

“The Humiliation And Exaltation Of Jesus Christ”

Philippians 2:1-11

Message by Michael J. Barnard

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Teaching Aim: To realize Jesus is the ultimate example of love and humility in Scripture. To understand God desires born-again Christians to follow the example of Jesus in loving one another; being of one accord; and being of one mind as we minister in His name. To explore the Christology found in **verses 6-11** as we examine the humiliation and exaltation of Jesus Christ. To recognize the fact that Jesus is fully God and fully Man; “*one Person*” revealed in “*two natures*.”

DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD’S WORD (*BIBLE STUDY*)

Part I: Do nothing out of selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind consider others better than yourself (vv. 1-4)

1. What makes the Council of Nicea (A.D. 325) so important to Christians today? Who were the following individuals and what was their role at the Council of Nicea: Constantine; Arius; and Athanasius? (Hint: Search Online) Who did the council end up siding with? What modern cult has teachings similar to that of the heretic Arius? Arius taught that Jesus Christ is a created being and the first of God’s creation. That would make Jesus a creature. What do the following Bible verses teach about Jesus? (See **John 1:1-4; Col. 1:16-17**)
2. What did Paul mean when he asked the Philippians to fulfill his joy by having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind (**vv. 1-2**)? Did Paul intend for the church to compromise and have this kind of unity with heretics and false teachers? Why is it important for the true church to minister in love, being of one accord and with one mind today? Does having one mind mean that we agree with every Christian on every single point? What does it mean?
3. Do Paul’s instructions in **verse 3** contradict much of what is seen in society today? If so, how? Why is “*selfish ambition*” not a good way to live your life? What is the exact opposite of selfish ambition? (See **Jam. 4:10**) What did Paul mean by saying, “*in lowliness of mind*”? Did Jesus minister in selfish ambition or did He minister in lowliness of mind? (See **Matt. 20:27-28**) If Jesus is the ultimate example of how we should live, why do you think so many Christians wrestle with “*selfish ambition*” today? What are some practical ways that you can serve others?

4. Today we hear a lot from advertisers on television, radio, and the internet encouraging us to focus on our own desires. What is their motive in doing this? Why is this kind of encouragement dangerous for us as Christians? How should Christians live their lives according to **verse 4**? Why? What kind of an impact do you think Christians could make on the world if we really did live out **verse 4** in our everyday lives?

Part II: Jesus Christ, the ultimate example of humiliation and exaltation. (vv. 5-11)

1. We believe in one God revealed in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Godhead is equal in essence (or deity) but different in role. Do **verses 5 and 6** help or hinder your understanding of the Trinity? Why? (See Commentaries) How does the humiliation (or humbling) of Christ relate to the incarnation? (See **Matt. 1:21**) What did Paul mean when he said that Jesus *“did not consider it robbery to be equal with God”* (**vs. 6**)? (See Commentaries)
2. The NIV (New International Version) translates **Philippians 2:6**: *“Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped...”* Today many people desire glory for themselves, not Jesus. Although fully God, Jesus in His human nature was not concerned about His glory but rather His mission. (See **1 John 4:14**) What can we learn about the glory of Christ from the following verses? (See **John 1:1-3,14; Col. 1:15-17; Heb. 1:1-5**)
3. What radical change did Christ voluntarily make according to **verse 7**? Does Paul’s comment that Jesus came *“in the likeness of men”* (**vs. 7**) imply that Jesus did not really have a human nature, but rather was simply *“found in appearance as a man”* (**vs. 8**), or even perhaps a spirit? How would this interpretation be inconsistent with orthodox Christology (the study of Jesus Christ)? Note: Jesus is fully God and fully Man. Where we have only one nature, Jesus has two.
4. What are some ways that we can know Jesus was fully Man? (See **Mark 4:37-38; 14:16-18; Luke 2:5-6; 24:43; John 11:35**) Jesus was not only fully Man, He was the perfect Man. Why was it important for Jesus to come in the flesh? (See **2 Cor. 5:21**) The Greek theological word *“kenosis”* is used in referring to the doctrine of the self-emptying of Christ at His incarnation. What did Christ empty Himself of at the incarnation? Was it His deity or glory? (See **John 17:1-5**)

5. What was the ultimate humiliation that Jesus Christ endured according to **verse 8**? (**See Matt. 27:22-40; Gal. 3:13**) Why were Roman citizens spared from having to undergo crucifixion? In **Psalm 22** David described crucifixion some 1,000 years before Jesus Christ and 700 years before this cruel form of execution was invented. How do you see crucifixion being described in **Psalm 22**? Was it necessary for Christ to die on a cross or could he have died some other way? Why? How was the death of Christ on the cross different from that of any other person that was crucified? (**Rom. 5:8-9; 1 Cor. 15:3,4; 1 Pet. 2:21-24**)

6. What did God do as a result of the obedience of Jesus Christ (**vs. 9**)? Christianity stands or falls on the resurrection of Jesus Christ. What makes the ascension of almost equal significance? (**See Acts 1:9-11; Heb. 1:3**) What name is being referred to in **verse 9**? (**See Acts 4:12**) What, if any, significance is there in this special name?

7. What similarities do you see between **verse 11** and **Isa. 45:22-24**? How are the two Scriptures different? At the name of Jesus, every knee "*will bow*" and every tongue "*will confess*" that Jesus is Lord; some voluntarily and some by force at the final judgment (**vs. 10-11**). What will happen on judgment day to those who voluntarily call upon Christ as Savior and Lord? (**See Rom. 10:9-11**) What will happen to those who refuse to confess Jesus as Savior and Lord? (**See Psal. 2:1-12**) What warning is given to unbelievers in **Psalm 2:12**?

8. Have you received Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. If not, why not do so right now in prayer?

9. Please spend a few moments and bask in the richness of the two famous historic Christian creeds on page 4.

KEY HISTORICAL CREEDS RELATING TO JESUS CHRIST (Creeds are historical statements of faith.)

The Nicene Creed 381 A.D.

[I believe] in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; [God of God], Light of Light. Very God of very God, begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father; by whom all things were made; who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary, and was made man; He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; and suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And [I believe] in the Holy Ghost, the Lord, and Giver of life; who proceedeth from the Father [and the Son]; who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and glorified; who spake by the Prophets. And [I believe] in one holy catholic and apostolic Church; [I acknowledge] one baptism for the remission of sins; and [I look] for the resurrection of the dead; and the life of the world to come.

The Chalcedonian Creed – 451 A.D.

The defining statement historically for orthodox Christology (the study of Jesus Christ):

Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.

Discussion questions:

1. What did you learn from reading through these creeds?
2. Why are the creeds important for Christians today?
3. Are the creeds something we should still be memorizing in the 21st century? Why?

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- It is the desire of the Lord Jesus that we love each other while being of one mind and of one accord.
- In lowliness of mind, we should esteem others as better than ourselves.
- Jesus is fully God and fully Man.
- In His human nature, Jesus temporarily set aside His glory, but not His deity.
- The ultimate act of love and humility was Jesus dying on the cross for our sins.
- As a result His death, God highly exalted Jesus that at His name every knee will bow.
- Every tongue will confess Jesus is Lord, either willingly or by force.

- The humiliation of Jesus was done to the glory of God.