

# The Mind of Jesus (2)

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Preacher: Rev James Maciver

[ 0 : 0 0 ] we'll know the Lord's blessing as we come to worship him together. You'll find the details as usual for the intimations on the bulletin sheet and I'm just going to refer to three of these just to highlight them for you. The Youth Fellowship meets tonight, that's at 7.30, that's in the MA Hall and then tomorrow night there's the, tomorrow from 10 to 12, the toddler group meet in the MA Hall as well. Tomorrow evening the Kirk session is due to meet, that'll be in the upper hall rather than on Zoom which we've had to do for some time.

So that's tomorrow at 7 p.m. Now the Wednesday meeting is entirely on Zoom because we have another missionary, Martin Dudgeon from Platform 67, who's going to give an account of his work with Platform 67. So again that's on Zoom only and I know some people have been inquiring as to whether we could access the Christian Institute meeting that's on that evening but there are other Christian meeting, Christian Institute meetings on over the next couple of weeks and it's the same login details as there are, as you have for this Wednesday. So because I had already booked Martin Dudgeon, I thought we'd be just as well to leave that in place and you can log into the Christian Institute meetings if you want on other occasions over the next couple of weeks. And if you don't have details, just contact me and I can send these on to you or they're available online.

Thursday the Gaelic prayer meeting meets at 7 30. That'll be led by Mr. Mordo Martin, our own elder. One other thing just to mention to you, to commend to you, and that's the Binding Brokenness Bible-Based Trauma Healing which Marianne is very much part of and I commend that to you.

And do please notice the details there or if you know somebody that would benefit from this course and I can vouch for its Bible quality and also its effectiveness because I've gone through it myself with Marianne early on when she started off with it. So you can see the dates there. Tuesdays from 2 to 4 and that's weekly from 2nd November to 14th December. Location is at the Shed at 11 Francis Street. There's a voluntary donation of £5 for just basically to cover materials. But I commend that to you and please pray about it because there are a lot of broken people about, people who need this kind of assistance and help and support. And we're grateful to Marianne herself for the amount that she's put into this and also the way that she, along with Joanna George, is willing to continue running that course. So with these intimations, let's begin our worship now this evening. And we're singing firstly from Psalm number 18 and Psalm 18 and that's in the Scottish Psalter version of Psalm 18 and from verse 46. These final few verses of Psalm 18, wonderfully triumphant verses.

God lives, blessed be my rock. The God of my health praised be. God doth avenge me and subdues the people under me. He saves me from mine enemies. Yea, thou hast lifted me above my foes and from the man of violence set me free. Therefore to thee will I give thanks, the heathen folk among, and to thy name, O Lord, I will sing praises in a song. He great deliverance gives his king. He mercy doth extend to David his anointed one and his seed without end. And of course because of David being himself a shadow of the Lord Jesus Christ in terms of his kingship particularly, many aspects of this psalm are also applied in fulfillment to Jesus himself and the overcoming by Jesus of his enemies and especially of death itself and the deliverance by which he has been set free from death in his resurrection and exaltation. So we'll sing these as we consider these in reference to Christ himself. God lives, blessed be my rock.

