

The King Enthroned

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[0 : 0 0] I think if the Bible was a mountain range, this would be one of the highest peaks. It tells us not only who Jesus was and what Christ did, but we learn about the mindset of Jesus.

We hear his inner motivations. So I want to just walk through this treasure in Philippians 2. We'll start with verse 6 here. Though he was in the form of God.

What does that mean? Though he was in the form of God. Paul the writer could have said, Jesus is God.

Could have, right? It's not a very elegant phrase. And I don't know how helpful it is. It's like, Jesus is God. I'm God.

You're God. We're all God. I don't know how helpful it is. Though he was in the form of God is more helpful to us. Because what it's saying, and it sounds a bit odd, and you're always about this close to heresy when talking about the Trinity, but what it's saying is this, is Jesus is the same substance as God.

[1 : 1 1] Lots of quotation marks here. It's the same substance of God. Jesus is as much God as God is. He's totally God. And what verse 6 does though, that first part of it, it sets up the rest of the verse here.

Listen to this. Another one of those like, what is this even saying?

What does this mean? Here's what I think it means. It's saying that even though Jesus is as much God as God, Jesus is God, even though he's that, he didn't exploit that situation.

He didn't exploit his Godness. Specifically, he didn't use his status as God as a reason to avoid suffering. He doesn't use his status as God as a reason to avoid the incarnation.

He didn't say, look, you know, when the plan was laid out, here's what we're going to do. He didn't say, look, I'm God, and I don't have to become a human and die because I'm God.

[2 : 1 6] Let's push this down to middle management. Let's get one of the angels to do this. Somebody else can probably do it. He didn't say that kind of thing. He willingly chose humiliation, even though he was God.

He didn't exploit his position. And then what the text does now, verses 7 and 8, is it begins to unpack this downward mobility of Christ, verses 7 and 8.

But he 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.

It's just this astonishing picture of humility here. It's like Jesus is walking down a staircase, step by step, step by step downwards. He leaves the throne step by step.

He becomes a human step by step. Not just any human. He becomes a servant. Step by step, down, down, down. He dies for us. Not just any death. Death by crucifixion.

[3 : 1 8] Which is, you know, the worst death the Romans could come up with. Christ, on the throne of heaven, humbled himself, humiliated himself to a degree that is astonishing.

Stepping down, down, down, down, down. It's not like a CEO takes a minimum wage job or something. This is God. God becomes this cursed man on the cross.

So what have we learned so far? Jesus, he was humble in heaven, wasn't he? Jesus was humble in heaven. He doesn't use his godness as a way to get out of the plan.

He was humble in the incarnation. Became a human child. He was humble in death. It was the cross. And it was all his own doing.

No one humbled him. No one humiliated him. Pilate didn't humiliate him. The torturers didn't humiliate him. The passage says he humbled himself. He did this himself. He did it willingly. I don't know if you've ever thought about what it would be like to be God.

[4 : 29] Perhaps you think it would be really great. Just do whatever you want. Just do God stuff. Like the cameraman in Megamind.

You ever watch that movie? Is that a bit low class example? I guess that probably is. That's all I got though. Gets these superpowers.

Turns out to be a bit of a jerk. What does God likeness look like in Philippians? It's not, you know, I can do whatever I want. I'm God. I can do whatever.

No. It's God likeness looks like giving away your rights to the point of death. It's just astounding. This is what it looks like to be God. Let's move to verse 9.

So there's this downward movement. Down, down, down, down. And then boom! Verse 9.

Therefore, God highly exalted him.

[5 : 26] And the original language of this is Greek. And it's hyper exalted. You imagine like these ancient catapults, right?

Ancient catapults. And the arm that sort of throws all the whatever they throw. It's just slowly being ratcheted down. And these winches are sort of turning. And it's slowly being pulled down, clicking into place.

The gears straining to hold the tension. And then boom! Somebody trips the hammer. And there's this explosive launch. Hyper exaltation.

God raises Christ from the dead. But not just that. He gives him the name above every name. The name of Lord. And then God says, and eventually, everybody will agree with that.

Everybody will bow the knee. Every tongue confess that you are the Lord. The resurrection. The ascension. The enthronement of Christ.

[6 : 27] This is God's massive yes to the work of Jesus. To what you've done. What you've done, Jesus, is God's massive yes. God is saying, your death is dealt with sin.

Your resurrection and enthronement. It means new life. But it's not all God is saying. He's saying, and now world? God says, listen to Jesus.

