What's your attitude to Jesus?

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Date: 30 October 2010

Preacher: Sam Low

[0:00] Well, good morning. I don't know about you, but I'm still feeling kind of excited after last Sunday. Vision Sunday started with a whole heap of momentum. I went home feeling very challenged, but also very encouraged.

And it was great to chat to a few people who hung around after church and just there was a visible and a tangible energy that I think people had because I think we're all getting a sense, as Deb was encouraged in South Africa, that God is on the move and that he wants to use us to make stuff happen in Chatswood and in Sydney and in the world.
And so I'm excited to be in the book of Philippians with you today. And I believe God's got something significant to teach us. I just wanted to warn you that I'm not going to be able to deal with everything in the passage that we just read because it is an incredibly rich passage.
But the good news is you get to do that in your small groups during the week. So the downside is if you're not in a small group, you should get into one so that you can get into the stuff that we don't get to today.
So if you're not and you want to be, can I encourage you to come and find Deb or myself or Chris Jones or maybe somebody in a seat next to you who's in one and find out how you can get into a group so that you can enjoy that as well.
[1:11] Or worst case scenario, if you can't, grab a booklet from the back and have a look through the studies that are there so that you can be wrestling with all that God wants to teach you from this passage in Philippians.

How about I pray and then we're going to get stuck into it and have that passage open in front of you because we're going to be looking at it in detail. Father God, we want to thank you so much that you love us.
We want to thank you so much that you sent Jesus for us. And we want to thank you so much that you have given us your word that we might know you better, that we might know what it means to live for you, that we might know what it is you would have us do in this life.
And Lord, I pray this morning that you would soften our hearts, that you would help us to see things that need to change and to have the honesty to acknowledge those things. And I ask that by your spirit you would make us more like Jesus so that we are better equipped to do your will.
Amen. Do you ever feel like you're being set up? Like you're in a conversation and people are just kind of talking you into a corner so there's no way out of it?
[2:14] Kids are particularly good at this. You know the scenario when the kids come home from school and maybe they've gotten a really bad report or maybe they've gotten in trouble and the conversation starts something like, Mum, you remember how you said you love me no matter what?

And there's kind of this implicit commitment that you know is going to come back to bite you when they tell you what it is that they actually have to tell you. Well, this is kind of how I feel like Paul opens this second chapter.
He's just finished chapter 1, if you have a look at verse 27, by saying whatever happens, conduct yourself in a manner worthy of the gospel. Then he opens this next section with what I think is as close to sarcasm as we'll find in the Bible.
Have a look at verse 1 with me in Paul's questions. He says, Do you kind of feel how pointed that is?
It's kind of like he's slapping you. It's like you could replace if with because, couldn't you? I mean, because you have encouragement from being united with Christ. I mean, every encouragement we have comes from Christ.

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[3:32] It's in him we're forgiven. It's in him we have hope for the future. It's in him we have constant support and unconditional love. And every encouragement comes from Christ. Every comfort comes from his love.

We have fellowship because of what he did. We have fellowship by his spirit that he has given us, that draws us together even though we're completely different and don't deserve it at all. And what we get from him is absolutely tenderness, compassion and love.
It's kind of sarcastic. I mean, the grace that we have from God has transformed us. It's changed who we are. It is the absolute foundation of what it means for us to still be people.
And Paul says, if you've got any benefit from being in Christ Jesus, if there's anything good for you about being a Christian, he means because of the blessings and benefits you have in Jesus, then, verse 2, make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love and being one in spirit and purpose.
Paul says, be unified. Be like-minded. Share the purpose that he's been talking about through chapter 1. Share the purpose that God has given us, and we looked at last week, the purpose of the gospel.
[4:51] The purpose of partnering in seeing other people come to know Jesus, in seeing God glorified. The purpose, back in chapter 1 and verse 7, of defending and confirming the gospel.

