

Philippians 2:5 Commentary

PREVIOUS

NEXT

CLICK VERSE

To go directly to that verse

[Philippians 2:1](#)
[Philippians 2:2](#)
[Philippians 2:3](#)
[Philippians 2:4](#)
[Philippians 2:5](#)
[Philippians 2:6](#)
[Philippians 2:7](#)
[Philippians 2:8](#)
[Philippians 2:9](#)
[Philippians 2:10](#)
[Philippians 2:11](#)
[Philippians 2:12](#)
[Philippians 2:13](#)
[Philippians 2:14](#)
[Philippians 2:15](#)
[Philippians 2:16](#)
[Philippians 2:17](#)
[Philippians 2:18](#)
[Philippians 2:19](#)
[Philippians 2:20](#)
[Philippians 2:21](#)
[Philippians 2:22](#)
[Philippians 2:23](#)
[Philippians 2:24](#)
[Philippians 2:25](#)
[Philippians 2:26](#)
[Philippians 2:27](#)
[Philippians 2:28](#)
[Philippians 2:29](#)
[Philippians 2:30](#)

Philippians 2:5 **Have this attitude (2PPAM)** in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ([NASB: Lockman](#))

Greek: touto **phroneite (2PPAM)** en [humin](#) o kai en [Christo](#) Iesou,

Amplified: Let this same attitude and purpose and [humble] mind be in you which was in Christ Jesus: ([Amplified Bible - Lockman](#))

Barclay: Have within yourselves the same disposition of mind as was in Christ Jesus ([Philippians 2 Commentary](#))

KJV: Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

KJV Bible Commentary: Keep on thinking this in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

Lightfoot: Reflect in your own minds, the mind of Christ Jesus. Be humble, as he also was humble

Phillips: Let Christ himself be your example as to what your attitude should be. ([Phillips: Touchstone](#))

Wuest: This mind be constantly having in you which was also in Christ Jesus

Young's Literal: For, let this mind be in you that is also in Christ Jesus,

HAVE (habitually, as your lifestyle) **THIS ATTITUDE** IN YOURSELVES WHICH WAS ALSO IN CHRIST JESUS: touto phroneite

- Mt 11:29; 20:26-28; Lk 22:27; John 13:14,15; Acts 10:38; 20:35; Ro 14:15; 15:3,5; 1Co 10:33; 11:1; Eph 5:2; 1Pet 2:21; 4:1; 1Jn 2:6)
- Excellent discussion of the doctrine **John MacArthur's [Humiliation of Christ](#)**

Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus (ASV)

and think the same way that Christ Jesus thought (CEV)

Let the same disposition be in you which was in Christ Jesus (Weymouth)

this mind be constantly having in you which was also in Christ Jesus (Wuest),

Let Christ himself be your example as to what your attitude should be (Phillips)

Let your attitude toward one another be governed by your being in union with the Messiah Yeshua: (Jewish NT)

Source: Christ-Centered Exposition - Philippians

CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE

Paul applies the lesson before he states it. In other words in Php 2:5 we have the exhortation (that flows naturally from Php 2:1-4) and in Php 2:6-11 we have the example of the "mind of Christ" which we as a church and individually are to practice as our lifestyle. As [Guzik](#) says "Paul will, in wonderful detail, describe for us the mind of Jesus in the following verses. But here, before he describes the mind of Jesus, he tells us what we must *do* with the information. Remember also that this mind is something granted to us by God. 1 Corinthians 2:16-[note](#) says that *we have the mind of Christ* But let this mind shows us that it is also something we must *choose* to walk in. You have to let it be so."

Vine introduces this section writing that "In order to enforce the earnest exhortations just given as to lowliness of mind and unselfish consideration of the things of others, the apostle sets forth the Lord Jesus Christ as the supreme example of this, and in doing so declares the outstanding doctrines of the faith, "the deep things of Christ," His voluntary self-abasement, His incarnation, His obedience even unto the death of the cross. The passage combines Christian doctrine and Christian practice. The immediate connection is between the principle in Phil 2:4, of having regard to the condition and needs of others, and this sublime example of Christ. For all that now follows declares how He looked upon our dire needs as sinners. We are the "others" whose "needs" were the great object of His actings of grace. And it is His mind, as thus expressed, that is to be our mind. ([Vine, W. Collected writings of W. E. Vine. Nashville: Thomas Nelson](#))

The KJV renders it **Let this mind be in you**" which gives one the impression that Paul is giving them an exhortation that is optional. As most of the modern versions convey more accurately, this instruction by Paul is a command. Paul is making it very clear that, if one is to be a child of God in whom the Father takes great delight, this command will be lovingly obeyed.

And so Paul proceeds to lift up before the eyes of the Philippians the example of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Spurgeon - What an example we have set before us in the Lord Jesus Christ! Jesus is the divine example of love and self-denial, and as we hope to be saved by Him we must diligently copy Him. He is now exalted to the highest glory as the reward of His voluntary humiliation, and by the same means must His disciples rise to honor. We must stoop to conquer. He who is willing to be nothing shall be possessor of all things.

What kind of attitude did He exhibit? What characterized His behavior toward others? One has summed up the mind of the Christ as:

- (1) The selfless mind;
- (2) The sacrificial mind;
- (3) The serving mind.

The Lord Jesus consistently thought of others. Now literally Paul commands the saints at Philippi "This be ye constantly thinking in you which also was in Christ Jesus"

Kenneth Wuest - After exhorting the Philippian saints in Phil 2:2-4 to think the same thing, to have the same love, to be in heart agreement, and in lowliness of mind to consider one another as excelling themselves, Paul says, "**Let this mind be in you which**

was also in Christ Jesus." This exhortation reaches back to Phil 2:2–4 for its definition and ahead to Phil 2:6–8 for its illustration. Paul does not give all that is in the mind of Christ in these verses. He selects those qualities of our Lord which fit the needs of the Philippians at that moment. That which Paul speaks of as being in the mind of Christ and which the Philippians were to include in their own spiritual lives consisted of a spirit of humility and of self-abnegation and an interest in the welfare of others. These graces were illustrated in our Lord's act of becoming incarnate in the human race and becoming the substitutionary atonement for sin. This lack of unity among the Philippian saints became the occasion for perhaps the greatest Christological passage in the New Testament that sounds the depths of the incarnation. Among scholars it is known as the Kenosis passage, speaking of the self-emptying of the Son of God as He became incarnate in humanity, the word kenosis being the Greek word meaning "to empty."

Wuest goes on to write "The Greek word order for the expression just noted is, **This be ye constantly thinking in you which also was in Christ Jesus.**" The position of the pronoun "**this**" is emphatic and shows that the exhortation reaches back basically to Phil 2:2–4, while the pronoun "**who**" in Phil 2:6 connects the exhortation with the illustration in Phil 2:5–8. The words "**let mind be**" are the translation of one Greek word which means, "to have understanding, to be wise, to direct one's mind to a thing, to seek or strive for." The word seems always to keep in view the direction which thought of a practical kind takes. The expression could be translated in a number of ways, each of which while holding to the main idea, yet brings out a slightly different shade of meaning. For instance: "Be constantly thinking this in yourselves;" "Be having this mind in you;" "Reflect in your own minds, the mind of Christ Jesus" (Lightfoot); "Let the same purpose inspire you as was in Christ Jesus" (Way). The sum total of the thought in the exhortation seems to be that of urging the Philippians to emulate in their own lives, the distinctive virtues of the Lord Jesus spoken of in Phil 2:2–4. It is the habitual direction of our Lord's mind with reference to self that is in the apostle's thinking, an attitude of humility and self-abnegation for the benefit of others, which should be true also of the Philippians. This gives us the key to unlock the rich treasures of the great doctrinal portion of the letter we are now to study. As to the translation of the verse, we might say that the verb of being is not in the Greek text. It is often left out by the writer, and supplied by the reader. In the case of the Authorized Version, we have the word "was." It could just as well be "is," for the Lord Jesus still has that same mind. But the past tense verb "was" suits the context better since the apostle is speaking of the past act of supreme renunciation performed by our Lord in His incarnation and atoning sacrifice. ([Philippians Commentary - Verse by Verse](#))

Gromacki: "Paradoxically, he illustrated exhortation with doctrine, whereas most preachers try to make their doctrinal sermons practical."

Frank Thielman, Philippians, The NIV Application Commentary (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1995), p. 115, explains: Paul says literally, however, "Think this in you," and the words "in you" (en hymin) are a common idiom in Greek for "among yourselves." Paul's primary concern, then, is social rather than cerebral: He wants the Philippians to adopt in their mutual relations the same attitude that characterized Jesus.

Constable - This paragraph is the most important one in the epistle and the most difficult to interpret. "By anyone's reckoning, Php 2:6–11 constitutes the single most significant block of material in Philippians."

This ([5124](#)) (**touto**) is emphatic (placed first in the Greek text for emphasis) and shows that the command relates refers to the what Paul has just instructed in the preceding passages Philippians 2:3-4.

May the Mind of Christ, My Savior

May the mind of Christ, my Savior,
Live in me from day to day,
By His love and power controlling
All I do and say.

May the Word of God dwell richly
In my heart from hour to hour,
So that all may see I triumph
Only through His power.

May the peace of God my Father
Rule my life in everything,
That I may be calm to comfort
Sick and sorrowing.

May the love of Jesus fill me
As the waters fill the sea;

Him exalting, self abasing,
This is victory.

May I run the race before me,
Strong and brave to face the foe,
Looking only unto Jesus
As I onward go.

May His beauty rest upon me,
As I seek the lost to win,
And may they forget the channel,
Seeing only Him.

Life Application Study Bible - Jesus Christ was humble, willing to give up His rights in order to obey God and serve people. Like Christ, we should have a servant's attitude, serving out of love for God and for others, not out of guilt or fear. Remember, you can choose your attitude. You can approach life expecting to be served, or you can look for opportunities to serve others. See Mark 10:45 for more on Christ's attitude of servanthood.

Have this attitude (5426) (**phroneo**) means to set one's mind or heart upon something, to have understanding, to be wise, to direct one's mind to a thing, to seek or strive for. The idea is not to give just a casual thought to something but a thinking that involves the affections and will as well as the reason.

Phroneo - 26x in 20v - **NAS** = adopt a view(1), conceited*(1), concern(1), concerned(1), feel(1), have attitude(3), intent on purpose(1), live in harmony(1), mind(4), observes(2), set their minds(2), set your mind(1), setting your mind(2), think(3), views(1).

Matt 16:23; Mark 8:33; Acts 28:22; Rom 8:5; 11:20; 12:3, 16; 14:6; 15:5; 1 Cor 13:11; 2 Cor 13:11; Gal 5:10;
Phil 1:7; 2:2, 5; 3:15, 19; 4:2, 10; Col 3:2.

Phroneo refers to the basic orientation, bent, and thought patterns of one's mind, rather than to the intellect itself. Paul is announcing this in the **present tense** (calling for continuous action, lifestyle) **active voice** (personal decision of the will - to yield to the enabling power of the Spirit - see below) **imperative mood** (command).

And so Paul is not making a suggestion but is commanding the saints at Philippi to be transformed by the "renewing of the mind" (Ro 12:2-note) because he knows that only in this way can we carry out the command for Christ-like behavior (for example, just try to be selfless and humble like Christ in your own strength! Our flesh ever gravitates toward selfishness and pride!) So it is vital to remember that Christ has not left us alone to try to carry this out by ourselves. He has given each and every believer a wonderful Helper (Jn 14:16, 26, 15:26, 16:7), the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of Christ (Ro 8:9-note). And so we must continually remember that the **Spirit of Jesus Christ** (Phil 1:19-note) is in us (1Co 3:16, 1Co 6:19-note), continually working, continually giving us the **desire** and the **power** to carry out all of God's commands (which we **cannot** carry out in our own inherent power, the "arm of flesh" 2Chr 32:8! Rely on this truth even as the people relied on King Hezekiah's words beloved!) even as he describes in the next section of this letter explaining that...

it is God Who is at work (energeo in the present tense = continually "energizing") in you, both to will (the Spirit gives us the "want to", the desire to obey God's commands) and to work (energeo in the present tense - the forever indwelling Holy Spirit continually gives us the power to obey) for His good pleasure. (Phil 2:13-note)

Comment: As Christ followers, we are 100% responsible to "**have this attitude**" (to continually "**work out** [our] salvation" - Phil 2:12-note) but at same time we are 100% dependent on the "synergistic" supernatural work of our Enabler, the indwelling Holy Spirit. It therefore behooves believers to become conversant with the Spirit's ongoing work and our continual ongoing need for His work in us (see comments by F B Meyer re "walking by the Spirit" at the end of this note);

Paul is calling the saints at Philippi (and in every place and every time) to a daily lifestyle of vigilance in maintaining a Christocentric orientation to life that could be eroded easily for as the hymn says

O to grace how great a debtor daily I'm constrained to be!
Let Thy goodness, like a fetter, bind my **wandering heart** to Thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, **prone to leave** the God I love.
Here's my heart. O take and seal it. Seal it for Thy courts above.
(**Play [Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing](#)**)

Sing this hymn to the Lord as your prayer right now and then empowered by amazing grace, go forth making the decision to

continually chose Savior over self. God will provide "plenteous opportunities" during the day as well as "plenteous grace" (cp 2 Co 12:9-note; 2 Co 12:10-note) to enable you to practice this important spiritual discipline of thinking like Christ would think in every situation and in every circumstance, to the glory of the Father. Amen.

Henrietta Mears - Paul says that the wonderful example of the Christian life that we must follow is Jesus Christ. We must imitate Christ, for although He is Lord of all, He became servant to all!...We must always bear in our thoughts the example of Jesus Christ (see Philippians 2:5-11). (What the Bible is All About)

Remember as **Robert Murray M'Cheyne** said...

"It's not great talents that God blesses, but great likeness to Jesus."

The saints at Philippi (as is true of all believers) had **"the mind of Christ"** (1 Cor 2:16) but Paul is them to continually think like Christ. He knew that when they had their Lord's attitude, they would not be defending their own rights, promoting their own selfish interests and living for themselves. **How did you begin your morning today?** Did you choose to put on Christ and His attitude or were you influenced by the world system (kosmos) which incessantly promotes and "exalts" selfishness (2Ti 3:1,2, 3, 4, 5-see notes 2Ti 3:1-2, 3:3-5).

Christ Who is "gentle and humble in heart" (Mt 11:29) is to be our daily example of selflessness. He was lowly-minded and we should be like-minded. As followers of Christ, we should imitate His "example" and "follow in His steps" (1Pe 2:21-note).

The one who says he abides in Him ought himself to walk in the same manner as He walked (1 Jn 2:6). (I.e., your life should match your lips! If it does not, you need to ponder 2 Cor 13:5).

We should

walk (present imperative = command calling for Spirit enabled/imparted supernatural love, love in action, to be the saint's lifestyle!) in love, just as Christ also loved (us), and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma" (Eph 5:2-note)

We should

not be conformed (present imperative + negative = stop doing this - suschematizo) to this world (aion), but be transformed (metamorphoo - continually = present tense) by the renewing of (our) mind that you may prove (dokimazo) (I.e., as the Spirit renews our mind to think experientially like who we are positionally [we have the "mind of Christ" 1Co 2:16] we will be able to test and discern and prove genuine) what the will of God is, that which is good (agathos) and acceptable (euarestos) and perfect (teleios). (Ro 12:2-note).

