

The Exalted Christ

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Bible Verse: Philippians 2:9-11
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There is an exclusivity to Jesus Christ that informs all of our worship and that is essential for us to understand if anyone is to be a Christian at all. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me. There is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved." Christ is alone in his glory. He is alone as the one Savior that God has appointed for men to be reconciled to him, and you could say that he is truly exalted and that informs our worship, that is why we sing so joyfully when we sing "It is well with my soul." There is for the believing heart, there is for the one that has been born again and understanding that Christ is alone in his greatness and in his supremacy and that's what we're going to see laid out so magnificently from the word of God here today as we turn to the book of Philippians 2. Philippians 2. I invite you to turn there with me.

This is the book that we are going through, teaching through right now and we've come to a great great passage in verses 9 through 11 and I want to read those to start out here this morning. Philippians 2:9-11.

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.

This passage is pointing us to the climax of human history, it's pointing us to the climax of the ages, what the outcome of everything will one day be. It will be the universal acknowledgment and exaltation of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It's not what you would have expected if you put yourself back 2,000 years ago and you were there at Golgotha when Christ was crucified. It's not what you would have expected by what you were seeing at that time. We saw that from the prior four verses that we looked at last Sunday and I want to just remind you of the context of these verses because they tie very tightly together. Paul has been teaching on the need for humility and unity within the church in the first four verses of chapter 2, and he illustrates what humility looks like by pointing to the person of Jesus Christ. Look at verse 5 through 8 with me. He says,

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

What people saw when Christ was on the earth was not commensurate with the glory that was actually his. "Veiled in flesh, the Godhead seen," is what was happening during his Incarnation and what we saw last time was that Christ had taken many steps down from his pre-Incarnate glory. He left heaven and came to earth, that's an incomprehensible step down. He came down as a man, his deity took on humanity, as it were, another step down. He lived in humble obedience to his Father, he lived as a slave it says, in the very nature of a slave. He humbled himself to the point of dying; why is God in human flesh dying and yet he humbled himself to the realm of death. It wasn't just that, he stepped down to death, it says there at the end of verse 8, "even death on a cross," the most degraded, despicable form of death that humanity has ever known. All of this from the Lord of glory, he stepped down, down, down, down to the cross and then into the grave. This was an utter humiliation of the one who was the Creator of all things and this, beloved, calls for...something like that cannot go without response and by response I don't simply mean your personal response, there was a cataclysmic response from God the Father and that will one day extend to all of creation in response to this great humiliation of Christ, and we see that in the passage that is in front of us. The humiliation of Christ leads to a response from God the Father and it will one day still future to us, lead to a response from all of creation. This is a magnificent magnificent passage and it's a delight to be able to open it for you here this morning.

Look at verse 9 with me as we see the response of God the Father to the humiliation of Christ. Look at verse 9 with me where Paul says, "For this reason also." For what reason? For in response to this great humiliation of Christ, God the Father honored God the Son and he honored him in two ways. It says there that "God highly exalted Him," number 1, and secondly, he "bestowed on Him the name which is above every name." You see, God the Father was not going to let this humiliation go by without a great reward being put upon his Son. They had planned, as it were, before the beginning of time for this to take place. The Son, Jesus Christ, gladly accepted the responsibility to be the representative and the redeemer of the elect but it would come at a great personal cost to him, and having paid that cost on the cross and with his obedient life, now God the Father in response honors him greatly because Jesus Christ voluntarily humbled himself, God the Father highly exalted him. And the word has the idea when it says there in verse 9, "God highly exalted Him," it has the idea that God the Father elevated Christ in superlative measure. He elevated him in a way that none other has ever had and none other will ever have. He elevated him. He honored him. He lifted him up in majesty.

And how so? You know, Paul doesn't explain it here, he just alludes to it in a summary fashion when he says that "God highly exalted Him," but beloved, remember the

narrative portions of Scripture to remember just exactly what God did for Christ, what the Father did for Christ and how he exalted him. Though he lay low in the grave, as we sometimes sing in Wesley's Easter hymn, "Low in the grave He lay, Jesus my Savior," what did God do? God resurrected him. He raised him from the dead. He exalted him by bringing him out of the grave. At the start, he raised Christ from the dead but not only that, not only was his exaltation in the resurrection, he was exalted in his ascension into heaven.

