obedient, not to death, but obedient to the Father up to the point of death, even the death of a cross. In so doing our Lord gave us the perfect example of the **self-emptied life**, an example and challenge to all those who would seek to follow in His steps (1Pe 2:21-note, 1Jn 2:6), seeking to be servants of the One Who came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many (Mk 10:45)

J Vernon McGee on Christ humbling Himself - You and I have been humbled by someone doing or saying something which has been humiliating to us. But notice that Christ "humbled himself." This is a most difficult thing to do.

One of the finest things I ever heard about John Wesley was concerning an incident when he was about to cross a brook over which was a very narrow bridge, just wide enough for one person. As he was starting over, he met a liberal preacher of that day. This preacher swelled up and said, "I never give way to a fool." John Wesley looked at him for a moment, smiled, and began to back off, saying, "I always do." My friend, it is difficult to take that humble place, but it has made me think a great deal more of John Wesley. We find it difficult to humble ourselves, but our Lord humbled Himself.

The great Puritan divine **Thomas Watson** commenting on "God made Him who had no sin—to be sin for us!" (2Corinthians 5:21-note) wrote that

This was the lowest degree of Christ's humiliation. That Christ, who would not endure sin in the angels, should endure to have sin imputed to Himself—is the most amazing humility that ever was!

Christian! Learn to be humble!

Do you see Christ humbling Himself—and are you proud? It is the humble saint, who is Christ's picture! Christians, do not be proud of your fine feathers! Have you an estate? Do not be proud. The earth you tread on, is richer than you! It has mines of gold and silver in its depths. Have you beauty? Do not be proud. It is but water mingled with dirt! Have you skill and abilities? Be humble. Lucifer has more knowledge than you! Have you grace? Be humble. It is not of your own making—it was given to you by God. You have more sin than grace; more spots than beauty. Oh look on Christ—this rare pattern of humility—and be humbled! **It is a sad sight, to see God humbling Himself—and man exalting himself; to see a humble Savior—and a proud sinner!** God hates the very semblance of pride! "I hate pride and arrogance!" Proverbs 8:13..

Be like Christ in grace and HUMILITY. He was like us in having our flesh, let us be like him in having his grace. We should labor to be like Christ, in humility. "He humbled himself." He left the bright robes of his glory—to be clothed with the rags of our humanity—a wonder of humility! Let us be like Christ in this grace. "Humility," says Bernard, "is a despising of self-excellence," a kind of a self-annihilation. This is the glory of a Christian. We are never so lovely in God's eyes—as when we are black in our own eyes. In this let us be like Christ. True religion is to imitate Christ. And indeed, what cause have we to be humble—if we look **within** us, about us, **below** us, and **above** us!

If we look within us—here we see our sins represented to us in the looking-glass of conscience; lust, envy, passion. Our sins are like vermin crawling in our souls. "How many are my iniquities!" Job 13:23. Our sins are as the sands of the sea for number; as the rocks of the sea for weight! Augustine cries out, "My heart, which is God's temple—is polluted with sin!"

If we look about us—there is that which may humble us. We may see other Christians outshining us in gifts and graces, as the sun outshines the lesser planets. Others are laden with fruit—and perhaps we have but here and there an olive-berry growing, to show that we are of the right kind. Isa 17:6.

If we look below us—there is that may humble us. We may see the mother earth, out of which we came. The earth is the most ignoble element: "They were viler than the earth." Job 30:8. (From Thomas Watson's superb work entitled [Body of Divinity - scroll down to point 6 "Christ's Humiliation in His Incarnation" and then "Use One: Of Instruction"](#))

[Guzik](#) on **He humbled Himself..**

- He was humble in that he took the form of a man, and not a more glorious creature like an angel.

- He was humble in that He was born into an obscure, oppressed place.
- He was humble in that He was born into poverty, among a despised people.
- He was humble in that He was born as a child instead of appearing as a man.
- He was humble in submitting to the obedience of a child in a household.
- He was humble in learning and practicing a trade - and a humble trade of a builder.
- He was humble in the long wait until He launched out into public ministry.
- He was humble in the companions and disciples He chose.
- He was humble in the audience He appealed to and the way He taught.
- He was humble in the temptations He allowed and endured.
- He was humble in the weakness, hunger, thirst, and tiredness He endured.
- He was humble in His total obedience to His Heavenly Father.
- He was humble in His submission to the Holy Spirit.
- He was humble in choosing and submitting to the death of the cross.
- He was humble in the agony of His death.
- He was humble in the shame, mocking, and public humiliation of His death.
- He was humble in enduring the spiritual agony of His sacrifice on the cross.

