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Hallelujah! What A Savior!

PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

Introduction

1. Today, many people the world over, have gathered and will gather to remember the death, burial and resurrection of our Lord, Jesus Christ.
2. I am afraid, however, that so much of what Jesus did on our behalf is either misunderstood or minimized by many.
3. In Paul's letter to the Christians in Philippi, he utilizes the entire story of what God's Son did to encourage them to adopt the same attitude of humility as that which our Lord demonstrated.
4. Today, I would like for us to walk through our text, here in Philippians 2:5-11, in order to wrap our minds around what has been done for us.
5. It is my prayer that, when we are finished,
 - a. You, if you are a Christian, will have a greater appreciation for what you are doing each day of your life, as you live for our Lord.
 - b. Those of you who may not be Christians will want to render obedience to our Lord and look forward to the day when we shall all stand before His throne and proclaim His name.
6. Most of all, I hope that all of us will seek to praise God for the Savior who came into this world to set us free from the sin and guilt in our lives.

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I. Our Lord's Condescension

A. HE REFUSED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS POSITION

"Who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with

God a thing to be grasped” (Philippians 2:6, NASB95).

1. The beginning of this verse is difficult for me to wrap my mind around.
2. I say this because I am finite and I can't begin to comprehend what God is like in all His majestic glory.
3. In Hebrews 1:3, the writer tells us that Jesus “is the radiance of His [God's] glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power.”
 - a. Jesus is not a reflector of God's glory. He is the one who radiates the glory of God!
 - b. What does the radiance of God's glory look like?
 - 1) None of us will ever know while still in this fleshly body.
 - 2) Jesus referred to it in His prayer with the disciples in the Upper Room on the night of His betrayal, “Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was” (John 17:5, NASB95).
 - c. He upholds all things by the word of His power.
 - 1) He sustains “all things by His powerful word” (HCSB).
 - 2) “. . . in Him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:17b, NASB95).
4. The reality behind these words is beyond our ability to comprehend.
5. In spite of all this, Paul tells us that “He . . . did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped.”
 - a. The idea which Paul seeks to communicate to us is that Christ did not hold on to His equality with God as something to use for his own advantage.
 - b. Do you know anyone who uses his or her position of authority for their own advantage?
6. God's Son chose to relinquish this in order to save us.

Slide 3**B. HE EMPTIED HIMSELF**

“. . . but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, being made in the likeness of men” (Philippians 2:7, NASB95).

1. Our Lord’s condescension involved not only His refusal to use His position to His advantage but also His emptying of Himself.
2. Paul tells us how He did this through two phrases which we find in verse 7:
 - a. “Taking the form of a bond-servant (slave)”
 - 1) Just as Jesus “existed in the form (appearance) of God”
 - 2) So He took “the form of a bond-servant,” the appearance of a slave.
 - 3) He demonstrated this in the Upper Room that night when He took off his outer garment, wrapped a towel around His waist and washed the feet of His disciples.
 - 4) On that night, Jesus “manifested the form of God in the form of a slave” (R. Kent Hughes, *Philippians*, p. 85)
 - b. “Being made in the likeness of men”
 - 1) “Being born in the likeness of men” (ESV)
 - 2) He identified fully with the human race.
 - 3) Another way to put it is that God’s Son became one of us and experienced all that we experience.
3. In Galatians 4:4, the apostle Paul wrote, “But when the fulness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman . . .”
4. Luke tells us that Jesus “grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men” (Luke 2:52, NIV84).
5. The prophet Isaiah paints for us another picture in Isaiah 53:3, where he wrote that “He was despised and rejected by men, a man of suffering who

knew what sickness was” (HCSB).

6. In Hebrews 4:15, the writer tells us that He was “tempted in every way, just as we are — yet without sin” (NIV84).
7. Why did He do all of this? Because it was the only way He could be “the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

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C. HIS HUMBLE DEATH

“Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Philippians 2:8, NASB95).

1. As one of us, there was something else which this sinless Son of God must do in order to take away our sin.
2. Here, in verse 8 of Philippians 2, Paul tells us that Jesus “humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”
 - a. No one in heaven above or on earth below humbled our Lord.
 - b. He humbled Himself.
3. Earlier, in verses 3 & 4, when Paul says to the Christians in Philippi, “. . . with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others,” he is thinking about Jesus own example.
 - a. Jesus considered us as more important than Himself.
 - b. In humbling Himself, He was looking out for that which was in our best interest.
4. Our Lord’s self-humiliation brought ultimate obedience — His “death on a cross.”
 - a. He knew that His death would involve His becoming sin for us (2 Corinthians 5:21).

