

Let's Pray:

My goal for this message is to elevate in your hearts the glory of Christ in such a way that bears the fruit **Christ-like humility in your lives and in this church.**

In the bulletin, the “**Big Idea**” for this message reads:

The mark of a **Christ-besotted** church is a congregation that serves one another in humble, selfless love.

The word “**besotted**” was frequently used by Jonathan Edwards. He liked to speak of **God-besotted joy**. Or a **Christ-besotted life**. That is, a life that is **utterly infatuated** with or **consumed** by the glory of Christ. And I use the term here because I believe that God is calling us as a church to embrace a **Christ-besotted humility**. A humility that **shows the world what God and His Gospel are like.**

So, to that end, please allow me to spend the rest of my time this morning introducing you to...

The Highly Exalted Christ

Please take you bibles and stand with me as I read **Philippians 2:5-11**

*⁷Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in **Christ Jesus**,⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.*

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

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

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

The mark of a Christ-besotted church is a congregation that serves one another in radical, selfless love.

- 1) Many scholars believe this passage was originally a hymn, sung by early Christians to commemorate and celebrate **the incarnation** of the Son of God. **And how I wish that song had be preserved.**
- 2) Just two main themes are presented to us by the apostle Paul in this passage.

I. The Humiliation of Christ (6-8)

II. The Exaltation of Christ (9-11)

The Humiliation of Christ:

1. If you are familiar with Philippians, you know that Paul's concern is that the believers preserve their **blood-bought unity** through **relational humility**. Moreover, He offers the ultimate **example** of **how deep** our humility should go as we relate to one another in the church. He writes (5)
 - a. ***"Have this mind [attitude, or posture] among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus."***
 - b. **What attitude?** The attitude of **humility**. The attitude that diminishes self for the benefit of others.

2. Beginning in **verse six**, then, He unpacks what is arguably **the greatest truth in the Bible**; namely, **that God the Son, who is worthy** of unrestrained and unmitigated worship and praise; The Being before whom every intelligent creature on earth and above the earth and under the earth should bow in humble adoration, - actually humbled **Himself** to accomplish our salvation?

3. **How can this be?** How can it be that the One who said (Isa. 14) that the nations before him are but a drop in a bucket and are counted as small as dust in the balance; who declared that **all nations** before him are as nothing; and are counted by him as **less than nothing**. How could He rank himself under us whose status is infinitely beneath him?
 - a. Puritan Pastor **George Swinnock** suggests that...

4. If we are able to conceive of the idea of anything being **less than nothing**, then we would understand **what all things are in comparison to Christ!**¹

5. Who is this highly-exalted being? Well, we already know that He is “**Christ Jesus**” **our Lord**. But we should allow **Paul** the courtesy of telling us who Jesus really is. He begins (6) with these words: “*though He was in the form of God* I[stop].”

6. Now, if we were NOT taking the time to be careful with this text one might read it and say, “A-ha! **Paul is teaching that Jesus came in a “form that looked something like God”** but wasn’t really God.

7. And if you believe **that**, you are a **Jehovah’s Witness** or a **Mormon**. “Perhaps he is wearing the clothes of God,” they say, “but **he is not God in his in-most essence.**” **But that would be a mistake**. Indeed **it would be a heretical error**.

¹ George Swinnock, *The Blessed and Boundless God*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Reformation Heritage Books, 2014), 10

8. When Paul speaks of Christ's being in **"the form of God"** he was speaking of how Christ appeared to those who knew Him in heaven before his **incarnation.**

9. To the extent that he could be perceived **in heaven** before he came to earth, it was **ONLY in the form of God.**²

- God the Father always knew Him as God
- God the Spirit only knew Him as God.
- The angels in heaven only knew Him as God.
- Even the fallen angels knew Him to be God.
- Moreover, Paul...could have chosen one of two GK. words for **"form,"** but he chose the one that specifically denotes **the exact character of something**³

What Jesus is – in and of Himself – if God--- (The one who said in the beginning "Let there be light!")

Therefore...

