

Philippians 2:9-11

Preached by Greg Lundstedt at Vancouver Bible Fellowship Church on 6/24/2007

How can we maintain unity in the church? Part IV: Riches to Rags to Riches

Prayer

Father, we praise You and we give thanks for Who You are and what You have done. We praise You that You loved us so much that You would send Your only begotten Son to die for us. And we praise You that He willingly and voluntarily came and took on human flesh. That He humbled Himself, becoming a servant, becoming humble to the point of death, Lord God, death on the cross. We praise You for what He did. And we praise You that You, as we will see today, exalted Him to His rightful place as Lord of all. Father, we pray as we look into Your Word that You would convict us, that You would encourage us, You would build us up. And if anyone here does not know Your Son, Jesus Christ, as Lord, that they would be convicted, that they would fall on their knees before You. And cry out to the Lord for salvation. Father, we thank You for Your Word. We pray that You will be greatly glorified through it's proclamation. And Father, we pray our response would bring You glory also. And we now pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

Sermon

Well, the majority of those in the world don't see Jesus as Lord. The majority of those in this world do not say He's Lord, they don't call Him Lord, they don't believe He is Lord. But there are some who believe He is Lord. And there are some who say He is Lord, but yet ultimately do not believe He is Lord as demonstrated by their actions. Jesus would address those who would come to Him on that day of judgment and say, "Lord, Lord, did we not cast out demons, did we not perform miracles in Your Name?" And Matthew writes Jesus' words in Matthew chapter 7, where Jesus says, "Depart from Me; I never know you, you who practice lawlessness."

There are some people who actually think they are believers and are following the Lord Jesus Christ, and they practice lawlessness, and Christ does not know them for they truly have not submitted their hearts and lives to Jesus Christ, believing in Him, believing in what He has done; placing their faith in Him alone.

You know, Jesus would talk to the Pharisees in Luke 6:46. He would say, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and not do what I say?" That makes sense, right? People say He's Lord, but yet don't do what He says. And Jesus says, "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord' and not do what I say?"

Last week, we saw Jesus go from riches, the riches of glory and the manifestation of His deity in heaven to rags as He came and took on human flesh, as He became (as the writer Paul would share in 2 Corinthians) that He became poor for our sakes that we might become rich. We saw that He became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. And we'll see today that because of what He did, He will be raised even higher and exalted, ultimately, to His position but more. As we'll see, His Name is above every name.

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Would you turn your Bibles to Philippians chapter 2, and we're going to be continuing with verse 9 through 11 today. Now, again, the context of the book of Philippians- the apostle Paul is writing a church that he knows well. He loves them and they love him. They were the only church that supported him at a certain time in Thessalonica. They were very dear to him and they were very concerned about his circumstances. They obviously had heard that he was under house arrest, that he was in chains. And they sent one to find out how he was doing, ultimately. And Paul writes back this letter to share that what they might think was hindering the gospel was not hindering the gospel at all. That God was using His chains for the pioneering advance of the gospel, that the whole praetorian guard had heard the gospel, and that there were those of Caesar's household (as we will see; chapter four) who give their greetings, who would ultimately come to faith in Jesus Christ.

And Paul desired that no matter what happened in his life, that Christ would be magnified. Whether it was his death, that Christ would be magnified in death. Whether it was his life, that Christ would be magnified in his life. And he desired these Philippians to understand the same thing, and to think like Christ. As Paul would share, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If Paul was going to stay on, if God was going to allow him to continue in this life, he was here to serve Christ and, ultimately, His people. And if he was to die, to die was gain because if you live for Christ and you die, you gain Christ. What a wonderful truth, and Paul even shares, "For that is much better." But his heart was to serve Christ and to be obedient.

We saw Paul was thankful for God's past work in these Philippians. And he was confident that God would continue that work in them. And we saw Paul shift the emphasis from his example of trusting in Christ, desiring Christ to be magnified in everything, to the Philippians. He exhorted them to walk in a manner worthy, as we saw, of their heavenly citizenship. They were to stand firm in the truth, they were to strive together in the truth, and they were to not be afraid of the opposition to the truth, which was ultimately a sign of their (those who oppose the truth) destruction and the Philippians' salvation.

And then Paul moved to address some issues which will happen with every congregation and every believer and every person who follows Christ- the possibility of disunity through selfishness. And Paul shared how they, and ultimately we, could maintain unity in the church. And he exhorted them first and foremost that their unity is based on their relationship with Jesus Christ. And we saw in the beginning of chapter 2, ¹ ***if therefore there is any encouragement in Christ***, (and that phrase in the Greek is first class, which means that "if there is, and yes there is."; it's fulfilled, then make my joy complete) ***if there is any consolation of love*** (and yes, there is), ***if there is any fellowship of the Spirit*** (and yes, there is), ***if any affection and compassion*** (and yes, there is), ² ***make my joy complete by being of the same mind*** (the same thinking), ***maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose*** (or one thought; the same word).