We can read about that in Acts 1 and I'd like you to turn there with me because we'll be in Acts for just a moment or two. Acts 1 as we see something of the way that God the Father exalted his Son. In Acts 1:9, Jesus had spoken to his disciples and now in verse 9 it says, "after He had said these things, He was lifted up while they were looking on, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And as they were gazing intently into the sky while He was going, behold, two men in white clothing stood beside them. They also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the sky? This Jesus, who has been taken up from you into heaven, will come in just the same way as you have watched Him go into heaven.'" Well, it's hard for us to imagine what that glorious scene must have been like but no man leaves earth like that. Christ ascended into heaven, bodily ascended into heaven while his disciples were watching him go, and somehow a glorious cloud received him out of their sight. Beloved, that is being exalted, being exalted far above earth, far above men. God raises him from the grave and then he raises him even further into heaven. Whereas Christ had stepped down voluntarily to earth and to death and to death on a cross, now there is a reverse process that is taking place as God raises him from the grave and raises him into heaven.

This has not happened to anyone else. You could say, "Well, what about Elijah? Or what about Enoch in the Old Testament?" But this is clearly a unique occurrence taking place in the person of Christ to set him apart and to elevate him in the eyes of men, and to elevate him from his humiliation to his rightful place of exaltation and Scripture tells us that now that Christ has ascended into heaven, his exaltation is further manifested by the fact that he sits at the right hand of God in glory. In the place of preeminent honor in all of creation, in all of the invisible and visible realm, there is no other more preeminent place of glory and Christ is there.

Look at Acts 2 with me. Acts 2 in verse 32 the Apostle Peter is preaching and he says, "This Jesus God raised up again, to which we are all witnesses. Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He has poured forth this which you both see and hear." God raised him up, he ascended into heaven, and now he sits at the right hand of the Father's glory. Scripture tells us that from there he has the glorious position, he does the glorious work of interceding for the saints. Hebrews 7:24 says he always lives to make intercession for them. Christ is in heaven now representing his people, praying for them, ensuring their perseverance to the end at the most intimate place of shared glory with the Father. And Scripture tells us also that one day Christ will return to judge the world and to usher in a new age. Let that sink into your mind for a moment or two or three, how separate this makes Christ, how glorious this makes Christ.

Turn to Hebrews 7 with me. Hebrews, that great book of Scripture showing forth the superiority of Christ, emphasizing also his exaltation. In verse 25, Hebrews 7:25 it says that "He is able also to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make intercession for them." And then he goes on to say in verse 26, "it was fitting for us to have such a high priest, holy," meaning set apart, "innocent, undefiled, separated from sinners and exalted above the heavens; who does not need daily, like those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the sins of the people, because this He did once for all when He offered up Himself."

So beloved, the resurrection, a great miracle, the ascension, a great miracle, his sitting at the right hand of the Father which is known as his session, sitting at the right hand of the Father as a great exalted position, a great work that he is doing now interceding for the saints and one day coming to bring human history to a close and usher in his own kingdom in his appearance at Jerusalem from which he will reign for a thousand years. Christ is glorious. Christ is exalted. And we call all of this, his resurrection, his ascension, his session, his second coming, we call all of this the exaltation of Christ and it is a great corrective to the overly familiar way that Christ is so often presented in modern day evangelism and in modern day thought. If he's presented at all, he's presented in terms of somebody who wants to fix up your life and thus putting you at the center of things. What we need to see is a reversal. You and I are not at the center of anything. Christ is at the center. Christ is the one exalted. All should be drawn into honor of him rather than in contemplation of ourselves. And beloved, what Paul is saying here in the context of Philippians 2 is this: the humiliation of Christ is over. He has fulfilled that work and it is done. God did not leave him in that state of humiliation, now he is in a state of transcendent glory.

