

# Philippians: A Prelude

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**Bible Verse:** Philippians 1-4  
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Today is a momentous day in our ministry and at our church because we're going to open the study, begin the study of a new book of the Bible. After doing the topical series that we just finished on the Holy Spirit today, we're going to turn to the book of Philippians and go through the book of Philippians on a verse-by-verse basis and verse-by-verse teaching is the foundation of what we do here at Truth Community Church. It's what I've tried to give my life to and it's a delight for me to anticipate getting back to verse-by-verse exposition after the topical theological series we did on the Holy Spirit.

So I invited you to turn to Philippians as we start here today. We're not going to get past the first word in the text this morning, but we can at least open the book, and what I would encourage you to do is this, something that I shared with someone in our congregation a week or two ago in a different context and with a different book, but you know, if you don't have a consistent Bible reading approach that you're using, maybe over the coming week or two you could just make it your goal to start your day or find a specific set time in the day to just read through Philippians once a day and read it in the spirit of, "Lord, I'm Your servant. Give me understanding that I might know Your testimonies," from Psalm 119:125. Read through Philippians, you can do it in 10 or 15 minutes, of course, and just read through that repeatedly day-by-day for a week or two and let the flow of the book and the content of the book start to fill your mind, and that would do a wonderful thing to prepare your heart for the exposition of Philippians that we'll be doing over the coming months. That would be a great place to get started. Maybe with the press of holidays, you've kind of gotten away from the word of God and you feel a little bit spiritually dry, I certainly know how that can go, well, this would be a great place to start and to shape your daily life around the teaching that your church is giving you and God will bless that, and the energy and the combination of those things might very well serve you well and make God's word even richer to you.

So I invite you to do that, if that sounds appealing to you, but in Philippians 1:1-2 we just see these opening verses and it will actually, we're going to have a couple, three introductory messages before we really get into the text, but just to introduce it, this is a book that I've not taught through before in the course of my ministry, taught passages out of it but not verse-by-verse so I'm very excited about this, and just to start us here in Philippians 1:1-2, it says,

1 Paul and Timothy, bond-servants of Christ Jesus, To all the saints in  
Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, including the overseers and deacons: 2  
Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Now the tradition in writing of ancient letters is a little different than ours. The writer would often state his name at the start, and if you think about it, that makes a lot more sense than the way that we do it where we put our name at the end of an email or at the end of a letter, we put it at the end, and I have to read all the way to the end to see who's saying all of these things to me. They did it the other way and they said, "Now let me tell you who's writing to you, it's Paul."

Paul wrote this letter and Timothy was with him as he did and he writes it to the saints in Christ Jesus and immediately we see something really significant about the nature of this letter, we see Paul who was an appointed apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ, a representative of Christ with legal authority to speak on behalf of Christ because of the commission that he had from Christ, writing to – note this – the people of Christ, "To all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi," and we'll talk about them more next week. But this is a letter from an apostle of Christ written to the people who belong to Christ. This is a family letter, so to speak. It's not addressed to the world at large, it's not addressed to those who do not know Christ, it's addressed to those who are in Christ Jesus who have been saved by grace through faith in him and belong to him, and through Paul what Christ was doing for his people at this time, through Paul Christ was giving them the instruction that they needed at that time for their life in a local body, for their life as individual Christians, and Christ was exercising his care, exercising his love for his people as Paul wrote this letter and then it was delivered to them at a future date. And in the wisdom, the providence, the full intention of God, this letter has been preserved for us as inspired instruction as the word of God for the people of God for all time. The word of God will not pass away and what Paul said to the people at Philippi gives us instruction that is helpful for us in spiritual life today, pointing us to the things of life in Christ, and pointing us to the wonders of his glory.