And then we saw how that looks in real time, how like-mindedness and unity looks in the body of Christ. Where he said literally, "nothing from selfishness or empty conceit." Nothing from a desire to elevate self at all. Nothing from empty conceit, where you would think that you have any rights or you deserve

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anything, that you are something. And we remember the words of Paul to the Galatians-“ If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.” (Galatians 6:3)

And we saw we are to have this attitude of humility that was in Christ; we are to be thinking of others as more important than ourselves. We are to be scoping out and looking for ways to address the interests of others rather than just the interest of ourselves.

And then Paul gave the command that we looked at last week, “Have this mind or attitude- this same word- thinking. Have this thinking which was in Christ Jesus.” He’s saying, “Think like Christ.” And we wonder how in the world can we think like Christ? And we looked specifically in 1 Corinthians chapter 2, that Paul clearly declares that the natural man does not understand the things of God. He can’t think like Christ, he can’t understand what God says. But the spiritual man, the one who is saved, has been given this wonderful gift, as we see in Scripture, the words, spiritual words and spiritual thoughts that Paul brought forth. And ultimately, Paul says, “But we have the mind of Christ”, pointing to the Word of God. We have some of what God thinks, revealed in His Word, and we can think His way by having His Word dwelling richly in our hearts. That doesn’t change who we are, doesn’t make us all robots. It makes us and brings us together in Christ, united.

So we saw, first of all, that we were to have this attitude in ourselves which was in Christ Jesus. And now, we’re going to look to an incredible passage, which we saw and we will review what we looked at last week, where we are going to see the Name above every name.

So again, would you turn with me to Philippians chapter 2 and we’re going to begin back in verse 5.

⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. [Philippians 2:5-11]

First thing we’re going to see in our passage is the reason for His exaltation. If you look at verse 9, he says, “Therefore also God highly exalted Him.” Therefore also, God highly exalted Him. And in the Greek language, there’s two words, *dio* and *kai*, and what is that mean? It means “therefore, for this obvious reason”. For the obvious reason before us, God highly exalted Him. And we’re asking, “Well, what is this obvious reason that God highly exalted Him?” It’s exactly what we saw last week; ***⁵ Have this attitude*** (verse 5) ***in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God,*** (we saw that although He was God and He manifested His deity and His glory, although He existed, it says here) ***did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped*** (we saw “a thing to be clutched at all costs.” And as we see, the Lord emptied Himself, verse 7); ***⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a***

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bond-servant, (that form in which we see Christ became fully human, although fully divine) ***and being made in the likeness of men.*** ⁸ ***And being found in appearance as a man, (what did He do?) He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.***

Instead of holding on to the right to outwardly manifest His deity and use His deity and glory to His own advantage, Christ emptied Himself by becoming a servant. By becoming human. He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death. God the Son, the Christ, existing in the very form of God took on the form of a servant, took on human flesh and became obedient to the point of death.

And that's what Paul writes about, as he's encouraging the Corinthians to be generous, to continue the giving that they had intended earlier. He says,

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. [2 Corinthians 8:9]

For this reason, God highly exalted Him. For the reason, for the incarnation, for the humility of Christ, the fact that God the Son took on human flesh, came among us, dwelt among us, lived the perfect life, and he lived obediently. He'd learned obedience through the things that He suffered, the writer of Hebrews says. From this, and ultimately His obedience to the point of death, even death on a cross, because of this, God highly exalted Him. And Paul wants us to see from the mindset of Christ that it is only through humility in the context of obedient servanthood that one is exalted. And, folks, we as sinful humans seek to be exalted. We seek to be elevated in position, we seek to be elevated in status, we seek to be elevated in finances and our relationships. We seek to be elevated even in our service of the Lord. And God makes it clear, as we saw in the last few weeks, that those are selfish, worldly and demonic desires that cause division.

James chapter 3. And just hold your fingers in Philippians and turn again with me to James chapter 3, and we'll look at verse 13. James writes in verse 13,

¹³ Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show by his good behavior his deeds in the gentleness of wisdom. ¹⁴ But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not be arrogant and so lie against the truth. (He's saying, "Don't live a lie, if this is what your heart is like.") ¹⁵ This wisdom is not that which comes down from above, but is earthly, natural, demonic. ¹⁶ For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there is disorder and every evil thing. [James 3:13-16]

And Paul is commanding these believers to have the mind of Christ, not to have this worldly, natural, demonic mindset which we are tempted with every day to exalt ourselves. It says, "Have this mind which was in Christ Jesus." Jesus suffered obediently, humbling Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death before He was exalted. And folks, we do, we have a problem in churches these days. A lot of people are doing church without obeying. We have an evangelical community with pastors who decide to do their own thing. They do what is right in their own eyes. We have congregations that are

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doing what is right in their own eyes, rather than humbling oneself, having the mind of Christ, being obedient to the revealed Word of God, people are exalting themselves by doing church and following Christ in their own way and doing what is right in their own minds.

