

PM Philippians 2:1-11 Humility always leads to Exaltation

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[0 : 00] Can you turn back to the passage that we looked at this morning in Philippians chapter 2, Paul's letter to the church at Philippi and chapter 2, chapter 2 indeed, yes.

And we're going to read the first 11 verses of this chapter. We looked at verses 5, 6, 5 down to 8 this morning and we'll do a short recap of that in a moment.

But we're really going to look at verses 9 through to 11 this evening, which is the exaltation of the Lord Jesus.

We looked at the humiliation of the Lord Jesus this morning and we're going to look at the exaltation of the Lord Jesus this evening. But we're going to read these first 11 verses.

Paul is writing from a prison or at least he's under house arrest in Rome. And he writes this letter to the church at Philippi.

[1 : 00] And he says these words. So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

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 interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 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 the death on a cross.

Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above 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. Amen.

[2 : 50] And may God give us good understanding of his written word this evening. Now, before we turn back to God's word there that we read a moment ago in Philippians chapter 2, as I say, I want us to look this evening, God willing, at verses 9 to 11.

We looked at verses 6 to 8 this morning, and in Philippians 2, verses 6 to 8, just to recap, Paul brings before us the greatest example that this world has ever seen of humility, humility, of self-sacrifice, and a person's love for others.

He holds up before his Philippian readers and hearers and us, the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Paul brings to our attention what we might call the humiliation of Christ.

Now, when we think of humiliation, we often think that it's something that is done to us, don't we?

When someone humiliates you, they belittle you.

They make you feel small and insignificant and stupid. And no one likes to be humiliated. But what Paul means when he speaks of the humiliation of Christ is something different.

[4 : 29] Because when Paul speaks of the humiliation of Christ, he speaks of the actions and the decisions that Christ himself voluntarily took to benefit and serve others.

People like you and I and the Philippian hearers. That's why in verse 8 we noticed this morning that it was Christ who humbled himself.

We saw that when we looked at the opening eight verses this morning. The humiliation of Christ are the actions, let me repeat, and the decisions that Christ took to come from the splendour of heaven down into this sinful world to save people like you and I.

And so this morning we looked at the humiliation of the Lord Jesus. We looked at the ordering of humility in verses 1 to 4.

Paul says to the Philippians, you are to live a life of humility. And we saw that that was to serve Christ and to serve others.

[5 : 54] We then looked at the originator of humility, and that was the Lord Jesus. And then we went on to look at the outshining of humility when we looked at Christ's life and his going to the cross at Calvary.

And we saw that in verses 6 through to 8. Now this evening I want us to look at the outcome of humility. And the outcome of Christ's humiliation is his exaltation that we find in verses 9 through to 11.

You see, Paul holds Christ, the Lord Jesus Christ, up to the Philippians, not only as a saviour of sinners, but also as a model that we as believers are to follow.

Christ's mindset and his attitude was to focus on others and on their well-being. He was selfless in his life.

He was sacrificial in his life. He valued others above himself. And he was prepared to leave the splendour and, dare I say it, the comfort of heaven to come into this world to live amongst sinful men and women.

[7 : 22] And Paul says we are to have the same mind and attitude. He says, let this mind be in you so our lives are to be focused on others and on their well-being because that was what Christ did when he came.

And he stepped into this world and he made himself nothing, Paul says, by taking the form of a servant and coming in human form at Bethlehem.

But we also saw that the self-humbling went beyond him just coming from heaven down into this world because as a man, when he was here on earth, he went further than that.

He was obedient to his father and he went to the cross of Calvary to die. And he was obedient to the point of death.

It was a shameful death. The death on the cross at Calvary. And what I want us to note that in verses 5 to 8 that we looked at this morning, the humiliation of the Lord Jesus Christ were all the actions of Christ himself.

[8 : 42] The Lord Jesus in those verses, he is the subject of those verses. It was he who humbled himself. It was he, the Lord Jesus, who emptied himself.

It was he who became a servant. It was he who came in the likeness of human flesh. He humbled himself. He was the one who became obedient unto death.

He put sinners like you and I before his own entitlements and privileges. And he was the one who effectively said, I cannot keep my privileges for myself.

I must use them for others. And to do this, I will gladly lay my privileges and prerogatives as God aside and pay whatever price is necessary to save others.

