

The Christ of Christmas – Part 2

Philippians 2:5-11

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I want you to follow with me. I'm going to begin reading in Philippians 2:5-11. I want to read the whole text together. He says, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7 But made himself"—referring to Jesus—"of no reputation,"—that means He emptied Himself. He didn't empty Himself of deity, that's an impossibility, but He laid aside His majesty. He didn't give up His deity, He laid aside His majesty in heaven, and He's going to go back to gaining that majesty more so even than before His incarnation. So, verse 7, He "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11 And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

As I said, we're looking at one of the greatest passages in the Bible on the Person and the work of Jesus Christ. Paul's writing this section not because he wants to teach the doctrine of Christ, but because he wants us to be like Christ so he gives Jesus our example of humility. It's really a practical section of Philippians. I don't think I mentioned this last week. The only indication of a problem in the church at Philippi, and the church at Philippi I think was the nearest and dearest to the heart of Paul, was there was some disunity, disharmony. There were people not getting along. That is why he sets forth Jesus Christ as our example.

Let me say this, Jesus is always our example. He's always our example of how we should live humbly before others, so he's actually speaking as of the mind of Christ. Notice he said, verse 5, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." This is the attitude and outlook of Christ, and we saw His sovereignty in verse 6 in His deity; we saw His servanthood in verse 7, or His humanity; and then in verse 8, we saw His sacrifice or His crucifixion. So, we have the mind of the Son of God, verses 5-8, humiliation, and then we have the mind of God the Father, verses 9-11, which is exaltation. But in our text tonight the focus is and the theme is what we call the exaltation of Jesus Christ. We learned from Christ's experience that exaltation always follows humiliation. This is a foundational biblical concept, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time,"—He will lift you up. If you exalt yourself, He will humble you; if you humble yourself, He will exalt you.

As we break down this text, verses 9-11, I want to point out to you four truths about Christ's exaltation. You know, rarely do you hear a sermon or a teaching on simply the exaltation of Jesus Christ. You hear sermons on His incarnation. You hear sermons about His crucifixion. You hear sermons about His resurrection, but why not a sermon on His exaltation. So, we see a sermon here tonight on the exaltation of Christ. We first see the source of Christ's exaltation

in verse 9a, the first half of verse 9, “Wherefore”—or because of this. Now, the “wherefore” always takes us back to what just got taught in verses 5-8. Because Christ humbled Himself, “. . . took upon him the form of a servant,” because of that, in light of that, God, that’s God the Father, “. . . also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10 That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,”—I’ve already read that, but the point is that in light of what Jesus did by humbling Himself, taking on in “. . . the form of a servant,” and being “. . . obedient unto death, even the death of the cross,” God is the One who exalted Jesus Christ. So, the Person that exalted Jesus is God the Father.

You would have a difficult time understanding properly this text, if you weren’t trinitarian. There are some people that say, “Well, we don’t really believe in a triune God.” The trinity, by the way, is absolutely essential to Christianity. If you deny the trinity, you do not have orthodoxy. You do not have Christian doctrine. One of the number one marks of a cult is the denial of the triune nature of God—one God, three Persons; God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit—One God, three Persons. This is God the Father, verse 9, that “. . . hath highly exalted him,” so the source of Christ’s exaltation was God the Father. It’s the Father’s response to the Son’s humble submission.

What was the Father’s response for the Son? The answer, to exalt Him. The verb, verse 9, it says there He, “. . . exalted him” This actually means He is only used once in the New Testament, and it’s used only of Jesus Christ. It means to lift above, to lift beyond. The word means highly, and notice “. . . exalted him,” so it means that God the Father lifted Him up, lifted Him above, lifted Him beyond. The word “highly” is interesting. He could’ve just said “exalted him,” He said, “. . . highly exalted him.” The Greek word for “highly” is the Greek word *hupw*, where we get our word “super” from, so it means He super or greatly highly exalted Him. Psalm 110:1 says, “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool,” and it’s so important to understand. In Isaiah 52:13 it says, “Behold, my servant shall deal prudently, he shall be exalted and extolled, and be very high.”

