

Philippians 1:27-2:11 "The Humiliation of God"

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[0 : 00] Hi, my name is George Sinclair. I'm the lead pastor of Church of the Messiah.

! It is wonderful that you would like to check out some of the sermons done by Church of the Messiah, either by myself or some of the others. Listen, just a couple of things. First of all, would you pray for us that we will open God's Word well to His glory and for the good of people like yourself?

The second thing is, if you aren't connected to a church and if you are a Christian, we really, I would really like to encourage you to find a good local church where they believe the Bible, they preach the gospel, and if you have some trouble finding that, send us an email. We will do what we can to help connect you with a good local church wherever you are. And if you're a non-Christian, checking us out, we're really, really, really glad you're doing that. Don't hesitate to send us questions. It helps me actually to know, as I'm preaching, how to deal with the types of things that you're really struggling with. So God bless.

But let's pray. Father, sometimes we hear your Word and get offended by it. Sometimes, Father, we hear your Word and don't get offended by it, but probably that's just because we're not paying attention. But we know, Father, that you only confront us because you desire to connect with us. And so, Father, we ask that you would give us ears to hear this morning and minds to understand. And grant us, Father, hearts that desire to believe and knees that are willing to bend to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. So, Father, we ask that your Holy Spirit would do that gentle but wonderful work in each of our lives. And we ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. Please be seated.

[2 : 05] So, yesterday afternoon was a nice day. I got to do one of my favorite things to do in life. I'm joking, by the way, which is to pick up dog poop in the afternoon from our backyard.

I cut the grass for the first time yesterday. Louise had started to cut the grass a bit on Friday, and I finished the job. It really had probably needed to be cut for at least a week.

But every time I had time to cut the grass, it rained. So I told people that it was God's will that I not cut the grass that particular day. That's my story, and I'm sticking to it. But finally, yesterday, God granted a beautiful sunny day. No more excuses. And it is Mother's Day today, and we're having company, so I cut the grass. The front of the yard is no particular problem. The back of the yard, I have two particular problems cutting the back. First of all is we have two large dogs. Now, that's not the problem. They don't harass me while I cut the grass. In fact, they, well, they can bug me because they want to be petted too much, but that's how they bug me. But that means before I cut the grass, there's dog toys, balls, sticks, bits of chew toys. You get the picture scattered all over the yard. So, because it's not any good to grow over a tennis ball or some hard plastic thing. First, I go throughout the whole yard picking up all that stuff and putting it somewhere. And then, of course, there's something that comes from the other end of the dog that has to be dealt with, namely the poop. And you go along with a bag, picking it all up and getting rid of it. And then I can cut the grass. Now, I mention all of this because if I was to say to you, to begin this sermon by saying, I always think, I always hate picking up the dog poop. It's so below me. It's so beneath me. All of you would say, oh, come on, George, get a grip. It's your dog.

It's just a dog. Pick up the poop. It's not beneath you. Are you really, it would be a sign of deep arrogance, wouldn't it, on my part? On the other hand, and of course, this is unbelievably hypothetical, but just think about it for a second, that while maybe I'm in the house after, I always cut the front yard first for a variety of reasons. I'm in the house having a glass of water before going out to deal with the toys, the poop, and the grass. And I come out and there's this elderly English man dressed in rough clothes. And as he turns to me and as he speaks, I realize it's King Charles III picking up my dog poop in the backyard. Now, Louise had let him in. Now, of course, different things would go through your mind. Of course, the first one is that this must obviously be a hoax. It

can't possibly be King Charles III in my backyard picking up dog poop.

But let's say for whatever reason, he was able to show me that he in fact was King Charles III for some reason in the backyard picking up my dog poop. Well, then the second thing that would go through your mind if it wasn't a hoax is that there must be somebody trying like me, they're trying to humiliate him because it really, we would all say it's beneath Charles III's dignity in place to pick up dog poop in my backyard. And so you'd wonder, are there terrorists who've kidnapped the royal family and are going to kill them if he doesn't do this? Are they videotaping it so that it will go on YouTube to be broadcast to the whole world to show how the terrorists have humiliated King Charles III?

[5 : 31] And if you end up realizing that there's no thing, the only other thing that could possibly come upon you is that you need to call 911 because King Charles III has gone completely lunatic and lost his mind.