In the book of Judges, we see the reason why Israel is in such a terrible state as they are spiraling down. Everyone was doing what is right in their own eyes. The writer says in chapters 1 and 2 that Israel didn't fully obey God. We need to have this mind which was in Christ Jesus. We need to become obedient to the point of death, ultimately. We need to become obedient. An obedient, humble servant.

Paul is commanding these believers to have the mind of Christ, to see others as more supreme. To humbly lower oneself, obediently serving God and thus His people. And Jesus showed us by His example to those who would name His name and follow Him, that the way up is down. Jesus suffered obediently, humbly becoming obedient before He was exalted. And it is the very mindset of Christ that we are commanded to have.

So then, first of all, these believers are exhorted to unity by having the mindset of Christ, and we see thus, Christ was exalted. So the reason for His exaltation was His obedient humility to the point of death. That's why. "Therefore, God highly exalted Him."

With that in mind, let's take a look at His exaltation; Verse 9, "Therefore also God highly exalted Him." Now last week, we saw clearly that Jesus, God the Son, was clearly God. As we looked in the Word, "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." And as we look at verse 9, we need to recognize Who is doing the exalting here. He says, "Therefore also God highly exalted Him." Christ did not exalt Himself; He lowered Himself and humbled Himself. Therefore, God highly exalted Him. The Father highly exalted Christ, His beloved Son in whom He was well pleased.

Now, this word translated "highly exalted" in Greek speaks of status. It speaks of being supremely exalted, to super exalt, really, in Greek. It speaks of putting someone in the most important, supreme position of honor. It was not just that Jesus was exalted by the Father, He was highly exalted to the most supreme position. And in Greek, the tense is such that it is an action completed in the past. The action of God highly exalting Christ is complete, and He now sits in the position of all authority. But there's one difference- before the incarnation, Christ was all-powerful and above all, highly exalted. And He lowered Himself, becoming humble to the point of death. But now, He is highly exalted. Not only being God but also being man. The God-man Jesus Christ has been highly exalted.

Now the Scriptures revealed this truth and foretold this truth. Psalm 45 verses 6-7.

⁶ Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of uprightness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. ⁷ Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated wickedness; Therefore God, Thy God, has anointed Thee with the oil of joy above Thy fellows. [Psalm 45:6-7]

Isaiah 52 right before Isaiah 53, "The suffering Servant". Isaiah 52 verse 13.

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¹³ Behold, My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up, and greatly exalted.

¹⁴ Just as many were astonished at you, My people, So His appearance was marred more than any man, And His form more than the sons of men. ¹⁵ Thus He will sprinkle many nations, Kings will shut their mouths on account of Him; For what had not been told them they will see, And what they had not heard they will understand. [Isaiah 52:13-15]

He says, "My servant will prosper, He will be high and lifted up, and greatly exalted." Now we ask, "When Christ was lifted up by the Father (It says in our passage, "Therefore God highly exalted Him), well, where did He highly exalt Christ to?"

¹⁴ Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. [Hebrews 4:14]

²⁶ For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; [Hebrews 7:26]

¹ God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. ³ And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high; [Hebrews 1:1-3]

Ephesians 1:19. Paul wanted them to know the results of knowing Christ better.

¹⁹ and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe. These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might ²⁰ which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, (and get this) ²¹ far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come. ²² And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, ²³ which is His body, the fulness of Him who fills all in all. [Ephesians 1:19-23]

The Father highly exalted Christ, He raised Him from the dead, ultimately, and Christ said, "I will raise Myself (ultimately) on the third day". And we see that He was placed far above all things. God therefore highly exalted Him. And we see this exaltation is because of the work that He did on the cross. We see that in Colossians 1:13.

¹³ For He (speaking of Christ) delivered us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. ¹⁵ And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. ¹⁶ For

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by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him. ¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. ¹⁸ He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead (speaking of His resurrection); so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. [Colossians1:13-18]

Because of what Christ did for you and I, God the Father highly exalted Him above all, and we'll see ultimately what that means.

And folks, one of our problems that we have every day is that Christ is not exalted in our hearts. He is lowly exalted or He is dethroned continually throughout the day as we exalt ourselves and our own wisdom and our own desires. When was the last time that you thought of Christ above everything? Folks, when you don't trust Christ to help you in the things He's proven and said He would be faithful, we're not exalting Christ; we're de-throning Him. When He makes a promise that says, "Fear not, for I am with you", do we believe that or do we lower Christ in our hearts and dishonor Him? Do you realize that we have the living Christ in us, the hope of glory, the One who is exalted above all things, is willing to live His life through you if you just let Him? The Lord of the universe, as we will see, the living Lord of the universe exalted above everything is willing to live His life through you.

