

# From Humility to Exaltation

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[ 0 : 00 ] Now, as the Lord enables us, let us turn back to this portion of Scripture we've read together, the letter of Paul to the Philippians and chapter 2.

Let us again read at verse 4. 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 used in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, 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.

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.

The Philippi was the first city in Europe in which Paul preached the gospel.

[ 1 : 48 ] And you remember from the book of Acts and chapter 16, how wonderfully the Lord worked in that place, and how varied the effects of God's power were seen and known.

For example, Lydia was with other women down at the riverside meeting for prayer. And when Paul began preaching, the Lord opened her heart that she took notice to what Paul was saying.

The Holy Spirit worked in her heart, savingly. And then, the prison jailer in Philippi, the prison into which Paul and Silas were cast, the prison jailer came in response to an earthquake that opened the prison doors, and he came and he asked Paul and Silas, Serge, what must I do to be saved? And the answer came from Paul, believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you shall be saved. You see, the Philippian jailer experienced an earthquake within himself, in his mind, in his conscience, in his affections, in his heart, and he was turned to the Lord Jesus Christ in a saving way.

Now, this letter that Paul is writing, he's writing it to the church in Philippi ten years later, ten years after he had first been to Philippi.

[ 3 : 34 ] And it says in verse three of chapter one, I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine, for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now.

What commitment they had in their lives from the first day until ten years later, they were still committed in this bond of love with the apostle and with the Lord in the gospel.

But Paul was a realist. Besides being thankful for their fellowship in the gospel for ten years, he realizes that these people still are not perfect.

None of us who follow the Lord Jesus Christ can expect perfection in this world. We need to be taught. We need to be refined.

We need to be led, improved, sanctified. And we see that these people had a particular problem. At the beginning of chapter two, he is saying, chapter two, verse two, complete my joy by being of the same mind.

[ 5 : 01 ] Having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. It's as if there were people pulling this way and other people pulling that way of a different mind.

And then, verse three, do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

And then it goes on in verse four, let each of you look, not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. There seemed to be a streak of selfishness and a lack of humility among the people in Philippi.

Despite the fact that the Lord had blessed them richly and that blessing had followed them through their life, nevertheless, they needed to be honed.

They needed to be cleansed from this particular problem that they had, this selfishness and self-centeredness. And the apostle, not only here, but elsewhere in the New Testament, he addresses practical problems by highlighting the highest possible standard to the people who have the problem.

[ 6 : 29 ] For example, going back to 2 Corinthians chapter 8 and at verse 9, the apostle there is talking about givings and being generous with their givings.

And then he says, you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, that you by his poverty might become rich.

He highlights the most wonderful example of liberality. Christ, who was rich, came to become poor, that you through his poverty might become rich.

And then also in Ephesians chapter 5 at verse 25, he's talking about the commitment of husband and wife within the marriage bond.

And he says, husbands, love your wives as Christ loved the church and gave himself for it. See the standard of love as Christ gave the church.

[ 7 : 44 ] That's the way husbands should love their wives and wives love their husbands. He uses such an amazing example to highlight this particular problem.

And now in this verse, in this chapter, Philippians 2, we have the same kind of pattern followed. He's talking about people in Philippi who are selfish and self-centered and so on.

I know he highlights the greatest example, Christ Jesus himself. He is the one who is least selfish, least lacking in humility and he highlights what Jesus has done to show these people how they ought to live.

first of all, I'd like to say one or two words and the context is so rich and I can't really hope to touch on every individual aspect of it but just a couple of points.

Firstly, as we have here, the glory that Christ possessed. It says here verse 6 and he's talking about Christ Jesus who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.

[ 9 : 14 ] That was Christ's glorious and eternal possession. Secondly, we see his voluntary condescension.

It says here from verse 7, he made himself nothing, taking in 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 thirdly, the exaltation of Christ bestowed upon him by his father therefore, in verse 9, 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 on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

One or two thoughts on each of these three points. and remember the apostle by highlighting this marvelous theology is addressing a practical problem among the Philippian church, a church he loves and has been in bonds with in the gospel for ten years.

Firstly, he highlights Jesus Christ who says in verse six, though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.

[ 11 : 06 ] He was in the form of God. What does that really mean? Well, in the Greek the word morphe means the very essence of God.