- [ 4 : 19 ]    blessed be my rock.
- the God of my health praised be. God doth avenge me and subdues the people under me.
- He saves me from mine enemies above above above my coals and from the man of thine set me free.
- therefore therefore to thee will I give thanks the heathen folk along and to thy name O Lord O Lord I will sing praises in a song He great in And his king, he mercy doth extend to David his anointed one, and his seed wither again.
- Let's now call upon the Lord in prayer. Let's join together as we address God in prayer. Almighty and gracious God, we give thanks that you are the God who has triumphed over death, the death which we caused by our sin against you.
- [ 7 : 18 ]    And yet, Lord, you have not rejected us or cast us permanently out of your sight. We acknowledge that this would have been very just of you to have done so.
- But we give thanks tonight, O Lord, and we come before you to worship you for the fact that you have sent your Son into this world to die the death that we deserved and to rise triumphantly from the dead and to come to be exalted to the right hand of the majesty on high.
- Lord, our God, it is our privilege to know these things. It is our privilege to worship you on account of them. And you are worthy of worship as God, supposing you had done nothing for us.
- For you are God and you are perfect. But you are worthy of our worship when we consider what you have done in order to redeem us from death, in order to place us in that relationship with you which we broke in the beginning, but which you reestablished through Jesus Christ, your Son.
- We thank you tonight, Lord, for the work of your Spirit by which you enable us to come to join to him in faith and to come to be as joined to him expectant, that your promises will be fulfilled as they are laid out before us in your Word.
- [ 8 : 42 ]    And we pray, O Lord, that all aspects of our worship tonight will be pleasing to you. Help us as we sing your praises to do so out of knowledge of the content of the words that we are singing.
- Help us to dwell upon them in our mind as we sing them. And to realize, O Lord, that you have given us these words so that we might uplift your holy name and that we may know at the same time our own soul to be uplifted and quickened and energized by your Holy Spirit as we sing them.
- And we thank you, O Lord, for the reality of these things that we sing about as we come to sing of the Lord and of his great acts of redemption and of his kindness towards his people and of the great acts of judgment that he has demonstrated down through history and that will be demonstrated finally also at the end of the world.
- For all of these things, O Lord, we come before you in awe and we admire you and we come to express our love for you in the way that you have revealed yourself to us.
- We also come to acknowledge our own sin and to confess our sins in your presence. And we give thanks, O Lord, that you have provided so abundantly against our sinfulness and against our sins that emanate from it.
- [ 10 : 05 ]    We bless you tonight, Lord, that we have the freedom, that we have the light of your truth and the promise that your Spirit will indeed enable us to confess our sins so that we will know you as one who is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

And, Lord, we bring before you all the burdens of our hearts as well. Lord, we know that so much of our experiences in this life, so many of them cause us at times to have a sense of bewilderment and a sense of not knowing the reality of them and the way they purposely fit into our lives.

We pray that you would guide us and direct us, Lord, tonight by your Word. We pray that you would comfort our hearts as we need your comfort, that you would encourage us and uplift us, that you would also, Lord, destroy within us any sense of personal pride that will rival you or that would in any way at all come to stand resistant to your claim over us, to your Lordship and to your glory.

We ask that you would help us thereby, O Lord, to realize the great privilege that is ours anew as we come together in this way. We thank you for the truth of your Word and for the way in which your Word assures us that the gatherings of your people are precious to you and that as we gather, Lord, here physically before you, we have such a great advantage that we not only receive but also contribute to the ongoing work of your church, to the ongoing fellowship of your people and to the way in which you cause your church to grow by your own blessing.

And we ask tonight, Lord, that you would assure us and keep reassuring us that your delight is in your people and that as we are surrounded, Lord, in our day too by so much that conflicts with your Word and so much that we find opposed to you and to our own progress, not only around us but even within our own very hearts.

[ 12 : 21 ] Lord, we thank you for the unerring direction of your Spirit and for the way that you have promised that that Spirit who inhabits his people as the earnest of our inheritance will continue to work in your people until they are ready to leave this world and come to be with Jesus in glory.

So bless us, we pray. As a congregation tonight, we give thanks for your ongoing encouragement and for your ongoing help to us and all that we seek to do in your name.

We pray that all the activities that take place through the week along with the services on the Lord's Day and prayer meetings, Lord, we pray that you would use them to further your cause and to further our own knowledge of you and to enable us to contribute increasingly to the work of the Gospel.

We ask that you bless the young folk tonight and the Youth Fellowship. We pray that they may know, Lord, of your blessing and all who help with the fellowship that you would grant them your blessing, Marianne and those who help her at these times in different ways.

Oh, Lord, our God, we give thanks for them. We give thanks for the young people and the youth of our church. We pray for them and for the children right through from the Sunday school to Twinnies and to Koresh.