Go back to the end of the book of Acts 2, back to the passage that we were at. I left off at verse 33, now in verse 34, Acts 2:34 Peter says, "it was not David who ascended into heaven, but he himself says: 'The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies a footstool for your feet.'" Therefore let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him both Lord and Christ--this Jesus whom you crucified." And so, beloved, we have this wonderful contrast that is taking place side-by-side and the exaltation happened within a period of a few short weeks of the ultimate conclusion of his humiliation. Just a few short weeks after Christ was crucified and mocked and spat upon on the cross, just a few short weeks after he cried out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me," and the surrounding witnesses were able to mock him and say, "If he's the Son of God, let him come down from the cross," and all of humanity, as it were, represented by their mocking, looking upon his humbled, humiliated state and thinking him to be someone other than he was, all of that now has been reversed, all of that has been turned on its head and the glory that was Christ's beforehand has now been restored to him with more even beside.

Was his glory veiled on earth in his humanity? Was his glory veiled on earth in the cross? It sure was. Couldn't have looked at him with his bruised and battered body and think that this was somebody unique. You couldn't have looked at him in the moment with human

fleshly eyes anyway and said, "Oh, this is the turning point of history. This is the One by whom we will divide time." From all outward appearances, Christ simply looked like one of tens of thousands of others who were crucified in that age. But beloved, if his glory was veiled then, it is veiled no more. God has publicly displayed in the resurrection, in the ascension. Stephen saw him standing at the right hand of God in Acts 7. When Christ returns to earth, there will be no question about who is glorious and who is in charge, and what God has done, God having highly exalted him like that, God has now granted a name to correspond to this high state that Christ holds.

Go back to Philippians with me, Philippians 2 again. In Philippians 2:9 it says, "For this reason also, God highly exalted Him," this is what we've been looking at, and he did something else, "and [He] bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." There is the climax of the passage. There is the name that God has assigned for Christ to henceforth be known as and to be recognized as, the name of Lord. This word "Lord," this name, this appellation "Lord," translates the name of God in the Old Testament, the Greek Old Testament translated the name Yahweh by this name here by which Christ is now known, Lord.

So let's back up a bit here and just remember what we're talking about. God the Father looked upon this humiliation of Christ and in his eternal plan reversed the perceptions of Christ that might otherwise have taken hold, and he so greatly and so quickly and so highly exalted him and wanted to make known that henceforth his Son would be honored by every name, by every man, by every tongue. As Christ humbled himself, as it were, before the universe, as the universe looks on if we speak in cosmic terms, the universe looks on and sees the Son of God humbling himself like this. This was no small matter of small consequence to God the Father. God the Father says, "Now that My Son has fulfilled in obedience the plan that We set the course of redemption upon, now I will exalt Him and the universe rather than looking on Him in humiliation, the whole universe will look upon Him in glory and recognize how He has been exalted." This was a matter of great cosmic significance within the Godhead and so the Father responds to Christ's humiliation, exalts him and says that henceforth he will be known as Lord. Lord, the name that was assigned to God himself. Lord, the name that indicates – watch this – the name that indicates that Jesus Christ possesses all of the attributes, all of the qualities, all of the powers of absolute deity; that Christ would be honored as God himself. God has granted to Jesus Christ the name by which he will be honored in the highest and most superlative manner possible and you can see this in the way that Paul quotes from the Old Testament.

Look back at Isaiah 45 with me lest you think that I'm overstating the case. God is speaking through the prophet Isaiah and he is making declarations about himself and when we see what Scripture Paul is quoting and ascribing to Christ, it sends chills down our spine to recognize the magnificence of what is being said. In the Old Testament 700 years prior to Christ and a little longer than that before Paul was writing, God said this through the prophet Isaiah. Verse 21 of Isaiah 45, "Declare and set forth your case;

Indeed, let them consult together. Who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I, the LORD? And there is no other God besides Me, A righteous God and a Savior; There is none except Me." In the Old Testament, God is speaking and declaring his own exclusivity and his own separate holy nature by which no one else can compare and he says in verse 22, "Turn to Me and be saved, all the ends of the earth; For I am God, and there is no other." So God is declaring his unique deity in what is being said here, and then watch what happens in verse 23, "I have sworn by Myself, The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness And will not turn back, That to Me every knee will bow, every tongue will swear allegiance." God says in the Old Testament, "I am the only God and because I am the only God, every tongue will confess My name, every knee will bow to Me."