And he's wandered away from his carekeepers and is in my backyard picking up dog poop. Because he'd obviously be insane. Keep that in mind as we read our Bible text today. Because it actually, believe it or not, all of those help you to understand this text. It's a text that if you start to understand it on one level, the first part of it is very implausible and also very, very confusing. And the second part of it is if you understand it, and in fact, actually the first, the second part would be two things for most people. They both say that it's offensive and also say that it's very predictable. Just the sort of thing you think the Christians would talk about. In fact, people would expect the second thing of Christians and surprised at the first part because it's implausible. And I've maybe lost some of you, but here's the bottom line. I'm going to show you why that's the reaction that people would have to it. But the bottom line is this, that when you get and actually hear what it's saying, it is the most profoundly beautiful and wonderful news you have ever heard in your life. It is the most profoundly beautiful and wonderful news that anybody has ever heard, and it's true. So let's look. Get out your Bibles. It's Philippians chapter 2, and we're beginning at verse 5. And it goes like this. And we're beginning at verse 5 because verse 5 is a bit of a hinge verse. It says, have this mind among yourselves which is yours in

Christ Jesus. And in some ways that hinge verse, verse 5, is why the verses 6 to 11, which Monique read, and I'm about to have us read through, that's what illuminates the whole book of Philippians. It's what explains what goes before and what comes afterwards is verses 6 to 11. It's the lens by which we're to understand sexuality, money, power, prestige, precision, being in our culture. It's how we start to understand things if you've given your life to Christ. So it begins verse 5, have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus. Now here's verses, you'll see basically verses 6 to 8 talk about a descent and 9 to 11 and ascent. But here's the first bit which is, well, you'll see what I mean by it's implausible when we understand it and confusing because of the language. It goes like this, verse 6, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. And you say, okay, okay, yeah, George, what's, well, here's, here's the thing if we slow down and read it and, and think about it for a second. Listen to verse 6 again.

Who though he was in the form of God. Well, what does that mean? Like, why does, is that trying to say that he's God? But it actually sounds like he's saying that Jesus isn't God. Aren't Christians supposed to believe that Jesus is God? So why would it say form of God and rather not just God? And then it says here, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped. Like, does that, so is it saying that Jesus is equal to God? Or is it saying that grasp is something that he's trying to grasp? He's trying to reach up and to become equal with God? Or is it saying that, good grief, that God the Father made Jesus get, go to the cross? And he was hanging on to the throne and saying, God, Daddy, Daddy, don't send me down there. Like, what does it mean to say he's grasped? It's not, what does that mean, that grasping thing? It's confusing. And then verse 7, emptied himself? Like, what did, like, how did he empty himself? Does that mean that he stopped being God when he became a human being? But don't Christians believe that Jesus is both fully God and fully man? And I know that's confusing, but George, it sounds here as if he stopped being God. And what do you mean by taking the form of a servant? Does that mean he's just sort of pretending to be a servant? And what about being born in the likeness of men? That doesn't make any sense. Is it saying that he's like a robot that just looks like a human being, but he's actually a robot? You know

what I mean? Like, if you saw somebody and say, oh, that's not a human being, it's just a robot, or it's just a cyborg. It's just, you know, some other type of science fiction thing. It's not actually a human being. It just looks like a human being. Is that what it's saying about Jesus? And then what about verse 8, when it says, found in human form, and being found in human form? Like, what's going on there? Is it sort of like he had amnesia, and he wakes up and finds you somewhere? Is it like, I don't know how many of you have ever been operated on and been knocked out?

[10:31] I don't know how many years ago now, 15 years ago or something now, I had a hernia operation, and to do that, they knock you out. And it's really odd, because they tell you, start counting, I think backwards, I don't remember, I can't remember if it was 10 or 100, start counting backwards, and I think I got to 6, and the next thing I know, because you go to sleep so quickly, the next thing I know, I'm awake in a different room, looking at a different person. So is it sort of saying something like that happened to Jesus? Like something gave him like amnesia, and the next thing he knows, he wakes up and he's a human being, so he decides he's going to do something about it? And then of course we get the rest of it, but except that word there, 8, in verse 8, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to the point of death. Like, so is he forced to do this? Even death on a cross?

And that word humbled, by the way, it's interesting. The scholars say that humbled is too weak a word, maybe humiliated is too strong a word, but it's somewhere between being humbled and being humiliated.