And the price to rescue us and to save us was the price of his life. It meant him renouncing the splendor of heaven and going to the cross with all its shame.

[10 : 02] And it was an act of obedience with no parallel. And that act of obedience and dying on the cross will never be repeated.

And it never needs to be repeated. because the sacrifice that Christ made to take away the sins of his people and those who would believe on him is a once and for all sacrifice.

Nothing needs to be added to it. It is sufficient to meet our needs. And Calvary was the lowest rung of the ladder that he descended.

And when he hung on that cross, people thought that they had got rid of him forever, didn't they? They hurled insults at him.

They ridiculed him. They spat on him. They laughed at his name. They laughed at his name.

[11 : 13] Ha! He saved others. Let him come down from the cross. If you're the Christ. And the Lord Jesus took all of that so that people like you and I could be saved.

And on the cross, he was the one who, as it were, he opened not his mouth. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep before the shearers, he was dumb.

He opened not his mouth. But fortunately for us, the gospel doesn't end at the cross.

The gospel is the good news that Jesus Christ has died to be a saviour. But it's also the gospel of the resurrection and the exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

God, you see, didn't leave Christ in the grave. But he raised him from the dead. And he exalted him to the very right hand of the majesty on high.

[12:34] Yes, verse 8 ends with death on a cross. The climax of his humiliation.

But look at the following verses, in verses 9 to 11. Paul says, Therefore, or wherefore, God has highly exalted him and given him a name that is above every name.

So the first thing that we want to notice from this verse is that God has highly exalted him. Now the title to this sermon, as you saw on your bulletin sheet, is that Humiliation always leads to exaltation. That is a principle, as we shall see, that runs throughout the whole of the Bible. But it is especially true and pertinent for the life and death of the Lord Jesus.

God has highly exalted him. You see, when men buried the body of the Lord Jesus, it was the last thing that human hands did.

[13:49] From that point on, when he was laid in that grave, in that tomb, and the stone was rolled across that tomb, it was the last thing that human hands ever did to the Lord Jesus.

From that point onwards, as we shall see, it was God. God, God the Father, whose hand was at work.

Human hands had done their worst to him, but God, but God raised him from the dead.

Peter, in his sermon at Pentecost, said to his readers, in Acts chapter 2, in verse 32, listen to these words, God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

You see, on the day of Pentecost, as Peter stood up, he was confronting his hearers and the Jewish people there, and he says, this Jesus, whom you slew, and who you put on a cross, and who you are culpable for, God has raised to life.

[15:04] And later on, in verse 36 of the same chapter, he says, God has made that same Jesus, the one that you put on the cross, whom you crucified, God has made that same Jesus, both Lord and Christ.

And we'll say something about that in a little while. Romans 10, verse 9, the Apostle Paul says these words, if you declare with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

You see, if ever you and I want to be saved, we need to believe in the real, literal resurrection and the raising up of the Lord Jesus.

If you declare with your mouth, Jesus is Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. And in these verses, in verses 9 through to 11, you see the active person and the active subject is no longer the Lord Jesus.

These are the actions of God the Father. And the actions of God the Father are based and connected with what took place in verses 6 through to 8.

[16:41] That's why there's a connecting word, therefore. Therefore, God has highly exalted him. it was because of Christ's obedience.

It was because he humbled himself. It was because he came down from heaven and took on flesh and blood. It was because Christ went to the cross of Calvary in obedience to his Father's will that God exalted him.

And so in verses 5 through to 8, as we saw this morning, we have an extraordinary and an exceptional obedience of Christ.

So in verses 9 through to 11, we have an extraordinary and exceptional reward given to the Lord Jesus.

You see, Christ's extraordinary obedience is rewarded by God the Father by an extraordinary exaltation and reward.

[17:57] That's why we have in verse 9 these words, God has highly, highly exalted him. It just doesn't say God has exalted him. It says God has highly exalted him.

Or, as we sometimes say, hyper exalted him. You know, if we talk about a child who has hyperactivity, and some children do have hyperactivity, we're not, we're saying that they have an abundance or an excess of activity.

Or if a person is diagnosed with hypertension, it's not just that they have tension in their lives, in their physical frame, they have an excess, a hyper tension in their lives.

I don't know if you've noticed as you watch the telly these days that food used to be fresh, now it's super fresh. Have you noticed that?

