

The sermon

Intro

If you were waiting on a job interview and sitting in the lobby and the owner of the company sat down next to you, how would you conduct yourself? Would you despise him? Would you treat him with respect? Likely you'd do your best to create a favorable impression. Meaning you'd respect him because of the power you know he holds over you.

When you know who's ultimately in charge, it affects how you respond. So it is with Jesus. When we come to grips with his universal authority of Jesus, we realize where our respect and allegiance should go.

Yes. Jesus is better than a business owner. Jesus doesn't just hold power over us. Jesus died for our sins. We know he's good.

Let's turn to Paul for some thoughts on Jesus' authority.

READ 2:1-11

Body

Passage Focus/Recap

Let's recap where we've been.

The Philippian church is facing external opposition. They live in a Roman colony where Caesar is Lord. Proclaiming Jesus is Lord is resulting in opposition and suffering. Perhaps loss of employment? Family rejection? Violence? External threats abound.

There's an internal threat too: division in the church. The Philippian church isn't of one mind. There's competing self-interests. What Paul calls "*selfish ambition and conceit*" (2:3).

So Paul exhorts the people to humility and looking out for "*the interests of others*" (2:4). And he points to Jesus' example.

- 1) In eternity past, Jesus had a mind to forsake his divine rights.
- 2) In the incarnation, Jesus took the posture of a servant by taking on human flesh and veiling his divine glory.
- 3) On the cross, Jesus humbled himself by obeying the Father and submitting to the divine plan.

Note Jesus wasn't forced to do these things against his will. Jesus resolved in his own mind to do these things in eternity past! Long before the crucifixion took place.

We'll look at what 2:9-11 means. Then we'll raise some applications.

Exultation of Christ

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, – 2:9

The resurrection is assumed but not stated. Verse 9 jumps to the time directly after the resurrection. Jesus was exalted by the Father at this time. His time of humiliation was over. In one of his resurrection appearances, Jesus appeared to his disciples and said, "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me*" (Matt 28:18).

Something happened after the resurrection. The Father gave the Son universal authority over everything. Theologians call this "the enthronement of the Messiah as eschatological judge" (Osborne, *Matthew*, 1078).

Following 40 days of resurrection appearances (Acts 1:1-3), Jesus ascended to the Father (Luke 24:50-53; Acts 1:9-11). At that time Jesus returned to heaven to sit at the Father's right hand (Acts 2:33; Rom 8:34; Heb 1:3-4; 1 Pet 3:22) and regained his heavenly glory that was veiled while he assumed the role of a servant on earth.

Back to verse 9. The word translated "bestowed" is the same word as "granted," the verbal form of grace, we encountered in 1:29 where God freely gave us belief and suffering. Jesus did nothing to earn the name "above every name" by dying on the cross. It was part of the divine arrangement established before the foundation of the world.

The name that was given was Lord. That's the name for Yahweh in the Old Testament = Jesus is God. The name given wasn't Jesus, because he was already given the name Jesus before birth, not after the resurrection.

When did God the Father exalt Jesus and give him the name Lord? After the resurrection. But why?

2nd coming

so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. – 2:10-11

Who will bow before Jesus and confess he is Lord? Every created being everywhere. Everyone in heaven. Everyone on earth. Everyone under the earth. That's the angels in heaven. Dead believers who's souls are with God in heaven right now. Everyone alive on earth today, whether Christian or non-Christian. Satan and all his demons roaming the earth. Every dead non-Christian in Hades (Luke 16:23). And the fallen angels who are presently confined to gloomy darkness (2 Pet 2:4; Jude 6). Every human ever born. Every angel ever created will bow before Jesus and confess he is Lord.

How do I know it's not just believers who will bow? Turn with me to Isaiah 45:14-25.

Isaiah 45 context

- 1) BIG IDEA: Those who go after idols will be shamed, but there will be no shame for those who turn to the LORD for salvation.
- 2) Isaiah speaks of a day when the nations will recognize Yahweh is the only God.
- 3) God assures Israel that in the end they will be saved, but only the believing remnant.
- 4) So God appeals to Judah to forsake the futility of idols because he's the one and only God, the only God in whom salvation is found.
- 5) The invite goes out to all, not just Israel.
- 6) And the invite comes with a warning.

Thus says the LORD: "The wealth of Egypt and the merchandise of Cush, and the Sabeans, men of stature, shall come over to you and be yours; they shall follow you; they shall come over in chains and bow down to you. They will plead with you, saying: 'Surely God is in you, and there is no other, no god besides him.'" ¹⁵ Truly, you are a God who hides yourself, O God of Israel, the Savior. ¹⁶ All of them are put to shame and confounded; the makers of idols go in confusion together. ¹⁷ But Israel is saved by the LORD with everlasting salvation; you shall not be put to shame or confounded to all eternity. ¹⁸ For thus says the LORD, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!): "I am the LORD, and there is no other. ¹⁹ I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, 'Seek me in vain.' I the LORD speak the truth; I declare what is right. ²⁰ "Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, you survivors of the nations! They have no knowledge who carry about their wooden idols, and keep on praying to a god that cannot save. ²¹ Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the LORD? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me. ²² "Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. ²³ By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: 'To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.'

²⁴ "Only in the LORD, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength; to him shall come and be ashamed all who were incensed against him. ²⁵ In the LORD all the offspring of Israel shall be justified and shall glory." – **Isaiah 45:14-25**

Several observations:

- 1) Worshipping idols is contrasted with worshipping God.
- 2) In Isaiah, every knee will bow before the LORD.

That's God the Father.