As we

"with unveiled face (behold) as in a mirror the glory of the Lord (in passages such as the one we are studying, we...) are being transformed (metamorphoo - continually = present tense) in the passive voice = action exerted from outside source - in this case the Holy Spirit) into the same image from glory to glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit" (2Cor 3:18-note)

What was the "attitude" in Christ Jesus? The answer follows in one of the most profound descriptions of our Lord in the entire word of God. If you have not memorized this section of Scripture so that you might be "blessed" by meditating upon ("beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord") it's precious truth "day and night" (Ps 1:2-note), you are missing the "opportunity of a lifetime". Take a week and memorize at least verses 3-10. You will never regret it in time or eternity! (See Memorizing His Word)

CHRISTOLOGY IN PHILIPPIANS 2:6-11

Christ's Preexistence	Philippians 2:6
Christ's Incarnation	Philippians 2:7-8
Christ's Exaltation	Philippians 2:9-11

Matthew Henry rightly reminds us that genuine **"Christians must be of Christ's mind.** We must bear a resemblance to His life, if we would have the benefit of His death" for as Paul writes "you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him" (see **note** Romans 8:9)

A T Robertson comments that "Paul presents Jesus as the supreme example of humility. He urges humility on the Philippians as the only way to secure unity."

The Lord of glory consistently thought of others first which prompted Charles H. Gabriel to pen these powerful, poignant words...

*He had no tears for His own griefs,
But sweat-drops of blood for mine.*

F B Meyer in Our Daily Walk has the following devotional entitled THE MEANING OF THE CROSS - FAITH IS not simply an intellectual experience of a statement of fact, but it is our personal trust and confidence in Him of whom the fact is true. We are not saved merely because we believe that Jesus Christ died for us on the Cross, but because we trust in Him who died. It is the personal touch between Christ and ourselves that causes His life to pass into our nature, making us sound and healthy, as well as secure and safe.

What does the Cross mean to you and me? Does it not mean that there our Lord gave Himself absolutely to the Father's will. Never in any way did He make Himself the origin and fountain of His action, but was ever the empty channel through which God poured Himself. "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." It seemed as if He went down lower and lower, on rung after rung of the ladder until He reached Hades, giving up everything only to follow the Will of God; but out of the lowest depths God raised Him to the Eternal Throne.

In each one of us there is strong self-will. You say, "I am resolved to be a good man or woman, to live a noble life, to give up bad habits—I will" But it can never be accomplished in that way. It is only when we are willing to see ourselves, our own energy, our good self as well as our bad self brought to an end on the Cross of Jesus, that we shall be able to enter into and live His eternal life.

At this moment I would summon you to stand beneath the Cross and to see there One who entirely yielded up His own will. More than that, I want you to see your self-life nailed there, and turn from it to God in adoration, saying that you are prepared to be weak and helpless so far as your own energies are concerned, that He may put forth in your life the mighty energy of that power which raised Christ from the dead. It is only when we are weak that we are really strong; it is only when we surrender ourselves to the power of the Cross, so that we realize that we have been crucified with Christ, that we are able to share in His eternal victory over the devil and the power of evil.

PRAYER - O God, Thou hast revealed Thyself to us in Thy Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. We love Him, because He endured the Cross, and despised the shame in order to save us. May we follow Him by the way of the Cross, bearing His reproach, sharing His griefs, obedient even unto death, that we may also live and reign with Him here, and more perfectly at last. AMEN.

WHAT is "the Christmas spirit"? Is it jovial family festivity, the sound of familiar carols in a busy shopping mall, the flow of cheery greeting cards that keep us in touch with old friends, a tree covered with twinkling lights peeking out of a pile of brightly wrapped packages, or the general good feeling we get at this season of the year? These are what most people think of when they hear the expression "Christmas spirit." But for Christians much more is involved.

J. I. Packer defines the Christmas spirit in his book *Knowing God*. He writes, "We talk glibly of the Christmas spirit, rarely meaning more by this than sentimental jollity on a family basis. . . . It ought to mean the reproducing in human lives of the temper of Him who for our sakes became poor, ... the spirit of those who, like their Master, live their whole lives on the principle of making themselves poor—spending and being spent—to enrich their fellowmen, giving time, trouble, care, and concern to do good to others—and not just their own friends—in whatever way there seems need."

In Philippians 2 we read that the Son of God laid aside His divine glory and became your servant and mine by being made in human likeness and dying on the cross for our sins. Following His example means letting the mind of Christ be in us and humbly serving others. That's the true spirit of Christmas!—D J De Haan ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Theodore Epp on Philippians 2:5-11

It is apparent that there was some element of Jesus' equality with God that He was willing to set aside during His earthly ministry.

One cannot give up the qualities of his inner nature, but he can relinquish the right, in some respects, to outwardly express his inner nature.

Even though Christ was God Himself and had the right to display His attributes, He willingly gave up this right in order to come to earth to be the Saviour of the world.

He did not cease being in the form of God as to His inner nature, but He gave up being equal with God as far as the expression of some of His attributes was concerned.

Remember that the Father did not humble Jesus Christ; He humbled Himself. There is a vast difference between being humiliated and willingly humbling oneself.

Jesus Christ voluntarily took a lower position because of His love for us. And this is the same kind of attitude that should characterize those of us who know Jesus Christ as Saviour.

The Bible has much to say about both pride and humility. James 4:6,10 says, "But He gives a greater grace. Therefore it says, 'God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' . . . Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you" (NASB).

First Peter 5:6 says, "Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord, and He will exalt you." (NASB). Matthew 23:12 says, "Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted" (NASB).

"Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves" (Phil. 2:3). ([Source](#))

Painting a Portrait

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. Philippians 2:5

Read: Philippians 2:1–11

The National Portrait Gallery in London, England, houses a treasure of paintings from across the centuries, including 166 images of Winston Churchill, 94 of William Shakespeare, and 20 of George Washington. With the older portraits, we may wonder: Is that what these individuals really looked like?

For instance, there are 8 paintings of Scottish patriot William Wallace (c. 1270–1305), but we obviously don't have photographs to compare them to. How do we know if the artists accurately represented Wallace?

Something similar might be happening with the likeness of Jesus. Without realizing it, those who believe in Him are leaving an impression of Him on others. Not with brushes and oils, but with attitudes, actions, and relationships.

Are we painting a portrait that represents the likeness of His heart? This was the concern of the apostle Paul. "In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus," he wrote (Philippians 2:5). With a desire to accurately represent our Lord, he urged His followers to reflect the humility, self-sacrifice, and compassion of Jesus for others.

It has been said, "We are the only Jesus some people will ever see." As we "in humility value others above [ourselves]" (v. 3), we will show the world the heart and attitude of Jesus Himself. —Bill Crowder

Father, please build the heart of Christ into my heart that those around me will see Him clearly and desire to know Him too.

How can you show Christ in your life to others in your community? Share at Facebook.

Christ's sacrifice of Himself motivates us to sacrifice ourselves for others.

Insight

The church at Philippi, established by Paul during his second missionary journey, was a growing and faithful community that had actively supported Paul's ministry (Philippians 1:5; 4:15–18). In this thank-you letter, Paul encouraged the Philippians to continue to grow and mature in their faith, even in the midst of persecution. He exhorted them, "Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ" (1:27), so that they would "shine . . . like stars in the sky" (2:15). He urged them to imitate Christ in sacrificial love, unity, humility, and service.

A former missionary told the story of two rugged, powerful mountain goats who met on a narrow pathway joining two mountain ridges. On one side was a chasm 1,000 feet deep; on the other, a steep cliff rising straight up. So narrow was the trail that there was no room to turn around, and the goats could not back up without falling. What would they do? Finally, instead of fighting for the right to pass, one of the goats knelt down and made himself as flat as possible. The other goat then walked over him, and they both proceeded safely.

In a sense, this is what Jesus Christ did for us when He left heaven's glory and came to this earth to die for our sins. He saw us trapped between our sin and God's righteousness with no way to help ourselves. He humbled Himself by giving up His right to use His divine power. He came in the likeness of men and took the form of a servant (Phil. 2:5-8). Then, by dying for sinful mankind, He let us "walk over Him" so that we could experience forgiveness and receive eternal life. —D C Egnor ([Our Daily Bread. Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Christ emptied Himself.

Behold our pattern.

St. Ambrose.

God's Paradoxes - Whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. --Matthew 16:25

The Bible tells us there is a wisdom that is foolish and a foolishness that is wise (1Cor. 1:20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25). There is a gain that is loss and a loss that is gain (Phil. 3:7, 8, 9). And there is an exalted way that leads downward and a humble way that leads to exaltation (Phil. 2:5-11).

Statements like these seem to be contradictions, but they are actually paradoxes. A paradox is a statement that contains two truths, which at first glance seem to be incompatible.

A psychiatrist once unknowingly referred to one of God's paradoxes, remarking, "The greatest secret of mental health comes down to us in the words, "Whoever would save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will save it." He added, "I forget who said that, but it is a great truth."

Who said that? Our Lord Jesus Christ! He gave us that principle in Matthew 16:25. And the apostle Paul lived it out as he endured countless hardships for the benefit of others (2Cor. 4:8, 9, 10, 11, 12). Yet Paul knew that even as his physical body was dying, his spirit was being renewed (2Co 4:16).

You cannot find your richest personal fulfillment until you sacrifice your time, strength, and resources to God's will. "Lose your life" for Christ. Start really living! --V C Grounds ([Our Daily Bread, Copyright RBC Ministries, Grand Rapids, MI. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved](#))

Take up thy cross and follow on,
Nor think till death to lay it down,
For only he who bears the cross
May hope to wear the glorious crown. --Everest

**Christ showed His love by dying for us;
we show our love by living for Him.**

F B Meyer in his devotional commentary "**The Epistle to the Philippians**" ask a series of questions which are vitally important to every believer's day to day life in Christ...

1. **How do you live the Christian life?**
2. **What means are given to the believer to press on in walking faithfully before the Lord?**
3. **Can the Christian really live differently from the unbelievers of the world?**

When true conversion takes place, the believer has a different nature and different desires than his unbelieving counterpart. This produces a different walk, that is, a totally different sort of conduct or lifestyle. Without this new nature a person can only slide deeper into bondage in attempting to conform to divine standards by the power of the flesh. Those who are in Christ are to live by the provisions of the Holy Spirit.

This is not to say that the believer never sins. For indeed he does as long as he is in his fleshly body. But there is a completely different attitude toward sin and even a different attitude toward the Law. He sins, but he does not desire to go on in sin. He sins, but he is not under the Law's condemnation, rather it serves to convict him and lead him in walking rightly before God.

How can we really live like Christians?

Let us see how our text gives us instructions and assurance of genuine Christian living.

I. A Command

The one imperative of this text is

"But I say, **walk** by the Spirit," which is followed by an inevitable result, "and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." (Gal 5:16-**see commentary**)

Jesus Christ has saved us to deliver us not only from the penalty of sin but also from its power in our daily lives. He has saved us that we might live holy lives before Him. For example, Titus 2:11-12-**note** declares,

"For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age."

It is not a matter of 'signing on with the Lord' then living anyway we desire until He takes us to heaven. So

many have the mistaken notion that Christianity is just a decision. It is not. It is a total lifestyle under the dominion of Jesus Christ. It means that you have a new nature and you live in a new way because you are indwelt by the Holy Spirit.

It seems that the Apostle captures the whole essence of the Christian's daily life within this verse. First he looks at it positively, then views it negatively. Let us see this for ourselves.

Walk by the Spirit

1. Stated positively

A number of matters confront us at first glance in the words, "Walk by the Spirit." First, Paul explains that this is the very antithesis of "biting and devouring one another" as he had warned about in the previous verse (Gal 5:15). "But I say," i.e., "Instead of biting and devouring one another because you have given the flesh an opportunity, "walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desires of the flesh." Christians must not be presumptuous about the way they live in relation to others. They must not be careless with sin. There is one way we are to live and that is by 'walking in the Spirit'.

A second issue involves the meaning of "walk." The word is commonly used in the New Testament to refer to the whole of one's conduct or behavior. It carries ethical connotations. It involves the way you and I live, how we treat others, what we think about, the sort of things in which we invest our time and resources, the way we talk, the people with whom we are involved. Walking implies progress, especially with the use of the present tense showing that this is continual action. It is not as fast as running, but it is steadily progressing. He does not tell us to go at breakneck pace in the Spirit, but to walk, to pace ourselves by the Spirit's direction and power.

Everything you do involves your walk with Christ if you are a believer. You are never to compartmentalize your life so that in this area you live like a Christian, but over here you live according to the ways of the world. I would go so far as to say, that if you are comfortable doing that you need to consider whether or not you have ever been born of God. All of us have been on the receiving end of unethical or rude behavior by those who profess to be Christians on Sunday but give no evidence of being a Christian during the week. If you have slipped into such a dichotomy then I urge you to repent!

Third, Paul qualifies what he means by commanding the believer to walk. He says to "walk by the Spirit." This brings into focus the great emphasis we see in the Upper Room Discourse in John's Gospel (Jn 14-16) and the writing of the Apostle Paul.

We are to live daily by the influence, direction and power of the Holy Spirit. We are to live in the sphere of relationship to the Holy Spirit. We are to live as those under the control of the Spirit (Eph 5:18).

This reminds us that we can only live by the Spirit if we have been justified by faith in Christ. The Holy Spirit is not a force for men to use to gain some personal mastery in life. He is God dwelling within the believer! He is 'the life of God in the soul of man' as Henry Scougal expressed it. Keep in mind what has transpired in the previous four chapters of Galatians. Paul has explained justification by faith. Now he is speaking to those who have been truly justified by Christ so that they might go on in the faith. and they can due to the Spirit's indwelling power.

Finally, to **walk by the Spirit** implies that the Spirit is heading somewhere and you are following. It demonstrates for us that the indwelling Spirit of God is actively involved in the life of the Christian in pointing him toward those things that are honoring to God. The Holy Spirit always leads us in concert with the revealed will of God in the Bible. He will never lead us to sin. He will never lead us to violate the written Word of God.

So whenever we seem to have an interest in heading in a questionable area of lifestyle, we can be sure the Holy Spirit is not leading us. Whenever we come to the Scripture and see what God commands us to do, we can be certain that the Holy Spirit, the Divine Author of the Word, will not guide us into disobeying what God has spoken.

To walk by the Spirit implies that we are maintaining an ongoing communion with God. We are exercising those spiritual disciplines that keep our hearts focused upon the Lord, that turns our feet away from sin, that warms our love for Christ. How are you going to walk by the Spirit if you are not in any sort of communion with Him? Our text calls upon us to be serious minded about our spiritual walks, to live in dependence upon the Holy Spirit granting to us the strength and power to obey, and to trust that He will always lead us rightly. We are to be sensitive to His promptings in our lives which may lead us in acts of service, witness, or love. We

see what God commands and find the Spirit's strength to obey. We hear the voice of the Spirit directing us and again find His strength to obey.