Now, in our passage it says that we are to, in verse 5, we are to have the mind of Christ. And thus allow God, ultimately, to exalt us at the proper time. Now, in our passage, Paul is presenting the divine paradox that the world does not understand, that the way up is down. That the road to exaltation or glory comes through humble obedient service that will ultimately bring glory to God. That a cross proceeds the crown. That there are sufferings first for the glories to follow. Folks, that's not what a lot of churches are teaching. They're not teaching that it is through humble obedient servanthood that ultimately, then God would glorify His people in heaven.

Paul told the Romans that, "If indeed we suffer with Him, we will be glorified with Him." And Jesus showed by His example that the way up is down.

²⁵ But Jesus called them to Himself, and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. ²⁶ "It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; ²⁸ just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." [Matt 20:25-28]

You know, the humble obedient mindset is not coming to church to be served, and many people choose a church on how it will serve them. The mindset of Christ is coming to serve, not be served, James 4:10 and 1 Peter 4:6,

Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you. [James 4:10]

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Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time. [1 Peter 4:6]

It's not the proper time to be exalted, brothers and sisters; it is the time to be humble, to be obedient servants, to have this servant's mind which was in Christ Jesus. Now, the question arises at this point- "Is it wrong to be motivated by the fact that God will ultimately exalt His servants?" It is, if you see your exaltation apart from bringing glory to God, yes. But folks, if you realize that our exaltation and being glorified will ultimately glorify Christ, then it is not wrong to recognize that we're to humble ourselves before the mighty hand of God, and He will exalt us at the proper time. John writes in 1 John, sharing these truths that we should look forward to.

¹ See how great a love the Father has bestowed upon us, that we should be called children of God; and such we are. For this reason the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. ² Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we shall be. (We don't know what we're like, it hasn't appeared yet, what God is going to do through us in Christ. And he says-)We know that, when He appears, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him just as He is. ³ And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure. [1 John 3:1-3]

So then, in our passage we have the greatest contrast you will ever see- Jesus Christ humbling Himself, being obedient to the point of death and God the Father exalting Him above all.

And now, as we see this, we look in our text that as God exalted Him, we'll see that God also bestowed upon Him the Name above every name. Verse 8 back in Philippians 2,

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore also God highly exalted Him, (and the second thing here) and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, [Philippians 2:8-9]

This is a difficult passage to interpret; this is a difficult portion to understand, so really be focused and ask the Lord to give you understanding into this. And this leads us to the question that we need to ask, "What is "the Name" which is above all names?"

In a quick reading of this passage, we would say that that name is Jesus. But I think if we look at the text more closely, and we study it and divide it accurately, we're going to see that that's not it.

⁹ Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, [Philippians 2:9-10]

Now, just about every single commentator who has gone through this passage agrees that in the Greek text, Jesus is not the name that he is talking about here. And you say, "What? What are you talking about here?" First of all, our text points out that the name is not at the beginning of His incarnation. He

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was bestowed the name when God highly exalted Him, right? He said, "Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and (then) bestowed on Him the name." Well, this name of Jesus wasn't bestowed in His exaltation; it was bestowed in His incarnation. "You shall call Him Jesus." So there's a timing problem there, first of all.

And secondly, we see that in the Greek text this word "of Jesus" in verse ten is in a genitive. And you go, "Well, what in the world is a genitive?" Genitive simply speaks of possession, and in Greek you can say things different ways. I could say, for example, "Name of Bob." Or I could say, "Bob's name." Right? If I say, "Bob's name", I could actually be referring to another name that he is called by or I could be referring to Bob. So you could look at it this way, "That at the name of Jesus or i.e. at the name that Jesus possesses." His possessive name. That at the name that He possesses, every knee should bow.

And most every Greek scholar agrees that the phrase in verse 10 can mean "the name that Jesus possesses." Jesus's name. Speaking of the name He possesses. Not at the name of Jesus but at the name he possesses. And hear me out, I think if we continue through the text we're going to see that's what it's saying. Now, look at thirdly we see that He was given not a name in verse 9 but the name. "Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name." Was the name "Jesus" above every name when He came to earth? Was that a name above every name? Yeshua. There were other people named Yeshua. Is that truly the name that is above every name? Well, certainly Jesus is above everyone but is the name above every name? Now, what is the name? In light of context, 99.9% of those who comment on this passage say that the name is "The Lord." That the name is "The Lord." Listen to verse 9 again.