What exactly is the exaltation of Jesus Christ? Let me break it down for you in three steps. The first was He was resurrected from the dead. Jesus came down from heaven, went to the cross, died for our sins, went into the grave, was buried, and then God the Father raised Jesus from the dead. I don’t have all the references written down for you tonight in my notes, but again another trinitarian note: Did you know the Bible says that God raised Jesus from the dead? Did you know the Bible says that Jesus raised Himself from the dead? Do you know the Bible says the Holy Spirit raised Christ from the dead? All three of the Godhead were involved in the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Here’s the first step in the exaltation that God the Father gave to God the Son. Write down Ephesians 1:19-20, “And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe, according to the working of his mighty power,”—listen to what Paul said—“Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places.” The “right hand” is the place of authority and sovereignty. In Romans 1:4, it says, “And declared to be the Son of God with power, according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection

from the dead.” It’s interesting that after Jesus died on the cross, no sinful hands touched Jesus Christ. Before that, He was spit upon, He was buffeted, He was beaten, He was whipped, but after He died, after He was buried, after He died they took Him down from the cross, loving hands wrapped Him, prepared His body, lay Him in the grave, and now He’s resurrected from the dead.

The second step in His exaltation is His ascension. So, resurrection and then ascension. Now, the ascension is when Jesus after forty days after His resurrection of appearing and disappearing and reappearing that He actually physically, visibly, bodily rose right back up into heaven. It wasn’t a ghost, it was actually Jesus rose up into heaven, and a cloud received Him out of their sight, and He went to heaven. An angel showed up and said, “. . . this same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven,” which means He comes physically, visibly, and bodily. This is a reference to the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, which I preached on last Sunday morning, so this is His ascension. If you want to write down the references to His ascension, Luke 24:51-53, Mark 16:19-20, and Acts 1:8-9. Jesus ascended back to heaven.

Thirdly, and this isn’t touched on very often, His coronation. So, resurrection, ascension, coronation. That means that He was seated and crowned in heaven. Write down Hebrews 1:3. After He had provided purification for sin, He “. . . sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high”—in heaven. Remember when Stephen was being stoned in the book of Acts 7, and he saw heaven open and saw Jesus standing at the right hand of the Father, the heavens were opened, and he saw Jesus. Then, he was stoned to death on that spot. But he saw Jesus. It’s interesting. That’s the only time in the Bible that Jesus is referred to as standing at the right hand of God the Father. Could it be, I think very likely, that He was standing to welcome home and welcome to heaven His first martyred child. He was reaching out His arms, no doubt, to receive Stephen back to heaven.

In Psalm 110:1, “The LORD said unto my Lord, Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies thy footstool.” Jesus is now super exalted in heaven. By the way, He is a God-Man in heaven. This is a mind-blowing thing. I mention it in just passing and don’t often comment on it, from the moment of conception in the womb of the virgin Mary, deity was fused together with humanity for all eternity. Jesus is the God-Man for all eternity, and He is the first fruits of them that sleep. His physical, bodily, glorious resurrection is a prototype of ours. Just as Jesus rose from the dead in a glorified body, so shall we. Now, we’re not God. We’re not divine. We won’t be seated at the right hand of God the Father, but Jesus is now super, hup W , exalted in heaven. This is His vindication for all the suffering and sorrow and sin that He bore upon the cross. Jesus received more in His exaltation than He had surrendered in His incarnation—more honor, more glory.

Remember in John 17, we studied it on a Wednesday night, and remember when Jesus was praying and said, “Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me . . . that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me . . . before the foundation of the world.” Jesus went back to glory. He came from glory, went back to glory, and now He’s the glorified

God-Man, our great High Priest, our sympathetic, compassionate High Priest in the heavens ever interceding for us. How wonderful that is! Jesus is now exalted in heaven over all creation, Ephesians 1:21, over the church, Ephesians 1:22, and as sovereign over all things. In Ephesians 1:22-23 it says, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, 23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." What a marvelous truth that is.

The second fact I want to point out in this text, and we'll need to move a little quicker, is the name of Christ's exaltation at the end of verse 9. So, the source of His exaltation is God the Father, but His name is that He's " . . . given him a name which is above every name," given Him honor and name; given Him a name or a status or a position that is above every other name. What is the name above every name? The same Greek word translated "highly" is also the word that he's given " . . . him a name which is above every name." Is it the name Jesus? What a beautiful name that is. The Angel Gabriel told Mary, "Call His name Jesus." He told Joseph, "Call Him Jesus," Yeshua, God is salvation, "because He will save His people from their sins." The angels of Bethlehem out in the fields, when they saw the shepherds, they said, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord," so He would be the Savior. He was Jesus. He was Yeshua.