Do not forget about the Holy Spirit's indwelling strength. Too often we lean upon our own abilities when facing the demands of God before us. But in simple language we are reminded to "walk by the Spirit." Do not trust in your strength for it will surely fail. Do not rest in your gifts and abilities for they are weak at best. Plead for the strength of the Holy Spirit to fill your life and enable you to live before the Lord in ways that honor Him.

2. Stated negatively

Paul says, in essence, do you want to know how to keep from going on in sin? Then "walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh." I believe it is important to see how Paul has used this term, "flesh," throughout this epistle. In 2:16 he speaks of "no flesh being justified" by the law. So by this he means no human being, no one subject to sin. In 2:20 he states that the life he lives in the flesh he lives by faith in the Son of God as one who has been crucified with Christ. Here he implies his humanity that is subject to sin. He is not using "flesh" as another term for 'sin nature' rather for the human body with its propensity for sin.

In Galatians 3:3, Paul asks the question, **"Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?"** This verse offers an important insight on how flesh is used in our text. The idea of being perfected by the flesh meant the labor which the Galatians were exerting in trying to conform to the law. It was their energies, their strength, their wisdom struggling to obey the law in order to be sanctified. Paul makes it clear that our sanctification does not occur because we conform to the law. The law has no power to sanctify just as it has no power to justify.

Akin to this same use of flesh is the passage in Galatians 4:21-31, in which Paul contrasts the children of promise with the children of flesh. By flesh, he again refers to the self-effort of fallen men trying to conform to the law of God in order to gain merit with God. Paul explains that such effort only leads to more slavery. Here he uses 'flesh' to describe man apart from God's grace, man left to himself and his own abilities. Rather than finding refuge in Christ, he trusts in himself as he seeks to conform to the demands of the law for justification.

Now, back to our text in Gal 5:16. When Paul says that if you walk by the Spirit you will not carry out the desires of the flesh, he points back to the statement he has already made in Galatians 3:3, that the flesh cannot perfect us or sanctify us. The only way of progress is by the Spirit's work in us. The flesh represents the unrenewed mind that still has all the properties of fallen humanity. Though the flesh might seek to do some good and clean up from time to time in order to impress others, at its root the flesh does one thing: it sins. The desire of the flesh is sin. You can dress it up, call it by another term but the propensity of our humanity apart from the grace of God is to go deeper and deeper into sin.

II. An Explanation

Perhaps this is easier understood if we take a closer look at what is meant by flesh and Spirit.

1. Nature of flesh and Spirit

Paul explains, "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please." Here we find the basic problem of why we must have a new nature controlled by the Holy Spirit. For all of us are still in the flesh, that is, we all still reside in human bodies that have the propensity for sin. We are capable in our humanity of committing any number of sins which might produce a moral outrage on the part of our neighbors.

There is another reprehensible thing about the flesh. It refuses to trust the cross of Christ. The flesh would rather trust its own strength for moral improvement and for standing with God. To turn away from self-trust to abandon all claims to merit and cling only to Christ sends the flesh into a frenzy! If something is of grace, of the Spirit, of the glory of God, the flesh will seek to do just the opposite. Its longings (Gk. 'desire') run completely counter to the Holy Spirit.

But the Spirit represents all that God is and all that God has done for sinners through Christ. The Holy Spirit, the third Person in the Godhead, applies the redemptive work of Jesus Christ to the sinner. It is the Spirit who renews and regenerates the fallen nature of the sinner so that he has a desire to repent of his sins and believe the gospel of Christ. It is the Spirit who continually renews and fills the believer, exercising control over his life so that he might be sanctified before God. It is the Holy Spirit who 'comes alongside to help' as the Divine Paraclete, comforting, strengthening, urging, motivating the believer in his walk with Christ. It is the Spirit who bears witness with our spirits that we belong to Christ.

2. Conflict of flesh and Spirit

It is natural that the flesh and Spirit are in conflict with one another! "For the flesh sets its desire against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please." You cannot please the flesh and at the same time please the Holy Spirit. Nor can you please the Holy Spirit and at the same time please the flesh. They work in opposition to one another. They are the exact opposite at every turn.

To live in the Spirit implies that the believer is living contrary to the normal human existence. He has trusted in the one work, that of Christ, which has brought him into relationship to the Holy Spirit. The flesh, on the other hand, trusts in a multitude of little works, adding them up as supposed merit before God. Thus, it denies the efficacy of the work of Christ on the cross.

Rather than setting up a dichotomy which we must choose on a regular basis for living, Paul is saying just the opposite. We do not choose to live in the flesh or choose to live in the Spirit, as though we can turn off one and turn on the other at the drop of a hat. Instead, we are either in the flesh or in the Spirit. We are either seeking to please God in the Spirit or seeking to please ourselves and the world in the flesh. The conflict abounds, for you cannot do the things which are pleasing to God as long as you are lost, i.e., in the flesh. Nor can you live the life which is displeasing to God as long as you are saved, i.e., in the Spirit.

Can Christians sin? Is Paul teaching perfectionism? Certainly we can sin, but the overriding message of Galatians is that those sins are not imputed to the believer as far as divine judgment. Christ has availed for the believer, so that his sins have been taken out of the way, judged in the Person of Christ on the cross. So, is he perfect? Not at all. He still sins because he still lives in a fleshly body. Until he is liberated from this "body of death" he will still battle with sin. But as a Christian, he has a new nature controlling his life. He is not the same person anymore. The union of his soul with the Spirit of God means that he is going to live in a new fashion. The pattern and practice of his life is to live in the Spirit, not according to the ways of the flesh.

So what is Paul doing in this passage? He is reminding the Galatians that if they are in Christ, then their lives will be lived in conformity to the Spirit of God and not to the flesh. It is not a matter of reverting back and forth between flesh and Spirit. Yes, we do struggle with sin. That is part of our sanctification. And yes, the Christian can fall into grievous sin, impairing his walk with Christ and damaging his testimony before the world. But because he is in the Spirit he cannot persist in such behavior or lifestyle. He cannot find satisfaction in sin or the ways of the world.

III. A Delight

Paul adds yet another dimension to this whole matter. "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under Law." The Greek translation puts this in the present tense, so it is better rendered, "If you are being led by the Spirit Himself, you are not under Law." The emphasis is upon the condition of the believer, he is being led by the Spirit, and the fact that he is no longer subject to the futility of the Law for his sanctification.

1. Assurance given

The assurance that a person is a Christian is the very fact that he is led by the Holy Spirit. As Paul wrote to the Romans, "All who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:14). If the Holy Spirit is not leading you to love God or to follow after Him or to desire Him, then what are you led to believe? You must assume that if there is no leading of the Spirit in your life then you have never been born of God. Why make such a statement at this point? Remember that Paul had been dealing with the matter of legalism as a means to being justified. He had explained that by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified (2:16). But some may have persisted in depending upon the works of the law to put them into a right standing with God. They had followed the deadness of legalism. They had trusted in the flesh. They were still under the Law.

But look at the reality of this assurance. If the Spirit of God persists in working in your life to lead you into holiness, then the evidence that you are being sanctified is present. God is at work in you! You are being led from one degree of grace to another. You are being brought through the trials of life, even with all of its temptations, into the liberty of an ongoing relationship to Jesus Christ. You are being assured by the witness of the Spirit that you are truly born of God.

You find yourself repulsed by the flesh. That becomes normal to you because the flesh and the Spirit "are in opposition to one another, so that you may not do the things that you please." By this Paul did not mean that you cannot follow after the Lord, but he meant that if you are in the Spirit then you cannot follow after the flesh to please the flesh, just as if you are in the flesh you cannot follow after the Spirit, regardless of how hard you

try.

2. Affirmation repeated

For Paul, to be in the flesh meant that you would strive to justify yourself before God by means of the Law. This is where his argument has the most practical application. He is telling us that just as we are not justified by the Law neither are we sanctified by the Law. "But if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law." By this, Paul does not mean that we become lawless, for our Lord declared, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." Surely that is law! But the whole attitude toward law is different. As Samuel Bolton wrote, "He that loves God solely because God commands it does not love God at all" [The True Bounds of Christian Freedom, 138]. We love Christ and demonstrate that love by our desire to obey Him.

Is this just a slavish duty? Does the Lord put us in the position that we feel compelled to follow a drudgery of obedience, even though our desire is to do otherwise? By no means, for "you are not under the Law." It is not the Law that compels you to obey but the reality that you belong to Christ and are indwelt by the Holy Spirit. It is the reality that you have a new nature in Christ, one that is bent on loving and obeying Him. You do not obey because you have to but because you want to. The Spirit of God has accomplished the change within you so that you might love and obey the Lord.

What is the difference between the person who obeys out of duty and the other who obeys out of delight? I return to the old Puritan work by Samuel Bolton for some most helpful material. Bolton compares what he calls "the legal spirit" with "the evangelical" spirit. So what we are addressing are those who are not truly born of God but who are attempting nonetheless to sanctify themselves by adherence to slavish duty. And we are seeing those who due to the new birth and ongoing work of the Spirit are walking in obedience as a delight.

(1) The principle that moves the one spirit to duty is slavish, the other childlike....

(2) The one man does these things as his delight, and the other as his burden....

(3) The one type of man performs duty from the convictions of conscience, the other from the necessity of his nature. With many, obedience is their precept, not their principle; holiness their law, not their nature. Many men have convictions who are not converted; many are convinced they ought to do this and that, for example, that they ought to pray, but they have not got the heart which desires and lays hold of the things they have convictions of, and know they ought to do. Conviction, without conversion, is a tyrant rather than a king....Conscience tells a man that he ought to do certain things, but gives him no strength to do them. It can show him the right way and tell him what he ought to do, but it does not enable the soul to do it....One the other hand, where there is the principle of the Gospel, where there is grace, it is in the soul as a pilot in a ship who not only points the way but steers the vessel in the way which he appoints.

(4) The one kind of man looks for his satisfaction in the duty by the performance of the duty, the other looks for satisfaction in the duty as he finds Christ thereby; it is not in the duty, but above the duty, that he finds his satisfaction.

(5) The one kind of man contents himself with the shell, the other is not content without the substance. The godly man goes to duty as the means of communion with God, to see God, to enjoy God, and to talk with God; the other goes to duty merely to satisfy the grumblings and quarrels of his conscience.

(6) The one type of man performs duty in order to live by it....But the believer prays and performs duty, yet he looks beyond them, and looks to live by Christ alone. He lives in the duty, but not by the duty; he lives in obedience, but yet looks a higher than obedience: 'I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me'....

(7) The one type of man does things coldly and formally, the other fervently....A natural man may pray earnestly at times when in fear or horror, or under pangs of conscience, but he does not cry believingly....

(8) The formal man does duty with a view to it serving other ends, and especially when he finds himself in extreme difficulties....But it is not so with the godly man. He closes with these duties as his heaven, as a part of his happiness, a piece of his glory....

(9) The one kind of man does duty as a sick man eats his food, not out of desire for it and delight in it, but because he knows that he will die if he does not eat; yet he has no desire or stomach for it. But the godly man does duty after the manner in which a healthy man feeds, not merely because he needs food, but because he desires it and delights in it.

Conclusion

It is only those who have been justified by faith alone in Christ alone who are being sanctified by the Holy Spirit. This one walks by the Spirit and is led by the Spirit. he has not by-passed the cross for a legalistic life of holiness. But from the cross, he presses on through the trials and temptations of life with a new Master, a new nature, and a new strength. Does this describe you?

Have you been laboring out of frustration to please God but failed to see that Jesus Christ has pleased God on our behalf? Are you clinging to your strength for obedience when as a true believer you have the power of the Holy Spirit to enable you?

Walk by the Spirit and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

The Descent Of The Word Phil. 2:5–8

Alexander Maclaren

‘Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus: 6. Who, being in the form of God. counted it not a prize to be on an equality with God, 7. But emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; 8. And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient even unto death, yea, the death of the cross.’— Phil 2:5-8 (R.V.).

THE purpose of the Apostle in this great passage must ever be kept clearly in view. Our Lord’s example is set forth as the pattern of that unselfish disregard of one’s own things, and devotion to the things of others, which has just been urged on the Philippians, and the mind which was in Him is presented as the model on which they are to fashion their minds. This purpose in some measure explains some of the peculiarities of the language here, and may help to guide us through some of the intricacies and doubtful points in the interpretation of the words. It explains why Christ’s death is looked at in them only in its bearing upon Himself, as an act of obedience and of condescension, and why even that death in which Jesus stands most inimitable and unique is presented as capable of being imitated by us. The general drift of these verses is clear, but there are few Scripture passages which have evoked more difference of opinion as to the precise meaning of nearly every phrase. To enter on the subtle discussions involved in the adequate exposition of the words would far exceed our limits, and we must perforce content ourselves with a slight treatment of them, and aim chiefly at bringing out their practical side.

The broad truth which stands sun-clear amid all diverse interpretations is—that the Incarnation, Life, and Death are the great examples of living humility and self-sacrifice. To be born was His supreme act of condescension. It was love which made Him assume the vesture of human flesh. To die was the climax of His voluntary obedience, and of His devotion to us.

I. The Height From Which Jesus Descended.

The whole strange conception of birth as being the voluntary act of the Person born, and as being the most stupendous instance of condescension in the world’s history, necessarily reposes on the clear conviction that He had a prior existence so lofty that it was an all but infinite descent to become man. Hence Paul begins with the most emphatic assertion that he who bore the name of Jesus lived a divine life before He was born. He uses a very strong word which is given in the margin of the Revised Version, and might well have been in its text. ‘Being originally’ as the word accurately means, carries our thoughts back not only to a state which preceded Bethlehem and the cradle, but to that same timeless eternity from which the prologue of the Gospel of John partially draws the veil when it says, ‘In the beginning was the Word,’ and to which Jesus Himself more obscurely pointed when He said, ‘Before Abraham was I am.’

Equally emphatic in another direction is Paul’s next expression, ‘In the form of God,’ for ‘form’ means much more than ‘shape.’ I would point out the careful selection in this passage of three words to express three ideas which are often by hasty thought regarded as identical, We read of ‘the form of God’ (Phil. 2:6), ‘the likeness of men’ (Phil. 2:7), and ‘in fashion as a man.’ Careful investigation of these two words ‘form’ and ‘fashion’ has established a broad distinction between them, the former being more fixed, the latter referring to that which is accidental and outward, which may be fleeting and unsubstantial. The possession of the form involves participation in the essence also. Here it implies no corporeal idea as if God had a material form, but it implies also much more than a mere apparent resemblance. He who is in the form of God possesses the essential divine attributes. Only God can be ‘in the form of God’: man is made in the likeness of God, but man is not ‘in the form of God.’ Light is thrown on this lofty phrase by its antithesis with the succeeding expression in the next verse, ‘the form of a servant,’ and as that is immediately explained to refer to Christ’s assumption of human nature, there is no room for candid doubt that ‘being originally in the form of God’ is a deliberately asserted claim of the divinity of Christ in His pre-existent state.