[ 13 : 44 ] And we pray for those even younger still who are not still able to attend these meetings themselves. Lord, we pray for our infants. We pray for those who have recently given baptism and for those who are baptized.

We pray, Lord, that you would bless such to them as families and as individuals. Continue, we pray, Lord, to look upon us in your favor and in your love as we would seek to be further directed by you in days to come.

Remember, also we pray, those who are ill tonight, we ask for those who have been ill for some time, have received treatment and are continuing to receive it.

For those who have been through surgery, Lord, we ask that you would continue to bless them. Bless those, Lord, whose faculties are now beginning to fail through loss of physical ability or memory.

We pray for them and we pray for those who care for them, whether at home or elsewhere in our care homes and in hospital. Lord, we pray that they will know your blessing even in these difficult times.

[ 14 : 53 ] We pray for our hospice. We pray for those who are seriously ill, especially those known to ourselves. We ask that you would, Lord, bless them and bless their families. Along with all who suffer still the pain of bereavement and sorrow over the loss of loved ones.

Whether in recent times or in times gone by, oh, Lord, we know how these wounds are so often open from time to time. And even though at times we may feel that we have successfully overcome the effects of death and bereavement in our families, yet, Lord, we know that at times the reality comes back with force.

And we pray that you would help us to deal with that through the comforts that are in Jesus Christ for us. The comforts that are ministered by your Holy Spirit to our own human souls.

We ask, too, your blessing for us again as a nation at this time. And, Lord, when we find so much still to concern us in our land, not only with the COVID-19 virus and the related effects of it, we pray that you would enable us to recover from it.

But not only recovering from it physically or mentally, but also spiritually, Lord. Bring us as a people back to a proper, balanced view of life. And help us, especially through the gospel, to realize that you are speaking to us through your providence as well as through your word.

[ 16 : 19 ] And help us to measure and to look at this and other providences through the light of your word, your word of truth. And we commend to you those who lead our nation at this time.

And ask that you would bless them and continue, Lord, to bless them. Especially, we pray, that you would give them the wisdom that is from above. The wisdom that comes not from human creation or ingenuity, but the wisdom that you are pleased to impart to those that call to you for it.

And we pray that you would bring our leaders to realize their need of that wisdom. Lord, when we find such a great gathering that is due in Glasgow in these weeks to come, we pray that you would grant that wisdom to those who meet.

We know that many of them sincerely seek to deal with the problems of our planet. Yet, Lord, we lament the lack of that wisdom and dependence upon yourself, at least in the way that they speak and set out policies and plans.

Oh, Lord, we ask that in mercy you would remember us. We pray that you would grant safety during these days, for we know the threat of violence and the threat of those who would seek to disrupt through violent means.

[ 17 : 38 ] We ask, Lord, that you'd bless the police force involved in the work of the summit in protecting people and going back and forth.

We ask, Lord, for days in which we will see your own goodness extended to us during this time. And we pray that you would grant blessing throughout the world to the work of the gospel, wherever it goes for us.

And so hear us, Lord, we pray now. Receive this, our thanks. Cleanse us from all our sin, for Jesus' sake. Amen. Let's read God's word now from the gospel, the gospel according to Mark and chapter 15 and from verse 37, sorry, from verse 33 to verse 47.

So that's Mark chapter 15 at verse 33. And after we've read these, we'll turn to our studies in Philippians chapter 2, where tonight we're looking at verse 8. Mark chapter 15 at verse 33.

This is, of course, about the circumstances of Christ's trial and now his crucifixion. And we read at verse 33, When the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour.

[ 19 : 10 ] And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani, which means, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Some of the bystanders hearing it said, Behold, he is calling Elijah.

And someone ran and filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink, saying, Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to take him down. And Jesus uttered a loud cry and breathed his last.

And the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. And when the centurion who stood facing him saw that in this way he breathed his last, he said, Truly, this man was the Son of God.

There were also women looking on from a distance, among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of James, James the younger, and of Joses and Salome. And when he was in Galilee, they followed him and ministered to him.

