
The Humbled & Exalted Christ

Philippians 2:5-11

When you think about the Lord Jesus Christ what comes to mind? Perhaps his loving kindness is the initial thought that comes to mind. Jesus is a loving Savior who manifested his love for his people by sacrificing himself on the cross for their salvation (v. 8; John 15:13). Some people think about Jesus' sovereign authority when they consider who he is. Jesus is the Creator of the universe (Col. 1:16) and therefore is the Sovereign of the universe. Jesus' sovereignty is also displayed in the various miracles that he performed throughout his stay here on the earth. The Gospels record that he cast out demons, healed people from life threatening diseases, controlled nature, fed thousands of people by multiplying food, raised people from the dead, and resurrected from the grave himself. To others, the holiness of Jesus may come to mind (Mark 1:24). Others may immediately contemplate on his return as King and Judge of all (Rev. 19; John 6:22-23). Have you ever taken time to contemplate the humility of Jesus? It's because of his humility that any of us are saved. Apart from the humility of Christ there is no salvation. The message of the glorious Gospel begins with the fact that Jesus Christ, the eternal and holy King of heaven, humbled himself in order to reconcile and exalt those who would place their faith in him. Paul clearly communicates in our text it was Jesus' humility and love for his people that provoked him to become our slave. Jesus humbled himself so that we may be exalted; he became poor so that we may become rich in him (2 Cor. 8:9); he was wounded so that we can be healed (Isa. 53:5). This is the Gospel of Christ's humility. Paul offers us two realities in our text.

1. *The _____ of Christ's Humility (v. 5-8)*

The apostle Paul begins our passage with an appeal (v. 5). Paul is appealing to the Philippian Christians and to us to be united with the same mindset. What kind of attitude or mentality does Paul want us to have? In verse 5, he writes, "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus". Paul elaborates further on Jesus' humility (v. 6-8). Paul's appeal in verse 5 is to follow the example of the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 5:1; 1 Pet. 2:21).

Paul's exposition of Jesus' humility begins with the mention of his divinity (v. 6). The Scriptures irrefutably and unapologetically lay claim to the divinity of the Lord Jesus Christ (Col. 1:16, 2:9; Heb. 1:3; 1 Tim. 3:16; cf. John 1:1). Although Jesus is 100% God, Paul says the following in verse 6, "[he] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped". What does that mean? Although Jesus is fully divine, he manifested his humility by setting his rights, privileges, and prerogatives as God aside. He didn't take advantage of any of those things as he exercised humility for our sake.

Jesus' humility not only led him to set his advantages of God aside, but it led him to incarnation (Heb. 2:14-17). Jesus exchanged the glories of being God and King in heaven to become our slave on earth. Why did Jesus become a man? He took upon himself human form so that he could die on the cross on our behalf thus saving us from the tyranny of Satan and sin. Jesus' humility and love for his people and the glory of God led him to become obedient to death upon the cross.

He hung on the cross for six long, painful, and excruciating hours, but the physical pain wasn't the worst part of his experience.

Jesus' humility and obedience didn't only lead him to be physically executed, but he drank every single drop and ounce of God's wrath against our sin (2 Cor. 5:21).

2. *The _____ of Christ's Humility (v. 9-11)*

As a result of Christ's humility, Paul mentions how God the Father rewarded the humble obedience of his Son. Notice what he says first in verse 9, "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name." How did the Father highly exalt Jesus? Three days after Jesus successfully carried out the mission given to him by his Father he raised him from the dead. That was the Father's first way of highly exalting the Son. By raising Jesus from the dead, the Father affirmed the validity of his sacrifice. The Father's exaltation of Christ continued when Jesus ascended into heaven. The glory that Jesus temporarily set aside would be restored to him when he ascended into heaven (John 17:5). Jesus' coronation as King took place when he ascended into heaven and sat down at the Father's right hand.

Paul also mentions that God bestowed on Jesus the name that is above every name in verse 9. Paul writes that every knee will bow at the name of the Lord, and when he writes "every knee" that isn't an overstatement. Not only will every knee bow at the mention and in the presence of the Lord, but every tongue will affirm the name that has been given to the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 11 says that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. The name of the Lord will cause all creation to fall to their knees and all creation will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Jesus is highly exalted over all because he humbled himself more than anyone.

Humility is all about having the attitude of Christ, the attitude that is willing to lay aside our rights, our privileges as believers so that we can learn to look at others better than ourselves, and we can begin to serve others as Christ served us. He came from heaven to earth, from glory to shame, from being a King to becoming a slave and from being the giver of life to giving up His own life for unworthy sinners like you and me.

Make an inventory of your life today and see if you have the attitude of Christ in His humility.