So he humiliated himself? What's going on? Okay, well, we get the point, generally. Actually, if you could put up the first point, Claire, that would be really helpful. God, the Son of God, humbled himself going from his heavenly throne to a womb, a cradle, to be a laborer, and to a cross and a grave. Maybe the laborer word isn't up there. God, the Son of God, humbled himself going from his heavenly throne to a womb, a cradle, a cross, and a grave.

So what the first part of that language is all trying to get, and if you really want to be nerded out, you can read academic commentaries. They expend pages and pages and pages on this, trying to get through the technical language. But it's trying to preserve three profound truths for us. And the first profound truth is that God, the Son of God, always remains fully God and equal with God, and he never loses this. He doesn't lose it when he takes into himself our human nature. He doesn't lose it when he's a zygote in the womb of Mary. He doesn't lose it when he's born in the cradle. He doesn't lose it when he goes around walking and eating and talking. He doesn't lose it when he dies on the cross. He doesn't lose it when he goes to the grave. Jesus always remains God, the Son of God, fully God and fully equal. And then the other thing about this, and so what it's basically telling you in verse 6 is that the question is going to be, what will God do to save human beings like you and me? And so the fundamental image there is not that God, the Son of God, stops being God, but that in a sense he disrobes. He takes a different status and he appears differently than what would be normally proper. So you see for a second here that it's as if it's of my status. It is not beneath me to pick up the dog poop in the backyard of my yard.

[13:40] That's not beneath me. That fits with my status. But it wouldn't fit with the status of King Charles. That's how we would all accept it. We might say he should pick up the dog poop in his own backyard or something like that, but probably even then most of the people would say, no, no, no, no, George.

That's for a servant to do that. So what it's describing is that God, the Son of God, remaining God, sets aside all of his appearance as God, all of the prerogatives, and in a sense what he's going to do is going to change status. On one level, of course, his status is still God, the Son of God, but he's going to take a different status. And what does that describe? That's what's described in verses 7 and 8. And there all of the verbs communicate that God, the Son of God, does this himself. He humiliates himself. He humbles himself. There's no obligation for him to do it. He does it out of love. He does it willingly. He does this to himself.

Most Canadians hate Trump. They would love to see Trump humiliated by being forced to pick up the poop in my backyard. If that was videotaped, just in Canada alone, it would get a billion views, many of them reviews, within the first week. Just the mere fact that many of you would like to see Trump humiliated in that way probably shows you need to repent, by the way. This isn't an announcement for Trump. It's just not the right attitude we should have to any person. Shows some pride in our part.

But it would be humiliating if he was forced to do it. But that's not what's happening. Jesus does. God, the Son of God, does all of these things himself. And even that language of grasp, what that doesn't mean is this. It doesn't mean that he's trying to become like God. He's trying to grasp that. It also isn't like, some of you might not know, but I have nine children.

And all of them, when they were young, back when they were very young, we would take them to see Santa Claus. And I can't remember which of them, but many of them, when maybe they were two or something, and you try to hand that baby off to go to that nice man with the white beard and the red suit, they would scream and grasp, whether it was me or Louise, with unbelievable baby strength, because there's no way they were going to leave the arms of their mother or father to go to that scary man with a red suit and a white beard. And they grasped at us, and we had to, well, we wouldn't end up prying them away. We would just end up holding the baby and standing beside Santa herself or something with the other kids for the picture. But that's not what's going on here. That's not at all. It's just, it's literally telling, it's not like that at all. It's not that I'm trying to grasp anything.

[16:30] I'm doing this all of my own volition. God, the Son of God, chooses to humble himself. He chooses to leave his throne. He chooses to set aside all of his appearance as God. He chooses it himself.

