

You've likely heard the saying – *Your attitude and not your aptitude determines your altitude*. Personally, I like this – and absolutely believe this to be true.

Yet some people go thru life thinking the whole world stinks. I read of a cranky grandpa who'd laid down for a nap and his grandsons put limburger cheese on his upper lip right under his nose. When he awoke from his nap, he staggered out of his bedroom shouting, "This room stinks!" As he went on thru the house he shouted louder, "This house stinks!" As he went onto the porch, he shouted, "The whole world stinks!" *Yet in reality, what stunk was right under his nose.*

More often than not, when life begins to stink the problem usually isn't w/ others but w/ us. That awful odor is our stinky, negative attitude. Yet if we could learn to adjust it, our lives might smell a little better for everyone.

Okay – I have a confession. I don't do well w/ poor, stinky attitudes, especially when it comes from me. I just don't do well w/ the Eeyore's of the world – those negative doom/gloom people. (Sound like Eeyore – *woe is me*)

A bad attitude is like a flat tire. You can't go anywhere until you change it. *unknown*

The longer I live, the more I realize the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It's more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failure, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It's more vital than appearance, giftedness or skill. It'll make or break a company. A church. A home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice everyday regarding the attitude we'll embrace for that day. We can't change our past. We can't change the fact people will act in a certain way. We can't change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that's our attitude. I'm convinced life is 10% what happens to me and 90% of how I react to it. And so it is w/ you. We're in charge of our attitudes. *Charles Swindoll*

I like what one comedian said – *I used to have a problem w/ a bad attitude until I realized I didn't have an attitude! I just had a personality others couldn't stand!* Yet if we were all honest, we've all had moments where our attitude has gotten the best of us – that we awoke on the wrong side of the bed or something happened causing us to see the glass ½ empty instead of ½ full.

This week I had such an occasion when I almost fell thru the ceiling over the baptistery while running wire for our stage project. Let me tell you – gravity is fast. Now I couldn't let my attitude go south, but I was too thankful to be alive... and impressed my fat body made it b/w 16' rafters.

We're in a series in Philippians about returning to our source of joy – about how to allow joy to flood our lives. In ch. 1, Paul said having joy requires us (1) to **remember** who we are in Jesus and (2) to **remain** faithful to the Gospels in all ways. This AM we're going to look at a 3rd key to joy – and that's **rethinking** our attitude to make sure it's in line w/ Jesus.

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender/compassionate? Then make my joy complete by agreeing wholeheartedly w/ each other, loving one another, and working together w/ one mind and purpose.

Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others, too. You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

Though he was God, he did not think of equality w/ God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. Philippians 2:1-11

Paul tells us that if joy is our objective, then it'll require a new perspective/outlook on life – a faith that thinks outside the box to see God's purpose/will for our lives. It'll require we have the same attitude Jesus had. So as Paul begins ch. 2, He speaks a word of encouragement to underscore the role of the H.S. implanted in us to adjust our attitude.

I The ENCOURAGEMENT

Is there any encouragement from belonging to Christ? Any comfort from his love? Any fellowship together in the Spirit? Are your hearts tender/compassionate? Then make my joy complete by agreeing wholeheartedly w/ each other, loving one another, and working together w/ one mind and purpose. Don't be selfish; don't try to impress others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourselves. Don't look out only for your own interests, but take an interest in others...

A Be HOLY SPIRIT Led

Notice the (3) questions. They speak to the effectual work of the H.S. in our lives as a result of our salvation when God deposited Himself in us in the person of the H.S.

1 H.S. ENCOURAGEMENT

The word used to describe encouragement is (*paraclesis*) meaning to come alongside of to give assistance/guidance.

It's the same idea exemplified in the Good Samaritan parable in **Luke 12** – where the Samaritan cared for the man would had been robbed, beaten, and left for dead. (**replay story**)

The role of the H.S. is to *walk alongside* of us to comfort, counsel, convict, and console us in our pursuit of God.

2 H.S. CONSOLATION

consolation (*paramuthion*) means to speak intimately w/ someone to influence/bless them at their point of need to compel them fellowship/followship w/ God. Meaning the H.S. serves to gently nudge us into the things of God.

3 H.S. FELLOWSHIP

fellowship (*koinonia*) refers to intimate partnership and mutual sharing as *we're in this together*... but in this case, we're in partnership w/ the H.S. in G.C. ministry.

4 H.S. COMPASSION

The idea is b/c the H.S. lives in us He compels us to have compassion/tenderness for others in their time of need.

Point – the very foundation of our attitude is founded in the work of the H.S. in us living thru us. He resides in us to transform us from the inside out to make us like Jesus.

B Be HARMONIOUS in Fellowship

Paul is calling us to have a selfless attitude w/ one another as we serve God together.