In this exaltation of Christ, God has made known that his Son will be known by that exclusive name, by that high and lofty and magnificent name. This is an undeniable assertion of the deity of Christ and it is made and it is asserted in a way that calls upon everyone to acknowledge it. Men rejected him in his humanity, now in the exalted manifestation of his deity every man will acknowledge him, respond to him, and declare that he is Lord to the glory of God the Father. That's how highly exalted he is. God the Father has exalted Christ in such a way that everyone will see that his Son shares equal glory with himself, and so Christ has glory, honor and power at the right hand of God and God has declared that he will be known and recognized by the name Lord which communicates deity, which communicates a consistency, a continuity with Old Testament revelation about God, and that this fullness of worship, this fullness of acknowledgment belongs to his Son. It's stunning.

This is how God views the humiliation of Christ, he has responded by exalting him to the highest possible place in all of the universe and Scripture emphasizes this in other places. In Hebrews 1, you don't need to turn there, but in Hebrews 1 it says in verse 3 that Christ "is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much better than the angels, as He has inherited a more excellent name than they." The exact representation of God's character. He has sat down at the right hand of the power and the glory of God, and he has inherited a name that is higher than even the highest of angels.

Look at the book of Ephesians beginning in verse 18, as you turn just one book back from Philippians. Ephesians 1:18, and you know, there's this sense, beloved, before I read the text that I want to say, there is this sense, there is this pulsation that takes place as you contemplate these things. When you realize all of the way that Christ humiliated himself, absorbing the wrath of God on behalf of his people though he was innocent himself, you realize how he was despised and rejected of men, you realize that he entered into the realm of death and you see the miseries that he endured on our behalf, and there's just this overwhelming tension that takes place and as you study his exaltation, it explodes on you that finally, finally Christ has received the glory that he always deserved to begin with. The rejection of men has been answered by the exaltation of God and this has corrected a great human injustice, as it were. While men were rejecting him, now everyone is forced

to recognize that he is truly glorious, truly exalted, and finally Christ is receiving the glory that he deserves which he voluntarily laid aside in order to undergo this humiliation on earth. What Christ voluntarily laid down has been given back to him and those of us with redeemed hearts can only slap our hands and say, "Yes! Yes! Yes! Finally! This is the way that it should be! Now the universe has been restored to some sort of order where Christ is receiving the honor that accords with His exaltation!"

So in verse 18 of Ephesians 1 Paul is praying for the readers of this letter and he says, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you will know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe." Paul is praying that the Spirit of God would illumine minds and enlarge the capacity of understanding so that the people of God could somehow grasp the admittedly invisible significance of the things of which he is writing. He says, "I'm praying that God would open your mind so that you could understand these things and that you could grasp that which is beyond the ability of the natural man to understand."

So he goes on and he says in verse 19 in keeping with this theme of the exaltation of Christ, he says, "These are in accordance with the working of the strength of His might which," and here we see the exaltation of Christ laid out again in another key passage of Scripture, "the working of the strength of His might which He brought about in Christ, when He 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," above every aspect of the angelic realm, in other words, Christ is far above that, "and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come." This is cosmic in its significance. This is galactic in how profound it is, that this name of Christ whom we proclaim, that Scripture testifies to and that we try to preach week by week, we and like-minded pulpits around the world trying to proclaim Christ, that when we are discussing Christ, we're not talking about someone's buddy, we're not talking about someone that we are to look to simply to make life a little bit better for us and to smooth out the rough patches, we are speaking of the Lord of lords and the King of kings in all of his might and majesty and glory, and that he is to be honored and recognized as such. And that he is above every name in this age, in the age to come, he will continue to be above every other name, far above, it says, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And Paul goes on to say that it's that Lord, that exalted Christ, verse 22, God "put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."

