

Place: Lurgan Baptist 21:12:2014

Reading: Philippians 2:5-11

THE JOURNEY TO JOY

7. THE CHRISTIAN'S MODEL

Joseph Ernest Renan, a French historian of the 1800's said this, *"Let the greatest surprises of the future come, but never has arisen, nor shall there arise another like Jesus Christ."* Charles Lamb, the essayist once said, *"If Shakespeare walked into the room we would stand But if the Lord Jesus walked into the room would bow."* Dr. W. Davis has called this passage *"the sublimest passage in Paul about the person of Christ."* Here in (2:5-11) we are exposed to the perfect role model for unity in the church. Do you know what it is that causes division in the local church ? **Self.** Our problem is usually our selfishness and pride. Because of our pride we insist that we are right, we insist in having our own way, we seek to assert our rights, we try to control other people, and we grasp power for ourselves. But how different was the Lord Jesus.

You see, here we are given a glimpse of His perspective so that we might see the price that must be paid for unity, is nothing less than death. It is a willingness to turn totally away from our own prerogatives in order that we might focus on the needs of others. No one has ever done that like Jesus Christ did. So here we have an illustration of the kind of

humility and servant-hood necessary to preserve unity in the body of Christ. *Today's preachers use practical illustrations to explain doctrinal points, Paul used doctrine to explain the practical.* You see, all was not well within the church at Philippi. Smouldering beneath the surface of an otherwise spiritual church was division, dissension, and discord. (4:2) So here Paul sets before them, the mind of Christ. And what is the mind of Christ ? **It's the submissive mind.** It's the mind that is expressed in (2:4) Now this lack of unity among the saints at Philippi was the occasion for Paul to set forth probably the greatest Christological passage in the New Testament. Here Paul pictures the descent of Christ from the highest position in the universe down, down, down to His death, and then He carries us up the other side of the hill and let's us see this same Christ exalted far above all.

Now let's remember that as we look at this tremendous passage that we are privileged to see the mind of Christ not merely for the satisfaction of our intellects, but for the reformation of our lives. In other words we are to see the mind of Christ, and then reproduce it in our own lives. *"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus."* (2:5) Do you know what this season of the year reminds us of ?

(1)THE INCARNATION OF THE SON

In the words of Paul, *"Great is the mystery of godliness God was manifest in the flesh."* (1 Tim 3:16) Did you know that there is no recorded birth in Scripture after the birth of the Lord Jesus ? Did

you know that the last genealogy or family tree listed in the New Testament is that of the Lord Jesus ? Because, the entire Bible from Genesis to Malachi pointed to the birth and the name of Jesus Christ. Now Paul does not give us any details about Christ's birth. He leaves that to Matthew and Luke. Matthew and Luke looked at the birth of Jesus Christ historically, they looked at the *historical event* but Paul gives us the *theological truth*. For beginning at (2:6) he takes us back behind the curtains of eternity and shows us what took place even before Christ was born. Paul's talks about,

(a) CHRIST'S ABSOLUTE DEITY:

" *Who being in the form of God*," The Amplified Bible puts it like this, " *Who, although being essentially one with God and in the form of God, possessing the fullness of the attributes which make God, God, did not think this equality with God was a thing to be eagerly grasped or retained.* " Now in no uncertain way the ***Deity of Christ*** is taught here. There are two or three words here that deserve our attention. The first is " *being*," (*huparchein*) The usual Greek word for " *being*," is not used here. Instead Paul chose another term that stress's the essence of a person's nature. It describes that which a man is in his very essence. ***The unchangeable, unalterable qualities of a man.***

So Paul begins by saying that Jesus Christ was and is unalterably and unchangeably God. He was, is and ever shall be God. But look at the word "*form*,"

(*morphe*) Sometimes when we think of the word "*form*," we think of outward shape, and it does not lose that meaning in the Bible. But we attach another meaning to the word. When we watch a person playing tennis or football we say, "*he was in fine form today.*" We mean that something belonging to the very essence of that man's game shone through. "*Form*," refers to the inner essential, abiding nature of a person. "*Form*," is something which never alters or changes. Now do you see what Paul is saying ? ***He is saying that Christ possessed inwardly and displayed outwardly the very nature of God Himself*** He is teaching that Jesus Christ had always been and always continues to be God by nature. He is teaching the *Deity of Christ*. My The Lord Jesus is not a man among men, He is not first among equals, He is not even the greatest of the great. Jesus Christ is God.