As we have already pointed out, Paul soars here to the same lofty height to which the prologue of John’s Gospel rises, and he

echoes our Lord's own words about 'the glory which I had with Thee before the foundation of the world.' Our thoughts are carried back before creatures were, and we become dimly aware of an eternal distinction in the divine nature which only perfects its eternal oneness. Such an eternal participation in the divine nature before all creation and before time is the necessary pro-supposition of the worth of Christ's life as the pattern of humility and self-sacrifice. That pro-supposition gives all its meaning, its pathos, and its power, to His gentleness, and love, and death. The facts are different in their significance, and different in their power to bless and gladden, to purge and sway the soul, according as we contemplate them with or without the background of His pre-existent divinity. The view which regards Him as simply a man, like all the rest of us, beginning to be when He was born, takes away from His example its mightiest constraining force. Only when we with all our hearts believe 'that the Word became flesh,' do we discern the overwhelming depths of condescension manifested in the Birth. If it was not the incarnation of God, it has no claim on the hearts of men.

II. The Wondrous Act Of Descent.

The stages in that long descent are marked out with a precision and definiteness which would be intolerable presumption, if Paul were speaking only his own thoughts, or telling what he had seen with his own eyes. They begin with what was in the mind of the eternal Word before He began His descent, and whilst yet He is 'in the form of God.' He stands on the lofty level before the descent begins, and in spirit makes the surrender, which, stage by stage, is afterwards to be wrought out in act. Before any of these acts there must have been the disposition of mind and will which Paul describes as 'counting it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God.' He did not regard the being equal to God as a prey or treasure to be clutched and retained at all hazards. That sweeps our thoughts into the dim regions far beyond Calvary or Bethlehem, and is a more overwhelming manifestation of love than are the acts of lowly gentleness and patient endurance which followed in time. It included and transcended them all.

It was the supreme example of not 'looking on one's own things.' And what made Him so count? What but infinite love. To rescue men, and win them to Himself and goodness, and finally to lift them to the place from which He came down for them, seemed to Him to be worth the temporary surrender of that glory and majesty. We can but bow and adore the perfect love. We look more deeply into the depths of Deity than unaided eyes could ever penetrate, and what we see is the movement in that abyss of Godhead of purest surrender which, by beholding, we are to assimilate.

Then comes the wonder of wonders, 'He emptied Himself.' We cannot enter here on the questions which gather round that phrase, and which give it a factitious importance in regard to present controversies. All that we would point out now is that while the Apostle distinctly treats the Incarnation as being a laying aside of what made the Word to be equal with God, he says nothing, on which an exact determination can be based, of the degree or particulars in which the divine nature of our Lord was limited by His humanity. The fact he asserts, and that is all. The scene in the Upper Chamber was but a feeble picture of what had already been done behind the veil. Unless He had laid aside His garments of divine glory and majesty, He would have had no human flesh from which to strip the robes. Unless He had willed to take the 'form of a servant,' He would not have had a body to gird with the slave's towel. The Incarnation, which made all His acts of lowly love possible, was a greater act of lowly love than those which flowed from it. Looking at it from earth, men say, 'Jesus was born.' Looking at it from heaven, Angels say, 'He emptied Himself.'

But how did He empty Himself? By taking the form of a slave, that is to God. And how did He take the form of a slave? By 'becoming in the likeness of men.' Here we are specially to note the remarkable language implying that what is true of none other in all the generations of men is true of Him. That just as 'emptying Himself' was His own act, also the taking the form of a slave by His being born was His own act, and was more truly described as a 'becoming.' We note, too, the strong contrast between that most remarkable word and the 'being; originally' which is used to express the mystery of divine pre-existence.

Whilst His becoming in the likeness of men stands in strong contrast with 'being originally,' and energetically expresses the voluntariness of our Lord's birth, the 'likeness of men' does not cast any doubt on the reality of His manhood, but points to the fact that 'though certainly perfect man, He was by reason of the divine nature present in Him not simply and merely man.'

Here then the beginning of Christ's manhood is spoken of in terms which are only explicable, if it was a second form of being, preceded by a pre-existent form, and was assumed by His own act. The language, too, demands that that humanity should have been true essential manhood. It was in 'the form' of man and possessed of all essential attributes. It was in 'the likeness' of man possessed of all external characteristics, and yet was something more. It summed up human nature, and was its representative.

III. The Obedience Which Attended The Descent.

It was not merely an act of humiliation and condescension to become man, but all His life was one long act of lowliness. Just as He 'emptied Himself' in the act of becoming in the 'likeness of men,' so He 'humbled Himself,' and all along the course of His earthly life He chose constant lowliness and to be 'despised and rejected of men.' It was the result moment by moment of His own will that to the eyes of men He presented 'no form nor comeliness,' and that will was moment by moment steadied in its unmoved humility, because He perpetually looked 'not on His own things, but on the things of others.' The guise He presented to the eyes of men was

‘the fashion of a man.’ That word corresponds exactly to Paul’s carefully selected term, and makes emphatic both its superficial and its transitory character.

The lifelong humbling of Himself was further manifested in His becoming ‘obedient.’ That obedience was, of course, to God. And here we cannot but pause to ask the question, How comes it that to the man Jesus obedience to God was an act of humiliation? Surely there is but one explanation of such a statement. For all men but this one to be God’s slaves is their highest honour, and to speak of obedience as humiliation is a sheer absurdity.

Not only was the life of Jesus so perfect an example of unbroken obedience that He could safely front His adversaries with the question, ‘Which of you convinceth Me of sin?’ and with the claim to ‘do always the things that pleased Him,’ but the obedience to the Father was perfected in His death. Consider the extraordinary fact that a man’s death is the crowning instance of his humility, and ask yourselves the question, Who then is this who chose to be born, and stooped in the act of dying? His death was obedience to God, because by it He carried out the Father’s will for the salvation of the world, His death is the greatest instance of unselfish self-sacrifice, and the loftiest example of looking on the ‘things of others’ that the world has ever seen. It dwindles in significance, in pathos, and in power to move us to imitation unless we clearly see the divine glory of the eternal Lord as the background of the gentle lowliness of the Man of Sorrows, and the Cross. No theory of Christ’s life and death but that He was born for us, and died for us, either explains the facts and the apostolic language concerning them, or leaves them invested with their full power to melt our hearts and mould our lives. There is a possibility of imitating Him in the most transcendent of His acts. The mind may be in us which was in Christ Jesus. That it may, His death must first be the ground of our hope, and then we must make it the pattern of our lives, and draw from it the power to shape them after His blessed Example.

The Ascent Of Jesus

Phil. 2:9–11

Alexander Maclaren

‘Wherefore also God highly exalted Him and gave unto Him the name which is above every name; 10. That in the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things on 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.’—Phil. 2:9–11 (R.V.).

‘HE that humbleth himself shall be exalted,’ said Jesus. He is Himself the great example of that law. The Apostle here goes on to complete his picture of the Lord Jesus as our pattern. In previous verses we had the solemn steps of His descent, and the lifelong humility and obedience of the incarnate Son, the man Christ Jesus. Here we have the wondrous ascent which reverses all the former process. Our text describes the reflex motion by which Jesus is borne back to the same level as that from which the descent began.

We have,

I. The Act Of Exaltation Which Forms The Contrast And The Parallel To The Descent.

‘God highly exalted Him.’ The Apostle coins an emphatic word which doubly expresses elevation, and in its grammatical form shows that it indicates a historical fact. That elevation was a thing once accomplished on this green earth; that is to say it came to pass in the fact of our Lord’s ascension when from some fold of the Mount of Olives He was borne upwards and, with blessing hands, was received into the Shechinah cloud, the glory of which hid Him from the upward-gazing eyes.

It is plain that the ‘Him’ of whom this tremendous assertion is made, must be the same as the ‘He’ of whom the previous verses spoke, that is, the Incarnate Jesus. It is the manhood which is exalted. His humiliation consisted in His becoming man, but His exaltation does not consist in His laying aside His humanity. It is not a transient but an eternal union into which in the Incarnation it entered with divinity. Henceforward we have to think of Him in all the glory of His heavenly state as man, and as truly and completely in the ‘likeness of men’ as when He walked with bleeding feet on the flinty road of earthly life. He now bears for ever the ‘form of God’ and ‘the fashion of a man.’

Here I would pause for a moment to point out that the calm tone of this reference to the ascension indicates that it was part of the recognised Christian beliefs, and implies that it had been familiar long before the date of this Epistle, which itself dates from not more than at the most thirty years from the death of Christ. Surely that lapse of time is far too narrow to allow of such a belief having sprung up, and been universally accepted about a dead man, who all the while was lying in a nameless grave.

The descent is presented as His act, but decorum and truth required that the exaltation should be God’s act. ‘He humbled Himself,’ but ‘God exalted Him.’ True, He sometimes represented Himself as the Agent of His own Resurrection and Ascension, and

established a complete parallel between His descent and His ascent, as when He said, 'I came out from the Father, and am come into the world: again, I leave the world, and go unto the Father.' He was no less obedient to the Father's will when He ascended up on high, than He was when He came down to earth, and whilst, from one point of view, His Resurrection and Ascension were as truly His own acts as were His birth and His death, from another, He had to pray, 'And now, O Father, glorify Thou Me with Thine own self with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was.' The Titans presumptuously scaled the heavens, according to the old legend, but the Incarnate Lord returned to 'His own calm home, His habitation from eternity,' was exalted thither by God, in token to the universe that the Father approved the Son's descent, and that the work which the Son had done was indeed, as He declared it to be, 'finished.' By exalting Him, the Father not merely reinstated the divine Word in its eternal union with God, but received into the cloud of glory the manhood which the Word had assumed.

II. The Glory Of The Name Of Jesus.

What is the name 'which is above every name'? It is the name Jesus. It is to be noted that Paul scarcely ever uses that simple appellative. There are, roughly speaking, about two hundred instances in which he names our Lord in his Epistles, and there are only four places, besides this, in which he uses this as his own, and two in which he, as it were, puts it into the mouth of an enemy. Probably then, some special reason led to its occurrence here, and it is not difficult, I think, to see what that reason is. The simple personal name was given indeed with reference to His work, but had been borne by many a Jewish child before Mary called her child Jesus, and the fact that it is this common name which is exalted above every name, brings out still more strongly the thought already dwelt upon, that what is thus exalted is the manhood of our Lord. The name which expressed His true humanity, which showed His full identification with us, which was written over His Cross, which perhaps shaped the taunt 'He saved others, Himself He cannot save,'—that name God has lifted high above all names of council and valour, of wisdom and might, of authority and rule. It is shrined in the hearts of millions who render to it perfect trust, unconditional obedience, absolute loyalty. Its growing power, and the warmth of personal love which it evokes, in centuries and lands so far removed from the theatre of His life, is a unique thing in the world's history. It reigns in heaven.

But Paul is not content with simply asserting the sovereign glory of the name of Jesus. He goes on to set it forth as being what no other name borne by man can be, the ground and object of worship, when he declares, that 'in the name of Jesus every knee shall bow.' The words are quoted from the second Isaiah, and occur in one of the most solemn and majestic utterances of the monotheism of the Old Testament. And Paul takes these words, undeterred by the declaration which precede them, 'I Am God and there is none else,' applies them to Jesus, to the manhood of our Lord. Bowing the knee is of course prayer, and in these great words the issue of the work of Jesus is unmistakably set forth, as not only being that He has declared God to men, who through Him are drawn to worship the Father, but that their emotions of love, reverence, worship, are turned to Him, though as the Apostle is careful immediately to note, they are not thereby intercepted from, but directed to, the glory of God the Father. In the eternities before His descent, there was equality with God, and when He returns, it is to the Father, who in Him has become the object of adoration, and round whose throne gather with bended knees all those who in Jesus see the Father.

The Apostle still further dwells on the glory of the name as that of the acknowledged Lord. And here we have with significant variation in strong contrast to the previous name of Jesus, the full title 'Jesus Christ Lord.' That is almost as unusual in its completeness as the other in its simplicity, and it comes in here with tremendous energy, reminding us of the great act to which we owe our redemption, and of all the prophecies and hopes which, from of old, had gathered round the persistent hope of the coming Messiah, while the name of Lord proclaims His absolute dominion. The knee is bowed in reverence, the tongue is vocal in confession. That confession is incomplete if either of these three names is falteringly uttered, and still more so, if either of them is wanting. The Jesus whom Christians confess is not merely the man who was born in Bethlehem and known among men as 'Jesus the carpenter.' In these modern days, His manhood has been so emphasised as to obscure His Messiahship and to obliterate His dominion, and alas! there are many who exalt Him by the name that Mary gave Him, who turn away from the name of Jesus as 'Hebrew old clothes,' and from the name of Lord as antiquated superstition. But in all the lowliness and gentleness of Jesus there were not wanting lofty claims to be the Christ of whom prophets and righteous men of old spake, and whose coming many a generation desired to see and died without the sight, and still loftier and more absolute claims to be invested with 'all power in heaven and earth,' and to sit down with the Father on His throne. It is dangerous work to venture to toss aside two of these three names, and to hope that if we pronounce the third of them, Jesus, with appreciation, it will not matter if we do not name Him either Christ or Lord, if it is true that the manhood of Jesus is thus exalted, how wondrous must be the kindred between the human and the divine, that it should be capable of this, that it should dwell in the everlasting burnings of the Divine Glory and not be consumed! How blessed for us the belief that our Brother wields all the forces of the universe, that the human love which Jesus had when He bent over the sick and comforted the sorrowful, is at the centre. Jesus is Lord, the Lord is Jesus!

The Psalmist was moved to a rapture of thanksgiving when he thought of man as 'made a little lower than the angels, and crowned with glory and honour,' but when we think of the Man Jesus 'sitting at the right hand of God,' the Psalmist's words seem pale and poor, and we can repeat them with a deeper meaning and a fuller emphasis, 'Thou madest Him to have dominion over the works of

Thy hands, Thou hast put all things under His feet.'

III. The Universal Glory Of The Name.

By the three classes into which the Apostle divides creation, 'things in heaven, and things on earth, and things under the earth,' he simply intends to declare, that Jesus is the object of all worship, and the words are not to be pressed as containing dogmatic assertions as to the different classes mentioned. But guided by other words of Scripture, we may permissibly think that the 'things in heaven' tell us that the angels who do not need His mediation learn more of God by His work and bow before His throne. We cannot be wrong in believing that the glory of His work stretches far beyond the limits of humanity, and that His kingdom numbers other subjects than those who draw human breath. Other lips than ours say with a great voice, 'Worthy is the Lamb that hath been slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honour and glory and blessing.'

The things on earth are of course men, and the words encourage us to dim hopes about which we cannot dogmatise of a time when all the wayward self-seeking and self-tormenting children of men shall have learned to know and love their best friend, and' there shall be one flock and one shepherd.'

'Things under the earth' seems to point to the old thought of 'Sheol' or 'Hades' or a separate state of the dead. The words certainly suggest that those who have gone from us are not unconscious nor cut off from the true life, but are capable of adoration and confession. We cannot but remember the old belief that Jesus in His death 'descended into Hell,' and some of us will not forget Fra Angelico's picture of the open doorway with a demon crushed beneath the fallen portal, and the crowd of eager faces and outstretched hands swarming up the dark passage, to welcome the entering Christ. Whatever we may think of that ancient representation, we may at least be sure that, wherever they are, the dead in Christ praise and reverence and love.

