

You're familiar with picture of the crucifixion, I am sure. Just picture it in your mind. I wonder if as you imagine what you have seen if Jesus is on it or not. You many know that these depictions are controversial for a number of reasons, but the primary problem with these pics of the cross is that Jesus is on it. Now, Christ on the cross is a true snapshot of part of the Christian story, but theological accuracy demands an empty cross. Not only that, an empty grave. Christ did not remain on the cross. The story doesn't end with his birth, or his death, but his resurrection and exaltation. The last word of this story is not "he breathed his last," but "Jesus Christ is Lord."

What have we seen in this Christ hymn? We have seen the exhortation, the example and now we turn to the exaltation. In Phil 2:1-4, Paul exhorted us to share the same mindset: be selfless not selfish, then in verses 5-8 he gave us the example and told us to have the mindset of Jesus: who though he was equal with God, he didn't exploit that fact for his own advantage but rather made himself nothing by becoming a man and dying on a cross. / Incarnation, Atonement, now exaltation. This week, we look at Phil 2:9-11 where we see the consequence of the obedience of Jesus. / **Phil 2:1-11** (922 - This is the Word . .). Main point: The Son made himself low so that the Father would lift him high. Three points: 1) The Father Exalted the Son 2) Jesus is Universal Lord 3) Soli Deo Gloria.

I. The Father Exalted the Son – 9. Therefore. When we see a therefore, we must ask what it is there for. It is showing a result or a consequence or an inference of what came before. Because Jesus was obedient unto death, God exalted him. You see if the Christ hymn had ended at verse 8 with death on a cross, we'd have no hope, but it doesn't. He went from shameful crucifixion to glorious exaltation. He descended in humility, and was exalted to victory. Self-humiliation to divine exaltation. Eph 4:10: "He who descended is the one who also ascended far above all the heavens, that he might fill all things." The crown comes via the cross. Why? Because God wants us in his Kingdom but we need forgiveness so there must be a cross / Christmas: Christ is born, Good Friday: Christ has died, Easter: Christ is risen, Ascension: Christ reigns, and we look forward to the day when Christ returns.

As a result of his obedience unto death, the Father highly exalted him. You, say wait a minute, isn't he the Son of God? Hasn't he always been exalted. Yes, but not in this sense. Remember the GC? It is after the resurrection that Jesus says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." Listen to **Rom 1:1-4**. As the second person of the Godhead, the Son has always possessed authority, but after the resurrection He is the victor. He was the Son before the resurrection, but he was not the victor yet. This is a new *achieved* authority and status. It is an *earned* lordship. *Therefore* God exalted him. The spoils of victory are his. After the cross, Jesus was raised from the dead, exalted to the right hand of the Father, and enthroned as king (Acts 2:30-36). Heb 2:9 reads "But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, *now* crowned with glory and honor *because* he suffered death." One commentator put it this way: "Christ did not gain a higher status than what he had as the preexistent Son; rather, he celebrates the accomplishment of salvation, experienced now by God's people, and with more to come in the new heavens and new earth."¹

Ps 110 is the most quoted passage in the OT and it tells us that the Son is now seated at the right hand of God, the place of highest authority. He sits not to rest but to reign. He is subduing his enemies as his people go promote his Kingship and preach the gospel. Christ is on mission through us.

¹ Cohick, 123.

Jesus has been highly exalted as a result of his obedience and is given the name that is above every name. The name is YHWH. LORD in the Greek OT was the translation of YHWH. The name above all others is YHWH. **Heb 1:1-4**. Isa 42:8: “I am the LORD; that is my name; my glory I give to no other, nor my praise to carved idols.” The name that YHWH does not share has been given to the Son. Jesus is God. That’s what we celebrate tomorrow.

Let’s zoom out and ask, “What is the goal of human history? What is God’s will? It is to exalt his Son. Eph 1:10: “making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.” What is God’s will? Purpose? Plan? To sum up all things in the Son. God the Father is Christ-centered. **Col 1:15-20**. The great goal of human history is for Christ to be exalted. Friends, if that is God’s desire, what does that mean for us? It means all of life for Christ. It means we seek to submit to his Lordship in all areas of life. It means we seek to make Christ central in everything we do. Col 3:17: “And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus.” **1:20-21**. What do the myriads of angels say in Rev 5? Worthy is the Lamb to receive power and weath and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing (5:12). The Father exalted the Son.