You see, beloved, when we say that Jesus Christ is Lord, the fullness of that confession is magnificent. To call Christ Lord according to the way that God has assigned us to use that name, is to recognize that he is the most exalted one in all of the universe and he always will be, and that there is none to compare to him and that is why we honor him and we worship him. So this, we get a sense of how great Christ is and how magnificent his humiliation was by the response that God the Father made in order to exalt his Son for all to see. Beloved, the world may not care about the humiliation of Christ, the world may look on it with disdain or indifference or, you know, a blithe dismissal as if it was a

matter of no consequence, but you and I should understand that God didn't see it that way, God saw it as something magnificent and he honored his Son greatly in response to it, and to the extent that we share in wanting to magnify and respond in worship to the exalted Christ, we're sharing in a sliver of the response that God made to it. To the extent that we can hear these things and respond in indifference or with a stifled yawn of boredom is simply an indication of how far we are from an understanding of what God assigns the greatest value to.

Now think with me for just a moment. If everything that we're saying is true, and it is because it's just coming straight from God's word, if God the Father assigned that kind of value to the humiliation and the exaltation of Christ and God orders the universe and God is directing all things to his glory and to his appointed ends, beloved, it should dawn on us that such a magnificent exaltation taking place within the counsels of the Trinitarian Godhead, that this is what the Godhead places emphasis on and the Godhead is responsible for the creation of the world and all who live within it, then it should be obvious to us that that which God has assigned great value to is obviously going to have universal consequences for everyone else. It could be no other way, and so the breathtaking exaltation of Christ that we have seen has vast and eternal and universal consequences for all of the intelligent universe in response and that's what we see in the remainder of Philippians 2.

Turn back there with me, if you will. We've seen the response of God the Father, he exalted his Son, and now we're going to see the response of creation. The response of creation and one day all that concerns us today, whether it's supposed viruses running around or political things or financial things or personal things, relational things, one day all of that is going to fade like mist into utter insignificance and the purpose of the universe is going to be fulfilled and that is no less than what Paul is speaking about here.

Let's go through verses 9 and 11 again and just keep this fresh in our minds, the whole context, the fullness of the sentence. Paul says, "For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name," that name from Isaiah 45, "so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow." Notice that three times "name" is used here, bestowed on him the name, number 1, which is above every name, number 2, verse 10, so at the name of Jesus, number 3. Three times "the name," the name representing the fullness of the character of the one. There is going to be a response of creation to that that we see there in verse 10 and it is nothing less than this, that every personal, intelligent being in the universe that has ever lived and that ever will live will confess the very things of which we are speaking here today, that Jesus Christ is Lord. Every one of them will.

Verse 10, look at it with me, "so that at the name of Jesus," there's a twofold response in creation, "every knee will bow," number 1, and then we'll skip over the rest of verse 10 for just a moment because I want you to see the parallel here, twofold response of creation, "every knee will bow," verse 10, verse 11, "every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." And so there is going to be this complete comprehensive confession and

these two verses here in verses 10 and 11 are showing and expressing the purpose of the exaltation of Christ.

Look at it there with me. Verse 9 we saw God highly exalted him, bestowed on him the name which is above every name, and then we see the purpose of what the outcome of this is to be, "so that." So that. God exalted him so that there would be a consequence of response by all of creation in response. And so the logic of the passage goes like this: verses 5 to 8, Christ humiliated himself, for this reason, God highly exalted him and bestowed on him a name, so that all of creation would respond by bowing the knee and confessing him as Lord. None of us are outside the scope of this. All of you in here have knees. All of you in here have tongues. Every one of you in one degree or another, in one manner or another will respond to Christ in exactly this way when the day of judgment comes. Every one of us are under the authority of what is being said here. The purpose of the exaltation is being expressed.

Paul says that every knee will bow. Bow the knee, you bow before someone, you bow the knee, you get on a knee before, you're humbling yourself before them. You're expressing conscious recognition of their position. In a much lesser way, in an illustration that I hate to even go to because it is so beneath the majestic glories of which we're speaking but just to give a sense of it, oftentimes, not always but oftentimes when a man proposes to a woman, what does he do? He gets down on his knee. He bows before. He humbles himself. He's asking for something before her. Well, in an infinitely greater way, all of creation is going to bow the knee and when I say all of creation, every intelligent being. We shouldn't think about this in an impersonal way, every intelligent being is going to bow before Christ in worship, in recognition of his vast sovereignty and the bowing of the knee is going to recognize and express submission to it. "Jesus Christ is Lord," and the knee bows in response. The knee bows in acknowledgment of the truthfulness of that statement. The knee bows in personal submission to his sovereignty.