He knows what he's saying. He's the king of the universe. Which means there's no individual or culture outside of his authority. So a yoga instructor in Sydney or a banker in Vancouver, a subsistence farmer in Papua New Guinea.

They all owe allegiance to Christ. Whether folks recognize it or not. What does that mean? It means that when you ask Jesus into your heart, it does not mean you're inviting a kind friend.

It doesn't mean you're inviting a comforting therapist into your life. No. The Jesus that is in your heart through the Holy Spirit, if you're following Jesus, that same Jesus that's in your heart by the Holy Spirit is also sitting exalted at the right hand of God.

[7 : 47] It means we hold nothing back from Jesus, does it? The natural conclusion is we hold nothing back from Jesus. You might know this story in the Crusades, which, by the way, if you're not a Christian and you're here, we don't like the Crusades.

We're not proud of them. Just bad. Right? Anyway, interesting story. So the Crusades. The knights, before they were sent off to the Crusades, the church made them get baptized in their full armor. So they'd go to a lake in full, full armor, and they'd be baptized full immersion. Like they'd go down in the water and come back up. But when they'd go down in the water, they'd hold their right hand with their sword in it outside of the water so it wouldn't go under the water.

As if to say, it's a true story, as if to say, you've got my whole life, Jesus. Obviously not this part. Obviously not that part there because, you know, this armor's going to do terrible, godless things. So you don't have that. Crazy. Like, I know, it just sounds bonkers to us. But here's the thing. At least they're kind of honest, you know.

[8 : 59] At least they're being honest about it. Like if it's us, we're going down in the water. Yeah, yeah, got my whole life. We're holding out our iPhones. Holding it out, the iPhone. Or like a picture of our girlfriend or a job contract or like whatever it is, Wi-Fi habit.

Whatever it is, you know. You've got my whole life, but obviously not that thing, Jesus. If Jesus is the king of the universe, he has our whole life.

What else do we do with this information? We're kind of getting to application here. I've just got a few minutes to go. What else do we do with this information that Paul has taught us here in his commentary on the cross and the resurrection?

What do we do with the fact that Christ was humiliated beyond imagination, exalted beyond imagination, so that now a human being runs the universe?

Well, Paul's point is back in verse 5, actually. We skipped over it. Verse 5. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.

[10:09] Paul gives us this whole insight into the mind and motivations of Christ and says, have this mind. Be like him. See, Paul brings the example of Jesus before us because I think when we see the selflessness of Christ, when we understand the story, it takes an axe to our self-interest.

We look at the cross and who is up there. It's God. And it came all the way down from us. He came down, down, down to your level and kept going below us. And ended up a criminal on a cross. You know, the world's advice to you is put yourself right at the center of everything. Put what makes you happy at the center of everything. And the Christian alternative is so radically different. The mind of Christ is one of selfless, purposeful sacrifice.

And Paul says, have that mind. Now, just to clarify, the Christian call here is not, you're not being asked to give up a deep sense of joy and you're not being asked to give up fulfillment and stuff.

[11:25] There's a great quote here from an author called David Benner. He writes this just as we finish here. Saint Ignatius of Leola notes that sin is unwillingness to trust that what God wants is our deepest happiness.

Isn't that great? I'll read that again. Sin is unwillingness to trust that what God wants is our deepest happiness. Until I'm absolutely convinced of this, I will do everything I can to keep hands on the control of my life because I think I know better than God what I need for fulfillment.

What do you need for fulfillment? The mind of Christ. Servanthood. Humility. This is where these lie. This is the mindset of Christ. And the passage says, don't be afraid to be humble.

And don't be afraid to be the servant that Christ calls you to be. Because what do we learn? God honors servants. God honors his servants. Amen.

Amen. I'm going to pray for us now. You pray with me. Amen. Father, this evening we celebrate.

[12:42] We celebrate you, Lord. We celebrate your resurrection, your enthronement. We're so grateful for the cross. Lord, in considering our brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka. Hundreds died, more injured.

Lord, this celebration feels like a protest, Father. Lord, we pray that you send our brothers and sisters in Sri Lanka.

I pray that they would know your comfort and your kindness. We mourn with them, Father.

But we don't mourn without hope. Because of the resurrection, you have promised new life. And what's amazing, God, is that you invite us to participate in that renewal.

You invite us to participate in this new life. Lord, teach us your way. Teach us the way of humility. Teach us the way of servanthood. And Lord, we pray this is not a chore.

[13:49] We pray this is not a duty or a law or a legal thing, Lord. But it comes out of the natural result of just knowing you, who you are, and what you have done.

We pray this in Christ's name. Amen.