Spurgeon's Devotional - Jesus is the great teacher of lowliness of heart. We need daily to learn of him. See the Master taking a towel and washing his disciples' feet! Follower of Christ, wilt thou not humble thyself? See him as the Servant of servants, and surely thou canst not be proud! Is not this sentence the compendium of his biography, "He humbled himself"? Was he not on earth always stripping off first one robe of honour and then another, till, naked, he was fastened to the cross, and there did he not empty out his inmost self, pouring out his life-blood, giving up for all of us, till they laid him penniless in a borrowed grave? How low was our dear Redeemer brought! How then can we be proud? Stand at the foot of the cross, and count the purple drops by which you have been cleansed; see the thorn-crown; mark his scourged shoulders, still gushing with encrimsoned rills; see hands and feet given up to the rough iron, and his whole self to mockery and scorn; see the bitterness, and the pangs, and the throes of inward grief, showing themselves in his outward frame; hear the thrilling shriek, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And if you do not lie prostrate on the ground before that cross, you have never seen it: if you are not humbled in the presence of Jesus, you do not know him. You were so lost that nothing could save you but the sacrifice of God's only begotten. Think of that, and as Jesus stooped for you, bow yourself in lowliness at his feet. A sense of Christ's amazing love to us has a greater tendency to humble us than even a consciousness of our own guilt. May the Lord bring us in contemplation to Calvary, then our position will no longer be that of the pompous man of pride, but we shall take the humble place of one who loves much because much has been forgiven him. Pride cannot live beneath the cross. Let us sit there and learn our lesson, and then rise and carry it into practice.

BY BECOMING OBEDIENT: *genomenos (AMPMSN) hupekoos:*

- Jn 4:34; 15:10; Heb 10:7, 8, 9

Remember that Paul is telling the Philippians that if they think they cannot humble themselves to the will of one another, they need to ponder the obedience of the Lord of glory who was willing to give up His rights as their example of **perfect selflessness**. This is the attitude the saints at Philippi were to manifest. It is the attitude every believer is to manifest to assure unity in the body of Christ.

Spurgeon on becoming obedient - Our Lord's way of **humbling Himself** was by obedience. He invented no method of making Himself ridiculous; He put upon Himself no singular garb, which would attract attention to His poverty. He simply obeyed His Father, and, mark you, there is no humility like obedience: "To obey is better than sacrifice; to give heed than the fat of rams" (1 Sam 15:22). **In what way, then, did the Lord Jesus Christ in His life obey? There was always about Him the spirit of obedience to His Father.** He could say, "Look, I come. In the scroll of the book it is written concerning me: 'I delight to do your will, O my God, and your law is deep within me'" (Ps 40:7). He was always, while here, subservient to His Father's great purpose in sending Him to earth; He came to do the will of Him that sent Him, and to finish His work. He learned what that will was partly from Holy Scripture. You constantly find Him acting in a certain way "that the Scripture might be fulfilled." He shaped His life upon the prophecies that had

been given concerning Him. Thus He did the will of the Father. Also, **there was within Him the Spirit of God, Who led and guided Him**, so that He could say, "I do always those things that please the Father." Then, He waited upon God continually in prayer. Though infinitely better able to do without prayer than we are, yet He prayed much more than we do. With less need than we have, He had a greater delight in prayer than we have; thus He learned the will of God as man, and did it, without once omitting or once transgressing in a single point. **He did the will of God also, obediently, by following out what He knew to be the Father's great design in sending Him.** He was sent to save, and He went about saving, seeking and saving that which was lost. Oh, dear friends, when we get into unison with God, when we wish what He wishes, when we live for the great object that fills God's heart, when we lay aside our wishes and whims, and even our lawful desires, that we may do only the will of God, and live only for His glory, then we shall be truly humbling ourselves!

Spurgeon adds " I have known persons try to humble themselves by will-worship. I have stood in the cell of a monk, when he has been out of it, and I have seen the whip with which he flagellated himself every night before he went to bed. I thought that it was quite possible that the man deserved all he suffered, and so I shed no tears over it. That was his way of humbling himself, by administering a certain number of lashes. I have known persons practice voluntary humility. They have talked in very humble language, and have decried themselves in words, though they have been as proud as Lucifer all the while. To obey is better than to wear a special dress, or to clip your words in some peculiar form of supposed humility. Obedience is the best humility, laying yourself at the feet of Jesus, and making your will active only when you know what it is God's will for you to do. This is to be truly humble."

Becoming (1096) (**ginomai**) means to cause to be ("gen"-erate) and in this context means that it came to be that Jesus experienced obedience to the will of His Father.

Obedient (5255) (**hupekoos/hypekoos** is from **hupo** = under, frequently meant not simply to be beneath but to be totally under the power, authority, control of something or someone + **akouo** = hear and apprehend with the mind, gives us our English word "acoustic") is an adjective which means giving ear to, hearkening, attentively listening and thus describes one who is obedient.

Obedient describes a person who obeys based on the fact that they have paid attention to what was commanded or instructed. In other words, what they heard did not just (as the saying goes) "go in one ear and out the other!" We have all seen the child who, when they are being instructed by their parents, responds by putting their hands over their ears so as to not hear their parent's words! That is a picture of not "giving ear to" (i.e., they are disobedient - I'm sure this doesn't describe your child dear reader!).

