

Philippians 2:5-11

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[0 : 00] Shall we pray, Heavenly Father, we give thanks for this grand text that is before us today and for your people that sit in this place.

We pray, O God, that you would be glorified through the proclamation, the practice of your word. We pray these things in Christ's name. Amen.

Amen. The text on this morning begins with one of the favorite Philippian verses. Perhaps you've memorized Philippians 2 and 5.

I did so many years ago in the King James Version. Let this mind be in you, which is also in Christ Jesus.

What does this verse do? It compels us, does it not, for the Christians or for the Christian community to mimic the mind of Christ.

[1 : 06] That's what it does. That's the exhortation that we see, that you and I, as followers of Christ, as citizens of heaven, that we would mimic the mind of Christ.

It crosses the grain of nature, who we are from within, as well as culture from without.

The mindset of this world order clashes with what we see in verse 5. Consider the following pairs, if you will.

What in the pair appeals most to you? Up or down? More or less?

Winning or losing? Rags or riches? Success or failure? Victory or defeat? Power or weakness?

[2 : 14] Glory or shame? It's not difficult to answer that question, is it? For any of us. For most of us, up is more appealing than down.

More is preferred over less. Victory has a nice ring to it. Defeat is just a thud, if you will. Think of your pursuits and my pursuits.

We pursue higher education. And we love to climb the corporate ladder. We aspire to upward mobility.

We are about the business of gaining and maintaining for the sake of self-fulfillment, recognition, and achievement.

May we beware of lesser things at the expense of greater things. What we see here in our text is a call to a different posture.

[3 : 21] And the model for what we see is Christ himself. Now, understand, when it calls for us to mimic the mind of Christ, though the word here sometimes can be rendered think, it's more than just a thinking, a mental process.

What's in view here is an attitude, a mindset, an internal disposition. It is a life direction, a life orientation, if you will. The disposition that we see in Christ and understand to be in him and of him is foundational for the community that is called by his name.

The text here calls for Christians to be carbon copies of Christ, both in the community and in the world. Bishop Charles Harrison Mason was the founder of the churches of God in Christ.

I became a Christian when I was a teenager. Bishop Mason had died a few years before that. But he was a legend of sorts and his reputation preceded him.

There were many who wanted to be like the bishop. Many who wanted to mimic him, mimic him in his words, mimic him in his dress.

[4 : 48] He had this really thin black bow tie. And of course, one day I got me a thin black bow tie.

I wanted to be like the bishop. He was a hero for many. There was a 45 RPM record. Some of you don't know anything about that.

But there was a 45 RPM record with the bishop praying. It's on YouTube now. I listened to it a few years ago. Same recording.

But the bishop was in earnest prayer before God. And just ministering and praying under the power of the Holy Spirit.

And my friend Jordan Houston and I, we used to listen to that record. And guess what we also began to mimic? We began to mimic the bishop's praying. His style. And his words.

[5 : 49] Here we're called to mimic Christ. We're called to mimic his disposition. What was it that characterized the mindset of Christ?

Well, if there was a question as to the fundamental of Christ's orientation, his attitude and his disposition, the verses that follow in the text address such an inquiry.

Don't you love it now that we have arrived? One person told me this morning he has been waiting for this particular text. Here we arrive at the theological high ground of the letter.

Huh? And here we get a glimpse of Christ in full color. He is beheld. Whether the words of verses 6 through 11 are originally Paul's words or the words of an early Christian hymn, that's not ultimately the important thing, is it?

What we knew, know, and sense is the very superb lyrical quality that matches the lofty subject matter that's here.

[6 : 58] Poetry has a way of saying things better, more clean, sometimes rather mystically, but also it can put color to words in a way that prose just doesn't do it.

The division is quite clear, is it not? What? Verses 6, 7, and 8 speak of Christ's humiliation. Verses 9 through 11 speak of his exaltation.

And let's know verses 6 through 8, where we find the answer to what was it that characterized the mind of Christ. This, in turn, answers the question, what should characterize those of us who are called by his name?

What is the mindset that you and I as followers of Christ as citizens of heaven should characterize our disposition? Look at the first thing. We see it in verse 6, do we not?

The mindset of Christ is a mindset of surrender. Look there. Look there. Who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.