The knee bows because it can do no other and everyone will comply, and when I say everyone, let's see what exactly what it says here. Paul explains what he means when he says every knee will bow. Look at it there at the end of verse 10, he says, "those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth," kind of a threefold classification that he gives there. Those in heaven, the holy angels, the departed saints will comply. They will bow. They will recognize Christ's sovereignty in submission and humility. Those on earth, the people who are alive at his return. They'll comply. They'll have no choice. Those under the earth, those that have died, those demons that are in a place of judgment, the human beings that are in hell with them. They will comply. So you look up into heaven, you see the angels and the departed saints being acknowledged here in this passage, and in all of their exalted state, they will bow the knee. You look on earth, those who are alive at Christ's coming, they'll recognize, they'll bow in submission and acknowledgment and humility and say Jesus Christ is Lord. And those that have refused him and rebelled against him, the fallen angels, the demons, the unsaved who are awaiting their final judgment before God, they will do the exact same thing. They will acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord and they will do so in a submission that is expressed by the bowing of the knee.

Look over at Romans 14 where you see this passage from Isaiah 45 being quoted again. Romans 14 at the end of verse 10 the Apostle Paul says, "we will all stand before the judgment seat of God. For it is written, 'As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me, and every tongue shall give praise to God.' So then each one of us will give an account of himself to God." So that's the outcome. Beloved, this is where all of us have a divine appointment, all of us are moving toward a culminating outcome of existence that will be the focal point of all of history, and you and I and everyone who has ever lived, every angel that's ever existed, every demon that's ever been put under the punishment of God, everyone will be joined together in ascribing Lordship to Christ, everyone will bow the knee and confess in that way.

Now just to be clear, Jesus Christ was always God. This exaltation did not add to his essence, did not make him more God or add something to him that he wasn't beforehand, but look at chapter 2, verse 9 and I think this is important for us to see, that the bestowal of this name upon Christ, this acknowledgment that he is Lord, has a future focus. Notice the future tense of the verbs here. Every knee will bow. Verse 11, every tongue will confess. Pointing forward to a consequence that takes place in time still future to us. So his exaltation does this, it manifests this, it manifests that Jesus Christ is highly and infinitely exalted above all of creation. You go to the highest order of created beings in all of the universe and Christ is infinitely above all of them.

So the entire intelligent universe will agree that Jesus Christ is Lord, and that universal confession is coming upon all of us. Every man, every woman, every child that has ever lived, every angel, every demon will bow to Christ on that day of judgment and they will confess this and they will give an account of themselves to him. For us as believers, those of us that are believers here today, for us that is going to be a time of joy, a time to confess him joyfully and enter into heaven. There will be a sense in which, I believe, there will be a sense in which we will be delighted and filled with gladness that finally Christ is getting the recognition that he's always deserved, and this outcome of creation will echo, it will resonate, it will be consistent with the deepest, truest desires of our redeemed heart that Christ be honored. We honor him imperfectly in our lives here today, our worship is inconsistent at best here on earth in this flesh in which we live, but the restraints of our sinfulness will be cast aside then and the fullness of the honor that we want Christ to receive we'll be able to express on that day, and we will be confessing with legions of others, joyfully and gladly and humbly acknowledging, "Yes, You are Lord! You are great! You are God's anointed! You are God! You are Savior! You are Redeemer! You're the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the Good Shepherd of the sheep!" And every name of Christ that Scripture says, we'll be ascribing to him to exalt him to the highest degree that our created beings can possible muster and it will be a time of transcendent joy.

But not everyone's gonna be a believer at that time. The enemies of Christ, they'll still make the same confession, they just won't be doing it willingly like we will be. His enemies will be making this confession under compulsion, under coercion. They will confess. Even though they don't love the one that they are confessing, they will bow, they

will confess that he is Lord so that there will be a kind of union taking place amongst all of the created order united around this one confession that Jesus Christ is Lord and believers will enter into heaven and his enemies will be sent away into hell. The last thing that they will say before their eternal judgment comes upon them is Jesus Christ is Lord, and then Christ will prove it as he sends them into punishment for their sins and their rebellion against his Lordship throughout all of their lives.