Do you see that word "*equal*," ? Scholars tell us that it is the word "*isos*," an isosceles triangle is a triangle with two equal sides, and the word means "*equal in size, quality, character and number*," In every way Jesus Christ was, is, and ever shall be God. Do you recall John's marvellous statement ? "*In the beginning was the Word*" (*Jn 1:1*) Do you remember the Jews questioning the Lord Jesus ? "*Thou art not yet fifty years old and hast Thou seen Abraham ? Jesus said unto them, before Abraham was I am.* " (*Jn 8:58*) Do you recall that His hearers cried out in resentment that He was "*making Himself equal with God.* " (*Jn 5:18*) My this is what our Saviour did claim that He was one with the Father. In His great high priestly prayer He prayed, "*Father, glori.b, Thou me with thine own*

self with the glory which I had with Thee, before the world was." (Jn 17:5) My in this rationalistic age where modernists and liberals would talk of a purely human Jesus we assert our belief in a Christ who was, is, and ever shall be God. (a)

(b) CHRIST'S PERFECT HUMANITY:

" But made Himself of no reputation", (2:7) This is more clearly translated *" He emptied Himself "* Now be very careful. Christ did not empty Himself of Deity, nor did He exchange Deity for Humanity. ***Christ emptied Himself not by ceasing to be what He was (God) but by assuming something He was not before (Man) He was fully God and He was fully Man.*** He was not all God and no man. He was not all man and no God. He was not half God and half man. The Lord Jesus was fully God and fully man. How completely our Lord Jesus conformed to man inwardly and outwardly is seen in these three expressions. *" The form of a servant," " the likeness of men," " in fashion as a man."* The word *"form,"* in (2:7) is the same as used in (2:6) and denotes the very essence of humanity.

My the reality of Christ's humanity is seen in the gospels for of the Saviour we read, that He was hungry (Matt 4:2) that He fell asleep (Mk 4:38) that He was wearied with the journey. (Jn 4:6) What a mystery. *" The Word became flesh",* (Jn 1:14) *" Veiled in flesh,"* Christ became man. *Now that's challenging.* For remember Paul is pleading for lowliness of mind. (2:3) and what an example He has set before us. We

throw our weight around trying to impress others. We struggle for a reputation yet *"He made Himself of no reputation."* Christ stooped, He stepped down, behold Him and then go out and imitate Him. Christ became man. *Now that's comforting.* For as perfect man He experienced all that we have experienced sin apart, therefore He can help us in the trials of life. My are you facing temptation ? The Lord knows all about it. For He was *" tempted in all points",* (Heb 4:15) Are you suffering ? He knows all about it. For *" Christ suffered also for us leaving us an example that we should follow in His steps."* (1 Pet 2:21) Have you had disappointments ? (Matt 23:37) At home, in school, business ? Christ knows all about it ! Oh, *" we have not a high priest",* (Heb 4:15) *" In every pang,"* (1)

(2) THE HUMILIATION OF THE SAVIOUR

Now just how low could the Lord Jesus go ? Well, look at (2:8) My If God's action in taking human flesh is remarkable, then here is something which is sensational. *For the Eternal to become Incarnate is one thing, but for the Incarnate to become a Curse is quite another thing.* But this is what our Saviour did. He was obedient to His Father right up to the point of dying. (Heb 10:9) Christ came right down to the last rung of our salvation *" even the death of the cross."* You see, such a death,

(a) WAS SHAMEFUL:

Christ didn't die an ordinary death, He died the death

of a common everyday criminal. Crucifixion was not just a barbaric way of carrying out capital punishment. It was designed to bring total humiliating shame on the person being crucified.

The Lord Jesus died an Initial Death, as the Lamb of God slain from the foundation of the world. He died an Official Death, as the God selected substitute. He died a Judicial Death, a judgement death for others. He died a Sacrificial Death, the just for the unjust that we might be saved. But He died a Criminal Death, " the death of the cross." My to this place, to that death, to this depth Christ's journey from the skies has brought Him. I think of the Psalm that was in His mind as He hung there. Was He dwelling on these words ? " *I am a worm and no man, a reproach of men and despised of the people.*" (Ps 22:6) Think of this. **God Man Worm.** (a)

(b) WAS PAINFUL:

It has been said that the person who was crucified " *died a thousand deaths.*" Do you recall that the Saviour suffered the pain intensely ? (Ps 22:1) He even refused to take any drug which would have dulled His senses. (Mk 15:23) But my what were His sufferings at the hands of men, in comparison with His sufferings at the hand of God, for we read, " *it pleased the Lord to bruise him,*" (Is 53:10) " *He that is hanged is accursed of God.*" (Deut 21:23) " *Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law being made a curse for us.*" (Gal 3:13) Do you see Him nailed to that Roman cross ? From **below** Satan and his hosts

assail Him, from **round about** men heap scorn upon Him, (Lk 23:35) from **above** the wrath of God descends (Zech 13:7) from **within** there arises that awful cry of desolation, " *My God, my God why hast Thou forsaken Me.*" (Matt 27:46) Into the depths, the darkness, the degradation of Calvary Christ descends and we have to say, " *For you, for them for me.*" " *Oh what I am that I should be*" My when you think of all Christ did for you, how can you turn your back on the Lord's Table ? Brethren, when you think of the depths to which He descended for you, can you not be motivated to speak at the Lord's Table for Him ? Many years ago gold fever swept through California. A man went west leaving his wife and their boy in New England. Soon he struck it rich and sent for his loved ones. The wife's heart leaped for joy. Taking her boy to New York she boarded a steamer for San Francisco.

The ship had not been out at sea a very long time before there was a cry of " **Fire, Fire.**" On board was a powder magazine and the Captain knew the moment the fire reached that store all on board would be lost. Lifeboats were launched but they proved to be too small and too few and were quickly overcrowded. As the lifeboat pushed that way that mother pleaded with the boatman to take her and her boy. " *No I dare not take another.*" But she continued to plead and at last he consented to take one more. Do you think that mother leaped into the boat leaving her boy to perish with the others ?

No, she seized him, gave him one last hug and dropped him into the boat with these parting words, " *My boy if*

you live to see your father, tell him that I died in your place." Do you realise that this ? That Christ died in your place. That He became your Substitute. Oh, as I stand at Calvary at the place where I ought to have died, " two wonders I confess, the wonder of His glorious love and my own worthlessness." But look again for God did not leave Him there. (1) (2) (3)

(3) THE EXALTATION OF THE SOVEREIGN

You see, an ordinary baby is no cause for celebration, a dead Saviour is not worth commemoration, but a risen Lord calls for exaltation. So Paul gives us the climax to this great passage when he says, "*Wherefore God also*" (2:9) Exaltation is the reward of humiliation, a principle found throughout the Scriptures. Do you recall the Saviour Himself declared, "*for whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted*" (Lk 14:11) A few steps and the Lord Jesus is back where He properly belongs. Indeed Paul tells us that,

(a) In His Present Position Christ is Exalted:

" God also hath highly exalted him," (2:9) Up from the Tomb in Wondrous Resurrection, Up to the Skies in Glorious Ascension, up to the Throne in Illustrious Session. My do you see what God thinks of the finished work of His own dear Son ? God hath raised Him to the loftiest heights. The words " highly exalted," mean to " exalt to the highest rank and power, to raise to supreme majesty." Christ has been raised "far above all principality and power and

*might and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this world but also in that which is to come." (Eph 1:21) Moreover, He has been given " a name which is above every name." (2:9) What is this name ? Well, of course in Biblical days a name was very significant. It described the character of the person who bore it. (1 Sam 25:25 Matt 1:21) There are some who think that this name is Jesus. But the text does not say " at the name Jesus." Rather it's the name that belongs to Jesus to which every knee shall bow and that name is found in (2:11) where Paul says " **Jesus Christ is Lord,**" which in the Old Testament would be Jehovah. And no other name than Jehovah has a right to be called " a name above every name." "**Jesus Christ is Lord,**" My are you acknowledging His Lordship in every area of your life ?*

***Lord of every thought and action
Lord to send and Lord to stay,
Lord in speaking, writing, giving,
Lord in all things to obey***

(b) In His Future Prospect Christ is Exalted:

The word "*confess,*" means "*to agree with and openly proclaim.*" My when the Lord Jesus comes back, He's not coming to take sides, He's coming to take over. And every pagan tongue, (1 Cor 15:40) every atheist tongue, every Buddhist tongue, every Muslim tongue, every humanist tongue, every demonic tongue, (Rev 20:11) every angelic tongue (1 Pet 3:22) is going to confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. I wonder, what way will you make this

confession ? Will you make it joyfully as you confess Christ as your Saviour and Lord ? Or will you make it painfully as you sink into the depths of hell ? E. P. Scott was a pioneer missionary to India. One day he found himself surrounded by a murderous band of tribesmen. On impulse he took out his violin and began to play and sing, "*All hail the power of Jesus name.*" When he reached the verse, "*Let every kindred and every tribe,*" he saw to his surprise every spear lowered and many of the tribesmen moved to tears. One day at the name of Jesus every tribesman will lay down his spear, every blasphemer will silence his attack, every agnostic will abandon his belief, every king and queen will lay down their crowns and acknowledge Him to be Lord.