[8 : 10] Did you know in verse 6 there is an affirmation of the godness or the deity of Christ? The text says that he was in the form of God.

Now, at the first glance, it may be a little tempting to think, well, he was less than God, though he had the appearance of God. Huh? No, that's not. But he wasn't really God.

Well, it's quite the opposite, really. Commentator Hendrickson notes that the word translated form or morphe in this text refers to the inner, essential, and abiding nature of a person or thing.

Huh? Christ being in the form of God speaks to his being God in nature, by nature. It's an affirmation of his deity.

But also we see here there is a surrender of the privileges of his godness. Even though he is God by nature, the mission demanded that he not function in accord with his godness.

[9 : 22] Huh? And the first thing we see is that we notice this Christ's willingness not to hold on to the privileges of his status as God.

Another way of saying it is that he was open-handed. Huh? He versus grasping the prerogatives of his godness, of his deity. Huh? Huh?

The mission called for the surrender of such. That's what he did. Huh? For some years now, there's been a very delightful program on television called Undercover Boss.

Huh? Perhaps some of you have seen it. The company owner or executive disguises himself and sort of descends into the work world.

Huh? Ordinary worker. They dress down. Sometimes they put on a disguise and enter the work world of the rank and file. They forego some of the perks and privileges of their position in order to investigate what's going on, what's really happening in the workplace.

[10 : 31] Well, Jesus is the first Undercover Boss, folks. He comes down. He dressed down, if you will. Well, relinquished the privileges of his position for the sake of those that he came to save.

Huh? What's characterizing the mindset of Christ? It is, first of all, an attitude of surrender. But that's not all. Look at verse 7. He made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

The second thing, it is a mindset or an attitude of servanthood. Huh? Verse 6 deals with his eternal essence, his godness or his deity.

Verse 7 deals with his earthly existence, his humanity. And the text says that he made himself nothing. Oh, it's the same word that some translations say he emptied himself. And King James, don't you love him? He made himself of no reputation. Huh? How was it that he made himself nothing or emptied himself, if you will?

[11 : 37] The next phrase explains it. Huh? By taking upon himself the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of man.

The work clothes of Jesus was his humanity. And I love the way that J.I. Packer has expressed it as it relates to the incarnation.

It was addition without subtraction. Huh? It was the adding of his humanity to his deity. And in one person you have, and only one person in all of history can be described as the God-man himself. Addition. Without subtraction in the incarnation, humanity was added without diminishing anything of Christ's godness.

Huh? For the purpose of the mission, if you will, Jesus took the form of a servant to serve the very purposes of the God. Huh?

[12 : 41] The writer of Hebrews put it this way. Since, therefore, the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things that he, through death, might destroy the one who has the power of death.

That is the devil. Jesus on mission to save people like you and me. Huh? Have you embraced him? Huh? Have you received that salvation? Won't you receive that salvation? Maybe even do so today. An attitude of surrender of the rights that were his by nature. An attitude of servanthood for the purpose of mission. But then notice also, and we see this in verse 8.

It was a mindset of sacrifice. Huh? And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

[13 : 53] Huh? Huh? Have you noticed the progression of the poem or the hymn? From heaven to earth.

It's a downward movement. Huh? Privileges relinquish. God becomes man. Then within the domain of his humanity, he didn't come to be served, but he came to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.

Huh? Huh? The attitude of sacrifice characterized the Lord Jesus the whole of his earthly life. His entry into our humanity meant the sacrifice of honor, the sacrifice of respect, the sacrifice of praise, and the adoration that is rightly his by reason of his being God.

His birth was a humble birth. His parents were humble parents. Huh? He lived a life of humble service. His was an earthly, humble existence.

He himself is recorded as saying, The foxes have holes, the birds of the air have nests, but the son of man doesn't have anywhere to lay his head. His ministry was financed by women of means.

[15 : 11] Huh? When he had to pay taxes, he sent one of his disciples to go fishing for money. Huh? Humble servant king.

He could have worn the best clothes, eaten the finest meals, commanded armies, ruled over empires. Though God, he did not function as God. Quite the opposite.

His was a life of sacrifice. The mindset of Christ. Surrender. Servanthood. Sacrifice.