Hupekoos also conveys the sense of subject or submissive to (another).

J I Packer in the **New Bible Dictionary** writes that...

The idea of **obedience** which this vocabulary suggests is of a hearing that takes place under the authority or influence of the speaker, and that leads into compliance with his requests. For obedience to be due to a person, he must: (a) have a right to command, and (b) be able to make known his requirements. Man's duty to obey his Maker thus presupposes: (a) God's Lordship, and (b) His revelation. **The OT habitually describes obedience to God as obeying (hearing) either His voice** (accentuating [b]) or His commandments (assuming [b] and accentuating [a]). **Disobedience it describes as not hearing God's voice when He speaks** (Ps. 81:11; Je 7:24,25,26-27,28)....

The **disobedience of Adam**, the first representative man, and the **perfect obedience of the second, Jesus Christ**, are decisive factors in the destiny of everyone. Adam's lapse from obedience plunged mankind into guilt, condemnation and death (Ro 5:19; 1Cor 15:22). Christ's unflinching obedience 'unto death' (Phil. 2:8; cf. Heb. 10:5-10) won righteousness (acceptance with God) and life (fellowship with God) for all who believe on him (Ro 5:15-19). ([New Bible Dictionary I. Howard Marshall, A.R. Millard, J.I. Packer, D.J. Wiseman](#)) (Bolding added)

Webster says "obedient" describes the attitude of being submissive to the restraint or command of authority; i.e., willing to obey. The **obedient** individual is submissive to the will, guidance or control of another, implying compliance with the commands or instructions of the one who is in authority, performing what is required, or abstaining from what is forbidden. **Words related to obedient** = acquiescent, compliant, sheeplike, submissive, yielding; dutiful, dutiful, loyal; law-abiding; obeisant, subservient. **Words contrasted with obedient** = insubordinate, rebellious; contrary, froward, perverse, wayward, willful; headstrong, intractable, recalcitrant, refractory, uncontrollable, ungovernable, unruly. **Which group of synonyms best describes your Christian walk?** Beloved, as Christ followers we are called to "follow in His steps" (1Peter 2:21-note), "to walk in the same manner as He walked." (1Jn 2:6), and it follows that obedience to the guiding and leading of the Holy Spirit (Ezek 36:27, Ro 8:14-note, Gal 5:16-note, Gal 5:18-note, Gal 5:25-note) should be our continual desire and practice (**You might consider praying** Ps 25:4,5, 143:10). This study of **hupekoos** begs the question - **Are you being obedient to the will of your Father, surrendering your will to His Spirit's**

leading and enabling power? This is the "Jesus way", the way to "walk in a manner worthy of the God who calls you into His own kingdom and glory." (1Thes 2:12-note)

J C Ryle exhorts us to make **Jesus' example** our chief standard of holy living...

If we would look rightly to Jesus—we must look daily at His example, as our chief standard of holy living. We must all feel, I suspect, and often feel—how hard it is to live a Christian life, by mere rules and regulations. Scores of circumstances will continually cross our path, in which we find it difficult to see the line of duty, and we become perplexed. Prayer for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and attention to the practical part of the Epistles, are, undoubtedly, primary resources. But surely it would cut many a knot, and solve many a problem—if we would cultivate the habit of studying the daily behavior of our Lord Jesus, as recorded in the four Gospels, and strive to shape our own behavior by His pattern!

This must have been what our Lord meant when He said, "I have given you an example—that you should do as I have done to you." (John 13:15). And this is what Peter meant, when he wrote, "Leaving you an example, so that you should follow in His steps." (1Peter 2:21). And this is what John meant when he said, "The one who says he abides in Him, should walk just as He walked." (1John 2:6).

Our "look" to Jesus is very imperfect—if we do not look at His example, and strive to follow it. Let us cultivate the daily habit of "looking to Christ as our pattern," as well as our salvation. We can never look too steadily at Christ's death and intercession. But we may easily look too little at the blessed steps of His most holy life. Let all men see that we love to follow Him whom we profess to love. "How would my Master have behaved in my position?" should be our constant concern. (From [Looking Unto Jesus!](#)) (See also Anne Ortlund's [Fix Your Eyes On Jesus - 44 excellent meditations](#))

As **A W Tozer** said...

The secret of successful Christians has been that they had a sweet madness for Jesus about them.

See study of other words in this "family"...

Verb hupakouo - of believers in Acts 6:7, Ro 6:12-note, Ro 6:17-note, Php 2:12-note.

Noun hupakoe - of Jesus in Heb 5:8-note and believers in 1Pe 1:14-note, 1Pe 1:22-note

The other two uses of **hupekoos** in the NT...

Acts 7:39 "Our fathers were unwilling to be **obedient** to him, but repudiated him and in their hearts turned back to Egypt

Comment: The Israelites under Moses refused to listen to and submit to the will of God given through His servant Moses. In this passage notice that to not be obedient is an issue of one's heart (their hearts turned back), which is why God is always working in our lives to cause us to love Him with our whole heart (cp Mk 12:30:, 2Chr 16:9)

2Corinthians 2:9 For to this end also I wrote, so that I might put you to the test, whether you are **obedient** in all things.

