

The Exaltation of Christ

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Date: 29 September 2024

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[0 : 00] Good morning. Thank you again for joining us today. We are going to continue on through Philippians chapter 2.

! So if you would, would you stand with me to honor the reading of God's word. Philippians 2, 5-11 says, Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus, who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited.

Instead, he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when he had come as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even to death on a cross.

For this reason, God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that, at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Let's pray together. God, thank you for who you are. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for your humility and your obedience that led to your exaltation. Thank you that we can gather to praise you together today.

[1 : 20] Pray your blessings over this time of studying your word, and it's in Jesus' name that we pray. Amen. All right. So, today we're focusing on verses 9-11, the second half of this Christ hymn.

And something that I didn't mention last week, but I want to bring up to your attention, because it's somewhat, at least somewhat relevant, is the structure of this passage, verses 6-11, it seems to be that it is some ancient, early church, like very early church hymn.

Like, it was written for the church to say together or sing together to praise Jesus. This was how they viewed Jesus. They viewed him as God.

They viewed him as equal with God, as humble for, you know, not considering his equality as something to be grasped and all those things. And so, this is kind of a picture into the early church and their praise of Jesus.

And when I say early church, I mean, Paul may not, he may have, may not have been the original author of this specific section of the book of Philippians.

[2 : 31] He might have drawn from the church, right? Something that he knew of as praise from the church. This is a small passage, something that people would memorize and sing together. And you get things in Ephesians and Colossians where Paul tells the believers to speak to each other in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, right?

To lift each other up. And so, it seems like this is probably one of those hymns that the early church actually spoke to one another in an effort to encourage one another and to remind them of the faith that they have and who they have the faith in.

And so, I didn't mention that really last week, but it's somewhat important because, again, it gives us a picture into the early church. And it's neat that the apostle Paul, when he's describing the humility that the church needs to have in order to be humble, it's neat that he draws on something that many of them might have already known and shows them, just remember, this is who Christ is, right?

This is the humble Jesus. And that's verses 6 through 8. That's what we talked about last week, if you remember. The seven different maybe takeaways from last week in terms of the actual passages that Jesus is preexistent.

He's the Son of God and equal with the Father. He completely emptied himself of heaven, and he took the form of a servant in humanity. He humbled himself. He was perfect in obedience, and he died a sacrificial death.

[3 : 55] And so, those are the things that we looked at last week. And that's the example of Christ for the believers, right? The model of humility, perfect humility, perfect obedience.

That's Jesus. And remember, we talked about Jesus is an example, but he's so far more than only an example. He's much, much more. He is the Savior.

He is, as we'll study today, Lord of all. And so, I just want to remind you of that because there's this example that we studied last week, and then we get this next section, which doesn't seem like much of an example at all.

Instead, it's a shift to now praising Jesus for this reason God highly exalted him, right? It's talking about what God has done because of Jesus' humility and his obedience.

And so, I want to be careful as we study this not to think that if we are very humble and the church is very unified, that we're going to be bestowed any name that's higher than any other name.

[4 : 54] That's not what this passage is saying. In some sense, there is an example, and we'll get into that. But the other side of this that's important to remember is that Jesus didn't humble himself and live on earth in perfect obedience and submission and die the sacrificial death on the cross so that he would earn this exaltation, okay?

And we kind of struggle with this because I think, like, at least the married men in the room will know what I'm talking about. Sometimes we do things not from a place of humility but because we want recognition, right?

Married guys, none of you like to do the dishes, right? Somebody say amen to that. None of you like to fold laundry, right? But, man, we all love to hear, you're the best husband in the world, you know? It's just nice. It's nice, I tell you. Right, Audrey? Okay. It's nice. No, but it's kind of funny, but we have a hard time with this where often we do things where it seems like we're being humble, it seems like we're serving, but somewhere deep inside, and sometimes as husbands not that far deep inside, we like to get the recognition and we like to get the praise and those things for what we do.

And there's really not much humility to that at all. But this passage shows us the humility of Christ and how the actual true humility of Christ led to his exaltation.

[6 : 26] And so, remember, Jesus' humble life shows us what it truly means to consider others as more important than yourselves. And then we get to verse 9, and it starts with this, for this reason.

And some of your Bibles might say, therefore. I think that the CSB changed it from therefore because they got tired of that joke. We've got to find out what it's there for, joke. But it's true.

We do have to find out what it's there for. What is this pointing back to? For what reason did God highly exalt Jesus? And the answer is his humility, right?