And since it's not simply so that we could, this poem is not simply so we could worship Christ, and hopefully we do, but it concerns not simply our worship, but it also concerns our walk, how we live. Surrender. Servanthood. Sacrifice. Huh? So, the life of Jesus was a lifetime of obedience that ended in the obedience, listen to this, of his cross work.

[16 : 17] And that's what we find ourselves in. Verse 8. His heavenly humility. Huh? It was the humility of God.

Huh? God himself. Huh? God expresses it yet again in sacrificial, our Lord expresses it in sacrificial obedience.

He expressed the humility of God. The humility of Christ was the humility of God. Huh? Charles Wesley expressed the mystery in these words.

Tis mystery all. The immortal dies. The immortal dies. How oxymoronic is that? Who can explore his strange desire?

In vain the firstborn seraph tries to sound the depths of love divine. Tis mercy all. Let earth adore. But angel minds inquire no more.

[17 : 21] Here it is. Here it is. Amazing love. How can it be that thou, my God, just die for me? Even death.

Death on the cross. The attitude of Christ is an attitude of sacrifice. The offering of his life for the eternal well-being of others expresses that so, so clearly.

Crucifixion. What a horrible way to die. A death that was reserved for non-Romans and the lowest persons in society by definition of the day.

You know what we would call that? Cruel and unusual punishment. And it was nothing less than that. Christ's humiliation. Verses 6 through 8.

And there's one word, friends, that characterizes this movement. It's mystery. And if that is, in fact, the case mystery, verses 6 through 8, guess what characterizes verses 9 through 11?

[18 : 23] Majesty. That exaltation of Christ, chapter 2, verses 9 through 11. Majesty. There's several majestic things that come into focus in verses 9 through 11.

The majesty, first of all, of exaltation and coronation in verse 9. Listen. Therefore, God is highly exalted and bestowed on him the name that is above every name.

Ah, here it is. The Father highly exalts him. A word only used here in the New Testament.

And it could have well been a word that Paul coined himself. Here we see in verse 9 what Jesus prayed for in John chapter 17. The resumption of the glory that he had with the Father before the world was.

Huh? And in Ephesians chapter 1, we see a commentary on what it means to be highly exalted.

Just so you haven't turned this morning. Turn over to Ephesians chapter 1.

[19 : 32] Look at verses 19 through 23. You want to know what it means to be highly or super exalted? Paul, in his prayer, gives us a glimpse of what that is.

Verses 19 through 23. And what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the working of his great might.

Here it is. That he worked in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places.

Check this language out. For above all rule and authority and power and dominion and above every name that is named. Not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

And he put all things. Here it is. Super exaltation. He put all things under his feet, gave him his head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him who feels all in all the majesty of exaltation and coronation.

[20 : 41] The humiliation is over. The despised and rejected one is now the high and exalted one. And with the exaltation of Christ, there's also in the earthly realm, the bestowal of a name and in the heavenly realm, that every name he has given him a name, bestowed upon a name that is above every name.

Peter in his message in Acts chapter 2 speaks of the father's action and the vindication of Christ in this way. Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus, whom you crucified.

The name that is bestowed is the name that was his from eternity. The Lord said unto my Lord, sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your foot stews.

The name Lord identifies him with the God of the Old Testament, as in both senses, both in his personal name, Yahweh, as well as in the name of respect, Adonai.

Both of them translated in the Septuagint as Kurios, Lord. The majesty and exaltation of our Christ.

[22 : 05] But then there's the majesty of universal worship in verses 10 and 11. Can you listen to what this says? So 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 is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Picture this worship scene, this revelation in kind. No one will be standing. A few weeks ago I went out to exercise.

And it took me a month to recover. Knees just aren't what they used to be. But guess what? Arthritic knees will bow on that day.

Every knee is going to bow. And every tongue is going to confess. All tongues confessing. All knees bowing.

All intelligent life in every realm. Worshipping Jesus as Lord. Huh? Isn't that the confession? Jesus is Lord. Now the confession of a Roman citizen is that Caesar is Lord.

[23 : 21] Such a confession for the believers in the Roman Empire could not be swallowed. Stomached, if you will. Even if it costs them their lives to not give that kind of confession.

But here is the confession. Your confession, friends, if you're part of, if you are a citizen of heaven. And my confession. The confession of the church.

The confession of Christians that Jesus is Lord. Huh? And we recognize him, huh? We recognize that Jesus is to be according. The worship according to Jesus is the worship that Isaiah speaks of as being according to God.