- Before **Mary** gave birth to Him, Jesus existed in the form of God.
- Before the **Babylonian** captivity, Jesus existed in the form of God.
- Before the **prophets** foretold the suffering servant, Jesus existed in the form of God.
- Before **David** became King, Jesus existed in the form of God.
- Before **Abraham** and the **patriarchs** turned the course of history, Jesus existed in the form of God
- Before the **tower of Bable** or God's **global judgment** in the world-wide flood, Jesus existed in the form of God.
- Before **Adam** ate from the forbidden tree, Jesus existed in the form of God.
- Before **light burst into** darkness and before **the earth** was born, Jesus existed in the form of God.
- For all of eternity past, as the Second Person of the Trinity, **Jesus existed in the form [Exact essence] of God.**

² Jason Krus, *The Exegesis and Theology of Kenosis* (In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master of Divinity degree at The Master's Seminary, Sun Valley California, (March 3, 2018), 4

³ John MacArthur Jr., ed., *The MacArthur Study Bible*, electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1822.

10. As we get caught up in the glory of Christ in this passage, we must not forget that Paul is illustrating **true humility**; the kind of humility he expects of us. So, when he declares that Christ Jesus “was in the form of God,” I think he wants us to catch the disparity between **Christ’s status** and **your own**.
11. What ruins unity in the church is self-exaltation and self-aggrandizement among sinners. **But Jesus isn’t a sinner. He is God. And as God he really does deserve to have others worship, adore, and obey Him.** And yet, He humbles Himself. He gets under us and elevates us. Not because we deserve it, but because of His great love.
12. A common theme in Paul’s letters is the exhortation for believers to grow progressively more like Christ. Here, in Philippians 2, however, Paul is showing us just how far we have to grow.

(Pastor Friend who bore the full weight of a conflict)

13. Here we are shown **the vast difference** between **Holy God who deserves worship but enters into personal humiliation**, compared with **sinful men who deserve eternal humiliation but demand to be worshiped**.
14. But before we move on, Paul has more to say about Jesus’ deity. Again he writes (5) **“He (Jesus) did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.”**
15. The word “**Grasped**” here means **“to cling to”** or **“to seize for one’s self.”** When the Father sent the Son to earth to redeem a people for his own possession by taking on the form of a servant, living among sinners, and dying in their place, **the Son did not demand His rightful status and place of supremacy.** He **Emptied Himself**.
16. **What does it mean** that Jesus “**emptied Himself**”? Well, it doesn’t mean he stopped being God. It doesn’t mean he gave up ANY of His infinite attributes.

(Jesus is the same Yesterday, Today and Forever)

- a. If Jesus is God, than He is God all the way; through-and-through.
 - b. **In the Nicene Creed** Jesus is identified as **“God of God, Light of light, Very God of Very God.”**⁴
 - c. If Christ the eternal King would give up ANY of His infinite attributes, **he would have ceased to be God. And if he is NOT God than He can save exactly No one no matter how radically humble he may be!**
17. As MacArthur writes: Jesus **didn't exchange his deity for humanity**. When he left His heavenly abode to come to earth born of a virgin in Bethlehem, he simply renounced certain divine **privileges** that He exercised before the thrown of His Father. Now He sets them aside to live under the normal constraints of being a man. **This was a self-renunciation, NOT an emptying Himself of deity.**⁵
18. “Jesus didn't have to steal divine glory. He didn't have to commit **“robbery”** (KJV) to be equal with God. **Equality with God was already His!** He was just temporarily clothed in humility. But one day it would shine forth as gloriously as it had for all eternity.
19. What did it mean practically for Jesus to **“empty Himself”** or **“pour Himself out”**? It meant (7) **“Taking on the form of a slave, by being made in the likeness of men.**
- a. Notice that first He bore the **form [exact essence] of God** (6)
 - b. Then he took the **form [the exact essence] of a slave** (7) by becoming a man.

⁴ <https://www.ccel.org/creeds/nicene.creed.html>

⁵ John MacArthur Jr., ed., [The MacArthur Study Bible](#), electronic ed. (Nashville, TN: Word Pub., 1997), 1823.