*Oh, that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall
Join in the everlasting song
And crown Him Lord of all*

Now we have almost reached the end of this great passage, but will you remember that Paul's aim is not intellectual but practical. Do you know what this season of the year is all about ? (1) (2) (3)

(4) THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE SAINT

I mean wasn't Paul writing to "*the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi,*" (1:1) And what does he say to these saints, to you and me ? "*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,*" (2:5) "*Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus,*"

You are in Christ, therefore you must be like Christ. The seventeenth century Puritan Thomas Brooks wisely observed that "*example is the most powerful rhetoric.*" Here is the Christian's Model, the believer's example, the saint's pattern. Let me ask you this are you "*in Christ ?*" Well, are you like Christ ? Do you have His attitude ? Do you have the mind of Christ ? That means having,

(a) THE SELFLESS MIND:

For Christ is an example par excellence of a totally unselfish outlook. What did Christ do ? He came from heaven to earth in the greatest stoop of all time. What's the usual reaction of that little child when you go to take their Christmas toys from them ? They usually cry, "*Mine, mine.*" The Lord Jesus did not say, "*Mine.*" rather He said "*others.*" (2:4) Lucifer said, "*I will.*" (Is 14:12) But Christ said, "*Thy will.*" (a) My we expect unsaved to be selfish and grasping but what about us as the Lord's people ? More than twenty times in the New Testament God instructs us how to live with one another. We are "*to love one another;*" (1 Thes 3:12) we are "*to prefer one another;*" (Rom 12:10) we are to "*edify one another;*" (Rom 14:19) we are to "*serve one another;*" (Gal 5:13) and we are not "*to judge one another:*" (Rom 14:13) (a) Have you got it ?

(b) THE SERVING MIND:

For Christ "*took upon Him the form of a servant.*" Have you ever noticed as you read the four gospels that

it is the Lord Jesus who serves others and not others who serve Him ? He is at the beck and call of all kinds of people, fishermen, harlots, tax-collectors, the sick and the sorrowing. Did Christ Himself not say " *The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto but to minister and to give His life a ransom for many*" (Matt 20:28) During the American Civil War General George McClellan was put in charge of the great army of the Potomac, mainly because public opinion was on his side. He fancied himself to be a great military leader and enjoyed having the people call him, " *a young Napoleon.*" However, his performance was less than sensational. President Lincoln commissioned him General in Chief hoping this would get some action but still he procrastinated. One evening President Lincoln and two of his staff went to visit McClellan, only to discover that he was at a wedding.

The three men sat down to wait and an hour later the General arrived home. Without paying any attention to the President, McClellan went upstairs and did not return. Half an hour later the President sent the servant upstairs to tell McClellan that the President was waiting. The servant came back to report that the McClellan had gone to bed. The Presidents staff were furious. Abraham Lincoln merely got up and led the way home. He said to his staff, " *This is not time to be making points of etiquette and personal dignity. I would hold McClellans horse if he will only bring us success.*" Are you willing to become a servant and " *wash one's another 's feet.*" (Jn 13:14) My so often we are like the two brethren who wanted to sit on the right and left hand of the kingdom.

(Matt 20:20) We're not willing to take the low seat, not willing to stoop to the obscure and unnoticed tasks, but Christ " *humbled Himself and took upon Him the form of servant,*" and Paul says, " *Let this mind be in you.*" (2:5) (a) (b)

(c) ***THE SACRIFICIAL MIND:***

You see, most of us are willing to serve others if it does not cost us anything, but if there is a price to pay we suddenly lose interest. But Christ " *became obedient unto death even the death of the cross.*" (2:8) Dr. J.H. Jowett has said, " *Ministry that costs nothing accomplishes nothing. If we would bless we must bleed* "At a religious festival in Brazil a missionary was going from booth to booth examining the wares. He saw a sign above one booth which said, " *Cheap Crosses,*" and he thought to himself, " *that's what many Christians are looking for these days, cheap crosses.*" My our Lords cross was not cheap, why should ours be ? Is it costing you anything to belong to Him ? Here then is " **The Christian's Model,**" here is what this season of the year is all about. (1) (2) (3) (4)

" *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,*" He is the Great Example. Lean on Him, Look to Him, Learn From Him. **Let the mind of the Master be the Master of your mind.**