So we're very privileged to be in a position, beloved, as a Christian here today, you are in a privileged position to have your sins forgiven, to belong to Christ, to be a saint, to be set apart for Christ positionally so that you belong to him. You've been rescued out of the world. You've been delivered from sin and condemnation and set apart to belong to Christ and to be his forever and ever and in the meantime, to realize that Christ in his love and care for you has provided for you in his word the instruction that is necessary for you to grow in the grace and knowledge of him. Part of the reason that Paul wrote this letter, we'll talk about this more in future weeks but I can't help myself but get ahead of myself for this, look at chapter 1, verse 27. As a Christian, a true Christian has somewhere in his heart, maybe it's kind of covered up with a little bit of dust by neglect, but a true Christian has in his heart an affection, a defining desire to return love and glory back to this Lord who saved him and the beauty of the letter to the Philippians is this, is that this was one of the primary purposes for which Paul wrote his letter. He said in Philippians 1:27,

27 Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ.

He says, "I want you now to live in a way that is reflective of the glory of Christ, the One who saved you." So for us today, those of us that are in Christ gathered together with his people, sharing a common commitment to Christ and to his word and to each other, even, as we'll see as we go through this book, we see that this book lays before us the premise, the goal, the opportunity, the intention that we would live in a manner, that we would conduct ourselves in a manner that is worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Well, that's a wonderful thing to contemplate and to look forward to, isn't it? And what Paul says, he goes on in chapter 3, verse 17 – I wonder if I'll even get to my message here today. I may not and that would be alright also. In chapter 3, verse 17, Paul who is in a unique position to say this as an appointed apostle of Christ, he says in verse 17,

17 Brethren, join in following my example, and observe those who walk according to the pattern you have in us.

Again, he's setting before them this goal of, "Here's how you pattern your life. Pattern your life after what you see in me and what you know about me." I'm not talking about myself, Don Green, here. Paul is saying, "Follow my example," the example of Paul in what he has given. "Look at my life, what my life has been, how I have been as an apostle, how I have been to you, and follow and learn from my example and walk after that pattern that you have found in me."

Well, you know, you step back and you start to think about these things and you realize the rich treasure that's laid out before us. Here we have in Philippians, we have God's inspired word that's perfectly reliable, it's infallible, it will never lead us astray, and we have this heart desire as born again believers that we want to live in a manner that's pleasing to the Christ who saved us, and here's a letter that's devoted to that purpose. So you have the written instruction of the word of God and then on top of that, God has left us with an example not only of Christ but of his Apostle Paul and invites us to consider the example of Paul as that which to follow and to emulate and to find a pattern in his footsteps, those that we can walk in ourselves.

Let me just put it this way, if you don't mind, and even if you do mind, I'm probably going to put it this way anyway. The older I get, the less interest I have about blazing my own path. I just want to walk in the path of sure proven footsteps that have been set before me. To follow in the example of the Apostle Paul, if I could somehow approximate that kind of faithfulness, that's all I need. I don't need to be different. I don't need to be distinct. I don't need a name for myself. If I could simply be in the shadow of those who have proven to be faithful servants of Christ, that's enough for me. What more could a person want than to follow in the example of one whose life was worthy of emulation? But there's something that we need to realize and to recognize as we go in the world around us, even as we live life together as a body of believers in Christ, it's that not everyone does that. Some people have the appearance of it but don't follow through on it.

Many claim to know Christ throughout the world who do not know him and Paul is mindful of that there in chapter 3, verse 18 when he says,

18 For many walk, of whom I often told you, and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ,

He said, "There are those who have started out claiming to know Christ, claiming to walk with Him, but the course of life showed that they never truly belonged to Him." They turned while they had the outward appearance, they had never truly been born again, they had never truly been converted so they never truly belonged to Christ and what happened to them is this principle, and I've said this a few times, a lot more times privately, that time and truth go hand-in-hand and as time goes along, time has a way of testing and proving the reality of a man's claim to know Christ, and in the men that Paul was referring to, they started out claiming Christ but time proved that their claim was not real. They had turned into enemies of the cross. How so? Verse 19,

19 whose end is destruction, whose god is their appetite, and whose glory is in their shame, who set their minds on earthly things.