MacDonald explains this passage: In writing the First Epistle to the Corinthians, Paul had put the saints to the test. Here was an opportunity for them to show whether they were **obedient** to the word of the Lord, as ministered to them by the Apostle Paul. He had suggested at that time that they should put the man out of the fellowship of the church. That is exactly what they did, thus proving themselves to be truly **obedient**. Now Paul would have them go one step further, that is, to receive the man back. ([MacDonald, W & Farstad, A. Believer's Bible Commentary: Thomas Nelson](#))

Hupekoos is found 5 times in the Septuagint - Deut 20:11; Josh 17:13; Pr 4:3; 13:1; 21:28

Proverbs 13:1 (Brenton's English translation of the Septuagint) A wise son is **obedient (hupekoos)** to his father: but a disobedient (**anekoos** = not hearing and thus disobedience) son will be destroyed.

Proverbs 21:28 A false witness will perish, But the man who **listens (hupekoos)** to the truth will speak forever.

As discussed **obedient** describes an attitude and willingness to be submissive to the will of another and to comply with the demands or requests of the one in authority (contrast Acts 7:39). And here again we see the perfect example of Jesus who declared...

I always do the things that are pleasing to Him (God the Father) (John 8:29)

David foretold of **Jesus' obedience** to His Father when he wrote...

Sacrifice and meal offering Thou hast not desired. My ears Thou hast opened. Burnt offering and sin offering Thou hast not required. Then I said, "Behold, I come; In the scroll of the book it is written of me; I delight to do Thy will, O my God; Thy Law is within my heart." (Psalm 40:6, 7, 8-[note](#))

Isaiah records the prophetic words of Jesus...

The Lord GOD has opened My ear; and **I was not disobedient**, Nor did I turn back. I gave My back to those who strike Me, and My cheeks to those who pluck out the beard; I did not cover My face from humiliation and spitting. (Isa 50:5,6)

We see **His obedience in the Garden of Gethsemane** as the sinless Son anticipated the cup of suffering in which He took upon Himself all the sins of mankind including the humanly unfathomable mystery of His temporary separation from His Father (Mt 27:45, 46). Jesus naturally shrank from this separation, but was obedient and willingly submitted, Matthew recording...

And He went a little beyond them, and fell on His face and prayed, saying, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; yet not as I will, but as Thou wilt."... He went away again a second time and prayed, saying, "My Father, if this cannot pass away unless I drink it, Thy will be done." (Mt 26:39,42)

In fact Jesus entire life purpose was to live in humble submission to the Father's will, **John** recording **Jesus'** words to His disciples that...

My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work. (John 4:34, compare Jesus' statement in Jn 17:4)

Paul speaks of Jesus' perfect obedience, an obedience which took Him to the "rth" degree, to death itself...

For as through the one man's disobedience (Adam) the many were made sinners (cp Ro 5:12), even so through the **obedience (hupakoe)** of the One (Jesus) the many will be made righteous. (Ro 5:19-note)

The writer of **Hebrews** explains that...

Although He was a Son, **He learned obedience** from the things which He suffered (What Jesus knew by omniscience, He "learned" by experience - true obedience can only be tested if it involved suffering). And having been made perfect (not as God (for as God He was eternally perfect, by definition), but as man), He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation (Hebrews 5:8-note, He 5:9-note)

(Later the writer of Hebrews records another affirmation of Christ's obedience to His Father) Then He said, "BEHOLD, I HAVE COME TO DO THY WILL." He takes away the first (covenant) in order to establish the second (covenant = New Covenant). (Heb 10:9-note)

Expositor's Greek Testament...

As obedient, He gave Himself wholly up to His Father's will. And the course of following that will led as far as death itself, no ordinary death..., but a death of shame and suffering.

Muller writes that...

Obedience unto God and surrender and submission to the will of God was maintained by Him unto the end, and the profoundest degree of humiliation was reached in that His death was not to be a natural or an honourable one, but was the painful and accursed death of the cross (cf. Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13). (The Epistles of Paul to the Philippians and to Philemon)

TO THE POINT OF DEATH EVEN DEATH ON A CROSS: mechri thanatou thanatou de staurou:

- Dt 21:23; Ps 22:16; Jn 10:18; 12:28, 29, 30, 32, 32; 14:31; Gal 3:13; Titus 2:14; Heb 12:2; 1Pet 2:24; 3:18

As we read these words, it is good for us to remember that Jesus was perfectly obedient to the point of death in **our** place, as **our** substitute.