II. Jesus is Universal Lord – 10-11a – Paul is quoting Isaiah 45 here. In fact, it is one of the most monotheistic chapters in the entire Bible. Mono – one, theistic God. There is one true God: **Isa 45:5-23**. He has no rivals, no contenders, He is the undefeated one. / What Isaiah insists belongs to YHWH alone, Paul attributes to Jesus Christ. He leaves no doubt that Jesus Christ is in fact God in the flesh. The God who will not share his glory with another has shared it with his Son.

Historical Footnote, this is the Text God used to save Charles Spurgeon on 1.6.1850. Charles was 15 and making his way to a church but had to stop short and went into a small primitive Methodist Church on Artillery St. Here is how he recounted it: “I sometimes think I might have been in darkness and despair now, had it not been for the goodness of God in sending a snowstorm one Sunday morning, when I was going to a place of worship. When I could go no further, I turned down a court and came to a little Primitive Methodist Chapel. In that chapel there might be a dozen or fifteen people. The minister did not come that morning: snowed up, I suppose. A poor man, a shoemaker, a tailor, or something of that sort, went up into the pulpit to preach. He was obliged to stick to his text, for the simple reason that he had nothing else to say. The text was, ‘Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth’ [Isa 45:22]. He did not even pronounce the words rightly, but that did not matter. There was, I thought, a glimpse of hope for me in the text. He began thus: ‘My dear friends, this is a very simple text indeed. It says, “Look.” Now that does not take a deal of effort. It ain’t lifting your foot or your finger; it is just “look.” Well, a man need not go to college to learn to look. You may be the biggest fool, and yet you can look. A man need not be worth a thousand a year to look. Anyone can look; a child can look. But this is what the text says. Then it says, “Look unto Me.” ‘Ay,’ said he, [in broad Essex], ‘many of ye are looking to yourselves. No use looking there. You’ll never find comfort in yourselves.’

Then the good man followed up his text in this way: ‘Look unto Me: I am sweating great drops of blood. Look unto Me; I am hanging on the Cross. Look: I am dead and buried. Look unto Me; I rise again. Look unto Me; I ascend; I am sitting at the Father’s right hand. O, look to Me! Look to Me!’ When he had got about that length, and managed to spin out ten minutes, he was at the length of his tether. Then he looked at me under the gallery, and I daresay, with so few present, he knew me to be a stranger. He then said, ‘Young man, you look very miserable.’ Well, I did; but I had not been accustomed to have remarks made on my personal appearance from the pulpit before. However, it was a good blow struck. He continued: ‘And you will always be miserable—miserable in life and miserable in death—if you do not obey my text. But if you obey now, this

moment, you will be saved.’ Then he shouted, as only a Primitive Methodist can, ‘Young man, look to Jesus Christ.’ There and then the cloud was gone, the darkness had rolled away, and that moment I saw the sun; and I could have risen that moment and sung with the most enthusiastic of them of the Precious Blood of Christ.”

Spurgeon was saved by looking to Christ from Isa 45. I wonder, if you have? Look to him. The One who was born of a virgin, obedient on your behalf, died in your place, now exalted. Isaiah and Paul say that every knee will bow at the name of Jesus. In heaven and on earth and under the earth. Universally. Across the board. Angels, humans, and demons. All will bow. No knee in the universe is exempt. And every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Cosmic universal Lordship. Lord of all. This is not universal salvation, but there will be universal confession as to who Jesus is. Acknowledgement. Vindication. We can bow now in humble submission or we will bow later in utter terror. Will we bow to receive salvation or bow to realize we were dead wrong? What believers now joyfully proclaim will one day be acknowledged by all.

As D.A. Carson says, “Either we repent and confess him by faith as Lord now, or we will confess him in shame and terror on the last day. But confess him we will.”² Staggering. Just picture it. Herod will bow, Pharaoh will confess Jesus is Lord, as will Nero, Caiaphas, Stalin, Muhammed, Hitler, Joseph Smith, Karl Marx, Richard Dawkins, you name them, they will name Christ as Lord.