⁹ Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name (I believe "Which Jesus possesses") of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is (there's the name.) Lord, to the glory of God the Father. [Philippians 2:9-11]

At the name which Jesus, this One who came to earth; you looked at Him and He was in His humanity. You did not see His deity. And the name this Jesus possesses- Lord- every knee shall bow and every tongue shall confess. I believe that's what this passage is saying. Christ was given the name Jesus in the incarnation but was declared Lord at His exaltation. He was highly exalted and given the name of Lord.

Greg Herrick writes ,

God not only exalted Him, but more specifically, He gave Him the name that is above every other name. The term gave means "graciously given." The reference to the name serves the function of not only identifying Jesus, but also saying something specific about Him. It is the name of "Lord" (vs. 11 *kurios*) that was given to Him. Therefore, Jesus enters into the ruling functions of God himself. This name and all that goes with it was acquired not by selfish ambition, but by lowly submission and was, therefore,

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graciously given to Christ. He is enjoying that which was already His by right, but for which He never clung to selfishly.

³² "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. ³³ "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God (highly exalted, right? "Therefore"), and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear. ³⁴ "For it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'THE LORD SAID TO MY LORD, "SIT AT MY RIGHT HAND, ³⁵ UNTIL I MAKE THINE ENEMIES A FOOTSTOOL FOR THY FEET. "' ³⁶ "Therefore (the conclusion here) let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ-- this Jesus whom you crucified." [Acts 2:32-36]

You saw Him as a man, and you killed Him, and God has declared that He is the Christ and He is Lord. He has highly exalted Him because of His obedient submission to the point of death. Does that make sense? Now, some of you might be saying, "What is the big deal about the term Lord?" We kind of use that slang here, even as a last name for people or actors or whatever, is Lord. What's the importance of this term "Lord"? *Kurios* in Greek. And the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, the LXX, they take the word *kurios* and they use that every time they translate the Hebrew word "Yahweh" which is Lord in the Hebrew text. And the corresponding word Yahweh means, literally, "self-existent one". I AM. Yahweh where we get the mistransliteration "Jehovah". It's Yahweh. Remember what Moses said and what happened to him at the burning bush.

¹³ Then Moses said to God, "Behold, I am going to the sons of Israel, and I shall say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you.' Now they may say to me, 'What is His name?' What shall I say to them?" ¹⁴ And God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM"; (He said, "Yahweh.") and He said, "Thus you shall say to the sons of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" [Exodus 3:13-14]

The self-existent One, the great I AM, the One who needs no one or no thing. He exists completely, self-exists, the great I AM. Do you remember what Jesus said to the Pharisees in John 8:56 as He shared with them that Abraham rejoiced to see the Lord's Day?

⁵⁶ "Your father Abraham (Jesus says) rejoiced to see My day, and he saw it and was glad." (that's awesome.) ⁵⁷ The Jews therefore said to Him, "You are not yet fifty years old, and have You seen Abraham?" ⁵⁸ Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." [John 8:56-58]

Jesus claimed to be the I AM, He just didn't cling to His prerogative to display it as He took on human flesh, becoming a bond servant. And therefore, God highly exalted Him. And it says here in John 8:59, "Therefore they picked up stones to throw at Him; but Jesus hid Himself, and went out of the temple."

What is this passage saying, our passage in Philippians? Jesus, being God, is Lord of all. He has been given the title of deity and sovereignty, the Lord. He is the great I AM. He is the self-existent One who is

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sovereign and reigns over all. And though you did not see it in the incarnation, God has highly exalted Him and bestowed upon Him His rightful name. And ultimately, as we will see, that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess. One might well note that we do not declare that Jesus is Lord. It is God who declares that Jesus is Lord. Jesus is Lord whether you recognize it or not. We do not make Him Lord, He is the Lord. He has already been declared the Lord. And again, I share, if you would've looked at Jesus in the incarnation, it says He was in the form of a man, He was in a "morphe"- you would've seen just His servant hood. You would've seen that aspect of who He is. But because of His humility and His obedience to the point of death, God highly exalted Him and granted upon Him the name which is above all names. Christ Jesus is Lord.

Now, many of us can make the error of seeing Jesus only as He was in His humanity. You know that, "He's a buddy, He's my friend and I'm going to walk with Jesus and I'm going to give Him an elbow. I'm going to put my head on His breast like John." Right? Many of us can make that error. But the apostle John who did lay at Jesus's breast saw the risen Lord in His glory. We see that in Revelation chapter 1. And if you want to hold in Philippians and turn to Revelation chapter 1, we'll look at verse 10. The apostle John who was very close to Jesus in His humanity sees the risen, glorified Lord.