The purpose of proclaiming it with our mouth and the purpose of living it with our lives. It's confirming it through the people that we are. He says, be unified because of what Jesus has already done for you.
I think sometimes we get the idea that what brings unity is the fact that we sit in the same building on a Sunday morning. We think that unity is about being in the same area as one another, having the same logo, the St. Paul's logo on our bags.
We think that brings unity. Now, that might help a little bit, and I like the new logo, but unity doesn't come just from sitting in a pew kind of near someone. Unity comes, according to Paul, from being like-minded, having the same purpose, having the same goal, having the same thing that drives us, being able to say like Paul did in chapter 1, for to me to live is Christ and to die is gain.
When we share that value, that's what brings us together. When everything about us is moving in the same direction, it all of a sudden doesn't matter so much if I'm sitting in a pew next to you.
[6:08] It doesn't matter so much if I like different music to you. It doesn't matter so much if I like to wear different clothes to church than you would like me to wear. What matters is we share the same purpose, the same goal, and we're working in the same direction.

But it's not always an easy thing, being unified at church, is it? I knew a guy in a church that I was previously involved in, and he was one of those people that just irritated me.
I don't think it was his fault. Maybe, I don't know. But he's one of those guys who every week at church, he would kind of come up, and you'd be in conversation with someone, and out of nowhere, you'd get this massive slap on the back just to let you know that they were there and to say hello. Or you'd be having a conversation with someone, and he'd come running down and jump onto your back, and I'd be like... And then afterwards, he'd kind of just stand next to you and not say anything, and just kind of wait for you to have a conversation. And I used to get very frustrated.
You know, I'd kind of be walking into church, and somewhere in the back of my head, I'd be praying that, please don't notice me so that I can sit by myself over there. And, you know, people can be frustrating. People can annoy us.
[7:18] People can have habits that get on our nerves. People can have, you know, desires that maybe clash a little bit with ours. People can disagree with us. And in a group this big, I'm fairly confident that there's some people in this room that probably irritate you a little bit.

You might have found ways of managing it. Maybe you can just kind of avoid them. The group's big enough, so you can just talk to the people that you like. But maybe sometimes you wish... Or church would be easier or better if that person wasn't here.
I don't want them to not be a Christian. Just maybe if they could be a Christian somewhere else where I didn't have to kind of interact with them. Now, you might not be as sinful as me, but I wonder... If sometimes you just think, wouldn't it be easier if church was just full of the people that I liked?
Or people who liked my sort of music or my style of service or my style of building or whatever else? See, in my eyes, this guy at my church was kind of getting in the way of the gospel purpose.

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When he was around, I was less loving. I was less encouraging. I was less compassionate. And so I kind of thought, you know what? If we're going to be about this purpose of, you know, the gospel, maybe he shouldn't be here.
[8:29] We'd be better at it if he wasn't here because he's kind of annoying. And maybe church would be better if it was just full of people that I liked. But that's not the gospel.

It's not what Christ is about. I mean, I had a well-intentioned idea of fulfilling the purpose God had given us, but a misguided idea. And maybe you are wrestling with people here at St. Paul's. Maybe you're wrestling with decisions that are made and you wish it could just be done a little bit more the way that you want it done. We'd never say that out loud, but maybe there's things that annoy you and deep down, you know, the reason they annoy you is because it's not the way you want it done.
It's not the way you would have us do church. It's not the way you would have us preach. It's not the logo you would have chosen. Well, like me, I think you need to hear Paul's words to you today. It's not about you. It's not about you even a little bit. Have a look at verse 3. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.
[9:47] Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. See, this is a community made up of forgiven sinners, made up of not the people you choose, but the people God chooses.

You know, it doesn't actually matter how long you've been a part of this community. It actually doesn't matter how long you've been a Christian. You have no claim on this church. You have no right to demand anything from anyone else in this church because you are here by the same grace that I am here.
You are only here because of what Jesus did first. Even if you were born into Christian parents in this church, you are still here because of what Jesus did and you have no claim on what we should or shouldn't do.
See, humility is the foundation of unity. Humility is the absolute cornerstone of partnership in the gospel. Humility that recognises what God has done for us is what releases us to serve like Jesus in this context.
A couple of years ago, Sal and I had just started college and we thought we'd love to go to a new church and kind of see what ministry was like in a different place and a friend of mine rang me up and he'd just finished his study at Bible College and he was starting a new church and it was exciting and it was energetic and there was this buzz of we're going to change the world and things are going to be fantastic and we were looking around for where do we go and do this?
[11:23] Where's the right place? And the hardest part about starting a church is what brings a building do you have it in? You know, churches have buildings and new churches don't have buildings so how do we deal with that? And the result was we found a church in Cogger, Cogger Presbyterian Church that was once a powerhouse of gospel ministry.