Spurgeon - Was He not on earth always stripping off first one robe of honor, and then another, till, naked, He was fastened to the cross? And there did He not empty out His inmost self, pouring out His lifeblood, giving up for all of us? How low was our dear

Redeemer brought! Lower than the cross Christ could not go; His death was one of such extreme ignominy that He could not have been more disgraced and degraded. Our Lord died willingly. You and I, unless the Lord should come quickly, will die, whether we are willing or not: "It is destined for people to die once" (Heb 9:27). He did not need to die, yet He was willing to surrender His life. He said, "I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take possession of it again. This commandment I received from my Father" (John 10:18). He died willingly, but at the same time, He did not die by His own hand. He did not take His own life as a suicide; He died obediently. He waited till His hour had come, when He was able to say, "It is finished," then He bowed His head, and gave up the ghost. He humbled Himself, so as willingly to die. He proved the obedience of His death, also, by the meekness of it, as Isaiah said, "Like a sheep is dumb before its shearers, so he did not open his mouth" (Isa 53:7). He never spoke a bitter word to priest or scribe, Jewish governor or Roman soldier. When the women wept and bewailed, He said to them, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Luke 23:28). He was all gentleness; He had not a hard word even for His murderers. He gave Himself up to be the Sin-bearer, without murmuring at His Father's will, or at the cruelty of His adversaries. How patient He was! If He says, "I thirst," it is not the petulant cry of a sick man in his fever; there is a royal dignity about Christ's utterance of the words. Even the "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani," with the unutterable gall and bitterness it contains, has not even a trace of impatience mingled with it. Oh, what a death Christ's was! He was obedient in it, obedient not only till He came to die, but obedient in that last dread act. His obedient life embraced the hour of His departure.

Jerry Bridges writes that "The **obedient** death of Christ is the very apex of the righteousness of Christ. Let's not miss the implications of this. At the Cross, Jesus paid the penalty we should have paid, by enduring the wrath of God we should have endured. And this required Him to do something unprecedented. It required Him to provide the ultimate level of **obedience**—one that we'll never be asked to emulate. It required Him to give up his relationship with the Father so that we could have one instead. The very thought of being torn away from the Father caused Him to sweat great drops of blood (Luke 22:44). And at the crescendo of His obedience, He screamed, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Mark 15:34). The physical pain He endured was nothing compared to the agony of being separated from the Father. In all of history, Jesus is the only Human Being Who was truly righteous...Just as God charged our sin to Christ, so he credits the perfect obedience of Jesus to all who trust in him. In what is often called the Great Exchange, God exchanges our sin for Christ's righteousness. As a result, all who have trusted in Christ as Savior stand before God not with a clean-but-empty ledger, but one filled with the very righteousness of Christ! ([The Bookends of the Christian Life- Jerry Bridges, Bob Bevington - I highly recommend this book](#))

Death (2288) (**thanatos** from **thnesko** = to die) refers physically to the separation of soul from the body (physical) death and was a legal technical term for capital punishment. In the NT **thanatos** is treated as a destroying power related to sin and its consequences.

The act of voluntary humiliation did not stop with the Incarnation but continued to the ignominious depths of death by crucifixion.

Kenneth Wuest clarifies - He became obedient unto death. But this does not mean that He became obedient to death. He was always the Master of death. He died as no other individual ever died or ever will die. He died of His own volition. He dismissed His human spirit. The word "*unto*" is the translation of a Greek word which means "up to the point of." Our Lord was obedient to the Father up to the point of dying. He said, "Lo, I come to do thy will, O God" (Heb. 10:9). ([Philippians Commentary - Verse by Verse Comments Online](#))

Albert Barnes - He obeyed even when obedience terminated in death. The point of this expression is this: One may readily and cheerfully obey another where there is no particular peril. But the case is different where obedience is attended with danger. The child shows a spirit of true obedience when he yields to the commands of a father, though it should expose him to hazard; the servant who obeys his master, when obedience is attended with risk of life; the soldier, when he is morally certain that to obey will be followed by death. Thus many a company or platoon has been ordered into the "deadly breach," or directed to storm a redoubt, or to scale a wall, or to face a cannon, when it was morally certain that death would be the consequence. No profounder spirit of obedience can be evinced than this. It should be said, however, that the obedience of the soldier is in many cases scarcely voluntary, since, if he did not obey, death would be the penalty. But in the case of the Redeemer, it was wholly voluntary. He placed himself in the condition of a servant to do the will of God, and then never shrank from what that condition involved.

Robertson called the death of the **cross** "The bottom rung in the ladder from the Throne of God. Jesus came all the way down to the most despised death of all, a condemned criminal on the accursed cross."

Spurgeon - "The lower he stoops to save us, the higher we ought to lift him in our adoring reverence. Blessed be his name, he stoops, and stoops, and stoops, and, when he reaches our level, and becomes man, he still stoops, and stoops, and stoops lower and deeper yet..."

Spurgeon on a cross - That was the worst kind of death. It was a violent death. Jesus did not fall asleep gently, as good men often do, whose end is peace. No, He died by murderous hands. Jews and Gentiles combined, and with cruel hands took Him, and crucified and slew Him. It was, also, an extremely painful death of lingering agony. Those parts of the body in which the nerves were most numerous were pierced with rough iron nails. The weight of the body was made to hang upon the tenderest part of the frame.