In Isaiah chapter 45. Turn to me and be saved all the ends of the earth. For I'm God and there's no other. By myself I've sworn from my mouth it has gone out in righteousness.

The word shall not return to me. This is Yahweh in the Old Testament. Every knee shall bow. This same thing is being according to Jesus. Every knee is going to bow. Jesus is God. He's Lord.

[24 : 23] Huh? And that name, title Lord, is the name that is above every name. Huh? Huh? That is his name.

The majesty of universal worship. But then there's the majesty of Jesus Christ to the glory of God the Father. Ah, you see that in 11b. The confession of the Lordship of Christ is not in opposition to the Father.

Quite the contrary. The confession of Jesus as Lord is to the glory of God the Father. Oh, did you hear the words of the songs that we sang this morning?

At the name of Jesus, tis the Father's pleasure that we should call him Lord, who from the beginning was the mighty word.

Huh? Huh? The Lord's table awaits us this morning, friends. But before we partake together, I want us to consider some of the implications of our text today.

[25 : 27] Huh? Not simply for worship, but also for their walk. And it's for the same for you and me. We are to mimic the mindset of Christ.

The selflessness of Christ is the pattern for Christian posture in this world. For you and me. Huh? The text and the context encourage a culture of Christ-mindedness.

Christian community is to be a culture of selflessness. After the example of Jesus, who visualized this aspect of God's character.

Our God is a humble God. Jesus shows us that. Christian culture is a culture of Christ-like selflessness.

That includes surrender and servanthood and sacrifice after his example. So I ask you this morning, what might the Lord be asking you to surrender?

[26 : 28] Husbands, what might the Lord be asking you to let go? Or parents or children here this morning?

What might the Lord be asking you to hold back on? You may feel that it's yours by rights. But what might you need to be releasing or relinquishing today?

Or who might the Lord be asking you to serve? What lowly task might the Lord be asking you to do? Whose feet, and that might even be literally, might the Lord be asking you to wash? Who do you need to serve?

Whose world do you need to enter into? Who, where do you need, where do your feet need to go? Where do your hands need to serve?

[27 : 35] Huh? Or what might the Lord be asking you to sacrifice for the good of others? Huh? Christian community is the context in which Christ's mindset is mimicked.

Huh? Huh? Oh, then the words. The servant king. So let us learn how to serve. And in our lives enthroned him.

Each other's needs to prefer. For it is Christ. That we are serving. Huh? Oh, but then there's something else that you need to know from this text.

The God who exalted Christ who came so low can be trusted to do what is right. Huh? God exalted him.

Christ humbled himself. But the Father exalted him. The God who vindicated his son will do what is right for those who follow in the steps of his son.

[28 : 40] Huh? You may think that you're losing. But your losing can actually be gain. For God's glory and for your good.

Huh? Leaving the results of our humble surrender and servanthood and sacrifice to him. He knows what he's doing.

Huh? What am I saying this morning? Simply this. Huh? The selfishness of Christ is the pattern for the Christian's posture in this world.

That's for you. That's for me. Today. Father, we give you praise and honor and worship. And as we go into communion.

This marvelous meal. That pictures what we have spoken about today. Christ. God.

[29 : 38] God. Becoming man. For the purpose. For the purpose. Of entering into our world. And dying for our sins. Lord Jesus.

We bless you. This morning. And give thanks to you. God. God. as well as what the father did your exaltation blessed be your name the words of institution this morning are found in first corinthians chapter 11 and this is how they read as we prepare ourselves may as we come for this meal may we be strengthened in our resolve and in our commitment to mimic the mindset of christ that we see in today's text this is what it says for i receive from the lord what i also deliver to you that the lord jesus on the night in which he was betrayed took bread and when he had given thanks he broke it and said this is my body the body of god made flesh which is for you do this in remembrance of me in the same way he took the cup after saying after supper saying this cup is the new covenant in my blood do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me if you have trusted jesus christ as lord and savior this meal is for you and we welcome you to the table both to remember jesus and to be strengthened by him if you're not yet trusted jesus as lord and savior the meal has little to no meaning for you right now we'd ask that you would continue to worship with us but the table is for those who have embraced him welcome to the table this morning david's coming and we're going we're delighted to be able to serve you today you