

Message #12

Philippians 2:9-11

Back in the early 80's, when we were in Grand Rapids, we met an old man named Mr. Sampson. He came to faith in Christ in his 90's. I used to enjoy listening to him tell stories of his life. He said his dad dropped him off at college, paid his first years tuition and gave him \$50 and a new suit of clothes and said now you are on your own.

Mr. Sampson had quite a career. After graduating from college he went to work for the Winchester Company selling rifles. Then he took a job for a distributor of hardware parts in Wisconsin. Ultimately, he ended up owning his own hardware store in Iowa.

While he was in Wisconsin, he said he was working for the owner who had a son who graduated from college. He came to his father and said he wanted to work in his company with the idea of becoming President of the company one day. His father told the son to think very seriously about that decision, but the son concluded that is what he wanted to do. So the father said okay you report to work on Monday morning.

When the son showed up for work, the father took him to the warehouse and put him under the warehouse manager, who gave him a broom. The manager said the first thing you need to do is sweep the warehouse loading dock. That is where the son began to work.

His father wanted him to learn every phase of the business, and in order to do that he needed to start at the bottom. Before he was exalted as President of the company, he was humbled as a dock sweeper. The father knew that the key to the top was to start low at the bottom. Mr. Sampson said that son worked every job for many years and finally he became President.

This concept is so foreign to most. Most have the idea that if you want to get to the top, the way to get there is to aggressively push and shove your way into power. You must assert yourself and promote yourself. That is the way it often works in the business world, the athletic world, the educational world, the entertainment world and often in the ecclesiastical world. **But that is not how it works in God's world.**

When it comes to God, the only way to exaltation is through humiliation. The ultimate example of this is Jesus Christ.

When Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians, he wanted them to develop an other-oriented humility and mentality. The Philippian church had much that was positive, but the primary negative was self-centered grumbling and disputing (2:14). Paul cared for this church and he cared for the people in the church and to motivate them to a humble service he used the incredible example of Jesus Christ. What Paul says here is this:

JESUS CHRIST IS AN EXAMPLE OF THE FACT THAT THE HIGHEST EXALTATION IN HEAVEN IN THE FUTURE COMES BY HUMBLE, SACRIFICIAL, OBEDIENT SERVICE ON EARTH IN THE PRESENT.

Not too long before Jesus died, the mother of James and John went to Jesus and asked if her boys could sit right next to Him in His Kingdom. Jesus proceeded to say that in the world of the Gentile, the way to the top is domination; but in God's world the way to the top is through humiliation. He said this: "Whoever wishes to become great among you, shall be your servant and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many" (Matt. 20:26-28).

Verse 9 begins with the conjunction "for" which means "on account of" or "because of" what Jesus Christ did. Because of what Jesus Christ was willing to do, being the glorious God who was willing to become a man and was willing to become a servant in order to die on a cross to save sinners, God the Father exalted Jesus Christ in two ways.

EXALTATION WAY #1 – God the Father exalted Jesus Christ in His position. 2:9a

Don't overlook this. Jesus Christ did not exalt Himself, although He had every right to do so. Satan and his forces did not exalt Jesus Christ. Most people don't exalt Jesus Christ. In fact, most people insult Him and curse His name. But God the Father has exalted Jesus Christ and wise are those who realize that.

The first result of the fact that Jesus was willing to go through all that He did is that "God highly exalted Him." The Greek word means to exalt beyond what is measurable; to exalt to the highest place there is in existence (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 459). God highly exalted him to the highest place of level that super abounds above everything and anything in every way.

Now of course the real question here is "What does that mean?" We have just read that Jesus Christ "existed in the form of God" and that He was "equal with God" (2:6). How do you get any higher exaltation than that? There is no higher position one may hold than that of being God. So what does it mean that "God highly exalted Him?"

Fortunately, God, in His Word, gives us further insight on this subject in at least one area. Three passages help give us some insight: 1) Acts 2:23-25, 30-36; 2) Hebrews 1:3; 3) Hebrews 12:2.

What we learn from these passages is that after Jesus Christ was crucified and raised, He went back to Glory and sat down at the right hand of God the Father. The Father sits on the Throne of Majesty as Almighty God and after Christ was raised, He, having been made in the likeness of men, went back to glory to sit down at the Father's right hand. He has always been God, but now He is sitting there as the God/man. There is no higher position one may have than to be seated at the right hand of God the Father and that is exactly the exalted position Christ has now in the aftermath of coming to this earth. He is in charge of everything. All judgment has been turned over to Him and He is now glorified by God the Father at a level way above and beyond anything and anyone.

When it comes to God and eternity, the key to greatness is humble, obedient service.

EXALTATION WAY #2 – God the Father exalted Jesus Christ in His name. **2:9b-11**

Not only has God the Father highly exalted Him in position, but also in name. The preposition “above” is one that means the name that God has given to His Son is a name that is over, above and beyond any other name (*Ibid.*, p. 457).

Now the specific name that was given from the Father to the Son is the name Jesus (Luke 1:31).

Jesus is the name of One who is identified as:

- 1) the Son of the Highest (Luke 1:32);
- 2) the Messiah (John 1:41);
- 3) the Son of God (John 3:16);
- 4) the God (John 20:28);
- 5) the Christ (Philippians 2:11);
- 6) the Lord (Philippians 2:11);
- 7) the Savior (Acts 4:10-12).

There is no other name given whereby men may be saved (Acts 4:12). There is no other name given whereby men may pray and actually communicate with God (John 14:14).

Unquestionably, the most exalted name in the universe is the name Jesus.