No doubt the nails tore their cruel way through His flesh while He was hanging on the tree. A cut in the hand has often resulted in lockjaw and death; yet Christ's hands were nailed to the cross. He died in pain most exquisite of body and of soul. It was, also, a death most shameful. Thieves were crucified with Him; His adversaries stood and mocked Him. The death of the cross was one reserved for slaves and the basest of felons; no Roman citizen could be put to death in such a way as that, hung up between earth and heaven, as if neither would have Him, rejected of men and despised of God. It was, also, a penal death. He died, not like a hero in battle, nor as one who perishes while rescuing his fellow men from fire or flood; He died as a criminal. Upon the cross of Calvary He was hung up. It was an accursed death, too. God Himself had called it so: "Cursed is everyone that hangs on a tree" (Deut 21:23). He was made a curse for us. His death was penal in the highest sense. He "bore our sins in his body on the tree" (1 Pet 2:24).

Cross (4716) (**stauros** from **histemi** = to stand) was an an upright stake, especially a pointed one. Thayer adds the **stauros** was a well-known instrument of most cruel and ignominious punishment, borrowed by the Greeks and Romans from the Phoenicians; to it were affixed among the Romans, down to the time of Constantine the Great, the guiltiest criminals, particularly the basest slaves, robbers, the authors and abettors of insurrections, and occasionally in the provinces, at the arbitrary pleasure of the governors, upright and peaceable men also, and even Roman citizens themselves. **Stauros** is used somewhat in with a figurative (but still very real) supernatural significance as the source of the the doctrine concerning the saving power of the death on the cross endured by Christ (1 Co 1:18 = where "being saved" = present tense).

The cross—1. literally. Mt 27:32, 40, 42; Mk 15:21, 30, 32; Lk 23:26; J 19:17, 19, 25, 31; Phil 2:8; Heb 12:2.—2. symbolically, of suffering and death Mt 10:38; 16:24; Mk 8:34; 10:21 v.l.; Lk 9:23; 14:27.—3. the cross of Christ as one of the most important elements in Christian teaching 1 Cor 1:17f; Gal 5:11; 6:12, 14; Eph 2:16; Phil 2:8; 3:18; Col 1:20; 2:14.

Friberg on stauros - (1) literally cross, an instrument of capital punishment, an upright pointed stake, often with a crossbeam above it, or intersected by a crossbeam (Mt 27.32); (2) by metonymy, as the means of atonement punishment of the cross, crucifixion (Php 2.8); as a religious technical term representing the significance of the atoning death of Jesus in the Christian religion cross (1Co 1.18); metaphorically, the dedication of life and the self-denial that a believer must be prepared to take on himself in following Christ (Lk 14.27) (Analytical Lexicon)

Vine on stauros -

Noun Masculine — denotes, primarily, "an upright pale or stake." On such malefactors were nailed for execution. Both the noun and the verb *stauroo*, "to fasten to a stake or pale," are originally to be distinguished from the ecclesiastical form of a two beamed "cross." The shape of the latter had its origin in ancient Chaldea, and was used as the symbol of the god Tammuz (being in the shape of the mystic Tau, the initial of his name) in that country and in adjacent lands, including Egypt. By the middle of the 3rd cent. A.D. the churches had either departed from, or had travestied, certain doctrines of the Christian faith. In order to increase the prestige of the apostate ecclesiastical system pagans were received into the churches apart from regeneration by faith, and were permitted largely to retain their pagan signs and symbols. Hence the Tau or T, in its most frequent form, with the cross-piece lowered, was adopted to stand for the "cross" of Christ. As for the Chi, or X, which Constantine declared he had seen in a vision leading him to champion the Christian faith, that letter was the initial of the word "Christ" and had nothing to do with "the Cross" (for [xulon](#), "a timber beam, a tree," as used for the *stauros*, see under TREE). The method of execution was borrowed by the Greeks and Romans from the Phoenicians.

The *stauros* denotes

(a) "the cross, or stake itself," e.g., Matthew 27:32;

(b) "the crucifixion suffered," e.g., 1 Corinthians 1:17,18, where "the word of the cross," RV, stands for the Gospel; Galatians 5:11, where crucifixion is metaphorically used of the renunciation of the world, that characterizes the true Christian life; Galatians 6:12,14; Ephesians 2:16; Philippians 3:18. The judicial custom by which the condemned person carried his stake to the place of execution, was applied by the Lord to those sufferings by which His faithful followers were to express their fellowship with Him, e.g., Matthew 10:38.

([Cross, Crucify - Vine's Expository Dictionary of NT Words](#))

Note another Greek word **xulon** is also translated "**cross**".

Crucifixion was a horrible way to die. The weight of the victim's body hanging from his wrists caused his joints to dislocate as he tried to push up on his feet to breathe and keep from suffocating. Eventually, the victim was no longer able to push himself up and finally suffocated.