All three of those words are filled with significance. Jesus. Christ. Is Lord. Jesus means “the Lord saves” – *yeshuah*. It is the name the eternal Son took when he became man. Christ is a title, not his last name. It means the anointed King. Jesus Christ is Lord. The basic Christian confession. Rom 10:9: if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Remember that the basic confession of the Roman Empire was Caesar is Lord (Acts 25:26). Augustus was worshipped in the imperial cult in Philippi. They believed and taught *apotheosis*: that the emperor became a god after death. Well, if Jesus is Lord, Caesar is not. We have a singular allegiance.

People will sometimes evade the gospel by saying that they are glad this Jesus thing is working for us, but He is no mere personal Lord. He is a public Lord. He is not easily dismissed, marginalized, privatized, psychologized, or sanitized. You can't domesticate deity. His divinity demands decision. How will you respond to this Lord? Larry King and he was once asked if could interview one person in history, who would it be and without hesitation he said Jesus Christ. When asked why, he said without hesitation: “I would ask him if he was really born of a virgin, because the answer to that question changes everything.” Everything hinges on what you believe about Jesus Christ. As Lewis said, "Christianity is a statement which, if false, is of no importance, and, if true, of infinite importance. The one thing it cannot be is moderately important."

Jesus Christ is Lord. He has all authority. He is the Ruler, the King of the Cosmos. In this way, the confession “Jesus is Lord” is what philosophers of language call a “performative utterance.” Performative utterances are sentences which not only describe a given reality, but also change the social reality they are describing. Friend, let me ask has this reality of Jesus’ Lordship changed the social reality it describes? In other words, is Jesus actually Lord of your life? Or are there areas in your life where you are trying to remain sovereign.

The goal here is to be Christ-centered in all of life. No compartmentalization. No, having him as merely Lord of my Sunday mornings! No, All of life for Christ. We worship Jesus in all of life. / Incarnation, obedience, death, resurrection, exaltation – all so that all people will acknowledge who he really is. What does all this lead to:

² DAC, 48.

III. *Soli Deo Gloria* – SDG – Glory to God Alone – 11b. The Father exalts the Son to the highest place with the highest name and it all redounds back to the glory of the Father. Ultimately, all things redound to the glory of God the Father. We just saw that that’s what our spiritual maturity does - **1:11**. When you ask “Why does God ___” the answer will always include at the end of the day: “for his glory.”

This is God’s goal – to spread his glory to the ends of the earth! God is committed to seeing the glory of his own name pervade the world. Hab 2:14: “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.” The waters are the sea. WLC Q1: What is the chief and highest end of man? A. Man’s chief and highest end is to glorify God, and fully to enjoy him forever. That’s why we exist.

John Stott says that here in this Text Jesus is given a God title (YHWH), applied a God text (Isa 45), and anticipates God worship (every knee and tongue). Jesus is not in that manger, he is not on that cross, he is not in the grave. He’s on the throne.

What is the rightful response to this truth? Much could be said, but three responses: Trust, promote, worship. Trust Christ. Turn from your agenda to His. Faith and repentance. Promote. As John Dickson puts it in his mission equation: if there is One Lord to whom all people belong and owe their allegiance, then the people of that Lord must promote this reality everywhere. Worship. Worthy is the Lamb. Praise him with your lips and your life. C Wesley in 1739: “O for a thousand tongues to sing, my great Redeemer's praise, the glories of my God and King, the triumphs of his grace! My gracious Master and my God, assist me to proclaim, to spread thro' all the earth abroad, the honors of your name. Jesus! the name that charms our fears, that bids our sorrows cease, 'tis music in the sinner's ears, 'tis life and health and peace. He breaks the power of cancelled sin, he sets the prisoner free; his blood can make the foulest clean; his blood availed for me. To God all glory, praise, and love be now and ever given, by saints below and saints above, the Church in earth and heaven.” Oh if we had 1000 tongues so that we could rightly sing our great Redeemer’s praise.

Benediction: Now may the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us as we go and may he increase our vision and devotion to the One with whom he has shared his glory. With our lips and our lives, may we be those who declare that Jesus Christ is Lord.