His humble life in leaving heaven to live on earth among sinful humans. His obedience to the will of the Father. Complete and total submission to the Father's will.

And if you remember, in the garden before Jesus' crucifixion, he was shedding tears of blood and was praying, not my will, but yours be done, right? That was his earnest prayer was that the will of the Father would be done in what would follow.

[7 : 28] And he knew what was waiting for him. He knew the punishment he was about to endure, the suffering he was about to endure. So in Jesus' humility and in his obedience, and then, of course, in his sacrifice, right?

For this reason, God highly exalted Jesus because he was humble, because he was obedient, and because he actually did physically die on the cross, right? He actually did take the punishment for sin that we deserve.

For that reason, God highly exalted him. And we have to be careful because, like I said, Jesus didn't earn something that wasn't already his, right?

As we've already talked about, we talked about last week, Jesus is truly God. He's truly God, right? Completely equal with the Father, which means the status of equality with God was already his.

He didn't have to do anything to earn that. So in that sense, a lot of people have, you know, really worked through this a lot smarter than me, and they've kind of talked about how it can't be that this is a reward for his action, that he's highly exalted, because that would be to say that Jesus earned this status of high exaltation in some way.

[8 : 45] And it's not that he earned the status of exaltation, but because of his humility, because of his obedience, because of his sacrificial death, God graciously gave, bestowed on him the name that is above every other name.

And so it's not so much that he earned it for himself, but now he's recognized as having the name that is above every name specifically and especially because of his work on the cross, because of his work in salvation.

He didn't humble himself to earn some reward, and that's precisely what makes him worthy of this unparalleled honor and glory. He truly humbled himself so that we could be saved, and as a result, he's highly honored.

He's highly exalted. There's something supernatural, something amazing when you consider the work of Christ in his life, his death, his burial, his resurrection, and especially amazing as you consider what that means for how we view Christ, how we behold Christ, right?

And so there's some passages. Of course, the one that Clint read earlier would be relevant that he exercised, God the Father exercised his power by raising in Christ, by raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand, far above every ruler and authority, power and dominion, and every title given, not only in this age, but also in the one to come.

[10:15] His name is greater than any other name, both now and forever, because of his work on the cross, his work in salvation, and specifically evidenced by his resurrection, by God bringing him back from the dead.

The resurrection of Christ is God vindicating him. It's him affirming his life and his ministry and saying, this is my son. His words are true. And if you believe in him, salvation can be yours.

And then in Hebrews chapter one, verses three and four, it says, the son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact expression of his nature, sustaining all things by his powerful word.

After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, so he became superior to the angels, just as the name he inherited is more excellent than theirs.

That kind of makes us pause for a second, because wait a second, was Jesus, you know, not superior than the angels? Is that possible? How did that happen?

[11:20] The author of Hebrews is not talking about his divine status. He's not saying that Jesus lost his divine status or earned divine status when he became superior to the angels.

Instead, the author of Hebrews is pointing to the actual status of him as truly man when he was resurrected and then ascended on high. He once again physically went to the superior place of being seated at the right hand of the Father.

Throughout Jesus' ministry, it's evident that he has complete power and dominion and authority over spirits and angels and all of those things. Even just look at the temptation of Jesus in Matthew chapter 4, and you'll see what I'm talking about.

But it's not that Jesus became superior to the angels in the sense that he wasn't already. It's that his status, his physical location, went from being on earth to being at the right hand of the Father in power yet again.

And his name that he inherited, again, God gave him this name that is above every name, is more excellent than theirs. Hebrews chapter 2, it says, verse 9, but we do see Jesus made lower than the...

[12:29] This is kind of explaining that idea. So Jesus is crowned with glory and honor specifically because he suffered death.

Right? So in some sense, the name that Jesus received and the exaltation that Jesus received from the Father is because of his work on the cross.

And it is because of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. So because of the life and death of Jesus and by the resurrection of Jesus, he bears the name that is above any other name, especially as it relates to the praise that he'll receive from humanity.

We will recognize him as worthy and honor him higher than anyone or anything else because, specifically because of his humility and his obedience and his sacrificial death.

So that's the reason, right? For this reason, God highly exalted him. The reason is he actually physically lived on earth, actually physically died on the cross and actually physically bodily rose from the dead.

[13:51] For that reason, he has the name that's higher than any other name. Okay? And so continuing on, God highly exalted him. This idea of exaltation. So there's this interesting concept, a biblical concept, that needs to be kind of explored here, which is humility leads to exaltation.