IV. The Glory Of The Father In The Glory Of The Name Of Jesus.

Knees bent and tongues confessing the absolute dominion of Jesus Christ could only be offence and sin if He were not one with the Father. But the experience of all the thousands since Paul wrote, whose hearts have been drawn in reverent and worshipping trust to the Son, has verified the assertion, that to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord diverts no worship from God, but swells and deepens the ocean of praise that breaks round the throne. If it is true, and only if it is true, that in the life and death of Jesus all previous revelations of the Father's heart are surpassed, if it is true and only if it is true, as He Himself said, that 'I and the Father are one,' can Paul's words here be anything but an incredible paradox. But unless these great words close and crown the Apostle's glowing vision, it is maimed and imperfect, and Jesus interposes between loving hearts and God. One could almost venture to believe that at the back of Paul's mind, when he wrote these words, was some remembrance of the great prayer, 'I glorified Thee on the earth, having accomplished the work which Thou gavest Me to do.' When the Son is glorified we glorify the Father, and the words of our text may well be remembered and laid to heart by any who will not recognise the deity of the Son, because it seems to them to dishonour the Father. Their honour is inseparable and their glory one.

There is a sense in which Jesus is our example even in His ascent and exaltation, just as He was in His descent and humiliation. The mind which was in Him is for us the pattern for earthly life, though the deeds in which that mind was expressed, and especially His 'obedience to the death of the Cross,' are so far beyond any self-sacrifice of ours, and are inimitable, unique, and needing no repetition while the world lasts. And as we can imitate His unexampled sacrifice, so we may share His divine glory, and, resting on His own faithful word, may follow the calm motion of His Ascension, assured that where He is there we shall be also, and that the manhood which is exalted in Him is the prophecy that all who love Him will share His glory. The question for us all is, have we in us 'the mind that was in Christ'? and the other question is, what is that name to us? Can we say, 'Thy mighty name salvation is'? If in our deepest hearts we grasp that name, and with unfaltering lips can say that 'there is none other name under heaven given amongst men whereby we must be saved but the name of Jesus,' then we shall know that

'To us with Thy dear name are given
Pardon, and holiness, and heaven.'

SERMON NOTES PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11

TITLES:

CHRIST OUR EXAMPLE (which we could subtitle...)

"How to Develop an Other's Orientation"

We need to learn instead of saying **Me-first,** to say, **“Me-third.”**

Recall the **mnemonic** for **"J.O.Y."**...

Jesus - our Example,

Others - our goal to serve

Yourself - our experience of joy

Y is last. That's what Paul says in Php 2:4: "do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." The Greek word for **"look"** is not just to see something but actually to fix one's attention on, with great interest in. **Here's the application** - Some of us (myself for sure) need to take our eyes off OURSELVES and literally lift them (our eyes) to LOOK WITH ATTENTION at others. This lines up with what our Lord taught in Mark 10:44: "Whoever wants to be first must be slave of all."

As an aside here is a great application of Php 2:3-4 - Fill in the blanks of this paraphrase with the names of two people you are struggling with right now:

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard _____ as more important than yourself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of _____."

How can we really do that from the heart?

That's what we will talk about today, for God has give us an example to follow and the power to enable us to follow!

ILLUSTRATION - Watchman Nee, the Chinese evangelist, tells of a Christian he once knew in China. He was a poor rice farmer, and his fields lay high on a mountain. Every day he pumped water into the paddies of new rice, and every morning he returned to find that a neighbor who lived down the hill had opened the dikes surrounding the Christian's field to let the water fill his own. For a while the Christian ignored the injustice, but at last he became desperate. He met and prayed with other Christians and came up with this solution. The next day the Christian farmer rose early in the morning and first filled his neighbor's fields; then he attended to his own. Watchman Nee tells how the neighbor subsequently became a Christian, his unbelief overcome by a genuine demonstration of a Christian's humility and Christlike character.

Constable - This paragraph is the most important one in the epistle and the most difficult to interpret. "By anyone's reckoning, Php 2:6-11 constitutes the single most significant block of material in Philippians."

THIS TEXT IS SUPERLATIVELY DOCTRINAL BUT IS NOT "DRY DOCTRINE" FOR IT TEACHES A BASIC PRINCIPLE WHICH IS SUPREMELY PRACTICAL - you can write this down - If you're experiencing friction in your relationships, whether at home or anywhere, chances are you need to grow in humility. C. S. Lewis saw this and wrote, "Pride has been the chief cause of misery in every nation and every family since the world began. Pride always means enmity--it is enmity. And not only enmity between man and man, but enmity to God." (Mere Christianity)

Calvin sums up the practical application of our text: "Since, then, the Son of God descended from so great a height, how unreasonable that we, who are nothing, should be lifted up with pride!" But, the fact is, we must fight pride all our lives. In 1985, a Spanish bullfighter made a tragic mistake. He thrust his sword a final time into the bull, which then collapsed. Thinking that the bull was dead, the bullfighter turned to the crowd to acknowledge the applause. But the bull was not dead. It rose and lunged at the back of the unsuspecting matador, piercing his heart with its horn.

Pride is like that. Just when we think we've conquered it and we turn to accept the congratulations of the crowd, pride stabs us in the back. It won't be dead before we are. In this section of Scripture Paul is going to teach us to fight pride by focusing on the example of what the Savior did for us by leaving the glory of heaven and coming to die for our sins. Have that same mind in you which was in Christ Jesus: "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others" (2:3, 4). That's the way toward harmony in our church and in our homes.

May God by His Spirit be pleased to drive these truths like stakes deeply into our minds so our hearts might be transformed and our lives, our families and our church might grow progressively more and more like Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

OUTLINES: these are just suggestions

- [Appeal for Unity](#) (1-2)
- [Appeal for Humility](#) (3-4)

THE MIND OF CHRIST IN EXAMPLE 2:5-8

- [Exhortation to Christians](#) (5): ***Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus***
- [Example of Christ](#) (6-8)

Christ stripped Himself of the robes of glory, and covered Himself with the rags of humanity. Why? So that He could redeem men from sin and bring them to God.

INTRODUCTION TO PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11:

It would **not** be an exaggeration to say that Philippians 2:5-11 is the greatest Christological passage in the Scriptures. This is an incredibly majestic text that has a "Take your shoes off" grandeur. It is so grand in fact, that it becomes very easy to lose sight of Paul's point in writing it. Like a deer spellbound by the headlights of an approaching car, it is possible get caught up in the brilliance of the passage and forget that Paul has written it to illustrate his point that we are not to be self-centered but united, serving one another in humility (Phil. 2:1-5). Have you ever said to someone "you have an attitude?"

In these few verses we see the great sweep of Christ's life from eternity past to eternity future, and we are admitted to the breathtaking purposes of God in human salvation.

INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT - In Lewis Carroll's famous book, *Through the Looking Glass*, Alice steps through the mirror in the living room to find a world on the opposite side where everything is backwards: Alice wants to go forward, but every time she moves, she ends up back where she started; she tries to go left and ends up right; up is down and fast is slow. Similarly, Christianity is a kind of looking glass world where everything works on principles opposite to those of the world around us. To be blessed, be a blessing to others. To receive love, give love. To be honored, first be humble. To truly live, die to yourself. To gain the unseen, let go of the seen. To receive, first give. To save your life, lose it. To lead, be a servant. To be first, be last.

In Philippians 2:5–11, Paul will explain that the way up is down. That's right: Down is up, up is down. The way to be great is to go lower. The way up is down. The logical flow of Philippians has been building up to this great truth. After addressing the church as a unified whole (Php 1:1–2), Paul offers a prayer for them to achieve this unity (Php 1:3–11). He then gives his own life as a model (Php 1:12–26) and urges the church to live lives of humility and unity without (Php 1:27–30) and within the church (Php 2:1–4). Finally, Paul arrives at a crescendo and turns his attention to the powerful example of Christ Himself in Php 2:5–11. This is one of the most important passages in the entire Bible. Many scholars believe that this is the best passage in the Bible to defend and explain that Jesus Christ is God. However, this sermon will not be a systematic theology lesson because it is found in a context that stresses the need for unity in the local church.

Dr. F. B. Meyer wrote of this section, "In the whole range of Scripture, this paragraph stands in almost unapproachable and unexampled majesty." Most scholars agree that these verses are a hymn or poem that Paul either wrote himself or included here as an appropriate illustration. It provides a powerful conclusion to his message on unity.

While the beauty of the Incarnation of our Savior is eloquently expressed in this paragraph, **we must remember that this was not given as a doctrinal treatise**. Rather, it is an illustration of the kind of humility and servanthood necessary to preserve unity in the body of Christ.

As one pastor put it "Today I will attempt to do an exposition of one of the most amazing and profound passages in all the Bible. My very best attempt at sound preaching will be but a puny effort, for there are no words to describe this sublime passage. Perhaps you would do better, after this sermon, to go home and, on your knees, pour over the sacred words yourself. I assure you, when you get off your knees, you will have a deeper adoration and appreciation for the Person and work of Christ."

Let me ask you a question - **Does anyone know what a parabola is or what it looks like?** Here's a picture of a **parabola** (the **blue** line) ...

Now this is a secular diagram from Wikipedia, but do you see anything that stands out in the picture? **The Cross!** Yes, you nailed it (pun intended)! In fact, today's message could be entitled "**The Great Parabola**." Why do I say that? Look at the diagram below which depicts what happened to Christ in Php 2:5-11...

Source: Christ-Centered Exposition - Philippians

How often have you heard “what goes up must come down,” but what we learn by the example of Christ is exactly the opposite. It is not what goes up that comes down, but rather what comes down is what goes up. This is a consistent teaching of Scripture: “Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up” (Jam. 4:10).

How significant is Php 2:5-11? As James Montgomery Boice said

“These verses bring us near to the bedrock of the early Christian faith and preaching. They contain most of the distinctive articles of the Christian creed. They teach the divinity of Christ, his preexistence, his equality with God the Father, his incarnation and true humanity, his voluntary death on the cross, the certainty of his ultimate triumph over evil, and the permanence of his reign.”

Here is one way we could outline this glorious section of Scripture:

CHRISTOLOGY IN PHILIPPIANS 2:5-11	
Christ's Example	Philippians 2:5
Christ's Preexistence	Philippians 2:6
Christ's Incarnation	Philippians 2:7-8
Christ's Exaltation	Philippians 2:9-11

We have been created to become like Christ. Listen to Romans 8:29 in the Living Bible: “For from the very beginning God decided that those who came to Him – and He knew who would – should become like His Son.” Let me be clear, He’s not saying we’re going to be a god, but He does desire for us to become godly as he develops His character in our lives. God wants to make us just like Jesus as we grow in grace and develop in discipleship. Ephesians 4:15 puts it this way: “We will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ.” One of the best ways to become like Jesus is to look at how He handled the temptations, trials, and trespasses of life. He is our model of Christian maturity and our goal should be to become like Him. Jesus put it this way in Matthew 10:25: “It is enough for the student to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master.” This is a process that doesn’t happen overnight. It’s going to take the rest of our lives for God to build a Christlike character in us, but there are some tools we can use to help along the way.

Our future hope should motivate our present lifestyle - 1 Jn 3:2-3 Beloved, now we are children of God, and it has not appeared as yet what we will be. We know that when He appears, **we will be like Him**, because we will see Him just as He is. 3 And everyone who has this hope fixed on Him purifies himself, just as He is pure.

Actions are always preceded by attitudes, which is why Php 2:5 is so important because Paul charges us to have a Christ-like attitude before we can carry out Christ-like actions. Obedience to the command and observance of the walk both necessitate our dependence on the Holy Spirit.

Given our natural bent to be self-centered, it has always been difficult to live out Christ’s directive—as Paul advises the Philippians in our present text, to “[do] nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others” (Php 2:3, 4). Humility and others-directedness are hard for us. We find it difficult in our most important relationships both in the home and in the household of faith. I would say it is not just “difficult” but impossible to act like Christ depending on our natural strength! We might appear to have some success for a while, but natural strength cannot imitate Christ, Who relied on the strength of the Holy Spirit, leaving us an example to follow. The only way to successfully obey Php 2:3-5 is by rejecting our tendency to rely on our own strength and to learn to rely wholly on the enabling power of the the Holy Spirit! How are you doing? Are you learning to lean hard on the Spirit or are you still trying to live this Christ life in your “own” strength?

Review:

- Php 2:1 - The excellence of what we have (READ)
- Php 2:2-4 - The expectation of what we must do (READ)
- Php 2:5-8 - The example to follow (READ)
- Php 2:9-11 - The exaltation of our Lord

CONTEXT:

The church at Philippi, as good as it was, still had selfishness and division. Paul challenges the believers, in light of the example of Christ, to “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” (Php 2:3-5).

How does this relate to the previous section on unity, Php 2:1-4? After exhorting the Philippian saints in Phil 2:2–4 to think the same thing, to have the same love, to be in heart agreement, and in lowliness of mind to consider one another as excelling themselves, Paul says, “**Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus**” This exhortation reaches back to Phil 2:2–4 for its **definition** and ahead to Phil 2:6–8 for its **illustration**. This is a command to make this our lifestyle!

Php 2:5 **Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,**

What is attitude? (ESV calls it mind) The English definition is a settled way of thinking or feeling about someone or something, which is generally reflected in a person's behavior. And so our attitudes lead to actions. If our attitudes are selfish, most of us know the type of actions that result. If our attitudes are selfless, the actions are completely different. It is a basic principle that outlook determines outcome. If our outlook is selfish, the actions will be divisive and destructive, the exact opposite of the effect Paul desires for the church at Philippi and at Wayside.

What is fascinating in this section is that Paul **FIRST** gives us the charge to "Have this mind among yourselves" and then he gives us the truth of Christ's example which should serve to motivate our obedience. Stated another way Paul applies the lesson before he states it. In other words in Php 2:5 we have the **exhortation** (that flows naturally from Php 2:1-4) and in Php 2:6-11 we have the **example** of the "mind of Christ" which we as a church and individually are to practice as our lifestyle. We are called to imitate Christ's model of humility (2:5-8). **To summarize the application, the way that we can imitate Christ's example is by giving up our "rights."** Obviously, living up to this attitude of Christ is not easy. It's a pursuit that humbles every believer to dust and yet we are commanded to pursue this lofty goal. **How is your attitude today? Does it line up with Jesus Christ or with your natural tendencies and inclinations?**

Scientists have succeeded in causing chickens to sound like quail. Researchers took tissue from parts of the quail brain thought to control the bird's call and implanted it in the brains of five chicken embryos. The experiment worked! The hatched chicks sounded like quail rather than chickens. When you believed in Christ, God implanted His mind into yours (1 Cor 2:16) and you became a new creation in Christ (2 Cor 5:17). However, unlike the chickens who sound like quail forever, you will not sound and act like Christ for the rest of your life without continually putting on His mind. Though there are a variety of things you can do to renew your Christlike mind, the best way is to **be in the Word daily**. Paul is calling for the saints at Philippi and us to be daily transformed by the "renewing of our mind" (Ro 12:2) because he knows that only in this way can we carry out the command for Christ-like behavior. Just try to be selfless and humble like Christ in your own strength! Our flesh ever gravitates toward selfishness and pride! **But it is vital to remember that Christ has not left us alone to try to carry this out by ourselves.** And that's why this call to put on the mind of Christ is followed by Paul's call for us to work out our salvation in fear and trembling (Php 2:12). And then Paul explains **how it is possible to daily have a selfless, sacrificial, servant oriented mind of Christ** writing that "it is God (THE HOLY SPIRIT) Who is at work (continually "energizing") in you, both to **WILL** (the Spirit gives us the "want to", the desire have a Christ-like attitude) and to **work** (the Holy Spirit continually gives us the power pursue this Christ-like attitude or mindset) for His good pleasure. (Phil 2:13)" Ben will unpack that great passage next week, but just know now that in calling for us to have the MIND OF CHRIST, God has given us His Spirit to energize **the desire and the power** to have that selfless, sacrificial, servant oriented mind like Christ had as a Man.