Now, in the providence of God, purely unplanned providence of God, I read from Colossians 3 earlier in the service for our Scripture reading and let's just pick up on this theme here of setting the mind on earthly things because it's been brought to our attention twice from the word of God in what we've seen already. In chapter 3, verse 1, Colossians 3:1, how is it that you live a life that is worthy of the Gospel of Christ? How is it that you conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ? There are those, there are many voices louder, more prominent, more persuasive, who would point you in the direction of changing the things of this world, of getting involved politically and getting involved in changing the culture and reclaiming the culture for Christ, all directed toward things that are tied up with the course of this world, things that are destined to pass with their using. Beloved, before you go down that path, before you give your life over to earthly things, God's word would call you to step back and consider what it is that you are thinking about, what it is that you're setting your mind upon, what it is that your life goal is being devoted to. What is it that you're giving your resources and your time and your thought and the best years of your life? The productive, fruitful years of your life, what are you giving them to?

Well, go back to Colossians 3. Paul said the enemies of the cross were setting their minds on earthly things, here in Colossians 3, what we saw earlier, verse 2,

2 Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth. 3 For you have died and your life is hidden with Christ in God. 4 When Christ, who is our life, is revealed, then you also will be revealed with Him in glory.

And on it goes.

So, beloved, when we see the call to live a life that is worthy of the Gospel of Christ, we see that there is a corresponding call to you to determine, to choose, to set your affections in a particular direction, set your affection in a particular direction and set your heart, settle it in your mind, young people, settle it in your mind, old man, old woman, settle it in your mind that going forward the heart affections of your life are going to be set on Christ and the things that are above; to recognize their surpassing value, that where Christ is and that you have been saved for the things of heaven, you have been saved to belong to Christ, you're a saint, you're set apart for him, and that the purpose of God in reaching down into your life and to save you was to be set apart for him not simply by your earthly conduct but by where your heart affections are set and belong to.

Don't we understand that in the nature in the realm of human love? You know, that a man and a woman come together and contemplate marriage and embedded in that in the right sense of marriage between a man and a woman, is a sense that, "My human heart affections are going to belong to you and to you alone. I'm going to be set apart for you for the remainder of my earthly life and as a husband, I will love you as Christ loved the church, and as a wife, I will submit to you as the church submits to Christ, and there will be an exclusivity of affection that I give to you." Well, multiply that by infinity and see the way the affections of a believer are supposed to belong to Christ. Set your heart upon the one who saved you. Do away with this double-mindedness. Do away with this love for the world that has a way of sucking people in and manifesting that they were never truly Christ's and they showed to be enemies of Christ because they loved the things of this earth more than the things of the world, as Paul spoke of these enemies of the cross in Philippians 3.

Why would you do that? Why would you do that? Well, look at verse 20 of Philippians 3. Paul says,

20 ... our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ;

He says, "Why would you set your mind on Christ? Why would you make it your highest priority not to maximize your privilege and position in this world? Not to maximize the accumulation of wealth in this world? Why would you do that? Why would you give your powers and affections to a person that you cannot see?" Well, it's obvious, isn't it? If you're a saint, if you've been set apart for Christ, your citizenship is in heaven. You belong to a different realm. Where your home is is someplace else and you devote yourself to where your home is, Christian believer, and your home is in heaven and so you give your mind and you give your life, you give your affections, you give your love over to those things that belong to the realm where Christ is and where he has appointed you to live with him forever. Well, this is a direct challenge to every thought that the worldly man carries about. This is a direct challenge to the way young people set their affections in life.

I've said it before, you know, when I was a young man, I went to law school and I went to law school because I wanted to be wealthy and I wanted to get a Mercedes convertible

and drive back to my high school reunion and make a point to them about who was going to be the most likely to succeed, because they hadn't voted me to that ridiculous thing. That was what motivated me in life was that pride of life, that boastful pride of life, the lust of the eyes and the lust of the flesh. That's all I wanted in life was to be able to go back and make a point to my high school classmates, some of whom have now died and gone on. How foolish. How foolish.