Okay? Humility leads to exaltation. And I'm not suggesting, again, that we will receive some great divine status because of our great humility or anything like that.

It would be quite prideful of us to try to attain divine status through humility, right? That'd be quite arrogant. On the contrary, humility leading to obedience is exemplified in the life, death, resurrection, and exaltation of Jesus.

But it is true for us as well. In Matthew 23, verses 11 and 12, Jesus is talking to his disciples about the Pharisees, and he's condemning them for their hypocrisy.

And he says, The greatest among you will be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. So he told his disciples that they shouldn't place their pride in their titles and recognition, right?

[15:03] Like the Pharisees, they would wear these tassels and they would wear these robes that they could walk around and show everybody, I'm the teacher. I am a rabbi. You should respect my word and hear what I have to say and all of those things because they loved it when people saw how smart they were.

And Jesus is telling his disciples, You shouldn't even go by rabbi. You shouldn't even go by master. You serve me, right? You serve one master. And so you have to be humble. He says to them that the greatest will become the servant of all and that if you exalt yourself, you'll be humbled, and if you humble yourself, you'll be exalted.

So the key to humility is not smarts. It's not fake humility that leads people to praise you. It's not anything other than truly submitting yourself to who God says you are, right?

And then in Luke 14 verse 11, Jesus shared the same message and he said, For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled and the one who humbles himself will be exalted. And in Luke, Jesus is talking about the need to be humble in a parable.

He's talking about at the dinner feast, if you go to somebody's house and you sit down at the seat of honor and then you get asked to move to the lowest seat, that's pretty embarrassing for you. In fact, it's humiliating.

[16:19] But if you go and you sit at the lowest seat of the table and you get asked to move forward, there's great honor in that. And so there's a couple of principles here. There's a practical application, right?

Which is, this is kind of a proverbial-like statement from Jesus, okay? Meaning, it's generally true on earth and it's always true in God's economy, okay?

Always true in God's sight, in God's eyes. So the general truth is, humble people generally are honored higher than arrogant, prideful people.

That's generally true. And I know sometimes we think about our society and we think about different people in the workplace and we're like, that just can't be right. But generally, it's true. People will honor and cherish and want to be around even people who are humble more than they would people who are arrogant and prideful.

But there's also a spiritual application to this concept of humility leading to exaltation. And that is, if you puff yourself up and try to present yourself as worthy to God, you'll be humbled in all eternity when you realize how far from perfect you really are.

[17:29] But if you humble yourself, if you humble yourself and tell God, acknowledge before God that you aren't worthy, that you are a sinner, that you aren't perfect, and that you need his help, that you need his salvation, that you need Christ's perfection, if you humble yourself before God, then you'll be exalted on account of Christ's exaltation.

You'll be made extremely high in the sense that you'll be in heaven with him. This is all from humbling yourself before God, submitting yourself to the need that you have for a savior who is perfect, who is beyond anything that we could ever think or imagine.

And that's how we should consider this idea of humility leading to exaltation as Christians. And then the other side of this is, what does this humility leading to exaltation mean for Christ?

How do we consider this? How do we think about this with regards to Jesus? Well, let's see here. Humility leads to exaltation, and Christ is most highly exalted.

Okay, so did a little bit of word study here. And this phrase, highly exalted, is one word in the Greek. It's only used one time in the New Testament, and it's right here.

[18:48] It means extremely and exceptionally honored, far above anything and everyone else, right? It's like this extreme hyper-superlative, okay? Jesus is highly, highly honored.

He is in a class of his own, all right? It's only used one time in the New Testament, but here's a little lesson for you. The Old Testament was written primarily in Hebrew, ancient biblical Hebrew.

But around the time of Christ in the New Testament being written and things like that, there was also what's called the Septuagint, it still exists, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, all right? So the Greek translation of the Old Testament, they tried to do what we try to do, which is best match the words in the original language to our language, right? And in Psalm 97, verse 9, this word, this extreme exaltation is used to describe God.

It says, For you, Lord, are the most high over the whole earth. You are exalted above all the gods. Now the point of the psalmist is not that God is higher than the other gods which legitimately exist, right?

[20 : 00] The psalmist's point is that God is so far out of this world, so far beyond anything that the human mind can comprehend, really, if he hadn't revealed himself, so far above all of those things that he is in a class, again, of his own.

So in both cases that this word is used in the New Testament and in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, it's talking about God being on a different level, completely far above everything and everyone else.

So Christ is most highly honored. And the only way that you can see these words being used in the New Testament and the Old Testament with reference to the Jewish God, Yahweh, and New Testament to Jesus is if you conclude that Jesus is truly God, right?