Now in this world, Jesus is one of the most blasphemed names that people use when they want to curse. But in God’s world and ultimately in this world Jesus will prove to be the greatest name ever given.

The name of Jesus Christ is so exalted that eventually there will be two universal results:

Result #1 - Every knee of every person will bow to the name of Jesus Christ. **2:10**

Isaiah the prophet made a prediction that one day “every knee will bow” before God (Is. 45:23). When Paul says, “every” he means just that “every.” J. B. Lightfoot said he means “All creation, all things whatever and wherever they are” (*Philippians*, p. 128). Every thing and every one will bend their knee to Jesus Christ. Dr. H. A. Ironside said don’t make the mistake of thinking “subjugation is the same as reconciliation” (*Philippians*, p. 46). All will be forced to bow, not all will be saved.

In fact, he specifically names three locations that leave little room for doubt on his meaning:

(Location #1) - Every knee in heaven will bow to the name of Jesus Christ. **2:10a**

Now this would include all holy angels and all believers of all ages. All heaven will bow before Jesus Christ.

Paul said in Romans 14:11 specifically to believers at the judgment seat of Jesus Christ that every knee will bow. Believers will willingly and humbly bow before Him as God. Wise are those who do it now.

(Location #2) - Every knee on earth will bow to the name of Jesus Christ. **2:10b**

This would include all angels and humans on earth. Specifically, at Christ's second coming. When Christ comes in all of His glory, every eye will see Him and every knee will bow.

(Location #3) - Every knee under the earth will bow to the name of Jesus Christ. **2:10c**

This would refer to those angels and humans who are in hell. They too will bow before Him.

In other words, because of Christ's willingness to give up His visible glory in order to come to earth to die for sinful man, all beings, both angelic and human, will bow their knees before Jesus Christ.

When we see Jesus Christ, I hope it is not the first time you have bowed your knees before Him. That would be shameful and disgraceful.

Result #2 - Every tongue of every person will confess the identity of Jesus Christ. **2:11**

Again Isaiah the prophet made a prediction that one day every tongue would swear allegiance to God (Is. 43:23). We learn here how they will do that. They will testify as to the identity of Jesus Christ. Paul said in Romans 14:11 that "every knee will bow" before God and "every tongue" will give praise to God. Paul said that in the context of a believer going before the Bema Seat judgment. Every believer will testify of the Deity of Jesus Christ.

The word "confess" is interesting and important. It means to "confess" to "agree" to "acknowledge" the same thing. This verb actually means to literally confess out of one's mouth the same thing that God says about Jesus Christ (G. Abbott-Smith, *Greek Lexicon*, p. 317).

Every tongue will eventually verbally acknowledge and confess the honorable, exalted truth about Jesus Christ, which is this: **Jesus Christ is Lord. Jesus means He is the Savior. Christ means He is the Messiah. Lord means He is God.**

One day every mouth will confess the identity and the majesty of Jesus Christ.

How do you get God-mocking, arrogant politicians and wealthy tycoons and drug lords and God-mockers and Satan and demons to bow against their own will and confess that Jesus Christ is the Lord God and worthy Savior? How do you get Mormons, Muslims, Jehovah's Witness, Buddhists, Agnostics and Atheists to confess that?

I read an interesting view from a minister in California as to how God will get people to confess this. This minister in California spoke to a solid Bible teacher who said this. Often times people view hell as being a place where demons and evil people blaspheme and curse God. But God will not permit that to go on through all eternity. Dr. H. A. Ironside said God never depicts hell as being a place of “wild pandemonium” (*Philippians*, p. 47). Those in hell will reverently acknowledge the Lordship of Jesus Christ to the glory of God. He said people have different thresholds of pain. Some people can only endure a small amount of pain before they are broken. For example, when torture tactics are used, some people crack easier than others. This Bible teacher said he thought hell would be like that. God will inflict on every person and every demon the hellish pain that it takes to bring that personality to the point where he continually cries out Jesus Christ is Lord and He is God and He is the only Savior (Stephen Cole, *Every Knee Shall Bow*, pp. 3-4).

Now if you are not willing to confess this now, you cannot be saved (Romans 10:9; I Cor. 12:3). This very acknowledgment is necessary for salvation.

But whether or not you believe it now or confess it now is not the point. The point is one day all will. One day every tongue will confess the truth about Jesus Christ. You may willingly confess it now or you will be forced to confess it at some point in the future. It is your choice.

But all need to know this—all will confess who Jesus Christ is and all will bow before Him.

Mormons who think Joseph Smith is the real Savior will confess it.
Muslims who think Muhammed is greater than Jesus will confess it.
Jehovah’s Witness who say Jesus is not Jehovah will confess it.
Buddhists who claim Buddha’s teachings are superior to Jesus will confess it.
Satanists who worship Satan, not Jesus, will confess it.
Agnostics who say you can’t really know truth about Jesus will confess it.
Atheists who deny truth about Jesus will confess it.

Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess the glorious identity and majesty of Jesus Christ.

When that happens it will be “to the glory of God the Father.” That every tongue confession will bring glory to God, even if one is going to hell or is already in hell.

Think very carefully about Jesus Christ. He left heaven to come here to die on a cross for you. There will come a day when every tongue will confess that.

The question is will you acknowledge this now? Will you submit yourself to His will now? The Bible does not offer second chances. When a person dies there is no second chance to get right with God (Heb. 9:27). So you can either come to terms with Jesus Christ now and be saved or you can come to terms with Him in hell and you will be forever damned. But know this, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess the truth about Jesus Christ. He is the only God/Savior who can save from sin.