

THOUGHTS ON PHILIPPIANS 2: 5-11

“Christ did not cease to be ‘in the form of God’ when he took the form of a slave. On the contrary, **it is in his self-emptying and his humiliation that he reveals what God is like, and it is through his taking the form of a slave that we see ‘the form of God.’**”

“It is typical of the biblical material that God is revealed through what God does, and here we find that God is revealed through what Christ does. Having been told that Christ is ‘in the form of God’, we find our attention immediately focused on what he did. Christ reveals himself in his gracious actions – in his refusal to exploit his rights, in his self-emptying, in his self-humiliation, and in his obedience, event to the point of death.

And because he is ‘in the form of God’, his actions reveal not simply his own character or nature, but what God is like as well. The birth, ministry, and death of Jesus are a consistent whole, and in them all we see the divine character revealed. Christ’s exaltation by God is the vindication of Christ’s actions, and not their undoing; it is precisely because he is humble and obedient that he also is Lord. **His exaltation is God’s triumphant affirmation that in Christ’s actions we have the perfect revelation of the love and compassion of God.**

“Asked to describe the nature of God, most people would probably appeal to ideas regarding omnipotence and omniscience, to God’s immeasurable distance from us and God’s unutterable holiness. **Paul, by contrast, describes what he refers to elsewhere as ‘grace.’** What resounds to God’s glory (in other words, what reveals God’s nature) is the proclamation of the crucified Jesus as Lord.”

(Morna Hooker)