And there were also many other women who came up with him to Jerusalem. And when evening had come, since it was the day of preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea, a respected member of the council, who was also himself looking for the kingdom of God, took courage and went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

[ 20 : 33 ] Pilate was surprised to hear that he should have already died. And summoning the centurion, he asked him whether he was already dead. And when he learned from the centurion that he was dead, he granted the corpse to Joseph.

And Joseph bought a linen shroud and taking him down, wrapped him in a linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb.

Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Joseph, saw where he was laid. Amen. May God bless to us that reading of his word.

And if we turn to Philippians now to chapter 2. Philippians chapter 2. We're looking tonight at verse 8.

But let's just read from verse 5 because this whole passage is so closely woven together. We'll just begin at verse 5. 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 made himself nothing taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men.

[ 21 : 48 ] 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.

We're looking at verse 8 tonight. We've seen verses 5 to 7 the last time we met together in this way. And we've been thinking of these verses verses 5 to 9 as a great journey which was taken by the Lord Jesus Christ beginning with him being in the form of God that is in the highest heaven as God and we saw last time how though this was the case yet he did not hold on to that as something that he would refuse to relinquish that position that he had but instead he took the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men.

And that's the first stage of the journey as we called it last time from the highest point down to this point at which he had taken human nature but doing so in the form of a servant.

And tonight we come to the next stage in that journey of Jesus which involves his death on the cross. And then God willing next time as it follows on in the passage the next stage of the journey is his exaltation to the right hand of God and given the name that is above every name which of course began with his resurrection and then the exaltation followed on from that.

But tonight we're confining it to this second stage which takes us to the cross which is really the lowest point of this journey that Jesus took. Remember remember the first time we came to the passage we thought of it as a great mountain the top of which extends beyond our ability to see the summit of it in the fact that Jesus is God.

[ 24 : 05 ] We know that's what is true of him but we cannot embrace everything that that entails. And as Jesus as you look at this mountain and Jesus as it were stepping down from that and coming down towards us and coming to be one of us in his human nature we're now coming to verse 8 where he reaches the lowest point of the journey as it refers here to his death.

Now you notice first of all he's saying here being found in human form he humbled himself and the translation there is somewhat misleading in a way because the word *forum* there is not the same word in Greek as the word *forum* used in verses 5 and 6.

Though he was in the form of God he took the form of a servant and we saw how that actually meant everything that is true of God to be said to be God everything that makes him God if you like is true of Jesus.

He is fully God and by the same token everything that you could say about a servant the complete definition of servant it is his as well.

He took the form of a servant. There is nothing about servitude that he refused to take. That is what he became as he came into our nature.

[ 25 : 25 ] But this is a different word in verse 8 and it's probably helpful to think about the older translation in the AV being found in fashion as a man.

Being found in fashion as a man. Now Paul never accidentally changes terms. There is always some reason why he uses different words in different places or indeed the same word at times in various places.

But here this word is used by him and it doesn't mean being found in human form or in fashion as a man. It doesn't mean any more than what we saw earlier that Jesus was less than human that he was not fully human.

Jesus is completely human was completely human as he took out human nature to himself. And if we dwell on that just for a moment it's important just to tease out some again of the ramifications of that or the importance or significance of that.

That Jesus is completely human. Everything you associate with a complete humanness is true of Jesus. His physical human nature his mental capacity his will his soul everything in what the catechism calls a reasonable soul along with a true body is true of Jesus of the son of God in our nature.

[ 26 : 48 ] That involves his will and his thoughts and his thought processes and his emotion everything you think of that is true of a human nature as human is his.

Now that's a crucial aspect of the way that Jesus is presented to us in the scripture. It's a crucial aspect of how we relate to this Jesus ourselves and how he relates to us.

It's a crucial aspect of his function as the saviour that he is completely human. Why is it so important? Why is it a crucial aspect of his function as our saviour and as an example to us as this passage in Philippians is setting out for us?