As a young person, you know we've got such a broad age demographic here in our church and I'm so grateful for that and it gives me opportunity to stop and pause and speak to different demographics from time-to-time, but you young people, you young people, what are you setting your affections on? Do you even know Christ? Do you even belong to him? Do you realize that at this early crossroad of life as you're setting the course of your life, you have the opportunity to start from the beginning to devote your affections, to set your mind and love and life energies toward Christ, to the one who loved you and gave himself up for you. If you claim to know him, well, let that, let that, beloved, define what you want out of life, what you want to do out of life. Think about what kind of career choices you're making. Think about what kind of relationships you're pursuing. Think about what kind of friendships that you are pursuing and ask whether this is advancing the interest of Christ or not because that is why you have been saved. That is why God saved you was so that you would be an instrument to advance his purposes, to live for Christ and not for yourself. And that alone is the life worth living. That alone is the life that is pleasing to Christ. Now that may lead you into secular employment and that's fine, but it's a secular employment that you pursue with a love for Christ at the center, not a love for yourself like I was in love with myself back when, wanting simply your own recognition, your own wealth, your own little domain and kingdom. Where does that fit, young person, where does that mindset fit into your approach to life? That's my question to you. Where is it? It's a point worth pondering. Those questions determine the outcome of your life.

Look at it, chapter 3, verse 20 with me,

20 For our citizenship is in heaven, from which also we eagerly wait for a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ; 21 who will transform the body of our humble state into conformity with the body of His glory, by the exertion of the power that He has even to subject all things to Himself.

Look, beloved, contemplate the destination and let your destination, if you say that you are in Christ, if you are in Christ let the destination determine everything that you do and make the point of your life going forward be that which conforms to your ultimate destination. In other words, conduct yourselves in a manner that is worthy of the Gospel of Christ. Live in a manner that is in accordance with the great glory of Christ and the great glorious purpose and the gracious purpose for which he saved you. That is the only reason to live. Everything else will be squandered by comparison.

There's another reason to pursue this kind of life that, again, we'll go through in days to come. I can picture someone hearing that maybe for the first time having it weigh upon

their conscience that who Christ is actually has a claim to the way that I live, I could understand somebody coming to grips with that, a young person maybe that hasn't been under God's word for very long, and to recognize that what Christ does is he places a totalitarian, in the words of my friend, Mike R., he places a totalitarian claim on your life and on your affections and he comes to you and he says, "You follow Me. Follow Me," is the claim of Christ. This is not an incidental passing hobby. This isn't an incidental passing affection. This defines the reason that you exist. This is why you are to live and the natural heart, the unconverted heart of which many of you are probably harboring despite external appearances, the natural heart when it is confronted with the totalitarian claims of Jesus Christ, will resent that, will resist it, will say, "Who is this man to tell me what to do? By what right does he claim me like that? Why should I live my life for someone else and what's in it for me?"

Why would you do that? Well, is that a question? Do we really need to have this conversation? Have you forgotten who Christ is and what he did? Well, Paul brings it to the core of his point in writing. Look at chapter 2, verse 3, of Philippians. It says this. Let me just refresh the context of what I'm about to say here as we look at this passage. Remember that Paul in Philippians 3 had, and we're just kind of treating this book in an overview thematic way that we'll add on in the coming weeks. Paul said that the enemies of Christ, their end was destruction, their glory is in their shame, they set their minds on earthly things. The mind that says, "Why should I live for Christ?" is rooted in that kind of thinking, an enemy of Christ whose mind is set on earthly things, whose mind is set on self, and there is a collision of worldviews that's going on in what we're talking about here as Christ makes his totalitarian claim on your life. What you need to see is that by his essence, by the very nature of who he is, he's entitled to do that. He is God in human flesh. He can make whatever claims he wants to and when God makes a claim on your life, your only right response is to obey, to respond in faith and say, "Yes, Lord Jesus, I will come to You. I will follow You. Save this wretched sinner that I might be able to know You and walk with You."

So it's by his essence that he has the right to do that, but there's another aspect of this and it is his example as well that sets before us the reason that we would live completely differently, that we would live in a way that is mindful first and foremost and exclusively that my life must be worthy of the Gospel of Christ. Why is that? It's because of the superior excellence of his example.

Look at chapter 2, verse 3 with me, of Philippians, where it says,

3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit

That, in itself, condemns the entire mindset that I described earlier of my own life, the selfishness of wanting a car, are you kidding me? The empty conceit of elevating myself above my classmates? They were teenage classmates. How sick, how perverted my heart was at the time and yet it's not all that different than the way others think, is it? This is the mindset of the world. Well, the Gospel of Christ, the person of Christ, comes and collides

with that and makes a totalitarian claim to abandon that, to repent of that, to go away from that and to go a different direction.