There was a time when their Sunday school had 400, 500 kids in it every Sunday. It was the place to be south of the harbour. Everyone was there and they were faithfully proclaiming the gospel. But when we arrived there there was 10 faithful older people no minister and a dying church.
These older people approached my friend who was looking to plant a church and said we love Jesus. They said we love our traditional service.
We love our organ. We love our church building. We love the way that we do things. But we love Jesus more. And so we want you to come. We want you to do church your way as long as it's about the gospel.
We want you to bring young people in and we want to see people get to know Jesus. And over 12 months we basically pulled the rug out from under them. By the time we left we only got to spend one year with them.
[12:41] By the time we left they had knocked down the old church building. We were meeting in a rented hall kind of down the road. This was about as dressed up as anyone got for church other than those ten older people who were faithfully there in suit and tie every week.

We didn't do hymns very often if ever. There'd been an intentional shift in the way we were doing church to try and make it accessible to other people. And I remember that I thought that that would be a really awkward thing.

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I thought these people some of them had been in the church for 80 years and I thought they'll be heartbroken. And I remember sitting down at morning tea with one of the head elders there a guy called John Burgess and I said how are you finding church at the moment?
And I was just humbled by his response. He had this huge smile on his face and he said I'm so excited to see young people in church again. I'm so excited that people are becoming Christians through this ministry again.
I said you know do you miss the old church building? He said oh it was great but this is better. I said do you miss the organ? He said yeah I do like the organ but I don't care as long as we get to sing about Jesus.
[14:00] What mattered for them was the actual purpose of the church. What mattered to them was Jesus. What mattered to them was the gospel.

What mattered to them was God's kingdom growing. What matters for the Philippians is the gospel of Jesus and for us it must be the gospel of Jesus.
The mission statement for us as a church says that we exist to know Jesus treasure Jesus and represent Jesus for God's glory and the joy of all people.
That is the only thing worth fighting over. that is the grid that we need to put decisions through now. If we're having disagreements or we're having fights the question has got to be not do I like it not is this my favourite style not do I like that person not do I get on with them but does this help us all of us know Jesus treasure Jesus and represent Jesus because that's all that matters that is the purpose God has given his church that is the purpose we are called to share that is the purpose that will bring us together and unify us that is the gospel we received that is the grace we received that is the forgiveness we received that is the forgiveness we share and that is the forgiveness we're called to proclaim the gospel of a humble selfless servant saviour king have a look with me at verse five your attitude should be the same as that of Christ
Jesus who being in very nature God did not consider equality with God something to be grasped but made himself nothing taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man he humbled himself and became obedient to death even death on a cross I think that is one of the most powerful passages in all of scripture that Jesus who is rightfully God who is in his very essence and being God in all his glory and splendor and majesty who is there before the creation of the world chose to humble himself for us chose to become what he had created chose to submit to disobedient humans the creator of life allowed himself to be beaten by death that is the savior that we follow it's his name that we bear the sovereign king who made himself nothing and for our sake do you ever realize or think about that he didn't have to do any of that he sat in heaven in the glory of
[17:09] God he could have put his feet up and kicked back and God still would have been glorious and majestic in every way he could have come down and at any point said you know what this is too painful this is too hard I mean he is all powerful and control of everything it's by his will that we're still alive and yet he stood there and let measly pathetic disobedient humans crucify him and at no point did he go you know what this is too hard it would be easier for me if I just went back to heaven because he could have at any point he could have but he didn't because of you and because of me that is when Jesus takes his rights as king and as ruler and denies himself those rights for the sake of other people it's his name we bear a community like this that follows