There's no way that a Jewish person, the background, Paul, would ever use that word to describe anyone who isn't God, all right? And then the name, the name of Jesus.

God highly exalted him and he gave him the name that is above every name so that at the name of Jesus, every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

[21 : 17] So what name did God give Jesus? That's actually led to a lot of questions, a lot of speculation. What is the name that God gave to Jesus?

And is it just the name Jesus? It doesn't seem like that would be the name that God gave him because that name was, well, one, pretty common. It was the Greek version of the Hebrew name Joshua.

It meant Savior. Was it some other secret name that in the book of Revelation when you see Jesus riding on the white horse and he has a name on his thigh and it's a name that only he knows?

Is it some secret name? I would argue that the name is a graciously given name, right? That's one thing that we have to understand. God gave him this name.

God appointed it to him. God bestowed it on him and it's the name Lord. The name Lord. And notice how this isn't immediately stated in this passage.

[22 : 15] He gave him the name that's above every name at the name of Jesus every knee will bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth. And then what's the confession? Every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

Jesus Christ is Lord. So the name is Lord. This poem, this hymn, was built in this way that kind of, it almost builds the tension a little bit that God gave him this name and then it releases the tension when it explains that Jesus Christ, we all praise him because he is Lord.

He is the Lord of all. So what's in the name? This word Lord, as you probably expect and maybe already know, it means the one who has authority over all things.

He is completely sovereign. He is the master. He is over everything. Right? There's this cosmic lordship of Christ. He is the Lord of all things.

But there's a little bit more to it and I'm going to go back to the Old Testament again because there's a really, really neat thing that this section of scripture, this hymn does that I think will help us understand exactly what was being conveyed here by the apostle.

[23 : 24] And so if you look at Isaiah chapter 45, verse 23, what you'll see is that verse 10 and 11, the beginning of verse 11 is really somewhat of a paraphrase of Isaiah 45, 23.

So what's the context of Isaiah 45, 23? Here's the deal. Isaiah, really long book of prophecy. The first 39 chapters, doom and gloom, very, very negative.

Things are going to go bad for the nation of Israel. Okay? Just the way it is. And then what it seems like is that the prophet Isaiah probably put the pen down, stopped prophesying for many, many years because this was a hard prophecy to unravel for the people or to reveal to the people.

And then at some point, after a period of time, picked the pen back up. God told him to prophesy again. And Isaiah 40, verse 1 has some of the most beautiful language in all of the Old Testament.

Comfort, comfort my people. Right? God brings back this comfort. And then for the next few chapters, the rest of the book of Isaiah, really what unfolds is God explaining his plan for salvation. [24 : 32] Right? And pointing to his might, his power. And in this section, chapter 40 through 45, the might that is in his name. Very profound, actually.

Over and over throughout Isaiah 41, 42, 43, 44, he says, I am the Lord. And then he says what he's going to do. I am Yahweh. He uses the divine name.

I am the Lord. So on and so forth. And so Isaiah 45, 23, says, By myself I have sworn, truth has gone from my mouth, a word will not be revoked, every knee will bow to me, every tongue will swear allegiance.

He's talking about the salvation, that he is the only real, true God who offers salvation, that all of the nations around the nation of Israel should forsake their foreign gods and give up their idolatry and forsake all of those things and instead turn to him.

And then he makes this promise that every knee will bow and every tongue will swear allegiance. In other words, every tongue will confess. In other words, there will be a time when every nation and every person will accept the reality that he is God.

[25 : 46] There's no more denial or rejection, only full acceptance of the fact that he is the Lord. He is God. So in Philippians, in Philippians chapter 2, in this Christ hymn, when Paul brings that, or whoever, you know, whoever wrote this hymn, but for our sake, whenever the apostle Paul brings in that reference to Isaiah 45, it takes the context with it.

the power of the name of the Lord. And in the Old Testament, like I said, when they would translate the divine name in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, when they translated the divine name, they used the same word that we see right here for Lord, kurios, in the Greek.

They used that same word. So there's this really neat connection to the context where there's this powerful, powerful proclamation that Jesus is the Lord equal to the divine name of God in the Old Testament.

Jesus is supreme. He has authority. He has power. He is God. He is truly God. And then, this is the amazing thing, is the way this ends is that Jesus, we will confess, everybody's going to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord and that confession that Jesus Christ is the Lord brings glory to the Father.