Well it's because everything that you are going through in this life has already been through of him. You may be saying tonight and I may be saying at times I don't think that anybody else is really in the position that I'm in.

I don't see how anybody else can understand what I'm going through because I've never found anybody in exactly the same situation as I'm facing. And certainly I can't understand how God could understand me how God could possibly sympathize with me in the way in which I find myself as a human being struggling with what I'm struggling with pained by what I'm pained with bewildered by what I'm bewildered with struggling to understand why things are as they are.

[ 28 : 25 ] Well Jesus is saying to you tonight and to me tonight through the likes of this passage whatever is true of your situation in life I have already been there I have gone through that and not only is he saying that but he's saying I've gone through it as someone dependent on the Holy Spirit and on the Word of God because you remember when Jesus came to face the devil for example in the wilderness and the devil's temptation thrown at him Jesus didn't come to as it were draw from his own divine power that's what the devil was trying to make him do to cease to be an obedient dependable servant no he went to the Word of God and he quoted from the words of Deuteronomy to the devil it is written now that shows you that Jesus as a human being like ourselves was depending on the Word of God in terms of his humanity and his human experience and his human development and his human progress in this life so Jesus well understands not only as God but also as human what you and I are going through in this world

I mean it would be a little perhaps a little if I can put it this way it would be some help to you if you really understood and grasp the fact as we do that God knows everything about it that from his omniscience from his all-knowing nature God is actually truly aware of everything we are going through but then as a human being you might be able to say from that well I understand that and I appreciate that but I need somebody who understand my human situation my human experience my human difficulties and Jesus is saying that's who I am that's why I came down this great height from being in the form of God to taking the form of a servant and you know that's what our world needs our world needs this very person for all the problems that you find in the world these human problems problems of human creation problems of human mismanagement problems of human failures all of these problems that you find characterizing human society

God is saying will you not turn to me and find in the God man my provision for your human predicament because that's what Jesus is about and so we stretch that out a little bit but he is set before us as completely and fully human and remember it doesn't require the element of sin or sinfulness we'll see this in a minute to actually make a complete humanity Adam was perfectly and completely human before he sinned and Jesus is completely human in taking to himself our humanity so why if that's the case why is Paul actually saying that he was actually found in fashion as a man in the AV rendering of it what does this actually mean well it means that although completely human nevertheless there's something different about him in fact there are some things different about him to set him apart from yourself and myself not to make him less than human not to make him less than fully sympathetic with our condition and our situation but nevertheless his humanity has some things that make it distinct or different from our own for a start he had no human father his human nature was created by the power of the Holy

Spirit coming upon the Virgin Mary and creating in her the human nature of our Lord and that's a precious precious truth it's one that the Bible makes clear that's what was announced to Mary and that holy thing which would be born of her would be called the son of God he did not have a human father but he did have a human mother and in the mystery of that great event of Mary becoming pregnant there is where the human nature of the Lord without a human father but by the power of the Holy Spirit and it is Mary who conceived and bore in her womb and gave birth to Jesus Christ now the devil's efforts in tempting the Lord was very often directed to these sort of points the devil's efforts in the desert and so on to actually bring him away from the fact that he was dependent and yet different and the second thing you find in the distinction between us and Jesus although we keep emphasizing the fact that he is fully human we grasp that we hold on to that but he is sinlessly human he never sinned remember the catechism asking the question into where

Adam's fall and the state into which Adam fell that the state into which he fell the sinfulness of that state into which he fell is characterized by certain things the sinfulness of that estate into which man fell characterized by the guilt of Adam's first transgression by the want of original righteousness by the corruption of his whole nature which is called original sin our corrupt nature by the fall together with all actual transgressions which proceed from it our sins come from our sinfulness but there's nothing of that in Jesus there never was there never will be and that's what the devil aimed at in his temptation in the desert to actually get him to sin if you are the son of God command these stones that they be made bread don't go on depending on the

