

**Series: Die Young**

**Sermon title: Down is the New Up**

Hosts – Last week we focused on Death is the New Life. You might want to refresh yourself with those particular points or thrust of the message.

**Say**, Down is associated with most things that we do not want to identify with in life. We fall down, we do not like the stock market to go down, and we know gravity pulls us down. And Jesus “came down” and changed the rules about “down”.

**Read** Philippians 2:3–8 ESV

*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.*

**Summarize** - Let's focus specifically on verses 7-8 for a couple of minutes. What is the big deal about Jesus emptying Himself, taking the form of a servant and becoming like us. As if it is not humbling enough for God to come down, He also humbled Himself further to the point of dying and in a manner that was more “down” than most other forms of death – death on a cross. One can hardly get lower than that.

Let's go back to the first few verses we read. How might you show evidence of counting others more importantly than yourself? Looking out for the interests of others? (Allow the participants to answer.) And if we are not careful, we can become obsessed with serving others that “serving becomes the idol”. Can service really be a bad thing? Anything/anyone that becomes more to you than God is an idol.

Last week we talked about “self” a lot and “self” is so important in our culture. Take care of #1; you can do anything you put your mind to doing; so many good stories coming out of the Olympics; etc. “There is no one more significant than me” is an unspoken but lived out mantra in many lives. And, now Jesus comes and messes all that up! Or does He?

As we begin to understand the depth of our sinfulness, we are able to more fully understand the depth of God's graciousness. As we more fully understand *We have all become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous deeds are like a polluted garment. We all fade like a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, take us away. Isaiah 64:6*

*Luke 14:11 – “For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

**Discuss** - How does one go about “humbling” one's self? How can we get in position to be obedient to what God asks us to do? (It is only through our surrender to God and allowing His rightful place in our lives.)

Humiliation- who signs up for that? Yep, Jesus did.

**Many times our desire for happiness trumps our desire to be holy. As James McDonald says, God's goal is not to make you happy, but to make you holy.**

*Psalm 37:4 - Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart. Is God enough for you?*

**How easily are you content? Do you find yourself deserving to be served; to get the best; to hear what you want to hear; to get there faster than everyone else; perfection is the only choice?**

Philippians 4:12 – Paul reminds us - *I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound. In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.*

*“No, don't say that. Who are you, a mere human being, to argue with God? Should the thing that was created say to the one who created it, “Why have you made me like this?” When a potter makes jars out of clay, doesn't he have a right to use the same lump of clay to make one jar for decoration and another to throw garbage into?” Romans 9:20-21 NLT*

How do you find yourself related to these?

**Down is not complaining** – What do you find yourself complaining about most easily and most often?

*“Do all things without grumbling or disputing (arguing),” Philippians 2:14 ESV*

Crying out for heaven on earth while saying we deserve it.

**Down is not needing to be heard** - speaking and not being heard - I want to be heard. I matter!

Speaking can get out of control

*“When words are many, transgression is not lacking, but whoever restrains his lips is prudent.” - Proverbs 10:19 ESV*

**Down is not needing to win** –

I have to be first! The last will be first and the first will be last. Not to eliminate competition but to boast in our weaknesses. Letting go of the need to be first.

Matthew 20:16

Boasting on our weaknesses rather than boasting on our successes. *So that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.” 1 Corinthians 1:31*

**Down is not fearing failure** - failure refines and is for our good, not our destruction

*“For the moment all discipline seems painful rather than pleasant, but later it yields the peaceful fruit of righteousness to those who have been trained by it.”*

Hebrews 12:11 ESV

Humility is the fear of failure's kryptonite

**Down is not requiring perfection** – how about God desiring faithfulness through surrender instead of perfect performance? In God's economy, Performance is never more important than faithfulness. This is so counter cultural!

*“For am I now seeking the approval of man, or of God? Or am I trying to please man? If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ.”*

Galatians 1:10 ESV

Pride never saves. Humility is all about reconciliation and salvation.

Humility saves others.

*“Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.”*

Proverbs 16:18 ESV

Share prayer requests and encourage one another to Die Young.