It brings glory to the Father. And if you go back to Isaiah 42 in verse 7 and 8, he says, I am the Lord, that is my name. I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.

[27 : 30] God is not in the business of sharing his glory. But for us to confess his Son as Lord, as supreme, as God, as the authority over all, for us to do that, to make that confession, actively brings glory to the Father.

He doesn't share his glory, so what does that tell us? Jesus Christ is truly God. God, and our praise of Jesus Christ for all eternity will bring the utmost glory to God the Father.

The promise of this passage is incredible. There's this already and not yet aspect, right? Christ is already exalted because he's ascended. He's at the right hand of the Father.

Father, but not yet has every knee bent and every tongue confessed that he is Lord. But that will happen.

And in Revelation chapter 5, so the book of Revelation is really interesting, I'm sure you know, but the apostle John gets called up to the throne room. And in Revelation chapter 4, he's in the throne room of God and describes the scene and all these colors and gems and beautiful things that he sees.

[28 : 45] And then he sees and the praise that he hears. And then in Revelation chapter 5, in the throne room, there's this moment where the scroll, God has this scroll that needs to be opened, right?

And it's the scroll of the things that are going to take place. And nobody is able to open it. Nobody's worthy to open it. And so John, the apostle, starts sobbing in heaven.

And he's like, what are we going to do? What's going to happen? Nobody can open it. All of heaven, all of earth, it's been searched. Nobody can open it. And then one of the elders says, look, the lion of the tribe of Judah, the root of David, he is worthy because he suffered.

Jesus is worthy because he suffered. And then you go on a little bit further. And in Revelation 5, verse 13, this is what John records. I heard every creature in heaven and on earth, under the earth, on the sea, and everything in them say blessing and honor and glory and power be to the one seated on the throne and to the lamb forever and ever.

John called up into the throne room of God, heard the eternal, everlasting praise of all people in that moment shout how worthy Jesus Christ is because of who Jesus Christ is.

[30 : 03] this passage is powerful. It's a reminder of the praise that the honor that is due to Jesus Christ because of his sacrificial death, his humble life.

Jesus is the king of kings and the lord of lords. And so you have this question, this is not a question on the screen, I just want you to see this. The humility of Christ leads to the exaltation of Christ which leads to the glory of the father.

And now there's this question, how does this really neat passage, how does it matter for us? It's a cool passage, right? This is who Jesus is. Praise God. Praise Jesus for who he is.

But what does this mean for you and me in our day-to-day life? Well, there's a few things. One, we have to, as Christians, understand and celebrate the amazing work of Jesus Christ.

Our lives have to be filled and marked by worship. Everything that we do should be worship, right? Colossians says, everything you do, do it unto the Lord, right?

[31 : 07] So whether you work or whatever, do it unto the Lord. Worship in all that you do. Seek to bring the most praise to Jesus in your life because that will glorify God.

We also should look forward with gladness to the day that all of humanity will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. if you have put faith in Christ, then what a joyous thought that is that one day everybody from everywhere dead or alive is going to sing praise to Jesus and confess that he is the Lord.

We will all understand in greater detail than we could ever imagine how Jesus is the Lord of all. He is supreme. So we should look forward to that day. But, if you have not put faith in Jesus Christ, this passage is a terrifying reminder to you that one day you will confess Christ.

One day you will confess that he is the Lord of all. And if you don't do that now during your time on earth when God has offered salvation to you, then that is going to be a terrifying confession.

Because you are subjecting yourself to his Lordship which means to his wrath for eternity separated from God. So, everyone will confess Christ.

[32 : 42] The question is, have you confessed Christ now so that that will be a joyful experience? Or, have you denied Christ and when you do confess him, will that be a terrifying experience?

2 Peter 3.9 says, the Lord does not delay his promise meaning to return as some understand delay but he's patient with you not wanting any to perish but all to come to repentance.

So, today, if you haven't confessed Jesus as Lord, I'm going to call you the same way that Peter did here in 2 Peter to repentance, to repent of your sin and to call on the name of Jesus and to confess him as Lord.

So, we're going to have a song, I think it's acapella again and so we'll stand and we'll sing but bring praise, bring your praise, joy-filled praise to Jesus Christ, to who he is and consider, have you put faith in Jesus Christ today?

If not, come talk with me. Let's pray together. God, thank you for who you are. Thank you for your word and your truth. God, we love you and we praise you and pray your blessings over this time as we sing praise to you now and we pray all of these things in the mighty exalted name of Jesus.

[33 : 56] Amen. Stand please. Have thine ever.