[ 35 : 21 ] Holy Spirit don't go on as a servant don't go on denying yourself what could rightly be yours that's the thrust of the devil's arguments and Jesus answers him as the humble servant that he is through the word of God now you find of course the same in Gethsemane and on the cross there are all sorts of attempts made to actually deflect the Lord to divert him to turn him away from that path that he's on the path of service the path of obedience and the struggles of his own soul in Gethsemane as he wrestled with the cup that the father had given him to drink and on the cross when so often it was thrown at him if you are the son of God come down from the cross and we will believe you he triumphed over all of that so he is different and he's different in the sense in which there is a veil of flesh as one of the hymn writers of the Christmas hymn puts it veiled in flesh the

Godhead see see this is the thing that Paul is saying here he was found in fashion as a man this is what he came across as this is what people thought when they saw him he's actually fully human he's a human being but there's a godhood there that is veiled by the flesh that is veiled by the fact that he's a servant that is not obvious by the fact that he's come into this world to be a servant to take the form of a servant his deity is not obvious it's hidden to a certain extent that's where you find verses like John 6 and verse 42 where Jesus was speaking about the bread that came down from heaven that he is the living bread and where the listeners were saying the Jews who were listening to this were saying is this not Jesus the son of Joseph whose father and mother we know how can he say that he came down from heaven and that proves the reality of the Lord's human nature that's how he was found in fashion as a man and yet at the same time beneath that or hidden there is his divine nature he is the son of God in our nature he is the son of



God even in the form of a servant he is still the son of God and that is hidden from you by his humiliation the state in which he entered into which he entered for our sake but then you see he say so then being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself becoming obedient to death even the death of the cross or death on a cross as it's put here now you see as Jesus came down from being a form of God as he took steps down from there into the form of a servant as he came into this world taking out human nature in the way he did as his humiliation is evident even to the masking of the fact of his deity that's not the end of the journey you might say surely that is a big enough step for the son of God to take from being in heaven in the form of God to being now in the form of a servant surely there's nothing else required of him surely that's gone far enough no but being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself you see the process the journey for Jesus was not just coming into our nature and that's that there's still more steps downwards to be taken by him the servanthood does not finish with the incarnation with the taking of our nature the servanthood continues through the obedience continues through to the death of the cross and that's what Paul is emphasizing here and one of the things that's really important for us to grasp is that

Jesus 100% was actively willing in taking all of these steps he didn't refuse to come into this world which is what we saw earlier in the passage is the emphasis Paul is saying he didn't count equality with God a reason not to come to take the form of a servant and even now in the form of a servant he did not turn to the father and say father this is far enough I can't possibly go through with the kind of thing that's here in the death of the cross as the son of God even in the form of a servant but he didn't you see he's actively obedient unto death even the death of the cross there's a process for the Lord in this journey and every day that he lived and every hour that he lived I'm sure he was tempted from one quarter or other to give up on this journey not to go through with it not to take the next step not to go as far as the death of the cross especially but he overcame that even in the garden of

Gethsemane you remember the wrestling on his own part in his own soul father if it be possible let this cup pass from me there's the reality of his agony of his suffering it's very real to him what's in this cup this eternal death that we deserved that's what the father has filled the cup with and he began to be so amazed as Mark says in his account of Gethsemane it's more than ever before in the mind of the Lord in Gethsemane as in his human nature he grew in understanding of what this cup entailed father if it be possible let this cup pass from me nevertheless not my will but thine be done in other words as we see in a verse that's in

[ 41 : 53 ] Romans chapter 15 again it's fitting in with Christ being an example even the Lord did not live to please himself he came for the benefit of his people and so in Gethsemane he's not there to please himself he is there to follow and take pleasure in the will of the father because his own will is perfectly in tune with it to die the death of the cross to go through with it this marvelous mysterious splendid journey that he's on and until it was finished every single step of the journey he faced and he took willingly and obediently and was not deflected from it aren't you thankful tonight that the lord actually went so far in his obedience as to die the death of the cross that he didn't stop in that journey short of that point where he gave himself to the death of the cross as we'll see in a minute really signified or symbolized what wonderful combination you have in

