

KENOSIS

The *kenosis* passage is Philippians 2:5-11.

2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:

2:10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of [things] in heaven, and [things] in earth, and [things] under the earth;

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

Jesus is both God and Man; He is the God-Man. But within the essence of Christ is also His function or His work. His person and His work are inseparable. He does who He is. I wish we could, maybe the better word is would, do that. We are called hypocrites because we do not do what we are. We do what we are not, or we wear a disguise and begin to do according to a disguise. But He is who He is, and what He does reflects exactly on who He is in the same way as His Words do.

This kind of Christian pilgrimage is portrayed in Philippians 2:5-8. Jesus left His home in heaven, and descended down. This is a downward descent that is based on the *kenosis* (the

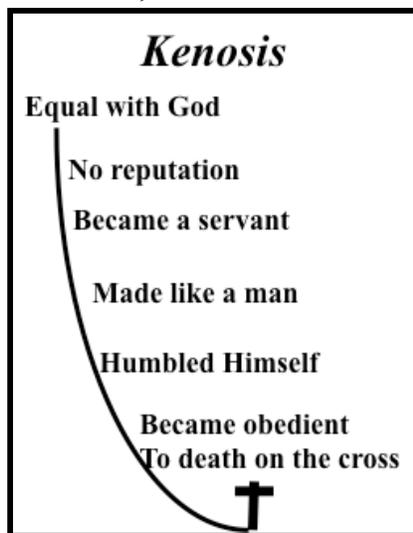


Chart Kenosis 1

word *kenosis* means that He emptied Himself). He made Himself of no reputation, then He took on the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man; He humbled Himself; He became obedient, and obedient to death on the cross. Please see Chart *Kenosis* 1 for this kind of pilgrimage.

Please note that exaltation comes after death (Philippians 2:9-11). After the descent there is the exaltation. Please examine Chart *Kenosis* 2 for a portrayal of the exaltation.

Now this is the kind of pilgrimage that Jesus had, and God says here, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus." This is the kind of approach to Christianity you are to have. This *Kenosis* is the pattern that God commanded for us to live. His only begotten Son lived it, and now we are to live it.

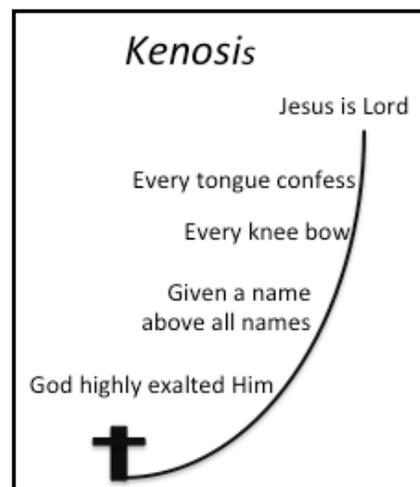


Chart Kenosis 2

The first requirement of discipleship is self-denial. You see Jesus denied Himself. He did not do one thing that He wanted to do. He submitted His will to the Father on every step that He took. He wants us to deny ourselves —“Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus.” This is what we are to do, and after death comes exaltation (see Chart *Kenosis* 2).

Christ despised all of the shame before the cross for the sake of the joy after the cross. How are you going to manage this kind of sacrificial life? *Kenosis* is acceptable by looking to the joy and anticipation to be found on the other side of death, the exaltation.

What do we typically want? We want exaltation now, not this *kenotic* pilgrimage. What we want is a reversal of the *kenosis*. So we take this kind of approach portrayed in Chart *Kenosis* 3. We want to climb up, we want the people to swoon over us, and we want all the applause, temporal comforts, and indulging our flesh. We want to get to the top with a big throne and sit and oversee those below us and have the people come and be dependent upon us in our exalted position. That is the opposite of what Jesus did. He came down. We want to go up. If you come down, you will be exalted. If you climb up, you will be brought down (See Chart *Kenosis* 4).

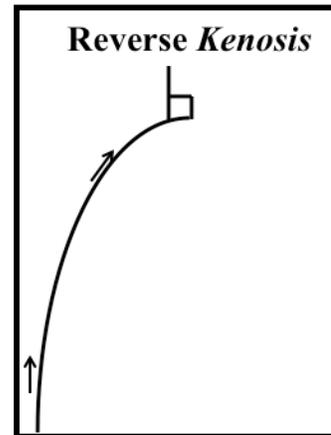


Chart Kenosis 3

What is the result on the other side of death? You reach your pinnacle of life, and then you die, and you have nothing because you received your rewards on earth. The person who loses his life will gain it (Matthew 16:25), and his reward is exaltation because he is faithful in the little things (See Chart *Kenosis* 5 at end of lesson).

The guy who is climbing is focused on the temporal, going after the lust of the flesh. He had better enjoy it while he has it because he is not going to have much later. He is going to fall to loss of rewards (see Chart *Kenosis* 6 at end of end of lesson).

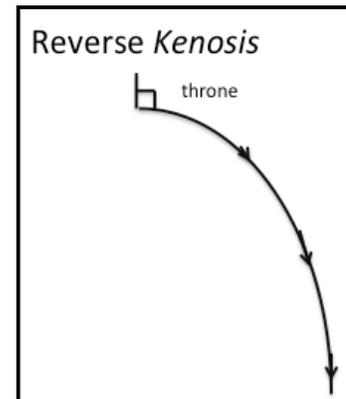


Chart Kenosis 4

Kenotic Examples

Let’s take a look at some *kenotic* examples. First is Timothy (Philippians 2:17-21). Timothy is doing good. Here is Paul in prison writing back to Philippi, and he wants to send somebody to find out the state of the Philippian church. He looks around at all these saints around him, and he cannot send anybody because they are not “like-minded (*kenotic*-minded).” He has one helper, his main guy, Timothy, to help him do the ministry, but he has to send Timothy back to Philippi because nobody is willing to throw away his own concerns and do the work of God at self-expense. Paul says: “For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek his own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.”