Athanasius (296–373), Bishop of Alexandria, noted that crucifixion was the only death a man can die with arms outstretched. He

said that Jesus died like that to invite people of all nations and all generations to come to Him.

The **cross** as used **figuratively** to describes that which was to be borne by those who, on behalf of God's cause, do not hesitate cheerfully to bear persecutions, troubles, distresses thus recalling and identifying with the rejection and fate of Christ while on earth. (Mt 10:38, 16:24, Mk 8:34, 10:21, Lk 9:23, 14:27, **literally** of Simon of Cyrene in Mk 15:21)

Stauros - 27x in 27v - All uses are rendered "cross".

Mt 10:38; 16:24; 27:32, 40, 42; Mark 8:34; 15:21, 30, 32; Luke 9:23; 14:27; 23:26; John 19:17, 19, 25, 31; 1Cor 1:17f; Gal 5:11; 6:12, 14; Eph 2:16; Phil 2:8; 3:18; Col 1:20; 2:14; Heb 12:2.

Related Resources:

- [Cross - American Tract Society Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Cross - Kitto's Popular Cyclopeda of Biblial Literature](#)
- [Cross - International Standard Bible Encyclopedia](#)
- [Cross - Nave's Topical Bible](#)
- [Cross - Bridgeway Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Cross - Charles Buck Theological Dictionary](#)
- [Cross - Fausset's Bible Dictionary](#)
- [Cross - Watson's Biblical & Theological Dictionary](#)
- [Cross - 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica](#)
- [Cross - The 1901 Jewish Encyclopedia](#)
- [Cross - Hastings' Dictionary of the Bible - Nice Discussion of Spiritual Meaning](#)

Crucifixion on a Cross was the most despised death of all and was reserved for condemned criminals. The cross was an instrument of most dreadful and agonizing torture. This mode of punishment was known to the Persians (Ezra 6:11; Esther 7:10); and the Carthaginians. However, it was most common among the Romans for slaves and criminals, and was introduced among the Jews by the Romans. It was not abolished until the time of Constantine who did so out of regard for Christianity. Persons sentenced to be crucified were first scourged and then made to bear their own cross to the place of execution. A label or title was usually placed on the chest of or over the criminal. Crucifixion was at once an execution, a pillory, and an instrument of torture. When we read of the antagonism to the cross of Christ, we must understand it as antagonism to a redemption which was accomplished by the deepest humiliation, not by the display of power and glory

Dwight Pentecost explains that the Cross was not a natural death but in fact...

It was so unnatural a form of death that the Old Testament law forbade it and placed a curse on anyone who should die by this means. It was such an unnatural and abhorrent death that the Romans outlawed it for all but the grossest of criminals. This means of execution was forbidden any Roman citizen; it was reserved for those the Romans called "barbarians," that is, non-Romans. The singular thing is that because Paul was a Roman citizen, he was protected from the kind of death that the Lord Jesus endured for sinners. But what Roman law protected Paul from, the Lord Jesus Christ could not and did not escape. For He came as a creature subject to the Creator. He came as a servant subject to a Master. He submitted Himself in obedience to the will of His Master in death, a death by crucifixion, in order to provide salvation for sinful men. ([Pentecost, J. D. The Joy of Living: A study of Philippians. Kregel Publications](#))

COUNTING THE COST OF A CHRIST FOLLOWER

Warren Wiersbe -Dr. J. H. Jowett has said, "**Ministry that costs nothing accomplishes nothing.**" If there is to be any **blessing**, there must be some "**bleeding.**" At a religious festival in Brazil, a missionary was going from booth to booth, examining the wares. He saw a sign above one booth: "Cheap Crosses." He thought to himself, "That's what many Christians are looking for these days—cheap crosses. My Lord's cross was not cheap. Why should mine be?" ([Wiersbe, W: Bible Exposition Commentary - New Testament. 1989. Victor](#))

Beloved, is it costing you anything to be a Christ Follower?

If we are to have this attitude (Phil 2:5) what does it mean to us today? We too must be willing (humility) to die to our old man's selfish interests. Positionally this has occurred on the Cross, so that when He died, we died (Ro 6:3-note, Ro 6:4-note), but if we are

truly His disciples (Mk 8:34), He calls us to experience death to self daily as a "normal" part of our life (Mk 8:34ff, 1Cor 15:31). How is this even possible? In Philippians 2:13 Paul explains that...

for it is God Who is at **work** (energeo in the present tense = continually) in you, both to **will** (present tense = continually willing us) and to **work** (energeo in the present tense = continually) for His good pleasure. (See more detailed discussion)

Every Christ follower has the indwelling Spirit of Christ (Ro 8:9, 1Cor 3:16, 1Cor 6:19), and He is our sole Source of inner motivation, continually giving us the "**want to**" so that we might even be willing to consider dying daily to self. But notice not only does the Spirit give us the supernatural **desire** but also the supernatural **power**, for He continually is working in us, "energizing" us and doing so in a way that brings glory, honor and pleasure to our Father Who art in heaven.