¹⁰ I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, ¹¹ saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." ¹² And I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands; ¹³ and in the middle of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His breast with a golden girdle. ¹⁴ And His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire; ¹⁵ and His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been caused to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters. ¹⁶ And in His right hand He held seven stars; and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength. (That's the Lord of the church. And the Lord of all.) ¹⁷ And when I saw Him, (I came up and gave Him a hug and gave Him a high five? No.) I fell at His feet as a dead man. (The glorified, risen Lord.) And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last, ¹⁸ and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades. [Revelation 1:10-18]

I was in a discipleship group with a pastor back at an old church, probably ten or so years ago. And I was severely rebuked and that stays in my memory. I was praying for the group, and I basically said every other word "And Lord", "And Lord, "And Lord, "And Lord. Just every other word. And after I was done, the pastor took me back and he said, "You know what? You use the Lord's name as a comma." And that convicted me greatly. We need to be careful and think about it. Sometimes we'll say, "And Lord, and Lord and Lord and Lord and Lord and Lord and Lord." Rather than recognizing who He is. He is the Sovereign over the universe, He is the Lord of all. And I want to ask you, "Do you see Jesus as the

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superior, exalted One or just your pal?" He is not just a friend. Yes, He is a friend; He is a gracious friend who condescends. He is a great High Priest who can sympathize with our weaknesses. And I praise Him for that but yet still also, as we see in Revelation and we see in this passage, God highly exalted Him far above. He is God. Thus, obey Him and serve Him. Do you call Him "Lord"? Then do what He says or don't call Him "Lord."

As we'll see, the question here is not whether He is the Lord God. It is; He is the Lord God. But the question is, will we bow before His Lordship or will we resist it? Now, we're going to see the purpose of His exaltation in verses 10 and 11. And let's look at this. Again, verse 9,

⁹ Therefore (That's because of His humility) also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus (Or I believe the name that Jesus possesses) every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. [Philippians 2:9-11]

Verse 10 begins with the phrase in Greek, *hina*. It means "that or so that" or "in order that". It is a purpose clause. Why did God highly exalt Him and bestow on Him the name of the Lord as sovereign? Two reasons. Two purposes. The first one: verse 10, "that at the name of every knee should bow." That every knee shall bow. That's the first purpose. That at the name, I believe, Jesus possesses every knee will bow. And the apostle Paul is quoting Isaiah 45, which Robert read for us earlier. A passage that clearly shows that the Lord God is the one being spoken of here, that every knee will bow and now we are seeing that it is Jesus here that every knee will bow to. Jesus is the Lord God.

²² "Turn to Me, and be saved, all the ends of the earth; (There's the invitation to anyone here who has rejected Christ. Turn to Me and be saved.) For I am God, and there is no other. (You're not God and there are no other gods.) ²³ "I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness, And will not turn back, That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance. [Isaiah 45:22-23]

That's the quote that Paul shares here from Isaiah. That everyone will give the Lord God allegiance, and now he is applying that to the context, to Christ. Everyone will give Him allegiance. God has highly, super-exalted Him and declared that He is Lord so that every knee will bow. Every knee will bow. Not almost every knee; every knee will bow. We didn't see it in the incarnation because of His humility. You may not recognize it now, but Christ is exalted far above, and He has been given the name above all names. The name that He possesses of Lord that every knee will bow.

Again, Greg Herrick writes,

Thus the passage is a powerful statement about Yahweh's regal supremacy. It is precisely this supremacy which is conferred on Jesus in Philippians 2:10-11. Paul says that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow and every tongue confess. In

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contemporary Christian circles the common misinterpretation of this passage is that the reference to the word name means specifically the name *Jesus*. But, it is the name *given to Jesus* which is the issue here. That name is "Lord" and *it is at that name* that all will bow and confess." It's at the name of the Lord. Psalm 2; pay homage to the Son lest He become angry. He's the Lord.

Now, he's not saying here that everyone will be saved. The Bible is clear that not all will be saved. Just because every knee is bowing doesn't mean that everyone bowing the knee is saved. Well, what does it mean by "bowing the knee"? Ultimately, it has the idea of paying homage to God. We only see this in part right now; we only see those who truly trust Christ for their salvation paying homage to God. There are a lot of Lord-speakers out there. "Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord." And a lot of disobedience. But the ones that truly bend their knees, the knees of their heart, to God, recognizing Him as Lord do that willingly now because of His grace. But there's a time when everyone will bow. And our passage shows us that there are three groups that will bow here.

First of all, he says "Those who are in heaven", and certainly this speaks of the redeemed, the righteous angels. It's possible it might speak of those who have access to heaven right now, those wicked angels. They're going to bow too, even though they have access to heaven. We see certainly in Job that Satan came before God. He had accesses, limited under God's sovereignty. But everyone in heaven will bow, and the redeemed will gladly bow their knees before the King of kings and Lord of lords. A gracious God who condescended to become like us. To live and suffer for us. To be like us except with no sin. To take on the punishment that we deserved. And then to be highly exalted. Highly exalted.