Chapter 2, verse 3,

3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

Your life goal, your life purpose cannot be about you in Christ, and what Paul does at that point is he goes on and illustrates with the superior example of Christ as to why this is morally persuasive, why this has a righteous claim on your conscience to live differently, to separate yourself from the pride and arrogance of your former way of life. Why would you do that? Because it is what Christ himself did.

Verse 5, look at it with me,

5 Have this attitude in yourselves

What attitude? This attitude of humility of mind. This attitude that regarded others as more important than yourself. Paul takes, as I'll show you in just a moment, he takes and explains for us the glories and the wonder of the Incarnation and the atonement in a way that shows us that Christ did the very thing that he as the writer of inspired Scripture, the appointed representative of Christ is calling you to do,

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

Now he's going to tell us about Christ, the greatest topic of preaching, the greatest topic of writing that there ever could be. What is it about Christ that would enforce humility to us? Verse 6,

6 who, although He existed in the form of God,

"Form of God," morphe, the very nature of God. He was God himself. He in pre-existent glory dwelt with the Father as John 1:1 says, "He was God and He was with God." He existed in the form of God but

did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped [a thing to be held onto], 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant [the very nature of a bond-servant and he did that], being made in the likeness of men.

Christ, in other words, is the supreme example of what it means to live a life that is worthy of the Gospel of Christ. Christ, what is the nature of Christ? What does the example of Christ tell you to do with your own life and resources? To give them away.

To not cling to them as though they were your own property. What he's saying is that Christ gladly voluntarily left the glories of heaven to take on humanity, to take on human flesh in order to give himself as a sacrifice for your sins.

Now think about that, beloved, think about that, young person, about what that means. Here you are with a measure of talent, a measure of ability, a measure of privilege in life – oh, I can't tell you how much I know you all need to hear this – here we are in a prosperous section of America in this period of time that the Lord has given to us, worshipping him, gathering together, fellowshiping together in a perfectly climate-controlled building where our surroundings are comfortable and the people around us are generally pleasant to be with and to look at. Here we are in this position of privilege that we have and what are we going to do with it? What will our attitude toward that be? Christ had more, had a greater essence, had a greater privilege and he gladly laid it aside, emptied himself, came to earth, and what did he do? Verse 8,

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

Are you kidding me? Are you kidding me? God, the Son, not only left the halls of heaven but he stepped down to come to earth not in glory but in taking on humanity, being found in appearance as a man. But not only that, he stepped down and placed himself in a position of obedience. Although he was God, he positioned himself to live a life of obedience to his Father; to live under the authority of God's law as a man. What kind of humility is that? The Creator of the universe humbled himself. He stepped down to earth, stepped down to become a man, and as you follow the progress of thought in that text, he stepped down even further by becoming obedient to the point of death. He who himself is the resurrection and the life submitted himself to death and not just death, but death on a cross. That is as low as you can go in the course of humanity is to be crucified as a common criminal, a symbol of suffering and shame and defeat. That is how great the humility and condescension of the Son of God was in order to become the Redeemer of his people.

Here we are, sinners of lesser privilege, of lesser rank, benefiting from this great work of Christ, this colossal, wonderful work of Christ, going to the cross to be an atonement for sinners, to rescue them from the wrath of God, under no obligation from you to him to do it, nothing that we could have asked for, we forfeited all claim on him, and Christ steps down, down, down, down, down all the way to the cross. In utter humility, in utter abandonment of his own claims to the dignities of his office and the dignities of his person, in humility and love steps down to the cross and offers himself as the perfect, effective, atoning sacrifice to save his people because he loved them.