And the other thing which is going on in this text, and which is the language, you could nerd out, try to, you know, get all the language and all, but what the language is trying to preserve are two other truths about Jesus being completely and utterly fully human. He is completely and fully human. And that's one of the reasons why Jesus doesn't come on earth one day as a 30-year-old man. That wouldn't really be human. He enters the human race the way all human beings begin, by being a zygote attached to the mother's womb. He fully enters into human life. But there's two things which are unique about Jesus which the language is preserving for us. The first one is this, that on one hand, the thing which is unique about Jesus is even though he is fully human, he's also God, the Son of God. So he is just as human as you and me on one hand, but on the other hand, there's something unique about him because God, the Son of God, he's just one person. God, the Son of God. It's not a matter of God, the Son of God, squeezing divinity into a human being, squeezing divinity into a zygote. It's a matter of God taking human nature into himself, but yet being one person. So the language of appearing to be a human being and the likeness of human, all of that type of stuff being found there, that means now that he's come to be a human being, he acts according to a status. He has a mother and father. He has children. He would have buried his father because Joseph died before the things in the crucifixion. He had to eat all of those things. He acted completely like a human being, but there's two things unique about him. One is that he's God, the Son of God, and the second is he isn't born with original sin. He isn't born with original sin. That's why they use the language to protect these very powerful truths. Now you might say, well, if he's not born with original sin, does that mean he couldn't sin? Not at all. Adam and Eve were born without original sin and sinned.

In fact, if you think about it for a moment, not being born with original sin might actually make sin both more tempting and more, just more tempting. I know that's a bit counterintuitive, but it's almost as if it's so completely different and other, it is both repulsive at times and alluring at times. And that's why it is says in the book of Hebrews and other places in the Bible that Jesus suffered trials and temptations like all human beings, only without sin. And that really, really is true. But that's this profound, all these things are trying to provide this very, very profound truth that, um, if you could up the first point again, Claire, God, the son of God humbled himself going from his heavenly throne to a womb, to a cradle, to a cross, and to a grave.

[19:50] Now, why did I say, I mean, this is counterintuitive, isn't it? Because it's, it's counterintuitive because the way we normally would think is that King Charles III shouldn't pick up dog poop. That's beneath his status. There's others who are lesser status who do that for him. We who are of a lower status serve those who are of a higher status. Uh, you know, King Charles III is maybe not somebody, I mean, we have to give our life to protect him. He doesn't give his life to protect us. It's just the natural order of things. You know, it's one of the things where I, our, our Muslim friends find the whole message of the gospel completely and utterly and massively counterintuitive that they, I mean, they call God Allah, but they cannot possibly conceive that God would ever, ever, ever, ever deign to come and humiliate himself in such a way. Like in a sense, this text is saying that if we went back in time, we would see Jesus picking up other people's dog

poop. How could God, the son of God, that's just completely implausible. But it's also unbelievably beautiful.

It says that only the gospel describes a God who understands you and gets you and loves you. What do I mean? A couple of years ago, uh, uh, one of my, my kids, they, uh, left their four children over with us. I think at that time, maybe the kids were told this story before, but not in a while, maybe three, five, seven, and nine, maybe four, six, eight, and 10, something like that. And I'm having lunch at the same time as them. And they're having some grilled cheese sandwiches, and I'm eating whatever I'm eating. And we all have a comfortable silence. Their kids all like each other, and I like them, and they like me. And we're all just comfortable, and we're all just silent. You know, I may be reading, they're just daydreaming whatever kids do as they're eating grilled cheese sandwiches. And then my wife sits down.

And she sits down and says, if you could be an animal, what animal would you be? Well, all of the kids' eyes light up, and they chatter away. Every child instantly has an animal that they would be. And maybe he say, I can't decide if I'd like to be this type of animal or that type of animal. And all the kids talk. What has she done? She has descended to their level and understands them. And when you hear of God, the Son of God, humbling himself in this way, there is no way that the God of Buddha can understand you. There is no way that the God of Islam can understand you in this way.

[22 : 27] There is no way that the God of boutique spirituality in Canada will understand you in this way, because only the God described in this text has humbled himself. And this is profoundly important for those of us who have experienced deep shame and humiliation. Only Christ understands your deep humiliation.

He humiliated himself that you might be reconciled to God. It's beautiful. But the next part almost seems to contradict it. Well, what do I mean? Let's look. This is the part that I said, on one hand, if people understand what it's being said, many Canadians would find it deeply offensive.

They'd also find it deeply predictable. They haven't got their mind. I mean, that's part of our job is to tell people there's this wonderful Savior who left the throne of heaven, set aside his glory and prerogatives, and died on a cross all because he loved you. But look at the next part, verses 9 to 11.

Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every knee, sorry, every name, 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 Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Now, for many of us as Christians, we say, okay, that's fine. And many, maybe if I was to even share this at my local coffee shop, they'd say, oh, that's sort of interesting. But that's because they don't really believe it's true. They would just sort of think that it's some pleasant thoughts that amuse Christians. And if that turns your crank, then so be it. But they don't understand that if they were to go back in a time machine and to say that to Paul, Paul would say, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, no, that's not what I'm saying. I'm actually saying that there will come a day that if God could put you into the future, there will come a day when you will be at a great plane, and you will see all human beings who've ever lived, and you will see all spiritual beings that have ever lived, that's angels and demons, and you will see them all arrayed. And somebody will come, God the Father will say, here is the Lord Jesus Christ. And at that moment that he declares that, you will see every single spiritual, spiritual being and human being bend their knee and say, Jesus Christ is Lord. You will see Goetheuma bend his knee and say that Jesus Christ is Lord. You will see Trump bend his knee and say, Jesus Christ is Lord. You will see the president of China bend his knee and say that Jesus Christ is

[25 : 12] Lord. You will see the Ayatollah of Iran bend his knee and say that Jesus Christ is Lord. And you will see George bend his knee and say Jesus Christ is Lord. And then Paul would say to them, and you will bend your knee and say that Jesus Christ is Lord. That is what will happen.

That is what Paul is saying here. If you could put up the second point, Claire, that would be very helpful. Jesus Christ was exalted from the depths of death to the throne of God. Jesus Christ was exalted from the depths of death to the throne of God. So that to understand that when Jesus rose from the dead, it is the first step of his exaltation. Where was Jesus between his resurrection appearances? Well, he wasn't hiding in a grove, sitting by a stream, by some cafe. No, he's in heaven. He's exalted. He comes from his exalted place in heaven to appear, to show and prove

time and time and time and time again, beyond all reasonable doubt, that he has triumphed. He has tasted all there is to taste of death, and he has risen from the dead. That is why the body is gone. The tomb is empty. He appears. He eats fish. He shows the scars. He has resurrected. But more than that, he is exalted. And by being exalted, he has been vindicated by Almighty God. And if you could put up the next point, Claire, that would be very helpful. Every knee will bend and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Every tongue. You and you and you and you and you and you and me and every person we see today, that will happen to them one day. Back a hundred million years ago, when I was in university, there was a woman, I think I was in my third year university, and she was always trying to find excuses to be around me. And she told me one day that God had assured her that we were going to marry. God had spoken to her very clearly, and we were going to marry. Now, you know, one of the things which is so bad about this is I didn't like her at all. Like, I had to exercise all my Christian charity to even talk to her. Like, I really, really didn't like her. Like, really didn't. You know, if there were, I don't know, 30,000 women at Carleton, she would have been like the 30,000 that I liked.

You know, that's how I felt about her. But I was with a Christian group. I couldn't act that. And I think one day I said, it's never going to happen. And, but here's the thing. I actually, especially because, you know, I mean, nowadays in some ways she stalked me, you might even say, right? She'd figure out ways to be with me and all of that type of stuff. And, but here's the thing. I don't know whatever happened to her. I really hope and pray that there was some, a man who, you know, and part of the reason I didn't like her was, who knows, probably terrible things in my part, by the way. Maybe you should, she was too like me. I don't know what, but hopefully she found somebody who would marry her and love her. I mean, I really hope that would be her destiny. But here's the thing.

We'll call her Sue. If there was a man who loves Sue like that, and there was Sue and that fellow, we'll call him Bob and me, both Bob and me are in Sue's presence. I'm experiencing torment.

[28 : 50] He's experiencing delight. And she's just being her. So here's this thing about, if you, you need to understand, if you could put up the next point, that would be very, very helpful, Claire.

The bending of the knee and the confessing of your lips that Jesus Christ is Lord will be either the beginning of eternal joy or the beginning of sadness and pain. Choose joy. Choose Jesus.

The bending of the knee and the confessing of your lips will be either the beginning of eternal joy. I've used this analogy so much. I love that old African-American spiritual.

And I, when that time comes, this is my hope. And in my resurrected body, it is proclaimed that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior God, the Son of God. And I, with all those countless throngs, I will bend my knee and I will confess with my lips that Jesus Christ is Savior and Lord. And in my spirit, I am singing like I have never sung before and inwardly dancing, free at last, free at last.