20. In what sense was He a slave?

- a. Well, of course he did a lot of serving. People were always selfishly coming to him to get what they wanted. And instead of being honored as a King, He was often treated as someone from the lowest cast of society.
- b. But in a more important way, Christ was a servant in the sense that He put himself totally at the disposal of people;
- c. *“For your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.”⁶ This is God-besotted humility.*

21. Consider Jesus’ life:

- a. He stepped down from His highly exalted throne,
- b. Humbled Himself to become a human baby completely dependent upon his mother,
- c. Suffered the indignities of childhood,
- d. Suffered the indignities of childhood,
- e. The reproach of jealous siblings, and the rejection of the very people he had created,
- f. Despite his unquestionable power to heal the sick, feed the hungry, calm storms, cast out demons, raise the dead, and lead the people into truth,
- g. **They rejected Him. This is the life of a slave.**

22. Then Paul says (8) “He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, **even death on a cross.** This was not a slave’s kind of death. This was the execution for a criminal.

⁶ (2 Cor 8:9)

23. **In an ultimate travesty of Justice**, He was sentenced to death for breaking the very law that He perfectly fulfilled every moment of his life. And how did He respond? **With radical Humility**.
24. *“Like a lamb to be slaughtered, He did not open His mouth.”*
25. Note how Peter describes Jesus’ response: **(1 Peter 2:21-23)** *“When he was reviled he did not revile in return, when he suffered, he did not threaten, but kept entrusting himself to God who judges righteously.”*

That’s Humility!

- a. Imagine **what that kind of humility would do to the atmosphere of your home**; the way you and your teenage children talk with one another.
- b. Just as in eternity past Christ always bore the likeness of God, on earth. **He bore the likeness of men. Jesus was a man.**
- c. If you were to see Jesus with his disciples, he would not have glowed with a golden **halo** around his head. He looked like a man.
- d. If you walked into a crowd where Jesus was, and you were looking for the Son of God, you would not have been able to pick him out. He looked **Randy**, or **Rodney**.
- e. He was **born** the way all human babies are born. He grew like all humans grow. He increased in wisdom and stature like every other human. He became hungry and thirsty. He wept and rejoiced. And most importantly, **He died** as any man who experienced crucifixion would die. Which, by the way, is astounding since he was the immortal God.

f. Jesus existed on this earth (and now in heaven) **as a man** just as surely as he existed **as eternal God**.

26. At **Christmas time** we refer to this as the **incarnation**. The word means that **God became man**. The apostle John said it a little differently: **“The word became flesh.”** This, beloved, points to the almost incomprehensible doctrine of the **hypostatic union**. God and man came together in one person – the Person of Jesus Christ.

27. Jesus really is all that it means to be God and He is all that it means to be a man. This is not merely a theological construct. **It’s biblical.**

a. **Rom. 1:1-3** Paul wrote³ “concerning God’s Son [**deity**], who was descended from David according to the flesh [**Humanity**].

b. **Galatians 4:4–5** “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son [**deity**], born of woman [**humanity**].”

c. What we learn from these texts is that **Jesus Christ is both God and man**.

d. One author writes,

“The incarnation is the central miracle of Christianity, the most grand and wonderful of all the things God has ever done.”⁷

⁷ John MacArthur, *Philippians: Christ, the source of Joy and Strength* [MacArthur Bible Studies], (Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 2007) 37

28. How should you and I respond to all of this? You should fall on our knees like the wise men of old and **worship**.

a. You should *bow our heads before the Father begging that you, being firmly grounded in love may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the breath and length and height and depth, and to experientially know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge*.⁸

b. And, we should ask Him for the grace to humble ourselves, to rank ourselves -under that contrary person in your church or in your home simply because **Jesus has modeled it and Jesus is worth it**.

29. Now, as we meditate on everything Paul has taught us about Jesus thus far, perhaps we are left with one question. **WHY?** Why did the King of heaven subject himself to such humiliation? Why did he humble Himself to the ultimate extreme? **There is but one answer:** He did it because it was the only way that you, who are by nature **hard-wired** to reject Him, could be saved. As the prophet Isaiah said,

*“All of us like sheep have gone astray. Each of us has turned to his own way, but the Lord has laid on Him the iniquity of us all”*⁹

30. The sovereign King of all creation humbled Himself, NOT merely by enduring insults and mistreatment, but by allowing the ungodly of His day to cut off His life like a spotless lamb on the alter divine justice! As Paul explains (8) **“He became obedient to death, even death on a cross.** Why? Because **the mission His Father gave Him** was to **rescue the lost** and to **justify the ungodly:** people like you and me. As Paul will explain to the church in Corinth:

⁸ Eph. 3:14-19

⁹ Isa. 53:6

God [**the Father**] made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.¹⁰ In other words, God allowed Jesus to be treated as if He had lived your sinful, rebellious, disobedient, ungrateful life so that He could treat you as if you had lived **Jesus' perfect life**.