I think a better thought, and we'll get there in just a moment, it's a little bit of a challenge because the name isn't given to us I think until verse 11, so the name above every name is not Yeshua or Jesus, it's going to be "Lord," verse 11, "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord," *kýrios* in the New Testament, equivalent in the Old Testament will be Yahweh or Jehovah. Jesus is Lord, or Jesus is Jehovah. That's the name above every name, that He's Lord, that He's sovereign, that He's over all. It's such a marvelous, marvelous thought. I think it's better than saying that the name "Jesus" is the name above every name, though it's very precious to us and we like to utter that name when we pray, but I believe the name in Paul's writing here is a reference to "Lord" in verse 11, which is the Old Testament equivalent of Jehovah or better would be Yahweh. No name other than Yahweh has the right to be called the " . . . name which is above every name."

The movement of verses 9-11 does not stop at the phrase " . . . above every name," the name Jesus, but it flows all the way through in the Greek grammar to the universal confession that Jesus Christ is Lord or *kýrios*. Verse 10 is actually a quotation from Isaiah 45:22-23 where it says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth: for I am God, and there is none else. 23 I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, That unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear," Isaiah 45:22-23. So, this "name . . . above every name," is actually Paul quoting from the book of Isaiah.

Here's the third in verse 10 and first part of verse 11, the response to Christ's exaltation. I love this. It's twofold. First of all he says in verse 10, "That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,"—secondly, verse 11—"And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." This implies reverence and respect. Every knee will bow to Jesus Christ. You either bow your knee now and it means salvation, or you'll bow your knee on

Judgment Day and it means your condemnation. Notice he breaks it down. It's universal by scope. It's in heaven in verse 10, all the angels and the redeemed men who have died in heaven. Revelation 4:9-11 speaks about the heavenly scene where they worship the Lord who is worthy " . . . to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created." And, " . . . things in earth," all those that are in earth; " . . . of things in heaven," those are the redeemed that are in heaven and the angels; "and things in earth," those are the saved; and those who are unsaved, "and things under the earth," verse 10. So, in heaven, on earth, and under the earth.

This pretty much covers every gamut. Even fallen angels, demons in hell, and unsaved men in hell will bow their knee. There's not going to be a rebellion in hell. There will be no rebellion in hell. They will bow their knees to Jesus Christ and every tongue will confess, verse 11. Paul doesn't say when this is. It could be at the Great White Throne; it could be at the beginning of the Millennium. It doesn't say, but it's sure universal—everyone will bow their knee, everyone will " . . . confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." In the Greek, this is *kýrios* ἰς πάντας αἰῶνες, Jesus Christ is Lord. Amen?

Now, I don't know about you, but it grieves my heart when I see Jesus defamed, Jesus maligned, Jesus mocked, Jesus ridiculed. But there is coming a day when every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess -Amen?- " . . . that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." What a glorious day that will be. Confess Him now and you will be saved; reject Him now, and you'll confess Him then and you will be damned. Romans 10:9-10, we know it well, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. 10 For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."

Here's my fourth and last point, the end of verse 11, the purpose, and I love this, the purpose of Christ's exaltation, " . . . to the glory of God the Father." Isn't that a great way to end this kenosis passage? All that we've studied these last two weeks is all to the glory of God the Father. I believe with all my heart that everything God does is for the glory, it's for His glory. All praise, all honor, all glory be to Him. The work of salvation has as its ultimate purpose the glory of God. If you want to glorify God—listen to me carefully—you must glorify and honor Jesus Christ. If you don't have Jesus right, you don't have God. You've got to be right about Jesus to be right about God, and you have to come to God the Father through God the Son in the power of God the Holy Spirit. Everything that God's done and is doing and will do is for His glory. Ephesians 1:6, 12 and 14, where you see the blessings from the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit all end with, "To the praise of the glory of his grace . . . who first trusted in Christ," to the praise of the glory of those who trusted in Christ.

Remember, Paul is not teaching the doctrine of Christ, he's giving us an illustration of humility, of being selfless in our attitude, of being sacrificial in our attitude, and having a servant's heart. There's the divine principle, as I said, that brings immeasurable blessing to God's people. It's found in 1 Peter 5:5-6. He says, "Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud,

and giveth grace to the humble. 6 Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." Let's pray.