- b. He knew that, through His crucifixion, He would save us from God's wrath (Romans 5:9).
5. Notice, when Paul writes "He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death," He then adds these words, "even death on a cross" (Philippians 2:8).
- a. Death by crucifixion was "the most cruel and despicable form of death."
 - b. The Romans reserved it for non-citizens and the worst criminals.

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II. His Exaltation By God

A. THROUGH HIS RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION

"For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name," (Philippians 2:9, NASB95).

1. Through His own experience, Jesus demonstrated the truth of something which He had said early in the week leading up to His crucifixion:

"But the greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted" (Matthew 23:11-12, NASB95).

2. It is because Jesus humbled Himself in this way that God "highly exalted Him."
3. When Paul wrote that God "highly exalted" Christ, he used a word found nowhere else in the New Testament.
- a. It means to bestow "exceptional honor."
 - b. To raise someone to the loftiest height.
4. How did He do this?
5. First, by the resurrection:

a. Matthew tells us in his gospel that on that Sunday morning so long ago, “a severe earthquake had occurred, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled away the stone and sat on it” (Matthew 28:2, NASB95).

b. As we sometimes sing,

**Death cannot keep His prey, Jesus my Savior;
He tore the bars away, Jesus my Lord!**

Refrain:

**Up from the grave he arose;
with a mighty triumph o'er his foes;
He arose a victor from the dark domain,
And He lives forever, with His saints to reign.
He arose! He arose! Hallelujah! Christ arose!**

6. After His resurrection, Jesus spent forty days with His apostles continuing to teach them.
7. Finally, He led them out to Bethany where He blessed them (Luke 24:50).
8. As He was blessing them, “He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight” (Acts 1:9).
9. In his sermon on Pentecost, Peter said that Jesus was “exalted to the right hand of God” (Acts 2:33), and Hebrews 1:3 adds “He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high.”
10. There, God gave Him the name which is above every name.
11. Over 700 years earlier the prophet Isaiah had given him several names, “Immanuel” (Isaiah 7:14), “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace” (Isaiah 9:6).
12. What name did God give to Him? It is the name by which God referred to Himself throughout the Old Testament — Lord.

“I am the Lord, that is My name; I will not give My glory to another, nor my praise to graven images” (Isaiah 42:8).

Slide 6**B. ALL CREATION'S DECLARATION OF CHRIST AS LORD**

“. . . so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Philippians 2:10-11, NASB95)

1. In these last two verses, Paul points us to the future exaltation of our Lord.
2. He draws this from God's words through His prophet Isaiah which we find in Isaiah 45.
 - a. Three times, (vv. 5, 6, 18), God says “I am the Lord, and there is no other.”
 - b. Then, in verses 22-23, He declares, “Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself, the word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back, that to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance” (Isaiah 45:22-23, NASB95).
 - c. Jesus is Lord. This is the name which God will give to Him.
3. There is something here which Paul does not want us to miss.
4. On the last day, when time shall be no more, “every knee will bow . . . in heaven and on earth and under the earth” at the name of Jesus.
 - a. This means every rational being in the universe.
 - b. No knee is excluded, whether it be human, angelic or demonic.
 - c. Some will bow out of grateful adoration, others in grudging shame.
5. Not only will “every knee bow,” but “every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”
 - a. “Jesus,” a name meaning “the Lord saves,”
 - 1) The name given to the Son of God at His birth.

- 2) Of this name, Peter said “there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4:12).
- b. “Christ” — meaning “the Anointed One,” “the Messiah”
 - 1) It speaks of Jesus being the fulfillment of O.T. prophecy
 - 2) As Paul declared in 1 Corinthians 15:3,4, “that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”
 - c. “Lord”
 - 1) The divine name of God.
 - 2) It is a public declaration of His sovereignty.

Conclusion

1. This is the gospel in miniature — to declare Jesus Christ is Lord.
2. It is what we profess every single time we gather for worship.
3. There is coming a day when all creation will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.
 - a. Those of us who wear His name will joyfully proclaim it alongside the angels in heaven.
 - b. Others who do not believe will confess it as well, though in despair.
 - c. This includes Satan and his angels and every person down through history who has rejected Christ.
4. We will all do this “to the glory of God the Father.”
5. Today, if you haven’t already done so, will you not turn from the sin in your life and confess Jesus Christ as Lord of your life.
6. Come to Him and let Him wash your sins away in the waters of baptism.