31. Friends, No matter how many times we hear it, the story of the redemption of sinners by the blood and righteousness of Jesus Christ is absolutely **BREATH-TAKING**.

But it's not the end of the story! This is where the . . .

The humiliation of Christ suddenly becomes...

The Exaltation of Christ.

1. This epic narrative of the humble Sovereign doesn't end in shameful death. You see, Jesus is King **NOT only** over heaven and earth but over **death and hell** as well! Therefore, **death could not hold him!** **The grave could not keep Him!** And the undeniable proof?... He arose again from the dead, **just as He said!**
2. **Now at this point one might ask**, "How did God the Father respond to His Son after all the mistreatment, hatred, and **Christ's humble response** to those who treated Him with such malice and hatred and contempt? Well, we don't have to speculate. We need only read verse 9-11.

*For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name,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,¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that **Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.*

¹⁰ 2 Cor. 5:21

3. It was the Father's great delight to exalt the Son and bestow upon Him this special gift.
4. **What is that gift?** The gift is a **Name**; **a Title of supremacy**; an appellation of **divine majesty**. "After a lifetime of self-humbling and obedience there comes to Jesus **in the Father's good pleasure**; the very thing He might have grasped but didn't."¹¹ Namely, **the glory and honor, and status he had divested himself of in His humiliation. And it is all wrapped up in a Name.**
5. **What is that name?**
6. At first blush we might think he is referring to the name **Jesus**. In fact, however, the name "**Jesus**" only tells us who is poised to receive this gift. It does not reveal the gift itself.
7. In his earthly ministry the Son's name was **Jesus**, meaning *Yahweh Saves*. Now that his work is complete and His exaltation has come, **this same Jesus** is given **a new Name** (a new Title). And that name is... **Lord**.
8. Again, listen to Paul (9-11)
Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

¹¹ Reinecker, Fritz, and Cleon L Rogers, *A Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament*, (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1980),

9. You see, beloved, **God's goal in redemptive History was not merely to save sinners.** To be sure, we might say that the salvation of sinners was the **Penultimate goal** of Christ's humiliation. But the **Ultimate goal** is that in the end all things (all history, all people, all rule, all authority) will be **summed up in Jesus Christ.** Hence we read in the N.T. texts like:

- **Eph. 1:20-22.** “[God] raised him from the dead and seated him at His right hand in the heavenly places *far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.* ²² And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church.
- **1 Cor. 15:25–27** “For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. ²⁶ The last enemy to be destroyed is death. ²⁷ For “God has put all things in subjection under his feet.”

10. You see, beloved, there is coming a Day, a great Day, a glorious Day, and a terrible Day when everything and everyone will be handed over to Christ, the sovereign Ruler of all. And every intelligent being who has ever lived,

- **In heaven”:** That's The cherubim and seraphim, and all the ten thousand times ten thousand good angels, including archangels; And all the redeemed of humanity who have departed from this earthly life and entered the presence of the Lord.
- **“On earth”:** These are people alive on earth on that great and terrible Day.
- **“Under the earth”:** All the damned in hell, along with the malevolent demons.

And together - every tongue will confess that

Jesus Christ is the **Victor!**

Jesus Christ is the **Ruler!**

Jesus Christ is **Lord!**

To the glory of God the Father.

11. The earliest confession of the first century church was this: **Jesus is Lord.** Oh how it must have strengthened the suffering saints in Philippi to know and believe that in the ultimate sense **Ceasar** is NOT Lord. **Niro** is not Lord. And for us: **the Supreme court** is not Lord. **The democrats** are not Lord. **And The Republicans are not Lord.**

Jesus Christ is Lord!

And as you meditate on the glory of the supremacy of Christ in your homes, I pray that we become a **Christ-besotted people.** And the evidence that we are will be made obvious by your humble, selfless love.