Praise God Almighty, I am free at last. And that is the beginning of an eternity in joy. For others.

[30 : 34] Forst to bend the knee and confess, it will be beginning of sadness and pain. Choose joy. Now, what follows from all of this, we need to wrap it up. And if you could go back, Claire, and put up verse 5, that would be helpful. How did this begin?

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus. You see, in a sense, actually, if you could put, we have that, if you could put a point number 5, that would be helpful.

The Christian life begins and grows by bending the knee to Jesus and confessing to him that he is Savior and Lord, that he is your Savior and Lord. That's how the Christian life begins.

You don't have to do, I mean, you could do it physically right now if you haven't given your life to Christ, but if you haven't given your life to Christ, that's, in a sense, there's no better time than right now just to stop listening to me.

And it may be in your imagination, if you're a person that uses their imagination, to just picture yourself looking at Jesus and bending your knee and saying, Jesus, you are my Savior and my Lord.

[31 : 52] And that's how the Christian life begins. There are many here who can't remember a time they weren't Christians. And that's very appropriate. You were raised with Christian parents.

And you don't have to have a moment that you know that. I mean, what really happens is at some point in time in your life, you realize you've done it. Some people, they realize they've done it in children. There's been many people who've become Christians, and they couldn't tell you the moment.

They might say, you know, six months ago I wasn't a Christian. Now I am. I don't know when that moment happened, but somewhere along that line, that transition happened in me. And now I know that I would gladly bend the knee to Jesus and confess that he is Savior and Lord.

And the Christian life begins that way. And that's also how you grow as a Christian. To grow as a Christian is to have more and more areas, the height and depth and breadth and width of your life. To realize when it comes to your intellect, when it comes to how you think, when it comes to the content of your mind, when it comes to what you see with your eyes, when it comes to how you think about your money, how you think about your family, how you think about sexuality, how you think about power, how you think about time, how you think about marriage, how you think about child raising, how you think about everything.

[33 : 05] In every place, it's a matter of bending the knee to Jesus and confessing that he is Lord. And that's how you become more Christ-like, the same way you become a Christian.

And in heaven, we will bend the knees together, confessing him as Savior and Lord. What is it we are invited to do as a church together is we are to be a community who bends our knees to Jesus Christ, confessing that he is Savior and Lord.

That is to describe our community life together. And so it's so beautiful here in this text, you see, because when I talk about the union with Christ, when you put your faith and trust in Christ, you really enter into him.

He really enters into you. And you enter into all of him. And he enters into all of you. He enters into, is in union with you from the moment you were conceived in your mother's womb to your death. He is in union with all of that. And that means that anything that you have done wrong and any even original sin fell on him.

[34 : 19] He dealt with it. And his perfect destiny and status of standing before God and all of that glory. Obviously, you're not on the throne of heaven with him, but he carries you right up before the throne.

And all of that glory comes to you when you put your faith and trust in him. And it's not just him dealing with your humiliation and shame and sin, but also the bestowing of glory upon you.

And that is what he does upon the cross. I might go a little bit past 35, but I want to show you two other things.

Because you see, the problem for some Christians is they take things like this and then they start to think, well, that sort of means that I should rule, that I should always be successful, I should always triumph.

But that's the wrong lesson to take. That's why we need all of the Bible. Take up your Bibles and turn with me to verse 27 of chapter 1, verse 27.

[35 : 17] If you think now that this verses 6 to 11, this provides a way to understand all that happens in the book. And the book helps you to understand what all of this means.

That this book, this 6 to 11 isn't telling you because of my exalted destiny that I will share Christ's glory. I will be filled with his glory. Therefore, I should...

No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. That's not what the story is to form you into. The story forms you into humility. Into humility and love. Not the exercise of power over others as your destiny.

Listen very briefly. Look at how it goes in 127. Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ. There's that big... How is my...

To be worthy of the gospel of Christ means that the story of the gospel forms me. Forms, as I said, how you think about money and sexuality and power and time and family and singleness and life and death.

[36 : 18] So that whether I come and see you or I'm absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind, striving side by side for the faith of the gospel.

And not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation and that from God.