Things are not just cool, they're super cool. Excited, super excited. And so, superlative upon superlative is given to the English language, I'm not sure that it actually adds anything, but that's the idea here in the word that God has not only exalted Christ, he has highly or hyper-exalted him to the highest possible degree.

[19 : 30] You see, it's to exalt, the word means to exalt beyond measure, above all others. And he's now sat at the right hand of the majesty on high.

And it's an interesting word to be highly exalted. It's only used here in the whole of the Bible, and it's only used of the Lord Jesus Christ.

He's the only one who has been hyper or super exalted. And the reason for that, I submit to you, is that just as no one ever humbled themselves like the Lord Jesus, no one stood so low as the Lord Jesus, no one obeyed so perfectly as the Lord Jesus, so his exaltation is without peer or parallel. The hymn writer Thomas Kelly, in his beautiful hymn, says these words, the highest place that heaven affords is his by sovereign right, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, he reigns in perfect light.

right. The highest place that heaven affords is his by sovereign right, or saving right, because it's because of his saving obedience that he is super exalted.

[21 : 19] it. Now listen to the words of Psalm 97 verse 9. If you have a Bible, maybe you should turn back to Psalm 97 verse 9, if you have your Bibles.

The psalmist is writing there, and he's writing of God, as revealed in the Old Testament, and he says in Psalm 97 verse 9, You see, the state of Christ's exaltation was his entrance into his reward, prepared and promised to him by his father, on the accomplishment of his suffering and of his travail.

And so God has highly exalted him, but secondly, look at what else God has given him. Secondly, in verse 9, that God has given him the name that is above every name.

Verse 9, Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him or given him the name that is above every name.

Well, which name is it? Here's a theological question for you. Is it Jesus, as the passage seems to suggest, or is it Lord?

[23 : 02] Which name is it that's bestowed on him? Well, in his humiliation, when the Lord Jesus came to earth, he was given a name, wasn't he?

He was given the name Jesus. And that means for he shall save his people from their sins. But in his exaltation and ascension, he was given the name Lord.

Listen to Acts 2 verse 32 to 36. These words from Peter as he preaches again on the day of Pentecost. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.

Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit, and has poured out what you now see and hear.

For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said, the Lord said to my Lord, sit on my right hand until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.

[24 : 16] Therefore, he says, listen to these words, let all Israel be assured of this, that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.

So it's a title given to Jesus in his exalted state and in his resurrected state. The prophet Isaiah in the Old Testament says these words, God says, in chapter 42 in verse 8, God says, I am the Lord, that is my name, I will not give my glory to another.

You see, the God of the Old Testament as we'll call it, who's the same God of the New Testament, God who refused to share his name, or the glory of that name with any other, exalts Jesus to the highest place and bestows upon him, that very name and title, Lord.

The name Jesus that we have here, just simply I submit to you, identifies the person, it's this same Jesus that was crucified, that God has bestowed upon him a name, a highly exalted name, a name that marks him out.

the person as we'll see, to whom every knee one day will bow, and every tongue will confess, and why is that?

[26 : 05] Well, it's because he is Lord, he is Jehovah himself, literally the words mean the Lord is Jesus Christ.

Isaiah, again, in the Old Testament, says these words in Isaiah 45 verses 22 to 25, Turn to me, God says, and be saved, all you ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is no other.

By myself I have sworn, my mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked. Listen to these words, and it's the God of the Old Testament, as revealed in the Old Testament, that says these things, before me, every knee will bow, by me, every tongue will confess.

They will say of me, in the Lord alone, are deliverance and strength. All who have raged against him, will come to him, and be put to shame.

But all the descendants of Israel will find deliverance in the Lord, and will make their boast in him. You see, the Lord Jehovah of Isaiah 45 is none other than Jesus Christ, as revealed in the New Testament.

[27 : 51] And that's why we have these words in Philippians 2 verse 10, so 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 or the Lord, the Lord of Isaiah 45 is Jesus Christ.

Well, God has exalted the Lord Jesus. God has given him a name that is above every name.

But thirdly, God's exaltation includes Christ's sovereign authority. Look at verse 10 again. It says, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and that every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Paul says, every single knee shall bow and every single tongue will confess before Jesus Christ. there will be every single knee to bow. You know, bowing the knee even in our society signifies worship, doesn't it?