Now, beloved, when Paul says conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ, young people, when the word of God comes, when Christ comes and makes a totalitarian claim on your life and says, "Live for Me," you have your answer to the question, "Why should I do that?" One is that if you're a Christian, this was the attitude which led to your salvation, that humility of Christ to save you and sacrifice himself for

you, and now his moral example, the example of his life, becomes the pattern by which you return devotion to him and you say, "Ah, I get it. I get it. Christ sacrificed Himself for me, He gave His life for me, then of course, of course what I do is I turn around and I give my life back to Him." There is a perfect symmetry, a perfect response that says just as Christ had that mind in himself and sacrificed himself for his people, I myself will sacrifice my life for Christ. I will make him my full priority. I will make him the highest affection of my heart and somehow as the Lord gives me opportunity in his providence as Christ gave himself for his people, somehow I'll make his people a priority in my life as well. Wow. Philippians already has a lot to say to us, doesn't it?

You know, one of the things about preaching that I've never quite gotten used to is this, is that the preacher is just a servant. As John MacArthur says, he's described himself often that he's just a waiter who delivers the food, there is no inherent value, no intrinsic anything in the preacher. That's okay. I don't mind that at all, but sometimes the thing that is more of a challenge to me is this, is just having to trust to the Lord what he does with his word in the lives of his people; what he does in the lives, what he does with it in the lives of those who hear who do not know him. That's hard because I like to see results. You probably do too. You guys that work with your hands, you get satisfaction, you go out, you build a table and there it is and you've got something to show for it. For a preacher, all of the results are invisible and you don't know how the word is impacting a heart as it's heard.

So that's difficult and to compensate for that, I just want to dwell on this just a little bit here in what I'm about to say. You young people, I always look over there because that's where most of them seem to sit, but these things are the nature of life. This is what life is about and if you are missing this, if you are rejecting this, if you are cold and indifferent to this, you might as well be on another planet freezing to death because your frozen cold heart is inexcusable. Every one of you in the room, every one of you on the live stream, every one of you listening to this or watching it on subsequent media, every one of you should have something in your heart, something in your response that melts toward this, that bends toward this, where your knee bows before this in seeing the glory and the supremacy of Christ not simply manifested in his glory in heaven, as we opened the service from Revelation 5, but seeing his glory magnified and expounded in God's word in his humiliation. The King of glory becomes the sacrifice on the cross and I want to tell you, there is no excuse for anyone to live the same, to live selfishly, to live indifferently to Christ after hearing these things. There is no excuse for that because our Maker became our Redeemer. Our King became our servant. The one who made our brains spilled his blood on a cross not for his sins but for ours. For ours. And the hymn-writer said it perfectly when he said, "Love so amazing, so divine, demands my life, my love, my all." Conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ.

Then you look at verse 9 of chapter 2. It didn't end at the cross, did it? God brought him out of the grave, God resurrected him, Christ ascended on high, Christ now dwells in glory exalted at the right hand of God from which he will one day return to this earth and manifest himself not in humiliation but in glory, in power, in conquering conquest. Verse 9,

9 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.

And this is a comprehensive statement. Do you know what? All of humanity will one day, you know, people are all worked up about political divisions and all of that stuff that people get worked up over. You know, we're all divided and we're against each other. Oh, okay. What do you expect sinners to end up like? But one day humanity is going to be united around a common confession. The time is coming where every knee will bow and confess that this Christ of whom we have been considering here this morning, this Christ who left glory, went to the cross, is now ascended and is coming again, one day everyone, every single knee will bow and every single mouth will confess that this Christ of whom I have been speaking to you this morning is Lord and there will be no questions about it. There will be no further toleration of indifference, no further toleration of false religion, no further toleration of sin. That is the ultimate culminating point and humanity will be united around the confession that Jesus Christ is Lord. They won't be doing it under the same circumstances. Those of us that belong to Christ will confess him as those who are saints set apart and who belong to him. His enemies, the enemies of the cross will do it under compulsion. They will be forced to bow. They will be forced to confess. But everyone, this intervening time where Christ is marginalized, where Christ is diminished, where Christ is mocked, this parenthesis of time in which we live in this age is coming to an end. There is an endpoint to this. Christ's glory will not always be deferred, it will not always be denied. One day it is going to be openly confessed by all either by faith or by force.