In the three tests of works, one guy said, “Let me go and bury my father,” and Jesus said, “Let the dead bury the dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.” He did not say, “Come follow me,” because that guy had concerns of his own that interfered with his followship.

Timothy, in contrast, is an example of the *kenosis*. Whatever the mission is, he will go. He does not have to be told that there is no place to lay his head because he has already experienced self denial in ministry. He has already been passing the test. He has already been

seeing the persecution. This is the kind of guy that goes and forgets self-interest. He just goes. That is what you need to be. You need to be the kind of person who is not detained by a concern for your own things. When Jesus says go, or come follow Me, you do it. If you do not, you may be a good guy and allowed to go preach the kingdom of God, but you cannot follow Jesus.

Next is Epaphroditus in Philippians 2:23-30. Epaphroditus is a guy who subjected himself even unto his life. He came near death in order to do the ministry, and he did not turn back. He went, and he did the ministry, and he is being sent back now by the Apostle Paul with a commendation. Do you want that kind of commendation?

Now let's take a look at the Apostle Paul in Philippians 3:7-14. The high calling of Christ is through the *kenotic* model. To get there, you must go downward in the life of sacrifice. This is the Christian pilgrimage in which temporal gain is loss to Christ, *i.e.* dung. Temporal loss (sacrifice) is winning Christ.

We have the three examples of the test of self-denial or *kenosis*. We've looked at the test of doctrine, the test of works, and the test of *kenosis*. You are going to be tested. Do you love the Lord more than bread? Your love is going to be tested. Do you want to follow Jesus? Your answer is going to be tested. Can you even get past the first test of discipleship? Your self-denial is going to be tested. Pass the test, brethren. Pass the test. Look at these examples and imitate these guys that have the commendation.

Do not look at the examples of temporal glory. Climbing up and getting all that you ever imagined is not your calling. You can trade your life for temporal gain. Do not be deceived. Lay up treasure in heaven for eternal gain. Stay with Jesus. Follow His example. He did not have a lot of clothes. He did not have a place to lay His head. He fell asleep in the bottom of an old stinky fishing boat. I do not know whether you have ever tried to sleep in a fishing boat. I have, and it hurts. Those boards gouge into your back. Your bones hurt; your head hurts; everything hurts. He slept in it. He was tired. He was despised and mocked, belittled, crucified. That is your model to follow.

We have three examples of people who are walking the *kenotic* pilgrimage that is downward, looking to the other side of the grave for their glory. Do not be deceived into looking on this side of the grave for your glory. If you get it on this side of the grave, you have it. You had better celebrate big time because that is all you are going to get. It ends at the grave. Instead, choose the glory that begins at the grave.

Now, I am going to pray for you.

“Father, I want to confess here with my mouth that Jesus is Lord, that I love You dearly. I want to pass this *kenotic* test, Lord. I want to deny myself, pick up my cross, and follow my Lord Jesus who bought me and owns me. I want everybody reading this to pass this test too, Lord. Lord, please help me to teach it not only with words but also with my life because I love You dearly. I pray this for the sake of my readers, but not only for them but for their congregations and the people they teach, people they minister to, their own households, their children, their families and friends. Lord, I pray that this teaching will go out from here, and go in many and varied places and touch many lives for Your glory and for their welfare. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.”

Dear friend, if you join in this prayer, say “amen” out loud right now.

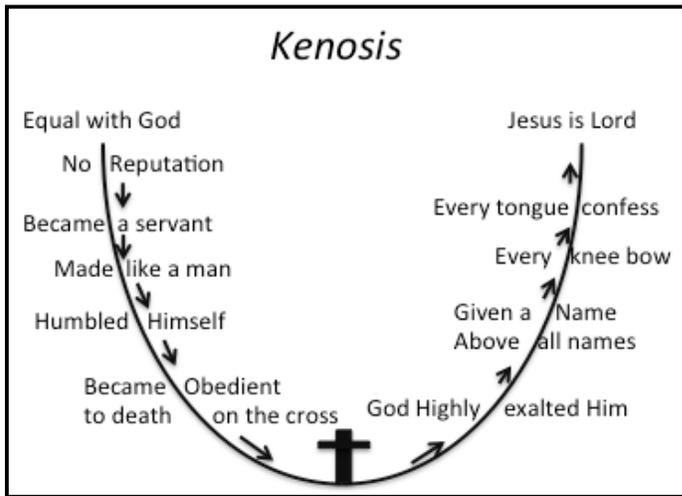


Chart Kenosis 5

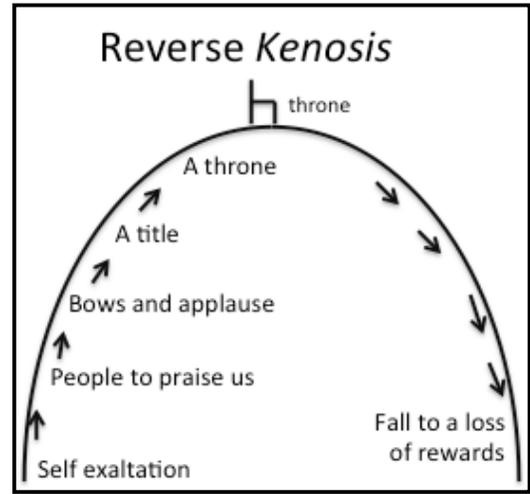


Chart Kenosis 6