It's sobering for the unbelieving. It's joyful for us. All of this should just elevate Christ in our minds and our hearts and give us a sense of holy reverence toward him. And what's the purpose of all of this? Paul expresses it there at the end of verse 11, every knee will bow, "every tongue will confess Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." This will honor God. This will honor the fullness of the Triune Godhead because as Jesus himself said, to honor Christ, to honor him, to honor the Son is to honor the Father as well. Jesus said in John 5:22-23, you can just listen as I read it, he says, "the Father has given all judgment to the Son," all of it, "so that all will honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him." There is no point in praying to God, worshiping God if your worship is not premised on the foundational saving work of Jesus Christ because if you don't honor the Son equally with God the Father, you're not honoring the Father at all no matter what you think you're doing with your lips.

So this great exaltation of Christ that is still future to us will be the climax of the exaltation that God has given to him now, raising him from the dead, ascending into heaven, sitting him at the right hand of the Father, interceding for the saints, one day coming again. Beloved, that's glory. That is glorious. That is exalted. That is far above the highest of kings that have ever existed on earth and that's who Christ is. Well, there's coming a day where creation, as it were, will catch up with God and give Christ that same acknowledgment of exaltation.

So we've said it's coming upon all of us and that leaves it with you and me to contemplate what this means for your own soul and your own life. It's going to be everybody but, beloved, I urge you to think about it in uniquely personal terms. Those of you that are walking in sin and double lives, you need to fear this judgment and let it provoke you to repentance while there's still time. Those of you that are not even in Christ and you've been indifferent to it, I plead with you, I ask you in light of the magnitude of what is coming to respond to Christ now so that that ultimate day will go well with you. Your indifference to Christ, beloved, is so inconsistent with where the universe is going.

James Montgomery Boice said it well. I quote him a lot and I'm glad I do. He said this, he said, "We need to ask ourselves in which way we are going to make that confession. Every one of us will make it some day. You will either make it willingly as you acknowledge Him who has been your Savior and Lord, or you will be forced to acknowledge it with bitterness moments before you are banished from God's presence forever."

My unsaved friend, I call upon you to bow the knee to Christ, bow to this one who bids you to come, who lovingly, graciously bids you to come to him now and a door of mercy is open to you now, but one day will be shut. Come in mercy. Salvation is from the Lord. Romans 10:9 says, "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." And his blood will wash away all of your sin. But I implore you not to take for granted the opportunity that's before you now to do that. Scripture says this will happen. It doesn't tell us when. It doesn't promise us tomorrow. Today is the day for your salvation, my unsaved friend. There's no other way to look at it. To turn away, to brush off the exaltation of Christ is to commit a heinous sin against God no matter how outwardly moral your life may appear before men. Honor Christ now with the submission of your heart.

For my Christian friends, my brothers and sisters in Christ here, what a wonderfully refreshing recognition it is for us to know that our Savior is Lord of all, and that God is sovereignly orchestrating and directing the outcome of history so that he whom we love, the Lord Jesus Christ, he whom we love will one day be openly confessed by all. We won't need, we won't want any glory for ourselves. It will be the fulfillment of the highest aspirations of our heart to see Christ honored this way in that final day, and so for now we have the privilege to worship him now, to honor him now, and with joyful expectation look to that outcome of creation that God has appointed where every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

Let's pray together.

O great and exalted Christ, You who humbled Yourself for our sakes, though You were rich, You became poor for us, now You are exalted on high, we bow the knee and we bow it now. We confess with our mouths and we confess it now that Jesus Christ is Savior and Jesus Christ is Lord, that Jesus Christ alone is worthy of praise, that Jesus Christ reigns over all, that He is highly exalted above all of creation, separated from sinners and yet the Savior of all who would come to Him. Dear Lord, work these things out in our minds, our hearts. Help us to see and appreciate Your glory and worship You in response. We pray in the name of Jesus Christ, to the glory of God. Amen.

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