Jesus should be the most humble community that there is I mean we should have trouble making decisions because we're all so insistent that the other person's needs come first I remember when I was in high school we had an English teacher that really wanted to see better manners from us year eight boys so she introduced a policy of doorway decorum it was catchy basically the way it worked is when you came to a doorway you were supposed to wait so that the person coming the other direction could come through the result for year eight boys was we never went through any doors when we came near a door we would just stand there for 20 minutes insisting that the other person go through first and explain that the reason we were late to class was because we were trying to be polite that's kind of where I feel like we should be we should be so gripped by the humility of Jesus to lower himself that we should be tripping over each other to try and put others first we should be so consumed by the needs of other people that people come in here and are just blown away by the service they see by the humility that they see by the love and care that they see I remember when I became a Christian I was about 14 years old and I was on a camp with 150 teenagers teenagers are the least humble and caring people in the world I can say that with

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absolute confidence and yet on this camp I don't remember exactly what the sermon was about the night I became a Christian I remember it was about Jesus but beyond that I couldn't tell you the passage but you know what I do remember I remember the community that week I started the week knowing about three other kids and I was a pretty annoying teenager in fact I remember on one of the visits to the beach I spent the entire return bus trip all 35 minutes of it sitting on the back seat singing this is the song that doesn't end as loud as I possibly can now there were kids that probably wanted me to shut up there was a few that politely asked me to be a bit quieter but even in spite of my being annoying I remember that by the end of the week I felt like I had 150 people who just wanted to make sure that I was having a good day who were willing to put themselves out for my sake

I was a annoying little 14 year old and there was kids who were 18 in year 12 who had taken the time to chat to me and say how are you finding the week new to me and I hope and pray that we as a community can share that kind of love I hope and pray that when anyone walks in here who doesn't know Jesus the first thing they spot is humble service the first thing they notice is that we're not here for ourselves it's not about us but it's about others it's about humility because that's what Jesus did for us that's the model he gave us that's the way we came to know him and it's his name that we bear I mean it's a little bit embarrassing when you really think about the kind of stuff that we're precious with when you think about the kind of sins that we've been forgiven from when you think about who

Jesus was and what he became and how he lowered himself even to death and then you sit there and you realise that you know I'm kind of precious about how loud the music is in church I get upset if somebody else has taken all the clean cups from morning tea I've been forgiven willful and disgusting rejection of God but when somebody hurts me I remember that sort of stuff I think it's because we feel like we have rights like we have the right to be treated with a level of dignity and respect and there's a truth in that God has made you in his image and you are valuable and so is every other person here but the one that we follow willingly gave up his rights the one we follow stepped down from heaven for our sake the one we follow calls us to forgive the failings of the people around us and love them anyway the one we follow calls us to imitate his humility to deny our rights and actively pursue what other people need first what Jesus did for us was something we could never deserve and we're called to be like him to be him to the people around us humility is about denying your rights for the sake of others and for the sake of the purpose we share of the gospel people

[23:14] I want to embarrass someone right now that I actually don't know I'm going to do this but as I was preparing this week this was summed up by something that I saw here at St. Paul's earlier this year I've only been here for 12 months and so there is probably other examples and I want to encourage you if you have been working hard at putting the needs of others first but I remember one Sunday rocking up to church sitting down probably somewhere roughly where me and Sal are sitting today and noticing Judy Green standing up the front with a two day old baby leading us in worship no one would have begrudged her if she stayed home that day just to recover she had a baby two days earlier it's well within her rights to relax and take it easy but she wanted to serve us it's perfectly reasonable for her to take that Sunday off and relax there's nothing bad about it is there it's fair enough but she chose to forego that right and serve us that is what humility is about denying what you deserve what you feel you are entitled to for the sake of the gospel and for the sake of your partners in the gospel see

Jesus humbling himself is the path that he took to glory instead of sitting in heaven feet up and just kind of waiting till the earth destroyed itself he came to heaven and suffered instead of arriving with angels and an army and destroying all his enemies he came and allowed himself to be arrested and put on the cross he submitted to punishment but then verse 9 therefore because of his humility God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name 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 for Jesus humility was a choice and it was a choice he could make confidently because he trusted God having lowered himself God raised him up having sought the good of others God provided for him having suffered God restored him to the name above every name to a position of ultimate authority on the throne in heaven see the path for