Hebrews chapter 5 and verse 8 where these things are brought together wonderfully there by the writer to the Hebrews though he were a son yet he learned obedience by the things which he suffered and being made complete he became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him what an amazing verse but the first part of it is what fits in with our study tonight though he were a son though he was the son fully the son of God yet he learned obedience just think of what that is saying the son of God who is in the form of God who is God who remained God who is fully God he learned something that he did not know in this way before obedience as a human being and as the servant of the father he was obedient and to death even the death of the cross and these words are deliberately chosen by the apostle as well because the cross while it is indeed a horrible awful way of dying the way in which malefactors were crucified under the

Roman Empire system and where Jesus was lumped with them if you like as he died that day between the two that were crucified along with him it's a horrible painful agonizing death Paul means much more than that when he says the death of the cross he's not thinking merely of the physical even though that was really itself hugely painful traumatic because the death of the cross means the cross as a symbol of God's curse because that's what Paul makes of it remember in Galatians where he says that Jesus Christ has set us free or saved us from the curse of the law all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse this is Galatians 3 verse 10 for it is written cursed be everyone who does not abide by the things written in the book of the law to do them now it is evident that no one is justified before

God by the law for the righteous shall live by faith but the law is not of faith rather the one who does them shall live by them Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law and then you've got words which nobody would dare to write unless they were inspired by God Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law becoming a curse for us for it is written cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree and then he goes on to say that so that the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles that we might receive the promised spirit through faith but just dwell on this for a moment he redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us you see this is how you have to look at the cross Jesus didn't become accursed merely by the fact that he was crucified Jesus was crucified because

God regarded him as accursed he laid the sin of his people upon him and that attracted and drew the curse of God to him as the penalty of our sin you see he was obedient unto death knowing that death was what he was going to die he didn't just come to the cross thinking it's going to be painful for me mentally it's going to be painful for me physically he's now facing the cup that he spoke of in the garden of Gethsemane and it's there just at his lips and he's about to drink it how did he come out of Gethsemane what words were on his lips as he came from these terrible moments of the agony of his soul wrestling over this cup well when Peter took out his sword and swiped took a swipe at Malchus and cut off his ear trying to the cup which my father gave me shall

[ 47 : 56 ] I not drink it shall I not go through with it this is what I came for this is the purpose of my being here my God my God why have you forsaken me is the ultimate in suffering but friends it's also the ultimate in obedience he became obedient as Ephesians as Hebrews 5 put it by the things which he suffered and his obedience did not stop short of taking the accursed death of the cross to himself that is what he did that is what he accomplished that is what he came for to redeem us from the curse of the law let me never dare say of myself I cannot go that far in serving the Lord so as to bring things to myself or to my family that would prove difficult or traumatic or challenging let me never go so far as to say that is just going too far in demanding things of me as a

Christian because I have to look at my Lord tonight and say this is what he actually did in obedience he went through from his life as he came into this world into the form of a servant he went through from that and down down further into the abyss of suffering and of death until he had accomplished it and overcome death itself none of us has the right to say whatever God is requiring of us that's asking too much whatever God means by discipleship as far as you and I are concerned don't ever say about it that requires too much of you that's going to bring too much pressure on your family or on yourself or on your workplace or on your colleagues on your marriage on your place in the world he didn't say that and of all the people that could have said that he is the one who might be said to have the right to say it but he didn't he made himself of no reputation he took the form of a servant and having taken the form of a servant he made himself nothing he was made in the likeness of men found in fashion as a man he humbled himself further to the death of the cross no one has the right tonight to say that God is asking too much of them by coming to Christ by giving things up for Christ by following