Remember that the road to victory is paved with humble submission to God! Are you experiencing victory over sin in your life? If not you might examine your degree of humble submission to God. As Spurgeon once said "We must stoop to conquer. He who is willing to be nothing shall be possessor of all things."

As [Guzik](#) says "Paul will, in wonderful detail, describe for us the mind of Jesus in the following verses. But here, before he describes the mind of Jesus, he tells us what we must *do* with the information. It is all too easy for us to read the following description of Jesus and admire it from a distance. God wants us to be awed by it, but also to see it as something that we must enter into and imitate. Remember also that this mind is something granted to us by God. 1 Corinthians 2:16 says that *we have the mind of Christ* But let this mind shows us that it is also something we must *choose* to walk in. You have to let it be so.

Php 2:6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

Our English word "FORM" can be misleading for it suggests shape or outward appearance. But as explained below the Greek word translated "form" (*morphe*) refers not so much to the outward appearance but to the essential nature of something or someone. And so "The form of God" speaks of Jesus' essence or nature as God, whereas "equality with God" speaks of the glories or prerogatives of God. Together the two expressions are some of the strongest expressions of Christ's deity in the entire Bible! What does it mean that Jesus EMPTIED HIMSELF? We can be sure of one thing: This phrase doesn't mean that Jesus emptied Himself of any of His divine attributes (emptying by subtraction). If Jesus did such a thing for even one moment, He would cease to be God.²⁸ Fortunately, the next clause in 2:7 explains the meaning of "emptied Himself"—"taking the form of a bond-servant being made in the likeness of men." Jesus' act of "emptying" Himself was in His act of "taking" on a human nature. It was emptying by addition. In other words, Jesus, being God, "emptied Himself" by adding humanity. Stated another way - This verse is not talking about what Jesus emptied Himself OF, but what He emptied Himself INTO. It's like pouring something from one pitcher into another. Jesus took all of His deity and poured it into another vessel, the "form of a bond-servant." He who is very God of very God became "very slave of very slave." He didn't stop being who He is, but He changed the form of who He is. Paul's point is that Jesus Christ practiced self-denial and self-sacrifice for our sake and became "God con carne" and Latin for flesh is "carnis" so Jesus became "God with flesh!" What an astounding, unfathomable thought. Jesus left the glory and splendor of heaven and came to dwell on earth to serve others. He understood the way up is down. "Taking the form of a bond-servant." In other words, Jesus became a particular kind of man, a slave, the lowest position a person could become in the Roman world. The King of the Universe, the Lord of glory, voluntarily became a pauper for our sake. He had to borrow a place to be born, a boat to preach from, a place to sleep, a donkey to ride upon, an upper room to use for the last supper, and a tomb in which to be buried. He created the world but the world did not know Him. He was insulted, humiliated, and rejected by the people He made. The more you think about it, the more staggering it gets. Nothing in fiction is so fantastic as this truth of the Incarnation. Jesus went as low as He could possibly go. Jesus came as a lowly servant, which is good news for us because that means there is no one with whom Jesus cannot identify. This means no matter what you go through, no matter how low you may get, you can never sink so far that Jesus cannot get under you and lift you up. He can identify with you in any situation, no matter how hard: poverty, loneliness, homelessness, rejection, you name it. As a man He was tempted and "since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are tempted." (Heb 2:18) "Come to the aid" is one word in Greek which mean to run to the aid someone upon hearing their cry. The next time you are being strongly tempted CRY OUT to Jesus!

Observations:

- His timeless existence - He has always been God. Our mind cannot grasp the concept of before the foundation of the world, but Paul says "He existed in the form of God."
- The form of God - He was in his very essence God. **Form** is *morphe* which speaks of the unchanging essence of His nature. Stated simply - **Jesus Christ possesses all of God's attributes.** Paul is saying Jesus is fully God! This phrase is not a reference to the outer appearance of Christ but indicates a profound and genuine inner identity. Jesus Christ was not simply like God; He was the very nature and substance of God. All that God is, Jesus Christ was and is and ever will be. To say that Jesus was in the form of God is the same as saying that Jesus was God.
- In Paul's day, the word *morphe* was used of a Roman stamp. Official government documents were sealed with wax. While the wax was still hot, they would press a ring or stamp into it bearing the emperor's insignia. The impression made in the wax was an exact representation of the insignia on the ring. That's the relationship Jesus Christ bears to God the Father. Jesus is the exact representation of who and what God is..
- The phrase "**being in the form of God**" is nothing less than a direct assertion of Deity. In Greek philosophy the word translated "form" means "the real essence of a thing." In this context it means that Jesus possessed "the specific character of God." Whatever it is that makes God God, Jesus possessed that same essence. Whatever you can say about God, you can also say about Jesus. He was all that God is and possessed all that God had. He was 100% God and nothing less. God's omnipotence was his, God's sovereignty was his, God's holiness was his, God's eternity was his, God's wisdom was his, and God's justice was his. (Pritchard)
- When we are told that Jesus took the **form** of a bondservant, the same word is employed that describes Jesus as being in the form of God. Jesus was in the form of God and He took upon Himself the form of a bondservant. His servanthood was authentic in substance and reality.
- His choice - to not regard equality with God something to be exploited to His own advantage. **APPLICATION** - If the only person in the world who ever had the right to assert His rights waived them, then you and I can do the same!

Here is a simple distinction between two important terms Paul uses in Php 2:6-8 -**Morphe**, "**form**", in Php 2:6,7 denotes a permanent expression of essential attributes, while **schema**, "**appearance**" (Php 2:8), refers to outward appearance that is subject

to change. This describes Jesus' pre-incarnate existence. We must remind ourselves that Jesus did not begin His existence in the manger at Bethlehem, but is eternal God.

Phillips paraphrase: "For he, who had always been God by nature, did not cling to his prerogatives as God's equal."

Wiersbe - A reporter was interviewing a successful job counselor who had placed hundreds of workers in their vocations quite happily. When asked the secret of his success, the man replied: "If you want to find out what a worker is really like, don't give him responsibilities—give him privileges. Most people can handle responsibilities if you pay them enough, but it takes a real leader to handle privileges. A leader will use his privileges to help others and build the organization; a lesser man will use privileges to promote himself." Jesus used His heavenly privileges for the sake of others—for our sake.

Wiersbe - We expect unsaved people to be selfish and grasping, but we do not expect this of Christians, who have experienced the love of Christ and the fellowship of the Spirit (Phil. 2:1–2). More than twenty times in the New Testament, God instructs us how to live with "one another." We are to prefer one another (Rom. 12:10), edify one another (1 Thes. 5:11), and bear each other's burdens (Gal. 6:2). We should not judge one another (Rom. 14:13) but rather admonish one another (Rom. 15:14). **Others** is the key word in the vocabulary of the Christian who exercises the submissive mind.

Php 2:7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

- **Emptied Himself** - "Kenosis" - Profound! Mysterious! Of what? Not His divine nature = impossible! He continued to be the Son of God. There is controversy re the "kenosis", some liberals suggesting He became human in the sense that He was fallible, possibly even sinful. Conservative interpretation is that He took on the limitations of humanity.
- The best and most accurate way to define the **self-emptying of Jesus** is that, in His incarnation, Christ voluntarily surrendered the independent exercise of His divine attributes. He never ceased to possess them all, but He voluntarily put Himself under the authority of God the Father and under the control of the Holy Spirit in their exercise. There is no record of Jesus having used these divine attributes in His first thirty years of human existence, but when the Spirit came upon Him at His baptism, He began to demonstrate these powers.
- The word **likeness** suggests similarity but difference. Though His humanity was genuine, He was different from all other humans in that He was sinless.

Calvin sums up the practical application of our text: "Since, then, the Son of God descended from so great a height, how unreasonable that we, who are nothing, should be lifted up with pride!"

Emptied Himself - here are 5 things to help you grasp this profound truth. Remember He never ceased being fully God when He became fully Man. (The list under "Jesus Incarnation" below is easier to understand and apply).

(1) His heavenly glory -veiling of His preincarnate glory (Jn 17:5)

(2) His independent authority (Jn 5:19, 5:30, 8:28,)

(3) the voluntary nonuse of some of His divine prerogatives (His divine attributes) during the time He was on earth (Mt 24:36).

(4) eternal riches for while on earth Christ was poor and owned very little (cf. 2 Co 8:9);

(5) a favorable relationship with God - He felt the Father's wrath for human sin while on the cross (cf. Mt 27:46 MY GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?)

Jesus Incarnation - How could we describe Jesus emptying Himself and what did it accomplish for us?

1. He descended that we might ascend (John 14:3)
2. He was born that we might be born again (John 3:3)
3. He became a servant that we might become sons (Galatians 4:6-7)
4. He was forsaken that we might not be forsaken (Matthew 28:20)
5. He died that we might live (John 5:24)
6. He came down that we might be caught up (1 Thessalonians 4:16-17)

- **Form of bond-servant** - The essence of His nature - As He Himself testified - Mk 10:45 "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Php 2:8 - Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

- Remember that Paul is telling the Philippians that if they think they cannot humble themselves to the will of one another, they need to ponder the obedience of the Lord of glory who was willing to give up His rights as their example of **perfect selflessness**. This is the attitude the saints at Philippi were to manifest. It is the attitude every believer is to manifest to assure unity in the body of Christ.
- Being found in appearance as a man - **THE CRADLE** - Simply stated He was born of the virgin Mary as a human baby. He was fully Man. **ILLUSTRATION** - During some unsettled days in ancient Rome, a slave heard that his master's name was on the liquidation list. He quickly put on his master's cloak and quietly awaited the arrival of the political butchers. When they found the slave dressed in his master's clothing, they killed him, supposing him to be the master. Likewise, the Master of the universe, Jesus Christ, took on Himself the cloak of our humanity. The death He endured is the death we deserved. Through His death, we have been spared.
- He humbled Himself - **THE CROSS** - His choice. Because of His great love for us. He willingly became the sacrificial Lamb
- **APPLICATION - WHEN WE ARE TEMPTED** - Look at the phrase **Being found in appearance as a man** - What is Paul saying? Paul uses the word **schema** which says that Christ was **MAN** in the sense that he endured all that we must endure in this world. The practical application is that there is NOTHING that happens in your life that Jesus' cannot understand. Hebrews 2:18 says "For since He Himself was tempted in that which He has suffered, He is able to come to the aid of those who are (continually being) tempted." **"Come to the aid"** is one word in Greek which means to run to one's aid upon hearing them cry out! The next time you are tempted, cry out to the One Who was "found in appearance as a man," because He understands what you are experiencing and will come to your aid.
- **APPLICATION - WHEN WE ARE SUFFERING** - As a Man Jesus experienced suffering. Peter used this truth to encourage Christians who were suffering - 1 Pe 2:21, 23 "For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, **leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps...**(23) and while being reviled, **He did not revile in return**; while suffering, **He uttered no threats**, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously." So when we are reviled, filled with the Spirit, we are enabled like Jesus not to revile in return (which is what our flesh wants to do). We don't threaten, but we rest in the truth that God is a perfect Judge and will judge evil that has been committed against us.
- A Christmas card captures the essence of Php 2:8 - A baby's footprint appears on the cover with the words, "Unto you is born this day a Savior." When you open the card, the phrase, "Which is Christ the Lord" is superimposed over a grown man's handprint, complete with a bloody hole in the palm.
- Death on a cross was brutal and barbaric and was not even talked about in polite Roman society circles. Ancient writers used to say that to die on a cross was to die a thousand times before you take your last breath. May I suggest that this was not the worst of it for Jesus? The most painful element of his death is that when He died, all the smelly sins and terrible transgressions of the entire world were placed on His shoulders. And when He hung on the cross as our sin substitute, God the Father had to look away, causing the Son to cry out in agony, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46).
- Because JESUS was FULLY MAN He could take our punishment upon Himself and because He is FULLY GOD the shedding of His blood satisfied divine justice. Jesus is both just and the justifier.
- **Max Lucado** - "Jesus humbled Himself. He went from commanding angels to sleeping in the straw. From holding stars to clutching Mary's finger. The palm that held the universe took the nail of a soldier. Why? Because that's what love does."
- **Augustine** said it this way (Listen closely) - "Jesus took to Himself what He was not, while remaining what He was...He continued to be what He is, while appearing to us as what we are."
- Dr. J.H. Jowett has said, "Ministry that costs nothing accomplishes nothing." If there is to be any blessing, there must be some "bleeding." At a religious festival in Brazil, a missionary was going from booth to booth, examining the wares. He saw a sign above one booth: "Cheap Crosses." He thought to himself, "That's what many Christians are looking for these days—cheap crosses. My Lord's cross was not cheap. Why should mine be?" The person with the submissive mind does not avoid sacrifice. He lives for the glory of God and the good of others; and if paying a price will honor Christ and help others, he is willing to do it.
- The test of the submissive mind is not just how much we are willing to take in terms of suffering, but how much we are willing to give in terms of sacrifice. One pastor complained that his men were changing the words of the hymn from "Take my life and let it be" to "Take my wife and let me be!" They were willing for others to make the sacrifices, but they were unwilling to sacrifice for others. It is one of the paradoxes of the Christian life that the more we give, the more we receive; the more we sacrifice, the more God blesses. This is why the submissive mind leads to joy; it makes us more like Christ. This means

sharing His joy as we also share in His sufferings. Of course, when love is the motive (Phil. 2:1), sacrifice is never measured or mentioned. The person who constantly talks about his sacrifices does not have the submissive mind. Is it costing you anything to be a Christian? (Wiersbe)

- **Spurgeon** - "The lower he stoops to save us, the higher we ought to lift him in our adoring reverence. Blessed be his name, he stoops, and stoops, and stoops, and, when he reaches our level, and becomes man, he still stoops, and stoops, and stoops lower and deeper yet."
- **Ray Pritchard** - Why did Jesus shed His blood on the cross? In three days we leave for our trip to Nigeria. As part of our preparation we had to take yellow fever shots. I am told that at the border, the Nigerian immigration officials will check to make sure we've been inoculated against yellow fever because people still die of that terrible disease. This week I learned where the vaccine comes from. In 1927 a man named Asibi, a West African native, came down with yellow fever. Unlike so many others, he did not die. Because his system had conquered the disease, Asibi's blood contained the antibodies which the doctors used to develop a successful vaccine. That vaccine has saved the lives of untold numbers of people around the world. Each dose of vaccine can be traced back to Asibi's original blood sample. One man's blood has saved the lives of millions of people. In a mysterious way we cannot understand, that is exactly what the blood of Jesus Christ did for us. His blood saves the lives of untold millions of people. His blood is the perfect "vaccine" against the disease called sin. "The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7, KJV).
- **ILLUSTRATION** - The home of an English family was discovered on fire. They thought everybody was out but the baby. The mother saved her. For years as the child grew up the mother went about the house with her hands covered. The eldest of the servants had never seen her hands uncovered. But the daughter came into her room one day unexpectedly, and the mother sat there with her hands uncovered. They were torn and scarred and disfigured. Instantly the mother tried to cover them as the girl came forward, but she said, "I had better tell you about it. It was when the fire was in the house and you were in your cradle. I fought my way through the flames to get you. I wrapped you in a blanket and dropped you through the window, and somebody caught you. I could not go down the stairway, so I climbed out of the window. My hands were burnt, and I slipped and caught on the trellis work. When I fell, my hands were torn. The doctor did his best, but, my dear, these hands were torn for you." And the girl, who had grown to womanhood, sprang toward her mother, took one hand and then the other, and buried her face in those hands, as she kept saying, "They are beautiful hands, beautiful hands." —J. Wilbur Chapman