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Jesus to the ultimate glory started in heaven with God but he chose to humble himself to not fight for what was rightfully his but instead to trust God to raise him up at the right time and the path is the same for us if we follow Jesus we look forward to heaven we pray for the day when Jesus comes back and we have painless perfection we have unhindered fellowship with God but first he calls us to humble service the heart of selfish ambition is born out of fear the thing that drives us to worry about me first is the fear that if I don't no one will it's being scared that if I look after other people I might have to go without but when we trust in a
God who has proved himself faithful when we trust in him to provide for us when we trust in him to look after us then we're released because all we need to worry about now is other people we don't have to look after ourselves anymore because God has promised he would do it in the same way he looked after Jesus and so we are released to pour our energy into the needs of other people to put them first because of what Jesus has done because of the example he has shown us and because God has exalted him therefore look at verse 12 trusting God doesn't mean being lazy I think there's two dangers for us in the Christian life one is that we thank God for what he did for us and we thank him for
Jesus and then we think so I'm not going to do anything it's like cheap grace the other danger is that we think grace is not enough so we thank God for what he did and then we feel this incredible burden to serve everyone else because if we don't serve God won't love us anymore but this verse tells us that neither of those is true it tells us first of all that we are to work out our salvation with fear and trembling it says don't be lazy about humility it says don't be lazy about gospel ministry it says don't be lazy about loving one another it says don't be lazy about loving and following Jesus but then it also says in verse 13 it is God who works in you to will and to act according to his purpose it's not God or me but it's totally God and because of God I get it's completely
[28:44] God so as we pursue humility together as we seek to serve one another we need to do it in the strength he provides and not presuming we can do it ourselves when I got married a couple of years ago I remember thinking through the marriage passages in the Bible trying to figure out what does the Bible tell me to do what the Bible tell Sal to do nothing apparently that was how I started reading those passages and I remember reading Ephesians about the husband must love the wife and the wife must submit and so when I read those passages I kept thinking okay so my job is to make sure Sal keeps submitting it's not by the way but I remember reading it thinking that and then a very wise godly older man sat me down and said no no no your job is to love your wife when you love your wife she'll want to submit and her job is to submit to you not to make you love her when she submits you're just going to love her even more and I think it's kind of the same with serving one another here at church it's really easy to get worried about my needs and the things that are important to me don't worry about what you might be sitting here thinking of people in this community that would do well to start humbly serving don't worry about that humbly serve and that will encourage them to humbly serve service in church is not about asking what

I want or even what I want to do to help gospel ministry go forward it's about asking what do you need so that together we can make the gospel go forward it's not about what I want it's not even about what I want to do but it's about what do you need so that not criticism but humility without complaining and arguing that's a really quick way to distract each other from the purpose God has given us by just sitting there criticising and letting each other know what's wrong and what's not done your way but humility and unity stand out in this world
I'm sure you've got a lot of nice friends who aren't Christians who don't go to church but the reality is deep down outside a church it's pretty hard to find people who genuinely seek the good of others first we're in a world that's selfish that encourages selfishness that encourages you to seek your own good encourages you to look after yourself but as we seek to know and treasure and represent Jesus together in partnership the lives we live and the relationships that we have with one another can either adorn the gospel or veil it whether or not we imitate Jesus will either make the gospel easier to hear or kind of muffled if people walk into church here if people see us in our spending time together on other days during the week visit bible studies get invited over for dinner and see us as a community of people who are selfless who are humble who are about one purpose then they see
Jesus even before we open our mouths they hear the gospel God has placed you here in this community at this time for his purpose he has placed you here to know treasure and represent Jesus with this group of people in partnership for his glory and for the joy of all people so ask

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yourself and don't just ask yourself for the next 30 seconds and forget about it but keep asking yourself what ambition what desire what insecurity in me do I need to let go of so that I can serve like Jesus did as a partner in this mission in chapter 1 verse 27 Paul calls them to live a life worthy of the gospel a life a life worthy of the gospel is single single-mindedly committed to gospel ministry it's about humble service like Jesus it's about trusting God to provide for you so that you can serve other people it's about working hard in the strength he provides so that we shine like stars in a world that doesn't know God and doesn't know love and doesn't know forgiveness so I ask you again what ambition what desire what need what insecurity do you need to let go of so that you can serve like
Jesus did as a partner in the mission of this church

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