Jesus repeatedly called for death to self in the lives of those who would see to follow after Him (Christ followers is another name for "disciples" - see Greek word study = mathetes) - Mt 16:25; Mk 8:35; Lk 9:24;17:33; Jn 12:24,25). The same truth is also stressed by Paul (Ro 12:1-note, Ro 12:2-note; 2Co 5:14,15; 6:9,10; Gal 2:20-note; Phil 2:5-11; 2Ti 2:11, 12-note). Dying to self and living unto God is the very essence of a truly happy (blessed) and fulfilling life in this world and the one to come (cp the promise in 1Ti 4:7, 8-note).

Keith Krell - Interestingly, the primary thrust of this passage is not evangelistic. Instead, it is written with the express purpose of motivating believers to be humble and unified. Today, do you need to die so that a relationship can live? What does your wife want or need from you? What does your husband desire from you? What do your children need from you? Leaders are not to abuse their power and position to further their own interests, but to pursue the best interests of others.³⁴ Instead of grabbing for their "rights," they begin to give to relationships. Instead of using others as means to their own ends, they serve others as ends in themselves. In your work life, instead of striving for upward mobility, why not pursue downward mobility?³⁵Remember, the way up is down. After reflecting on Jesus' downward mobility culminating with His death on the cross, you may declare, "Lord, I would die for You or for someone I love." As Fred Craddock has said, "To give my life for Christ appears glorious. To pour myself out for others...to pay the ultimate price of martyrdom—I'll do it. I'm ready, Lord, to go out in a blaze of glory. We think giving our all to the Lord is like taking a \$1,000 bill and laying it on the table—here's my life, Lord. I'm giving it all. But the reality for most of us is that He sends us to the bank and has us cash in the \$1,000 for quarters. We go through life putting out 25 cents here and 50 cents there. Listen to the neighbor kid's troubles instead of saying, 'Get lost.' Go to a committee meeting. Give up a cup of water to a shaky old man in a nursing home. Usually giving our life to Christ isn't glorious. It's done in all those little acts of love, 25 cents at a time. It would be easy to go out in a flash of glory; it's harder to live the Christian life little by little over the long haul."³⁶Yet, there are no shortcuts in the Christian life. If you want to follow the model of humility, you must take the high road, which requires getting low for others! It requires continually serving regardless of personal cost. This is how you imitate the model of humility. The way up is down. ([Work Your Way Down the Ladder](#))

ILLUSTRATION - The home of an English family was discovered on fire. They thought everybody was out but the baby. The mother saved her. For years as the child grew up the mother went about the house with her hands covered. The eldest of the servants had never seen her hands uncovered. But the daughter came into her room one day unexpectedly, and the mother sat there with her hands uncovered. They were torn and scarred and disfigured. Instantly the mother tried to cover them as the girl came forward, but she said, "I had better tell you about it. It was when the fire was in the house and you were in your cradle. I fought my way through the flames to get you. I wrapped you in a blanket and dropped you through the window, and somebody caught you. I could not go down the stairway, so I climbed out of the window. My hands were burnt, and I slipped and caught on the trellis work. When I fell, my hands were torn. The doctor did his best, but, my dear, these hands were torn for you." And the girl, who had grown to womanhood, sprang toward her mother, took one hand and then the other, and buried her face in those hands, as she kept saying, "They are beautiful hands, beautiful hands." —J. Wilbur Chapman

In his book "**The Epistle to the Philippians**" F B Meyer summarizes Philippians 2:5-8 as...

Majesty and Humility Combined. In the whole range of Scripture this paragraph stands in almost unapproachable and unexampled majesty. There is no passage where the extremes of our Saviour's majesty and humility are brought into such abrupt connection. Guided by the Spirit of God, the Apostle opens the golden compasses of his imagination and faith, and places the one point upon the supernal Throne of the eternal God, and the other upon the Cross of shame where Jesus died, and he shows us the great steps by which Jesus approached always nearer and nearer to human sin and need; that, having embraced us in our low estate, He might carry us back with Himself to the very bosom of God, and that by identifying Himself with our sin and sorrow He might ultimately identify us with the glory which He had with the Father before the world was. And this wonderful description of His descent to our shame and sorrow is here cited by the Apostle, that it might be a living impulse and inspiration to ourselves, not to look upon our own things, not to hold them with a tight grasp, but to be willing to stoop for others to shame, sorrow, and spitting; fulfilling God's purpose of mercy

to the world, even as Jesus Christ, who became the instrument and organ through which God's redemptive purpose wrought. "Let this mind be in you." Think these thoughts. Never look exclusively upon your own interests, never count anything of your own worthy to stand in the way, but always be prepared to the last point to deny yourself, that the redemptive purpose of God may flow through the channel of your life to those that sorely need His blessed help. It is a wonderful thing that, day by day, in our poor measure, we may repeat the purpose and the work of Jesus Christ our Emmanuel. No rhetoric or metaphor of ours can add to the splendour of these words, but in the simplest possible way we will stand on these seven successive slabs of chrysolite.