Php 2:9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,

- **WHO HAS GOD HIGHLY EXALTED? YOU MAY BE SURPRISED AT THE ANSWER! Highly exalted** could be accurately paraphrased "**super exalted**" - God exalted Jesus to the highest possible degree to the point that it is difficult to describe with words. And note that it is the **MAN** Christ Jesus Whom the Father exalted. Contrast this with His humiliation - **God (Jesus) humbled Himself**. On the other hand **in the exaltation it is God Who exalted the MAN Christ Jesus** to sit at the right hand of glory! A truth we often forget is that at the right hand of the Father is the **GOD-MAN Christ Jesus**. In His exaltation He did not cease to be God, and throughout eternity will remain Jesus Christ, fully God and fully Man. And forever **we will see His scars as proof of His humanity** and as **assurance that His covenant with us is eternal. IF YOU NEED ASSURANCE OF YOUR SALVATION, REMEMBER HIS ETERNAL SCARS THAT PROCURED YOUR SALVATION!** John assures us of Jesus' everlasting Humanity writing "And I saw between the throne (with the four living creatures) and the elders **a Lamb standing, AS IS SLAIN** (perfect tense - forever appearing slain which speaks of His scars)....." (Rev 5:9) In short Jesus Christ is the perfect MEDIATOR, God and Man united forever. Spurgeon (attributed to John Boys) - The best way to reconcile two disagreeing families is to make some marriage between them; even so, the word became flesh, and dwelt among us in the world that he might thereby make our peace, reconciling God to man and man to God. **By this happy match the Son of God has become the Son of Man and the sons of man have become the sons of God.**" This is your King Christ Jesus. He should never be reduced in our thinking to an abstract concept, for JESUS is not simply the means by which God accomplished salvation. **He Himself is our salvation as God revealed in Humanity!**
- **WHAT ABOUT THE NAME HE IS LORD?** It was Juliet who asked, "What's in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would still be as sweet." That makes great poetry, but the fact of the matter is that we put a lot of stock in names. People do not generally ask for acetaminophen when they have a headache. They are usually looking for Tylenol. Names mean things for us. They represent quality. Advertising only goes so far; in the end there has to be some substance behind the claim. If there is, then you have a name that can rise above all other competitors. Jesus far outstrips all pretended competition, and the name given to him by the Father conveys supreme quality. It is a name that describes his very nature, a name that every tongue must confess and every knee bow to: "**LORD.**" Kurios, Master, Owner, His eternal title which signifies Sovereign

power and total authority. Sadly, the word “**LORD**” does not seem to carry much weight today. This was not so in Paul’s day. This was the imperial title that all of Rome would acknowledge as belonging to Caesar alone. But it only belonged to him after a religious ceremony in which he was deified. Once he was “deified”, the loyalty of people everywhere was determined by their willingness to declare that “Caesar is Lord.”

- There were Christians at these times who were actually persecuted as atheists because they placed their loyalties above those that were considered owed to the state and the deified Caesar. The cry of the heathen populace in the Roman Empire against the Christians was “Away with the atheists! To the lions with the Christians!” Why? Because they would acknowledge no other Lord but Jesus.

EXAMPLE OF POLYCARP Bishop of Smyrna in the second century:

Now, as Polycarp was entering into the stadium, there came to him a voice from heaven, saying, “Be strong, and show thyself a man, O Polycarp!” No one saw who it was that spoke to him; but those of our brethren who were present heard the voice. And as he was brought forward, the tumult became great when they heard that Polycarp was taken. And when he came near, the proconsul asked him whether he was Polycarp. On his confessing that he was, [the proconsul] sought to persuade him to deny [Christ], saying, “Have respect to thy old age,” and other similar things, according to their custom, [such as], “Swear by the fortune of Caesar; repent, and say, Away with the Atheists.” But Polycarp, gazing with a stern countenance on all the multitude of the wicked heathen then in the stadium, and waving his hand towards them, while with groans he looked up to heaven, said, “Away with the Atheists.” Then, the proconsul urging him, and saying, “**Swear, and I will set thee at liberty, reproach Christ; Polycarp declared, “Eighty and six years have I served Him, and He never did me any injury: how then can I blaspheme my King and my Saviour?”**...The proconsul then said to him, “I have wild beasts at hand ; to these will I cast thee, except thou repent.” But he answered, “Call them then, for we are not accustomed to repent of what is good in order to adopt that which is evil; and it is well for me to be changed from what is evil to what is righteous.” But again the proconsul said to him, “I will cause thee to be consumed by fire, seeing thou despisest the wild beasts, if thou wilt not repent.” But Polycarp said, “**Thou threatenest me with fire which burneth for an hour, and after a little is extinguished, but art ignorant of the fire of the coming judgment and of eternal punishment, reserved for the ungodly. But why tarriest thou? Bring forth what thou wilt.**”

- **The "Apogee" of Christ** - Apogee is a term in astronomy and which is used figuratively to describe the highest point in the development of something; the climax or culmination. Christ's exaltation is the "Apogee" of all human history, the high point, the climax, the culmination.
- **For this reason also** - When you see a statement like this always pause to ponder and ask "For what reason?" This will slow you down, allow you to meditate on the Scripture and allow the Holy Spirit to teach you. So the question is "for what reason?" Remember context is king is interpretation, so we need to examine the preceding passages. Sometimes the answer is easy as in this case -- the reason for His exaltation is His voluntary humiliation and complete obedience to the point of willingly dying on the Cross.
- God highly exalted Him - the Cross was the lowpoint, but not the endpoint, for His Father "highly exalted Him"
- **APPLICATION:** Four times in His ministry Jesus spoke on the text: “For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted” (Mt. 18:4; 23:12; Lk 14:11; 18:14). He lived the text. His own life is the greatest example of this principle.

Is this practical? Of course it is - For example James 4:6 says that " **GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.**" Do you want to experience His amazing grace daily? Then walk the way Jesus walked, in humility, and you will be strengthened in your inner being by His grace. You will be fortified to fight the good fight of faith, regardless of what comes at you in your day. Are you experiencing spiritual attack? James goes on to say "Submit therefore to God (**THAT'S A WILLINGNESS TO BE HUMBLE**). Resist the devil and he will flee from you. 8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. 9 Be miserable and mourn and weep; let your laughter be turned into mourning and your joy to gloom. 10 Humble yourselves (**ENABLED BY THE SPIRIT YOU HAVE TO MAKE THE PERSONAL CHOICE TO FOLLOW THE EXAMPLE OF JESUS**) in the presence of the Lord, and **He will exalt you.**" Humble service may go unnoticed now, but it will be rewarded by the King Himself. Never trade temporal recognition for eternal reward!

Joseph suffered and served for thirteen years; but then God exalted him and made him the second ruler of Egypt. David was anointed king when he was but a youth. He experienced years of hardship and suffering, but at the right time, God exalted him as king of Israel.

Here's an example of humbling yourself-- Do you always need to be right? It takes a good dose of humility to let go of the need to always be "right" and not do it with a condescending look. But every time you do, you're actually emulating Christ rather than clinging to the advantage of your rightness.

HERE'S AN ILLUSTRATION - A famous Christian businessman was visiting a church and was asked to give a word of greeting. He got carried away telling all that God had done for him. "I have a successful business, a large house, a lovely family, a famous name, enough money to do the things I want to do and be able to give to Christian works. I have health and opportunities unnumbered. There are many people who would gladly exchange places with me. What more could God give me?" From the back of the auditorium a voice called, "**A good dose of humility!**"

So when you sense an attack of pride, surrender immediately to the Holy Spirit and let Him work in you (Php 2:13) to produce humility and submission before God. Remember: in the battle against pride, the only way to conquer is to surrender—surrender to the Spirit.

There have been some great names throughout history, but none greater than the Name above every name... And here are some of His great names:

He is the Alpha & Omega; the Beginning and the End; He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life; He is the Door; He is the Good Shepherd; He is the Vine; He is the Bread of Heaven; He is the Living Water; and He is the Light of the world. He is the Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, and the Prince of peace. He is the Lamb of God; the Lilly of the valley; the Rose of Sharon, the Lion of the tribe of Judah. He is the Messiah, He is Immanuel, He is Son of God and Son of man; He is our Kinsman-Redeemer. He is our Bridegroom. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords. He is Lord, Savior, and Redeemer, the Rock of our salvation. He is the King of glory and the great I Am. He is Master, Ruler, and the Hope of our salvation. HE IS!

Php 2:10 so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

THE LAST WORD!

ILLUSTRATION - GOD has a way of turning the tables on evil. The French philosopher Voltaire predicted that Christianity would be swept from existence within one hundred years. Yet just fifty years after he died in 1779, the German Bible Society had occupied Voltaire's house and was using his printing press to produce stacks of Bibles. During World War II, Adolf Hitler erected a massive stone structure in Monte Carlo. It was to be a radio station from which to broadcast Nazi propaganda into North Africa. Today, from that very building, **Trans World Radio** beams the Gospel of Christ's redeeming love all across Europe and into Russia and Africa. Could these ironies of history be just a hint of the last word Christ will have at the end of this age?

The combination of tongues confessing and knees bowing gives evidence that the idea is a complete submission to Jesus, both in word and in action, and one that is required of all.

As **Calvin** rightly points out, the submission of the devils and of unsaved men will not be voluntary. But all *will* acknowledge the Lord's supremacy whether they like it or not.

When we sing "**All hail the power of Jesus name!**" we actually mean it. Everybody is to bow before Him, for He is the Lord!

All hail the power of Jesus' name!

Let angels prostrate fall.

Bring forth the royal diadem,
and crown him Lord of all.

Bring forth the royal diadem,
and crown him Lord of all!

O seed of Israel's chosen race

now ransomed from the fall,

hail him who saves you by his grace,
and crown him Lord of all.

Hail him who saves you by his grace,
and crown him Lord of all!

3 Let every tongue and every tribe
responsive to his call,
to him all majesty ascribe,
and crown him Lord of all.
To him all majesty ascribe,
and crown him Lord of all!

4 Oh, that with all the sacred throng
we at his feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song
and crown him Lord of all.
We'll join the everlasting song
and crown him Lord of all.

- **EVERY KNEE WILL BOW** - This is not a figure of speech but literal truth. And it is sobering truth -**every** knee **every** place! You mean even the demons? Yes, even Satan himself! You mean even those who scoffed at Him when He was alive on earth? Yes. You mean even those who today use His exalted Name as a curse word? Absolutely yes! **APPLICATION QUESTION** - What do you do when you are watching a show and they curse the Name of Jesus? Do you keep watching? Do you pay to watch a show like this? I realize this is a difficult question for you? It is super difficult for me! It is difficult to find a show or series that does not use Jesus' great Name in vain. But one day we and those who use that Name will bow before Him.
- At the mere mention of His name, everyone above the earth will bow, including all the good angels and all the redeemed who have died before Christ returns. Everyone on the earth will bow, including all human beings. Everyone under the earth will bow, including all the inhabitants of hell and all the evil angels. And in that moment, the cycle will have been completed. The One who was humiliated will be exalted. The One who was brought low will be raised up high.
- To bow before Him now means salvation; to bow before Him at the judgment means condemnation.

THE NAME - Jesus! No other name draws people together so closely, while at the same time evoking hatred in others.

In 1999, a political candidate answered a question about who had the greatest effect on his life by saying, "Jesus Christ. He changed my heart." This person's honest answer was met with disdain from people who detest the name of Jesus. On the other hand, people all over the world who love Christ meet every week to honor and praise Jesus' name. To them, His name means love, joy, peace, hope, and forgiveness. What is it about this name that divides people so clearly? Why do some treat the name of Jesus with contempt while others hold it in highest esteem? I think the reason some people can't stand Jesus' name is that they don't want to be reminded of their sins. Jesus is "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), the One who saves us from our sins (Matthew 1:21). People who refuse to ask for forgiveness from sin cannot love the name of Jesus. Yet His name "is above every name," and one day "every tongue [will] confess that Jesus Christ is Lord" (Philippians 2:9,11).

Jesus! Do you love that name? Praise God for that holy name—and tell others what Jesus has done for you. — Dave Branon

Jesus—O how sweet the name,
Jesus—every day the same;
Jesus—let all saints proclaim
Its worthy praise forever.
—Martin

Php 2:11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

When we understand the uniqueness of Jesus Christ, only one response makes sense—to fall on our knees and confess Him as Savior and Lord. There are two ways we can do this. We can either bow in humble submission today, confessing Jesus and receiving Him as our Savior, or we will be forced to bow to Him at the judgment. But every creature in heaven, on earth, and in hell is going to bow to Jesus Christ. When you bow to Jesus in repentance and submission, He becomes Lord of your life. And when He becomes Lord of your life, He takes over. That means He deserves all of your respect, honor, and obedience because of who He is and what He has done for you.

Now I want you to use your imagination as you listen to the somber words one more time (READ ABOVE) - Now imagine that this is

the last act of a great play. This is the grand day when all creation confesses **Jesus Christ is Lord**. Those who do not confess Christ before they die, will be forced to confess Him with shame and terror. For those of us who have confessed Him during our life, one glorious day we will gladly and with delight and humble adoration own Him as Lord of all creation. **Have you confessed that Jesus Christ is Lord of Creation?**

Although the entire creation will one day confess Jesus as "Lord", only those who do so during their life will be saved by that confession, Paul writing that "that if you **confess** with your mouth Jesus as **Lord**, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (Romans 10:9-10)

Robert Morgan - Last Sunday morning I ended my message by telling of a young man who waited too long to make his decision for Christ. Evangelist Peter Cartwright pleaded with him, and the young man kept putting off the decision. He suddenly fell ill, and on his deathbed, the young man screamed, "It's too late. I'm lost! I must make my bed in hell! Lost! Forever lost!" I then closed with the verse that says, "Seek the Lord while He may be found and call upon Him while He is near." At the close of the second service, as I gave the invitation, a woman came forward, knelt with me here at the altar, and gave her heart to the Lord Jesus. Two days later, she was shot dead, killed by an ex-boyfriend who pumped her full of bullets as she got out of her car. I prayed with her at the altar Sunday, and yesterday I preached her funeral. I'm so glad she listened to the prompting of the Holy Spirit and made that decision, for it truly was her last opportunity. You and I don't know if we'll ever have another opportunity like this, to confess with our mouths Jesus as Lord and to believe in our hearts that God has raised Him from the dead.