Think of what I just said in verses 6 to 11. For it has been granted to you that for the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him, but also suffer for his sake. Engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

He's talking about himself, 6 to 11. If you could put up the point, this would be very helpful. What's he saying? It's a very simple point. When you follow Jesus, when you're in Jesus, and swim against the current and the crowd, you will be bruised.

All the world says the powerless should die and the powerful.

[37 : 24] That's the natural way that human beings think. Jesus went right against that. He swam against the stream. He swam against this crowd to save you. And what he's saying to his contemporaries is this.

Listen, in the ancient world, all the smart people, all the rich people, everybody knew that there were many gods. Everybody knew that the powerful should rule. Everybody knew that slavery was all right.

In fact, it was a very, very good thing. In fact, for an ancient Roman to see a crucifixion, they would say to their young son, that proves the glory of Rome and that we will never end.

And we look at a cross and say, that reveals the glory of God. Not the glory of Rome. The crucifixion reveals what should be a shame to Rome.

And God used that which was shameful to save you and me. And so in the culture, it's just like now. You know, we have to fit in with all sorts of political causes.

[38 : 26] And if you don't fit in with political causes, it might cost you promotions. It might cost you being invited to parties. And there's all this cultural pressure to go along with all these things which are just lies and just evil.

And it's so easy for us to get sucked in. And that's why Paul is saying, you need to be formed by the story of verses 6 to 11. And when you're formed against it, you're going to be flowing with Jesus against the crowd and against the current.

And when you do that, you will be bruised. Maybe even die. But that's what you choose. And if you could look at just these last few verses and then we'll close.

Look at verses 1 to 4, just before Have This Mind Among Yourselves, of chapter 2. So if there is any encouragement in Christ, this story which I've just told you from 6 to 11.

If there is any comfort from love, just think of the love that God showed. It's the love that held Jesus to the cross that drove him to humiliate himself in such a way. If there is any koinonia, union in the Holy Spirit.

[39 : 30] If there is any affection and any sympathy, the words there could also be compassion. Complete my joy by being of the same mind. Having the same love.

In other words, having the same story form us. Having the same love form us. Being in full accord with each other and of one mind. And do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit.

But in humility, count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interest, but also to the interest of others. That is swimming against the crowd and swimming against the current.

And you do that, you will be bruised. And that is to describe our life together. And here's the thing. Evil flattens.

Virtue grows. If you go to see a room of drunk people, when they're not drunk, they might be witty. They might be pleasant.

[40 : 27] They might be gentle. They might be all sorts of those things. Those are all sucked out of them when they're drunk. To see a group of men or women fixated on a screen looking at pornography, it reduces and removes their humanity.

Looking at a beautiful sunset brings out all sorts of stuff that's beautiful in a person, doesn't it? You get to hear joy. You get to hear jokes.

Maybe somebody bursts into song, does a little dance. Beauty does that. Evil flattens. You see, here's the thing. The last point, that would be helpful.

Pride leads to noise. Humility in Christ grows. Not sameness, but a melody and harmony of beauty. Be the difference if we all just started yelling.

Be another thing in a few moments when Jono leads us and we are of one mind, of one voice, around a beautiful melody. And for those of you, maybe sit beside Deborah or some other people who know how to do harmony, so we're not all just singing the melody.

[41 : 35] It's beautiful. That's what God is calling us to in Christ. I invite you to stand. And just as we're about to pray, just to reiterate, there is no shame that is so shameful.

There is no brokenness that is so broken that Christ did not die for you. And just as my wife was able to get to the level of children and enter their world in a way that brought joy, even in your worst trauma, Christ has entered into your level and speaks to you at your level so that when you turn to him and bend the knee and confess with your lips, it is the beginning not of sadness and sorrow and

pain, but the beginning of joy.

Let's bow our heads in prayer. Father, thank you for Jesus. Thank you, Father, that you and your word preserve these wonderful truths. Thank you, Father, that you've called people like myself and Joey and Steve and Daniel Avitan and Colton and others to study so that we can understand these things and that we together might read the word together and be formed by it.

And, Father, thank you so much for what Jesus has done for us. Thank you, Father, that you have made right with us, that you have made right with us, that you have made right with us, and, Father, we ask that you would help this profound story to shape us and to make us, to be our comfort and our joy, our hope, that it would so form us that we are willing to swim against the current in the crowd, all for the good of the crowd and for your glory.

And we ask all these things in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior and all God's people said, Amen.