Well, what else? The second group- those on earth. So those in heaven are going to bow their knees. Those on earth, that's us right now, those on earth. We're right on earth right now. We're alive. There are believers and unbelievers, and everyone on earth will eventually someday bow before Jesus Christ the knee and declare that He, we will see, is the Lord God. And declaring "Lord" shows absolute submission. There is a gracious, willing submission now but there will be a forced submission in eternity for those who reject Christ. The righteous and the unrighteous, those who are on earth.

And the last- those who are under the earth. A phrase of those whose eternal fate has been sealed. Those who are awaiting final judgment. That would include the unrighteous dead in a place called Hades, as we see in Luke 16. It would also include certain fallen angels, we see in Jude 6, that are being kept under eternal bonds for the great day of judgment. The sad truth is that all who rejected Christ, refusing to bow during their life, will for eternity in eternal punishment bow to Him. But unfortunately, there will be no chance for redemption.

One pastor put it this way,

Wouldn't it be horrible to spend your life rebelling against Jesus Christ, only to spend all eternity bowing your knees to Him, anyway? One thing is sure. There will be no rebellion in hell. All will submit to Jesus Christ. Everyone will then know that He is the only Savior, but for those who did not trust Him in this life it will be too late. Still, for all

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eternity in hell, as they suffer eternal condemnation, they will pay Him homage and give Him glory. [Unknown]

Folks, every knee will bow. Dwight Pentecost writes,

Here is an amazing revelation that, because of the exaltation of Jesus Christ, even the fallen, unredeemed angels, and unredeemed, sinful men, who are under eternal condemnation, will have to bow before the display of the majesty of the Son of God and acknowledge that the One they despised and rejected is in truth the exalted Son of God. While in their state of separation and condemnation they cannot believe to the salvation of their souls, throughout the unending ages of eternity, even hell itself will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and acknowledge that the despised and rejected One whom they delighted to put to the cross was in truth the absolute Sovereign of the universe. And God will not leave one single created intelligent being who does not admit to the superior worth of Jesus Christ. Things in heaven, things in earth, and things under the earth will bow the knee in reverence and respect and awe at the majesty of the exalted person of Jesus Christ.

That's what's going to happen. Bow your knee now to the Lord. Don't just give Him the lip service "Lord, Lord" and do your own thing. He is the Lord, and He's a gracious Lord. He's a good God to serve. If you submit yourself to Him, it's wonderful. He's a good God. He's not an evil task master, He's a gracious Lord, wonderful, wonderful God. You can bow before Him now willingly or you will bow before Him in eternal punishment. And that's what this passage is saying.

So, God highly exalted Him and gave Him the name which is above all names, that everyone should bow and secondly, let's look at our text. There's another thing. Verse 10, "that (the purpose) at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, (and here's the second reason) and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Second statement- every tongue. Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of the Father. Paul uses the word that is an intense form of "confess". It means to openly or plainly confess. It means to publicly declare. Every tongue will publicly declare that Jesus is Lord. Jesus Christ is Lord. And right now, folks, only the truly redeemed confess that Jesus is Lord. Only the redeemed do so right now. That's how we got saved. Romans 10- Paul shares that by acknowledging that Christ is Lord and what He did for us. Romans chapter 10. Turn with me for a second to Romans chapter 10. We just went through this a few months ago in the Romans study. Romans 10 verse 8. As Paul is addressing the unbelief of the Jews, he points out that it wasn't God's fault that they don't believe. The Word was near them.

⁸ But what does it say? "THE WORD IS NEAR YOU, IN YOUR MOUTH AND IN YOUR HEART"-- that is, the word of faith which we are preaching, (and here you go) ⁹ that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; ¹⁰ for with the heart man believes, resulting in

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righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. ¹¹ **For the Scripture says, "WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM WILL NOT BE DISAPPOINTED." [Romans 10:8-11]**

Obviously the act of believing includes an eternal, and ultimately an external, confession at some time of the fact that Jesus is Lord. You can't be saved by a Jesus that isn't Lord. You can't be saved by a Jesus who you don't really believe is God. You can't be saved by a Jesus that you don't believe is the sovereign over the universe. And he says, verse 12,

12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; for the same Lord is Lord of all, abounding in riches for all who call upon Him; 13 for "WHOEVER WILL CALL UPON (The name of my buddy?) THE NAME OF THE LORD WILL BE SAVED." [Romans 10:12-13]

Some of you today have a salvation based on a Jesus of your own image. He's not the Lord in your life; you don't believe He's the Lord. You never did. You were in a fix and you called out for salvation to get yourself out of that fix. Some of you have called upon a fix-me-up Jesus for salvation. Some of you have called on a Jesus that just has merely a plan for your life. Some of you have called upon a Jesus that you don't truly see as Lord. Paul says, "Whoever will call upon the name of the Lord will be saved." And if you truly believe He is Lord, you will ultimately speak those words at some time; you will ultimately confess that truth. Call upon Him now. He willingly came; He graciously came. He lived the perfect life. He is the Lord, and He came in grace and mercy. And you need salvation; we all do for there are none righteous, not even one. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

Now, I need to give you one caveat here. This is not a formula for salvation. "I will confess Jesus as I start saying words or mantras." It is a declaration of a heart that He is truly Lord which will ultimately come out in our speech. From whatever is in the heart proceeds from our mouths. And we will see ultimately that those in eternity will, from their hearts, recognize the truth that Jesus is Lord. But it will be too late.