If you're like me, you can't wait for that day to come. You can't wait for the time when Christ finally is acknowledged with the fullness of glory that he has deserved all along, and this despicable time in which he is mocked and degraded in the hands of unregenerate men will come to an end and his glory will be on full display, and that which we as true Christians know to be true in our hearts will be manifested for all to see, and the Lord that we love finally will be getting the glory that he deserves. Yeah, I can't wait for that day. I really can't. I live for that day. I live for that day when I'll see him face-to-face. I live for that day when, figuratively speaking, maybe literally, we'll see, when you and I as believers in Christ have the opportunity to fall at his feet with the woman who was weeping tears of repentance and watering his feet with her tears of repentance, I picture the day, I long for the day that will be something like this, even if it's not literally like this, where we fall at his feet and water his feet with our tears, no longer tears of repentance but tears of joy, tears of fulfillment, tears of recognition that the day has finally come and we are in the bodily presence of our great and glorified Lord. That's the day that Christians live for when they understand. That's the day that you live for and shape your life around. You shape your life around the coming of that day and thus conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ.

So I ask you, look again with me at Philippians 2, I ask you, my friends, chapter 2, verse 10, "that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow," young person, have you bowed the knee to Christ? Old man, death is not that far away, have you bowed the knee to Christ? Paul said something similar in Romans 10. He said this is "the word of faith which we are preaching, that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved." Do you see the confession that will come at the end of time whether by faith or by force all men bow the knee and make this confession that Jesus Christ is Lord? It's that confession that is the word of faith that brings salvation to you. It is the response of faith that says, "Jesus Christ, You are Lord. I believe in Your redemptive death. I repent of my sin. I cast myself at Your feet. I receive You as my Lord." Verse 9 of Romans 10, "and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved; for with the heart a person believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation."

My friends, my dear beloved friends, time is short. Christ is Lord. The time is now. If you are not in Christ, I invite you to come to him. Christ commands you through his word, Christ invites you, Scripture describes it as a begging, we beg you on behalf of Christ be reconciled to God. For those of you, my beloved brothers and sisters in Christ, those of you that belong to Christ, see afresh the glory of your Savior. See afresh the wonder of his person. Marvel afresh at his condescension and the great price that he paid for your salvation. One writer said, "Oh, let us hold on to this," I believe it was Martyn Lloyd-Jones, "Oh, let us hold on to this. Let us hold on to the glory of Christ. Let us hold on to Him through the sorrows of whatever this past year may have brought, through the opportunities and the sorrows that may lie ahead in the year to come. Let us hold on to this Christ and live in a manner that is worthy of the Gospel of our great Lord Jesus Christ." Will you do that?

Let's pray together.

*Our great God and Savior, our Lord Jesus, how we love You and worship You and honor You and thank You for Your great work on our behalf. How we love and honor and thank You for the wonder of who You are. How we marvel in the inexplicability, grandeur of the truth that You loved us and gave Yourself up for us. I pray, Father, according to Your power, according to Your invitation, according to Your glory, according to Your command, according to Your will, Father, I pray for those that are here that are not in Christ. O God, how great their accountability will be if hearing of Christ, hearing of His shed blood, they walk away and say, "That's not for me." O God, the awfulness of the ultimate outcome of that heart disposition. I pray that You would have mercy on them by Your Spirit and through the power, the omnipotent power that You have, that You would lead them today even now to saving faith in our Lord Jesus Christ. Father, for the weak and struggling believer, may the power of Christ be his confidence and his encouragement to step forward to continue on in the faith, to persevere in the midst of the adversity and the discouragement and say, "My Lord reigns. I can go another day. I can face the coming year because my Savior lives." Father, as a church, we just pray that there would be a collective sense of unity around this purpose that we must glorify Christ, that we must live together for Him, that we must live in unity with one another as*

*we serve the same Lord, according to the same word, by the same faith. God, we commit all of these things to You. We pray for Your blessing in the weeks and months to come as we expound the book of Philippians. Help us to honor You. Help us to receive it with a sense of anticipation and, Father, transform us as we do from glory to glory, as 2 Corinthians 3:18 says, as we behold the face of Christ, we might be transformed from one image of glory to a greater image and thereby honor Christ with all that we do until You lead us safely home to heaven. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.*

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