Let me speak to what a church should be – we should be a faith community where, in spite of our differences, we learn to think/serve together. We're not called to casual gatherings – but to be brothers/sisters in Christ compelled to love God as we love one another – and in doing so we help each other to see life w/ a positive outlook/attitude. (see **Hebrews 10**)

C Be HUMBLE in Service

Quite simply, life is about more than us. It's about Jesus! Paul is saying life/ministry is bigger than you – be humble.

humility – to be submissive to the core by learning to think rightly of yourself in light of who God is.

Mankind has always had a difficulty w/ humility – w/ seeing themselves rightly – and this is nothing new:

Greece said – *Be wise, know yourself*

Rome said – *Be strong, discipline yourself*

Religion says – *Be good, conform yo urself*

Epicureanism says – *Be sensual, satisfy yourself*

Education says – *Be resourceful, expand yourself*

Psychology says – *Be confident, assert yourself*
Materialism says – *Be possessive, please yourself*
Asceticism says – *Be lowly, suppress yourself*
Humanism says – *Be capable, believe in yourself*
Pride says – *Be superior, promote yourself*
But Christ says – *Be unselfish, humble yourself*

To help us understand true humility – Jesus modeled for us genuine humility by stepping off His throne into flesh as God entered time/space to seek and to save the lost.

II The EXAMPLE

Jesus didn't just know the way – He showed us the way!

You must have the same attitude Christ Jesus had. Though he was God, he didn't think of equality w/ God as something to grasp. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross. So God elevated him to the place of highest honor and gave him the name above all other names, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue declare Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of the Father...

This text speaks to the incarnation – God became flesh and entered into humanity. This is part of a doctrine known as the *kenosis* of Christ – or His self-emptying. It is one of the more essential doctrines of the Christian faith.

Every year when the time comes to ordain new deacons I have a little fun when the council arrives as the doctrinal portion of the council – I always like to ask MY question! And it is based on this passage.

Explain the relevance of the kenosis of Christ as it pertains to the symbiotic relationship b/c the hypostatic union and the theanthropic nature of Christ as to relations to your salvation and identity in Christ.

The simple truth is this passage encapsulates the greatest teaching/message of hope the world will ever know – that God, the sovereign creator, did for mankind what it couldn't do for itself – He provided a means of forgiveness and restoration w/ God by incarcerating himself in flesh so that He might make a satisfactory atoning sacrifice to rescue man from sin and reconcile man to Himself.

This passage tells us that Jesus was 100% God, but instead of remaining high/mighty, He humbled/restricted Himself by becoming 100% man to offer His life as a sacrifice that might satisfy the justice of the Godhead. In doing so, He modeled the attitude of true servanthood for us to follow.

III The EXPECTATION

As w/ most things in Scripture – Jesus did what He did so when we come to know Him as Savior, our lives would also honor Him as Lord and that we'd exemplify who Jesus was and did so others might too come to know Him as Savior.

Dear friends, you always followed my instructions when I was w/ you. Now that I am away, it is even more important.

Work hard to show the results of your salvation, obeying God w/ deep reverence and fear. For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.

Do everything w/out complaining and arguing, that no one can criticize you. Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shining like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people. Hold firmly to the word of life; then, on the day of Christ's return, I will be proud I did not run the race in vain and that my work was not useless. Ph. 2:12-16

Paul makes it simple – ***a right attitude of submission will lead to a right action of service.*** Let me say it another way – If your attitude is in alignment w/ the life/example of Jesus, then your life will have meaning/purpose into eternity.

work hard – This is where Divine sovereignty collides w/ personal responsibility. But Paul isn't saying you have to do something to earn or keep your salvation, BUT rather, b/c of the H.S. in us – our outlook on life ought to be different.

obeying (*hupoakouo*) *hupo* means under; *akouo* refers to acoustics or hearing – meaning we are to hear and respond to the voice of the H.S.

Notice also where the power to live w/ a Jesus attitude comes from – not from our ability/ingenuity but from the H.S. w/out deposited w/in as we abide and live under His influence. Thus, our job isn't to manufacture the task, but to put ourselves in a position for God to flow through our lives. When this happens, in effect... our attitude in Christ does determine our altitude in life. It determines our joy.

So what must we do... Turn to Philippians 4

Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, w/ thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable – if anything is excellent or praiseworthy– think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me– put it into practice. And the God of peace will be w/ you.

Philippians 4:4-8

Let me show you the 411 Paul says is necessary to live an abiding life that'll provide you w/ an attitude that'll carry you to joy:

A **REJOICE** – Return to the source of your joy. In other words – give Jesus a try. Put your focus on Him.

B **PRAY** – Bend your knee and bow your heart to seek and depend on God instead of trusting in yourself.

C **THINK** – Focus you mind/heart on the things of God and not on the things of this world (Col. 3:1-4)

D **LIVE** – Put truth into action by choosing to follow and obey the leading of God in His Word and H.S.