

Reflection Tim Leitner
Wednesday, March 25, 2020

And every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. *Philippians 2:11*

Tonight's interpretation of this reading from Philippians is the King James Version, which accounts for some of the verses sounding different than in the versions we have heard in the past weeks. For instance: ***Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.*** Oddly our focus verse for this week: ***every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,*** is the same wording as the NSRV, the interpretation that we normally use in our worship.

Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord

Pondering this verse made me realize that for most people who attend Christian worship, these words do not sound out of the ordinary. Weekly in worship, we hear and confess that Jesus is Lord many times. In the Greeting we include Jesus in the Holy Trinity: *May the Grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Love of God and the Communion of the Holy Spirit.* We end most prayers with, *in Jesus' name* or *through Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord.* The longest article of the Apostle and the Nicene creeds are focused on confessing and proclaiming Jesus Christ is Lord. With so much wording in our liturgy confessing Jesus as Lord, why is this statement from Paul so very important, especially to us who frequently confess these words?

We find the answer to that question when taking a closer look at Paul's words earlier in this chapter of Philippians. There we find an extremely important reminder from Paul for the Philippians and for us:

live as Jesus lived. ***Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. ... Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus.*** We are not to just act as Jesus acted but we are to think and believe in the way of Jesus, making our focus in life not primarily inward to ourselves, but outwardly loving and caring for all others before ourselves.

Paul goes on to remind us the importance of Jesus being God, that He did not stay only as God nor did He take a powerful position as a human. He emptied Himself completely in order to live the example of the life we are meant to live. His power was in giving Himself over to obedience, the obedience that took Him to death, death on the cross.

This power shown by Jesus was so different that any human would expect. He did not come with violent power against any foe. He did not come with force in an effort to retaliate against anyone. Jesus came in power with Love, Compassion, Mercy. Jesus came with the power of healing, comfort, and caring.

So, Paul's words that ***every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord*** is not only because Jesus is God but as God, He gave Himself up for us all. It is through Jesus' life, death and resurrection that we have salvation. Paul is not speaking to the Philippians in order that they will be able to achieve such salvation. Paul is saying that it is because of this salvation, this unbelievable gift from God, that we are freed in order to stand up and confess Jesus is Lord. This salvation provides every tongue the reason to confess ***Jesus Christ is Lord!*** The Lord of love and compassion. The Lord of peace and mercy. The Lord that provides us with all that we need and abundantly more, which frees us to share what we have, to care for those who are in need, to love all others, to protect and to stand up for those who are oppressed, abused, forgotten. We are freed to put others ahead of ourselves. So, let us live out Paul's words: ***Let the same mind be in us that was in Christ Jesus.***

And in knowing all that Jesus Christ gave for us, we confess loudly through our words and in our actions of love for one another, that **Jesus Christ is Lord!**

Amen!