

## Get a New Attitude

✠ for comfort (vv.1-4) ... courage (vv.5-8) ... glory (vv.9-11)

In the Name of **Christ** our **Life**, dearly redeemed:

Have you noticed all the talk lately by politicians, media, regular folks about the need for America to unite? What does it take to bring us together? Sometimes just a tragedy or two or three. From the hurricanes southeast to the massacre in Las Vegas, heartache, loss and anguish can sometimes bring out the best in Americans. Even his critics have to agree with President Trump on that. In Vegas ex military and others kept going back in to get the wounded out. One woman loaded up her car with strangers to get them to safety. Pickup trucks became ambulances. While media pundits keep asking, “Why?” about the shooter, a healthier question would be to discover the “Why?” about mercy, self-sacrifice and grace under trial. Don’t wring your hands about everyone else who needs unity. We all do. As we look to Christ Jesus to discover the “Why?” each of us can also **Get a New Attitude – Living HIStory....**

✠ for comfort (vv.1-4)

It’s impossible for non-believers to get this. Too busy criticizing God for allowing suffering in this world, they can’t see the source of all suffering is man with his sin. As Jesus said in one of His parables, **“An enemy has done this.”** (Matthew 13:28 ESV) The end of all suffering will come on Judgment Day – for believers. For non-believers, Judgment Day is just the beginning of eternal terror. **For comfort** see the God-Man Jesus Christ taking on the worst of all suffering. The Holy Spirit opens our blind eyes and turns the light on for us. **“With God all things are possible.”** (Matthew 19:26) I pray **for your comfort** today.

Parents, or grandparents, the first time a little one falls asleep on your shoulder is a sweet memory you don’t soon forget. It’s also a great illustration about how God feels when His Word finally gets through. Resting on God’s grace, we are **Living HIStory** with **The attitude of Christ.**<sup>1</sup>

You could translate four **“if’s”** in the first verse as **“since,”** because each is ironic. It’s like saying to someone who can barely get up from a fabulous banquet, **“If you’ve had enough to eat....”** **“Since [we are] united with Christ,”** we have the **“encouragement”** to move on in our faith. **“Since”** He sacrificed Himself, Christ’s unconditional **“agape-love”** truly gives us **“comfort, consolation, solace”** in the midst of tragedy and loss. This **New Attitude** God gives in Christ Jesus is truly amazing. Even when nothing else has changed in our outward circumstances, we still find **“comfort from his love”** with a **New Attitude.** **“Since”** the dear **Holy Spirit** is giving us God’s grace in Word and sacraments, we have true **“fellowship”** in **common-union** with God and each other. **“Since”** **“tenderness and compassion”** keep from welling up inside and overflowing, God keeps giving us **The attitude of Christ.**

Now the Holy Spirit wants us to be **“like-minded,”** having the same feelings deep down inside. Have the same self-sacrificing love for each other that unites our souls in one powerful purpose. Why do we schedule our services as we do? Why serve on committees? Why support this Gospel ministry? Is it not for others? If you insist on “my way or the highway,” you’ve slipped into the ruts of **“selfish ambition [and] vain conceit.”** God pulls us out of that quicksand. **“In humility consider others better than yourselves.”** Sacrifice your opinions, needs, desires like Christ. **“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.”** What church does not suffer from one or two members or a pastor pushing their own opinions on the rest? What marriage or family would not benefit from this **New Attitude** unique in human history? Don’t be afraid. Look to Christ...

<sup>1</sup> This sermon is part of a Growth Group series on Philippians: **Living HIStory.** Discover at <http://www.wels.us/newlife>.

### ✠ for courage (vv.5-8)

Some of you who work in the travel industry get frustrated the way people are so reactionary. One report of terrorism in Europe and everyone wants to cancel their trip. It's like hearing about Las Vegas or hurricanes in Florida and deciding not to come to anywhere in America. The travel minister of one African nation said they suffered one terrorist attack in twenty-years, but the American media covered it like an every day occurrence. It takes so little to turn travel veterans into couch potatoes.

So who traveled the farthest? Who gave up the most? No one else could come from the glories of heaven but God's own Son. No one but the most loving, kindest, most courageous could give up what every human heart desires for the worst the human heart can fear. It was not just the cruel torture of the cross. Not just the shame. But to be put under the guilt of the entire human race is impossible for us to conceive. Hollywood cannot picture it. We cannot imagine it because we've been spared by God the full, terrible, wretched view of even one full day of our sin. None of us could survive a video of our sin from cradle to the grave. If you find yourself lately feeling a bit self-righteous, not so conscious of your sin, ask God to give you a **New Attitude**. Then brace yourself. God's love will put you in tears of sorrow over your sin. When He kills your sinful pride, God raises you to the **courage** of the cross.

*"Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus..."* Only God can create this **New Attitude**, but He does so tenderly, quietly in the gentle whisper of His Word. See how high Jesus was in glory to come down to be one of us? *"Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped..."* Jesus is God from all eternity, so He did not have to grab on to deity, nor did He have to fear losing it in death. In unmatched **courage** our Lord Jesus Christ, *"made himself nothing,"* literally, "emptied himself" of the full use of His divine power and glory. By *"taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness...being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death – even death on a cross!"* Down from heaven to suffer our hell!

Jesus said, *"No one takes [my life] from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father."* (John 10:18 NIV84) Applying this to us, Martin Luther noted: *"He...who has emptied himself through suffering no longer does work but knows that God works and does all things in him. He neither boasts if he does good works, nor is he disturbed if God does not do good works through him."*<sup>2</sup> In other words, you and I need not worry if it seems we have accomplished so little in life. Take **Courage** in Christ...!

### ✠ for glory (vv.9-11)

Who's to say whether the athletes taking a knee or the academics refusing to bend the knee to God are more concerned about helping others or just making a name for themselves? Clucking like hens at the sins of others may make us feel good, but God wants us to confess our own sin and **Get a New Attitude**.

These last verses are awesome. Whether one repents in time or refuses to repent – *"every knee will bow"* to Jesus as Judge. *"God exalted [Jesus] to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name."* That's the Name יהוה – God the LORD. God's goal is *"that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."* God wants to give each of us a **New Attitude** during our time of grace so that we can enjoy His gift of heaven for all eternity. *Soli Deo Gloria!*

Did you catch Jesus' ultimate goal? Even in His State of Exaltation Jesus is all about glorifying not Himself, but **God the Father**. This is amazing because the Father always glorifies the Son, and the Holy Spirit glorifies them both, even as He proceeds from the Father and the Son. Glory to God! Now there's a totally brilliant, brand spanking **New Attitude**. Take one *To Go* – then go with God! Amen.

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<sup>2</sup> LW 30:55, quoted in Fredrich, Edward C. *The Wisconsin Synod Lutherans*. NPH, 1992, p. 267f.

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