Scott Grant writes,

God exalted Christ with the intention that every knee bow and every tongue confess. Some of us are bowing and confessing willingly and joyfully. It cannot be said, however, that every knee is now bowing and every tongue is now confessing. When Christ returns, everyone will acknowledge his lordship, willingly or unwillingly.

Folks, Jesus was exalted and given the name of Lord so that everyone would bow their knee and confess that He is Lord. And ultimately, we see the final result of that. Again, verse 9.

⁹ Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus (or I believe "the name He possesses) every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, (and here you go) to the glory of God the Father. [Philippians 2:9-11]

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There is one God, eternally revealed in three Persons- Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And when it comes down to it, that when Christ is exalted in His proper place, God the Father is glorified. To the glory of the Father. When every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, God the Father will be glorified. Folks, there are many Christians (maybe yourself and maybe us at times) who say, "We want to bring glory to God." But we don't understand what brings glory to God. Here, the bowing of one's knee and the confession of His true Lordship brings God glory. Want to glorify God? Bow your knee to Christ. Why do you say, "Lord, Lord" and not do what I say? Bow your knee and acknowledge Him willingly and that will glorify Christ and glorify God the Father ultimately.

So at this point, let's look at some applications to this passage. First of all, we never want to apply a passage apart from its intended meaning, and Paul is intending to use this passage to unify the church in the mind of Christ. A mindset of humility and submissive obedience. The entire passage is calling for us to have this mind that was exemplified by Christ. The mindset of humility, allowing God to exalt at the proper time, not exalting self. Not exalting self.

So many problems in the church would be resolved if we would not exalt self. The pastor would be just a pastor rather than the senior pastor. He would become a servant of God and others, feeding and tending the sheep, watching out as commanded by the Word- John 20, Acts 20, 2 Timothy 4, Ephesians 4. The people would not come to church to be served but to serve as commanded by the Word of God through the Lord- 1 Peter 4:10-11, Romans 12, 2 Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4. Unity would not come through the strong opinions or personalities but would come through humble submission to His Spirit and His Word. And the list goes on.

Christ was obedient to the point of death. We are to have this mind that was in Christ Jesus. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you at the proper time.

Well, what are some secondary applications? Jesus Christ is the great I AM. He is the Lord God. You can willingly bow now or be forced later. Some of you think He is Lord but you may find yourself that day saying, "Lord, Lord" and He saying, "Depart from me; I never know you, you who practice lawlessness." Is your life a life of sin and self-desire? That's what He'll say.

Luke 6:46

⁴⁶ "Why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say? ⁴⁷ Everyone who comes to Me and hears My words and acts on them (Jesus says) , I will show you whom he is like: ⁴⁸ he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid a foundation on the rock; and when a flood occurred, the torrent burst against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. ⁴⁹ But the one who has heard and has not acted accordingly, is like a man who built a house on the ground without any foundation; and the torrent burst against it and immediately it collapsed, and the ruin of that house was great."

You're facing great ruin if you don't bow your knee now and I want to encourage you to come before the Lord of the universe, Jesus Christ, who bore your sins in His body on the cross and believe in Him.

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Place your faith in Him. You will bow and acknowledge Him either now or later. You can do it in grace. You can do it under judgment.

Prayer

Father, I thank You for Your Word. Thank You so much that it is this mindset of Your Son which is so unfathomable. This mindset that He did not consider equality a thing to be grasped but humbled Himself to the point of death, becoming obedient to the point of death. Becoming a bondservant. Father, I pray that we would have this mind which was in Christ Jesus, that we would obey this command. That we would truly see Him as Lord and obey Him and do what He says and serve Him with gladness, Lord God. And Father, I pray for those that You know, You know the hearts here, Lord God, You know who is willingly acknowledging You and You know who isn't. I pray for anyone who is not acknowledging You, that they would be terrified, Lord God, at the consequences that You have clearly warned of in Your Word. And that they would willingly bow before You, trust in Your Son Jesus Christ, a gracious loving God who came for us and died for us. Father, I pray that we would be a body of believers that submits to Christ as Lord. So that you will be glorified. I pray this in Jesus' name.

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