- 3) In Philippians, every knee will bow before Jesus.

That's Jesus is equated with the one God of the Old Testament.

- 4) Paul adds "*at the name of Jesus*" to "*every knee should bow.*"

The LORD becomes Jesus.

- 5) Paul adds "*in heaven and on earth and under the earth*" to clarify what is meant by "*every knee...every tongue.*"

That's every being ever created, whether angelic or human.

- 6) In Isaiah, it's bowing and swearing "allegiance."
- 7) In Philippians, it's bowing and confessing "*that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*"

Confessing Jesus is Lord = allegiance = swearing Jesus is my Lord personally. Faith involves allegiance, not just believing facts.

- 8) But in Isaiah all don't swear allegiance.
- 9) Some come bowing and swearing that "*Only in the LORD*" are found "*righteousness and strength.*"
- 10) Others "*shall come and be ashamed who were incensed against him.*"

Meaning some who bow and confess do so in faith while others bow and confess in rebellion and shame.

- 11) For some the bowing and confessing is done willingly.
- 12) For others the bowing and confessing is imposed upon the unwilling.

So I conclude Philippians 2:10-11 speaks of a future time when all humanity, both Christian and non-Christian, will bow before Jesus.

When will this take place? The day of the Lord, the 2nd coming, the day of judgment Paul spoke of in Acts 17:31. Matthew 25 envisions a time when Jesus returns and "*will sit on his glorious throne*" with "*all the nations*" gathered before him, both sheep and goats (25:31-34).

Application

Alright. We've gone through a lot of information. I love to give you in depth personal application. There's nothing wrong with head knowledge. In chapter one Paul spoke of how he prayed "*that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment*" (1:9). So I'm not anti-knowledge. But knowledge is intended to result in love. Or the purpose of knowledge is altered lives. We don't stop at head knowledge. God gives truth so that we'll live in new ways.

But verses 9-11 are all about Jesus' glory. They're not behavioral instruction. So how might we apply these truths? Well, the **big idea** Paul's after is imitate Jesus' example of considering others, giving up our rights, humility, and obeying God. If we do so we'll be united as a group of believers in this local church. We'll be able to withstand gospel opposition together.

There's some other insights that stand out as well. Here's some application points.

Point 1: Stand firm because Jesus is Lord.

National rulers are temporary. Cultural pressures are temporary. Jesus' universal authority is not. Caesar won't be Lord forever. Caesar himself will bow before Jesus.

Christian, why are you considering bowing before public pressure when Jesus is Lord? Are you being pressured? This is a truth for you. When we know who's in charge, we know whom to fear and respect!

The day of judgment cries out stand firm in Christ!

Point 2: Exaltation follows humility.

There's a pattern in Jesus' redemptive work that's followed in the lives of believers. Humility now results in exaltation then. The exaltation I have in mind includes a glorified body, being granted access into the heavenly city (Rev 2:7; 3:12), the "rule" and "authority over the nations" promised in **Revelation 2:26-27**, and sitting with Jesus on his throne which we hear of in **Revelation 3:21**.

In chapter 4 of James he warns his Christian audience about friendship with the world and God's good and righteous jealousy over our affections. In **James 4:6-10** he says:

But he [God] gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble." ⁷ Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. ⁸ Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. ⁹ Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. ¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

Humility in the form of submissive repentance leads to exaltation. What's submission to Jesus look like? What's obedience look like? It looks like repentance. Turning from sin. Turning from affection for sin, sinful desires, sinful mindsets, sinful patterns. And turning to "the obedience of faith" Paul speaks of in Romans 1:5. That's faith-driven obedience. Repentance in this life leads to exaltation in the life to come!

James goes on to say. "There is only one lawgiver and judge, who is able to save and destroy" (4:12). And 5:7-9 speaks about "the coming of the Lord" in judgment. Exaltation happens at the 2nd coming.

Believing that Jesus will exalt me for standing firm when he returns motivates present humility.

Point 3: Exaltation is unmerited.

Recall that God "has highly exalted him [Jesus] and bestowed on him the name that is above every name" [Lord]. This was an act of the Father's grace. Meaning Jesus' didn't merit this exaltation. So it is with us.

Yes, we respond to God's promises, we exercise faith, but we don't merit exaltation. Faith provides no benefit to us apart from Jesus' substitutionary death on the cross. Jesus merited salvation for us by taking our punishment away and by succeeding where Adam failed. He took the punishment and kept the law where we failed. Thus, his righteousness is credited to our account.

We don't deserve to have our prayers answered. We don't deserve to be saved. We don't deserve to be exalted by the holy God on the day Jesus returns. But we will be. Why? Because Jesus earned that benefit for us. Think about that when you're tempted to think life is unfair!

Point 4: Will I be exalted or shamed?

The question everyone in this room has to answer is in what manner will I bow and confess Jesus Christ is Lord? Will I do so in humble adoration? Will I do so in shame? Those who bow in humble adoration will be welcomed into the kingdom. Those who bow in shame will be excluded.

The way to respond to Jesus now is the way the faithful will respond then: humble adoration, confessing Jesus is Lord.

We're at the gospel. That's the good news of salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus. It's good news that God is merciful and pardons our rebellion. It's good news that God gives us a new heart to do battle with sin. It's good news that there's a kingdom to come where the fall will be undone and death and sin will be no more.

We embrace the good news through faith and repentance. Turning from sin by trusting in God's promises of mercy in Christ.

If you comprehend your sin and brokenness and God's mercy, call on God to forgive you by trusting in Jesus and what he did on the cross.