[29 : 24] It signifies homage, it signifies adoration, it acknowledges somebody's authority as being greater than your own and so you bow the knee as you would bow the knee before King Charles III or the late Queen Elizabeth II if you were in her presence.

But there's going to be universal acknowledgement that Jesus Christ is Lord. In heaven, Paul says, and on earth, and under the earth.

these three spheres in God's creation, all people, all creatures, angels in heaven, demons in hell, human beings living or dead, will assuredly, Paul says, one day will bow the knee to Jesus Christ and acknowledge him as Lord.

You know, the word confess that we have here, that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, verse 11.

The word confess simply means to acknowledge something openly, doesn't it? it doesn't mean that all those who confess will be saved at this end time and this end assize before God, but rather that everyone will acknowledge or will have to acknowledge Jesus as Lord.

[31 : 29] Every one of us, as I said to my friend Alan round the corner this morning as I spoke to him out of the car, you're going to have to, and I'm going to have to stand before God one day and give an account of what we have done with our lives.

Listen to the words of Donald Carson, he says, there will not be universal salvation, there will be universal confession as to who he is.

That means that either we repent and confess him by faith as Lord now, or we will confess him in shame and terror on the last day, but confess him we will.

What does this mean for us this evening? Well, it means that you and I can either bow the knee to him by gladly accepting his lordship and rule over our lives today, or you will be forced in a future day to confess him as lord when you bow before him on that judgment day.

It's always been the principle as I said that runs through scripture. it's always this way with humility and exaltation.

[33 : 17] You and I have got a choice to make. You can humble yourselves under the hand of God and let God do the exalting or you can exalt yourself but one day God will humble you.

That's a principle that runs throughout the Bible. That's why the apostle Peter says these words in 1 Peter 5 in verse 6 he says to believers he says humble yourselves in other words bow the knee worship God worship Jesus Christ he says humble yourselves therefore under the hand of God therefore under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you.

Or listen to Lord Jesus in Matthew 23 verses 11 and 12 and we thought about this this morning with the children you see in God's eyes and in God's kingdom the greatest among you shall be your servant and whoever exalts himself will be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted and James as he writes to his hearers he says this is why the scripture says God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble and James goes on to say humble yourselves before the Lord and he will exalt you well why is this passage here for us why did the apostle Paul write this

passage to the

Philippians well simply to focus their minds on Christ there is no greater subject for us as believers than to focus on the life and death resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ secondly I submit to you that he writes as he's pointing us to Christ as our ultimate model of humility to which he calls us we are to have the same mind the same attitude as the Lord Jesus had we are to live lives that are directed towards others and their good and their benefit to help them we are to have the same mind as the Lord Jesus we are to be selfless and self sacrificing in our lives we are to put others before ourselves as the

Lord Jesus did he put us before himself but there's also as we have looked at this passage tonight there's a promise to us that humility if we take the humble position and live the humble life it will always lead to exaltation therefore God highly exalted him why because Christ humbled himself and if we humble ourselves God will exalt us at the right time the person with the submissive mind as we live for others we must expect sacrifice and service but in the end it's going to lead to glory as it did for the

[37 : 29] Lord Jesus and then finally I leave this with you this evening that there is a day of reckoning that none of us will escape there is a day of reckoning with God all of us must appear before him to give an account of our lives how are you going to appear before God if you do not accept and bow the knee just now you will be forced on that day to bow the knee and acknowledge that Jesus is who he claimed to be the son of God with power the Lord Jehovah the one who will come on that day to judge the world let's pray together father we thank you for your son the

Lord Jesus we thank you that he is the only savior of sinners and father we confess that so often we live for this world we forget about that day of reckoning that judgment day that each one of us is nearer now than we were yesterday that we will have to stand before you one day and if we are not dressed in the righteousness and clothed in the righteousness of your son the Lord Jesus then there will only be a fearful looking for judgment from you so father we pray this evening for all of us that we might be raised from our laziness our complacency that we might not put off this day as your word says today if we hear your voice harden not our hearts father we realize that every time we hear your word and we refuse to obey it there is a hardening process takes place and father we fear for people who think that they will escape your judgment who live taking that risk but father we know that there is certainly a fearful judgment to come if we do not accept your son the Lord Jesus so burn this please into our hearts and help us to take your word seriously we ask this just now in Jesus name Amen Never to do you why you what