Not just that he was like God. But his was the very essence of Godhood. He was very God of very God.

He was God in reality. He was God in all its fullness. He was God from all eternity. The catechism is an amazing document, isn't it?

God is her spirit, infinite, eternal, unchangeable. That belongs to Christ. The infinity, the unchangeableness belongs to him.

And then it goes on in the catechism elsewhere. There are three persons in the Godhead. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power, and in glory.

[ 12 : 26 ] And now he's focusing in these verses on the second person of the Trinity, Christ Jesus, Jesus Christ. And it says, though he was in the form of God, that is, although he was in essence God, he was God from all eternity with the Father and with the Spirit.

and then it says, he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped. He means by that, I believe, that he wasn't, he did not need to aspire to being God. He did not need to try and work his way into being God. He was God. It was not something that he was able to aspire to and attain to.

Rather, it is something that belonged to him by right from all eternity. He with the Father and with the Holy Spirit, he is God, not by accession, not by robbery, not by attainment.

He is God of very God from all eternity. He is the great I am, the being one, the one with no beginning and no ending, the one who is changeless.

[14:03] Holy, holy, holy. He is inexhaustible in all his glorious being.

He is omnipresent. He is eternal. And this is the Savior whom we preach. And this is the Savior who was preached in Philippi by the Apostle Paul and Silas ten years earlier.

This is the Savior they had embraced by faith, Lydia and all others who came to saving faith in Philippi. They embraced this Savior, Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, the Mediator, the Prophet, Priest, and King of the Church.

But then secondly, we see what it says. Verse seven, he made himself nothing, 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.

What condescension? he was not forced to humble himself. He voluntarily humbled himself.

[15:44] In the council of redemption in eternity between the persons of the Trinity, he agreed willingly and readily to come in the fullness of times to be the sin bearer of his people.

Come to fulfill the law on their behalf. Come to suffer the punishment due to them, even the punishment that was due to them for all of their sins.

And it says here, he made himself nothing. In the original, the word is, he emptied himself.

well, we have to say immediately that he didn't empty himself of his divinity. He couldn't do that.

He nevertheless came and he made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant. When we read about Mary and the whistle of the angel to her, telling her that she was going to have a son and that a son would be none other than the Lord of glory.

[17:11] And she said, how can this be? See, I know not a man. And the angel assured her that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and the power of the Holy Spirit would overshadow her.

And that holy thing to be born of her would be none other than the Son of God. God. What an amazing thought that is.

The God of glory taking to himself human nature at the very point of conception.

The second person of the Trinity united that embryonic humanity.

joined it to his divine nature and continues to be joined to that divine nature even now and throughout the ages of eternity.

[18:19] Two natures in one person forever. And it says here he made himself nothing taking the form of a servant.

You have to take these ideas together. He didn't make himself nothing and become nothing as it were. No. He became nothing by taking.

He became a servant. He became man. He became the savior of sinners in this amazing condescension.

he assumed creaturehood. He came into the world that is full of misery, full of sadness, full of sin, animosity against God.

He is born in a low condition. He was born in a manger or laid in a manger in Bethlehem. He wasn't in a five star hotel. The poverty of his birth speaks volumes about his willingness to condescend, to come down in order to save his people.

[19:42] And when he came, he was made under the law. Made of a woman, made under the law.

And when you think of the Lord of glory, having united human nature to his eternal and divine person, coming to be made under the law, he was made under the ceremonial law.

at eight days old, he was circumcised. We read of him going up to the temple at 12 years old to the feast. He was committed to living according to the ceremonial law.

And of course, the domestic law, we read that he went down with them to Nazareth and was subject unto Mary and Joseph.

We're talking about the God of the universe who created all things by the word of his power, who sustains all things by the word of his power.

[ 20 : 58 ] And this is him having come into the world a babe in Bethlehem, a young lad in Nazareth, a carpenter in Nazareth, and now it says here that he was born in the likeness of men and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death.

He took the form of a servant. It's the same word morphe used for his form of servant as he was in the form of God.

He was essentially God, the word is used to describe him in that situation. And now when it comes to talk about his servanthood, he is a real servant, a servant through and through.

As he was God and is God through and through, so he became a servant through and through. To do your will I take delight, he said, O thou my God that art.