As Spurgeon rightly observed "**NOW**" is the watchword of the wise." **LATER may be too late!** Right NOW counts for ever. How goes your preparation for the future dear saint? It's now or never. "Time is the seed of eternity." To make our life count for eternity, we must be wise in how we spend our time today. What will your eternal harvest be?

ILLUSTRATION - TOO LATE - An Englishman by the name of Ebenezer Wooten had just concluded a preaching service in the village square. The crowd had dispersed, and he was busily engaged in loading the equipment. A young man approached him and asked, "Mr. Wooten, what must I do to be saved?" Sensing that the fellow was trusting his own righteousness, Wooten answered in a rather unconcerned way, "It's too late!" The inquirer was startled. "Oh don't say that, sir!" But the evangelist insisted, "It's too late!" Then, looking the young man in the eye, he continued, "You want to know what you must do to be saved. I tell you it's too late now or any other time. The work of salvation is done, completed, finished! It was finished on the cross." Then he explained that our part is simply to acknowledge our sin and receive by faith the gift of forgiveness.

JESUS IS GOD - OKAY! JESUS IS LORD - NOT! - Chuck Colson notes that in the first century, if you stood in a public gathering and cried out, "Jesus is God!" no one would be upset. But if you shouted, "Jesus is Lord!" you would start a riot. Let us be crystal-clear about this. Rome did not persecute Christians because they believed in the deity of Christ, or that Jesus was the promised Messiah, or that Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead. Rome did not kill Christians because they said Jesus is the only way of salvation. Those were "religious beliefs" that did not threaten the state. But when Christians declared, "Jesus Christ is our Lord, and there is no other!" that was a direct attack on Caesar-worship, and thus punishable by death.

- The word "confess" means to say the same thing as and so to agree. Every created being that can vocalize will acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, that He is Master and Sovereign Ruler over us and over everything.
- And what will be the grand result of all creation bowing and confessing Christ as Lord? God the Father will be glorified.
- **APPLICATION:** Of course we can never glorify God in the same way Jesus did, but to glorify God is our purpose. The Westminster Catechism asks "What is the chief end of man?" The answer is "Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever." In Mt 5:16 Jesus tells us how to glorify God exhorting us - "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." Here we see that "good works" bring glory to God. They are works that are initiated and empowered by the Spirit. So if we begin our day in the Word, surrendered to and empowered by the Holy Spirit, we are much more likely to do good works that glorify our Father in heaven. Others see us not repaying evil for evil, forgiving when others have hurt us, etc. These are not natural responses and in them the world gets a proper picture of the invisible God.
- We honor God's name when we call Him our Father and live like His Son.
- What about ourselves? How easily to answer the first catechism question: My chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever! Can you see here how that is not just some teaching mechanism, but an astounding statement of what it is to have the very MIND OF CHRIST Himself? HERE IS THE QUESTION FOR ALL OF US -- Does this statement govern my talents, my fortunes, my gifts and prospects in life? In all these things, am I upheld by the kind of motivation that sustained Christ? Can I really give all that I am to Christ and to my fellow man and be satisfied that He receives the glory?
- Are you to be found In Him? May we have this mind in ourselves that was also in Christ Jesus. And as a result, may our humility be furthered by a consideration of the person, position and purpose of our Great God and Savior, Christ the Lord.

Benjamin Warfield said *"Only, when we humbly walk this path, seeking truly in it not our own things but those of others, we shall find the promise true, that he who loses his life shall find it. Only, when, like Christ, and in loving obedience to His call and example, we take no account of ourselves but freely give ourselves to others, we shall find, each in his measure, the saying true of himself also: "Wherefore also God hath highly exalted him." The path of self-sacrifice is the path to glory."*

To summarize the application of this passage - "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" by the power of His Spirit we should daily seek to have

- **The Selfless "mind"** - which thinks nothing of itself, but only of others.
- **The Sacrificial "mind"** which is prepared to go to utmost lengths for those others' welfare.
- **The Serving "mind"** - which is happily content to render any service that will help.

This is the quintessential confession of Christianity. To know Christ as Savior is to confess Him as Lord.

C. S. Lewis explained our options regarding Jesus this way

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God." That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him or kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. (C. S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*)

ILLUSTRATIONS:

ILLUSTRATION: A former missionary told the story of two rugged, powerful mountain goats who met on a narrow pathway joining two mountain ridges. On one side was a chasm 1,000 feet deep; on the other, a steep cliff rising straight up. So narrow was the trail that there was no room to turn around, and the goats could not back up without falling. What would they do? Finally, instead of fighting for the right to pass, one of the goats knelt down and made himself as flat as possible. The other goat then walked over him, and they both proceeded safely. In a sense, this is what Jesus Christ did for us when He left heaven's glory and came to this earth to die for our sins. He saw us trapped between our sin and God's righteousness with no way to help ourselves. He humbled Himself by giving up His right to use His divine power. He came in the likeness of men and took the form of a servant (Phil. 2:5-8). Then, by dying for sinful mankind, He let us "walk over Him" so that we could experience forgiveness and receive eternal life.

ILLUSTRATION: President Nixon once declared in a speech that the greatest moment in human history was when man walked on the moon. Shortly afterwards, Billy Graham corrected him and said, "No, the greatest moment in history was not when man walked on the moon but when God walked on the earth."

GOD STOOPED DOWN - Dr. Richard Seltzer tells of a moment when he caught a transforming glimpse of what happened at Bethlehem. It reoriented this surgeon's life in an important way. He explains what happened in his book called, "Mortal Lessons."

I stand by the bed where a young woman lies, her face postoperative, her mouth twisted in palsy. A tiny twig of the facial nerve, the one to the muscles of her mouth, has been severed, and she will be thus from now on. Oh, the surgeon had followed with religious fervor the curve of her flesh. I promise you that. Nevertheless, to remove the tumor from her cheek, he had to cut that little nerve.

"Will my mouth always be like this?" the woman asks. "Yes, it always will be so. The nerve has been cut." She nods and is silent. Her young husband is in the room and he smiles and looks at his wife with a love so absolutely generous that it stuns the surgeon to silence. All at once I know who he is, and I understand and instinctively lower my gaze... The bridegroom bends down to kiss her mouth. And I am so close that I can see how he twists his lips to accommodate hers.

In commenting on this story, Pastor Dan Meyer writes, "Once upon a time, the God who bent down and took hold of a handful of dust and shaped humanity and breathed life into it stooped down again, and this time it was himself that he reshaped in order to kiss a disfigured earth with his grace and to breathe new life into the

beloved. He showed us in that moment that it is not just the staggering height of God that displays His grandeur, it is how far He is willing to bend down that fully displays His glory”(

ILLUSTRATION - After being married for over 50 years, a man revealed the secret to his successful marriage. He said, “Well, the wife and I had this agreement when we first got married. When she was bothered about something, she jus’ tell me and git it off her chest. And if I was mad about somethin’, I was to take a long walk. I ‘s’ppose you could attribute our successful marriage to the fact that I have mostly led an outdoor life.” This man was committed to unity!

Christ’s sacrifice of Himself motivates us to sacrifice ourselves for others.

HUMBLING HIMSELF - Bill Hybels has said: “The sights and sounds and smells and splendors of heaven are all Jesus knew from eternity past. When he wakes up as a baby, the first thing he sees on planet earth is that he’s in a barn. The first thing he smells is urine and manure. And the first sounds he hears are of animals. In heaven...Jesus had known legions of angels hovering around the throne, tens of thousands of them assigned to the full-time job of singing, ‘Worthy is the Lamb. Holy, holy, holy. There is none like you.’ He gets down on planet earth and there’s none of that going on. There are just some cows and donkeys and a few people standing around” (Preaching Today).

C.S. Lewis pointed out that if you want to get the hang of the Incarnation, think of how you would like to become a slug or a crab.

APPLICATION/ILLUSTRATION - Painting a Portrait

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. Philippians 2:5

Read: Philippians 2:1–11

The National Portrait Gallery in London, England, houses a treasure of paintings from across the centuries, including 166 images of Winston Churchill, 94 of William Shakespeare, and 20 of George Washington. With the older portraits, we may wonder: Is that what these individuals really looked like?

For instance, there are 8 paintings of Scottish patriot William Wallace (c. 1270–1305), but we obviously don’t have photographs to compare them to. How do we know if the artists accurately represented Wallace?

Something similar might be happening with the likeness of Jesus. Without realizing it, those who believe in Him are leaving an impression of Him on others. Not with brushes and oils, but with attitudes, actions, and relationships.

Are we painting a portrait that represents the likeness of His heart? This was the concern of the apostle Paul. “In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus,” he wrote (Philippians 2:5). With a desire to accurately represent our Lord, he urged His followers to reflect the humility, self-sacrifice, and compassion of Jesus for others.

It has been said, “We are the only Jesus some people will ever see.” As we “in humility value others above [ourselves]” (v. 3), we will show the world the heart and attitude of Jesus Himself.

CONCLUSION:

- **Christ showed His love by dying for us; we show our love by living for Him.**
- The **MAJESTY** became **MENIAL** and a **MAN** in order to be our **MEDIATOR** and forever our **MASTER**. GLORY!
- **By His life, Jesus teaches us that the way up is the way down**
- How do we as a church and as individuals live selflessly rather than selfishly. There is only one way! Empowered daily by the Spirit of Christ we must make the choice each morning to have the same attitude of mind that Christ had, the attitude of a humble bond-servant, willing to die that we might live forever with Him. May that breadth and length and height and depth of love of our Lord serve to motivate us daily to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship and to not be conformed to the world but to be transformed (more and more into the image of Christ) by the renewing of our mind that we might prove what the will of God is that which is good and acceptable and perfect. Amen (Ro 12:2)
- **One thing is clear from Php 2:9-11** - You will see him and bow before him. Will it be in love and adoration as you fall gratefully before the one who loved you and died for you? Or will it be by compulsion as you are forced to your knees by the angels moments before you are removed from his presence forever? Jesus said, “Come to me, all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matt. 11:28). He is your Savior who loves you and gave himself for you. Today is still the day of his grace. Won’t you come to him today?
- Bowing the knee means submission to him as Lord. Confessing with the tongue means that there is no other Lord but Jesus. Fix this thought clearly in your mind. Jesus will have the last word! He will be vindicated before the entire universe. Even his enemies will bow before him. In the end no opposition against him will stand. This is not universal salvation, but it is universal confession. Not all will be saved but all will confess that Jesus is Lord. Here is your choice: A) You can confess him now with joy as your Lord and Savior, B) Or, you will someday confess him as Lord in shame and terror.

- **Ray Pritchard tells this story, a story I would imagine several of you could tell** - Recently a friend told me about a family member who said in all seriousness, "If you ever mention Jesus to me again, I will never speak to you again." When such moments come, we need to respond with words like these: "I don't want to lose your friendship but I must tell you the truth. You were made by Jesus Christ. You owe your life to him. One day you will stand before him as your Judge. Sooner or later every knee will bow before him and confess that he is the Lord. You can bow before him today as your Savior or you can face him one day as your Judge. But you cannot escape him. The choice is yours."

- Let's summarize what this passage is telling us about Jesus Christ.

- 1) What He Was—Fully and Completely God!

- 2) What He Became—A man while retaining his deity.

- 3) What He Chose—To die a humiliating death on the cross.

- 4) What He Gained—The highest place/the greatest name/universal honor.

This is the Jesus of the Bible. This is the Jesus we worship today. This is the Jesus we call Savior and Lord. This is the true Christ of the Christian faith.

We live on a visited planet. Allow the magnitude of the Majesty becoming man to help you know that He understands everything you're going through today. And be so amazed at the Incarnation that you can't help but tell others about it. Luke 2:16-17:"So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them."

Friend, are you underwhelmed by the Christ? If you are, may I suggest that you take a fresh look at the steps the Savior took for you? When you focus on His majestic preexistence and move to His menial position and then remember that He was a man of perfection who became the mediator for people, you will be moved to respond to Him as your preeminent master. You will never be underwhelmed by the gift of Christ again. If anything, you will be overwhelmed with adoration...

Ray Pritchard - The Incomparable Christ

Almost a century ago, two famous essays were written about the life of Christ—"One Solitary Life" and "The Incomparable Life." Josh McDowell reprinted them in his book, [Evidence That Demands a Verdict \(borrow online free\)](#). I have combined the two and done a slight revision because I think taken together they paint a vivid picture of who Jesus really is.

Two thousand years ago, a man was born contrary to the laws of life. He lived in poverty and was reared in obscurity. He was the child of a peasant woman and worked in a carpenter's shop until he was 30. Then for three years he was an itinerant preacher. He never owned a home, never wrote a book, never held public office. He never went to college and never set foot in a big city. He never traveled 200 miles from the place where he was born.

He possessed none of the usual traits that accompany greatness. He had no credentials but himself. In his infancy he startled a king; in childhood he puzzled doctors; in manhood he ruled the course of nature, walked upon the billows as if on pavement, and hushed the sea to sleep. He healed the multitudes without medicine and made no charge for his service.

While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him. His friends ran away. One of them denied him. He was turned over to his enemies and went through the mockery of a trial. He was nailed on a cross between two thieves. While he was dying, his executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth—his coat. When he was dead, he was taken down and laid in a borrowed tomb.

Twenty centuries have come and gone and today he is the centerpiece of the human race and the leader of the column of progress. He never wrote a book, yet no library could hold all the books written about him. He never wrote a song, and yet he has furnished the theme for more songs than all the songwriters combined. He never founded a college, but all the schools put together cannot boast of having as many students.

He never marshaled an army, nor drafted a soldier, nor fired a gun; and yet no leader ever had more volunteers who, under his orders, have made more rebels stack arms and surrender without a shot fired.

He never practiced psychiatry, yet he has healed more broken hearts than all the doctors far and near.

How great is his influence? All history is divided by his coming—BC and AD. We call this year 1998 in honor of his birth.

The names of past leaders have long been forgotten. The great men of Greece and Rome are dusty names in the library of time. Scientists, philosophers, kings, generals and theologians have come and gone, but the name of this Man abounds more and more.

Though time has spread 2000 years between the people of this generation and the scene of his crucifixion, yet he still lives. Herod could not destroy him, and the grave could not hold him.

He stands alone on the highest pinnacle of heavenly glory, proclaimed of God, acknowledged by angels, adored by saints, and feared by devils, as the living personal Christ, King of Kings, Lord of Lords, the Savior of the world.

This is the Christ of the Bible. This is the Jesus we worship. This is the true Christ of the Christian faith. This is the One in whom we have believed. He and He alone is our Lord and Savior. Millions of Christians unite in worshipping him in every nation on every continent. He is worshipped in Raxaul, India; Osaka, Japan; Sydney, Australia; Brussels, Belgium; Jos, Nigeria; Conakry, Guinea; Islamabad, Pakistan; San Jose, Costa Rica; Havana, Cuba; La Paz, Bolivia; Ottawa, Canada; St. Petersburg, Russia; London, England; Ankara, Turkey; Jerusalem, Israel; Beijing, China; Asuncion, Paraguay; and Oak Park, USA.

He and He alone is the Lord. Oh, that our hearts would sing his praise. God hasten the day until every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Amen.