Jesus whatever it takes that's our example let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus but let me just conclude by reminding yourselves of why this passage is here as it is why did Paul write this to the Philippians what was his purpose in including these details about the Lord Jesus Christ well it was as we read at the beginning of this chapter so that each of you look not only to his own interests but also to the interests of others to do nothing from rivalry or conceit but in humility count others more significant than yourselves have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus because that he says what you see in him and I'm going to quote Principal Donald MacLeod in concluding our service tonight because he has a wonderful little booklet on this passage and in that booklet he deals with the relationship between theology and practice between theology and application to

Christian life which is essentially what Paul is actually doing it's a little booklet called Philippians 2 and Christology I was fortunate enough to obtain it as a student and I think it's quite difficult to get nowadays but anyway this is what Principal MacLeod says and I'll quote it at length theology does not exist in a vacuum it exists in order to be applied to the day to day problems of the Christian church then he refers to 2 Corinthians 8 and Philippians 2 as example passages where Jesus is our example he says in the Corinthian example passage and the Philippian example passage Paul is dealing with the problem firstly of vain glory in a Christian congregation that's Philippi and the problem of failure of Christian liberality or charity because Corinthians were dealing with a collection for the poor the problems he's dealing with he says and yet he says one meets with these difficulties daily they are standing problems they're still are problems yet he says

Paul as he wrestles with both has recourse to the most massive theology and but of the idea of the applicability of the profoundest theology to the most common place problems who would ever imagine that the response to the glory of the incarnation might be to give to the collection for the poor who might have thought that the application of the glories of New Testament Christology might be to stop our quarreling and our divisiveness in the Christian church but he says that is what Paul is doing he is telling them remember your theology and place your behavior in the light of that theology and he finishes by saying this we must never leave our doctrine hanging in the air nor hesitate to enforce the most elementary Christian obligations with the most sublime doctrines why is theology important he is saying it is for application to your life as a Christian because as you deal with theology and nowhere more so than in the person of Jesus Christ it is there for your practical use not just to fill your head with theology and with knowledge it is there so that you will fill your life with following his example and applying it to your life too let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus let's pray gracious and eternal God we are concerned at all times to follow your example but we give thanks tonight that you are more than an example to your people you are the foundation of their hopes you are the rock on which they are able to stand by your grace you are the one in whom their hope is placed and will not be put to shame but we give thanks that you are our example too that as you came to take our human nature oh Lord you did so in a way that followed through all the implications of being a servant and of fulfilling the Father's purpose and will for the redemption of his people oh Lord make these things inestimably precious to us make us thankful that we have access to them that we have freedom to deliberate upon them and that we have the facility of applying them to our own daily lives forgive us we pray when we come short as we always do of following that example or living up to these expectations but Lord help us not to despair or to be despondent but nevertheless help us to continue continue to walk in the footsteps of faith and of dependence on your Holy Spirit and your word receive our thanks for Jesus' sake

[ 56 : 54 ] Amen well we're going to conclude this evening singing words from Psalm 22 which again set out the sufferings and the death of Jesus for us Psalm 22 in the Sing Psalms version that's on page 26 and we're going to sing verses 12 to 16 words that so graphically describe to us the intensity of suffering that the Lord himself went through as these are prophetic words in advance of that so Psalm 22 verses 12 to 16 strong bulls of Bashan circle me wild bulls approach on every side as roaring lions tear their prey at me their mouths they open wide like water I am emptied out and all my bones are torn apart my inmost being melts away and into wax has turned my heart my strength is dried like shattered clay and as I fight to draw my breath my tongue is sticking to my jaws you lay me in the dust of death a pack of dogs encloses me their circle round me is complete

I am beset by evil men and they have pierced my hands and feet his words strong bulls of Bashan circle me strong bulls of Bashan circle me while bulls approach on every side as roaring lions dare their prey at me their mouths they open wide like water I am emptied heart and all my bones are torn apart my inmost being melts away and into wax is turned my heart my strength is dry like shattered clay and as I fight to draw my breath my tongue is sticking to my jaws you lay me in the dust of death a pack of dogs encloses me their circle round me is complete

I am beset by evil men and there appears my hands and feet now may the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ the love of God the Father and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you now and ever more Amen