I have finished the work that thou gavest me to do, he says to the father at one point. He took the form of a servant and in human form he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death.

[ 22 : 32 ] The obedience of Christ. He loved to do the father's will. The father gave him a work to do and it was his delight to do it and it meant him becoming man and becoming a servant and being obedient even to the point of death even death on a cross.

death was the climax of his obedience or maybe the nadir of his obedience whichever way you look at it.

When he went to the cross Peter tried to keep him away from the cross. These things shall not happen unto you he said get behind me Satan he said you have more regard for the things of men and for the things of God it is his delight to embrace the cross oh I know he went to Gethsemane and there he prayed fervently until his sweat like great drops of blood fell down upon the earth father if it's possible remove this cup from me however not my will but your will be done his human frame was shattering as it were in prospect of what this cup would involve for him he realized the domination that was in this cup he realized what was involved by way of suffering nevertheless he says not my will but your will be done the will of the son and the will of the father ran together and we see here he was obedient to the point of death having loved his own he loved them unto the end unto the bitter end the end of the cross or when we think of what the cross involved for him the sufferings of his body were one thing men did what they could they showed as much cruelty as they were permitted to show but then when the

Lord went on the cross at the mid day hour darkness fell upon the land for three hours between midday and three in the afternoon and it's as if God was pulling a curtain across so that people could not see what his son was experiencing it was representative the darkness outside was representative of the darkness within and he cried my God my God why have you forsaken me he knew why he was being forsaken that was the purpose for him coming into the world to bear the sins of many just like the scapegoat in the old testament ritual the sins of the people were confessed on the head of the scapegoat and the scapegoat was led away into the wilderness by the hand of a fit man and then released there never again to come back this was

Christ going into the darkness the loneliness of that wilderness experience alone alone with God the just judge of all the earth who poured upon him the undiluted wrath due to us for our sins every wave broke upon his head so that not a drop of wrath will fall upon your head if you are his child being in human form he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross it wasn't a deathbed full of palliative medicine that our saviour experienced many people know that kind of deathbed where pain is taking away where discomfort isn't really a problem but

[ 27 : 53 ] Jesus Christ at the hands of cruel soldiers was wounded in his hands and his feet and upon a cross suffered the undiluted wrath of God on a cross a public execution the most shameful of deaths the most painful of deaths death which he was willing and happy to endure and the apostle Paul writes this to the Philippians what now do you think of your selfish ambitions what now do you think about your pride this is what your savior has done thirdly the exaltation that he was privileged to know therefore verse nine

God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name and so on God has highly exalted him you know that the first step of his exaltation was his resurrection from the dead the women went early to the sepulcher laden with odors and spices that they might anoint his body but they went there the Lord was not there he had risen from the dead he was raised from the dead death had been conquered by him he is the prince of life the first step of his exaltation the resurrection and he appeared to many of his people over these 40 days before his ascension which was the second step of his exaltation the third step of his exaltation is his sitting at the right hand of

God his heavenly session sit at my right hand until I make your enemies your foot stool what an amazing saviour and there he sits today continually making intercession for his people continually remembering their needs continually able to supply grace to them in all their situations and of course the final step of his exaltation will be his second coming the second coming of Christ he is highly exalted now but when he comes again every knee will bow every tongue confess every knee that has not bowed yet will bow at that day despite themselves knees that have bowed in reverence and in adoration in a day of grace will bow that day and sing his praises throughout the endless ages of eternity every tongue confess that

Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father every tongue maybe you don't think today that he is Lord in Psalm number 2 you find that people there are saying well we don't like to have the word of God the law of God bind us or tie us down we'll break these bands from us well if that is your attitude today I pray it won't be your attitude for too long because one day your tongue will confess despite yourself Jesus is Lord Jesus is Lord but may you confess it today and may you be happy to receive him as Lord of your life as saviour from your sins the one whom you seek to serve all the days of your life in this world the one who came into this world humbled himself was obedient unto death even the death of the cross surely he's the one we need to please and not please ourselves we need to please him live for him do what honors him in every detail of our life have this mind among you which is used in

Christ Jesus who though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but made himself nothing 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 may we bow before such a saviour who is today exalted at the right hand of God and may we bow every day of our life remembering what he has done and remembering how unworthy we are of the least of all of his mercies amen may God bless these words