

CHRIST OUR LORD

Philippians 2:6-11

In our study of the first five verses of this chapter we noted Paul's exhortation to unity and his exhortation to the imitation of Christ our Example. We concluded with an observance of Christ's way of thinking. We discovered that He wants us to cultivate the qualities of humility and unselfishness and to avoid strife and vainglory.

Continuing our study of this exhortation to the imitation of Christ our Example and our Lord, let us note:

2. His humiliation. 2:6-8.

(1) The nature of it. 2:6-7a.

It was the will of the Father for Him to come down from those dizzy heights of glory, and to live in the midst of our sin and shame and pollution. We get accustomed to it, but it was terrible for Him, the infinitely Holy One, He came only at the will of the Father. The Saviour said, "Neither came I of myself, but my Father sent me." And He was held here in the will of the Father. He emptied Himself, but not of His deity.

(2) The manner of it. 2:7b.

"But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." The idea of a servant here is not usefulness, but of obedience, being told what to do. While with the Father and the Spirit in glory, the Lord Jesus had never been told what to do.

As a man He humbled Himself. With no home in which to be born, He was born and laid in a manger. He became a poor man with no place to lay His head. He did not become a rich man. He did not become a man who was highly honored. He did not take the highest office among men.

(3) The extent of it. 2:8.

He became a man, a poor man, a despised man, and a dead man. He did not die quietly among His friends. He did not die a heroic death on a field of battle. He was hanged. In that day death on the cross was as shameful as death on the gallows today.

3. His exaltation. 2:9-11.

(1) In the past. 2:9a.

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him." "Wherefore" can be translated "for this reason." Because He went to the depths, God exalted Him to the heights. The Lord Jesus Christ made the journey from the throne to the manger, then, from the manger to the cross and the tomb, and from the tomb back to the throne from whence He came. So great was the lowliness of His mind that Christ voluntarily emptied Himself, but God saw to it that He was exalted. That is always the way. Not only did He raise Him from the dead, but He welcomed Him to the glory which He had shared with Him before the world began.

(2) In the present. 2:9b.

"And given Him a name which above every name." Today, in glory, He has a name which is above every name. This name denotes all that He is now known to be, as Son of God and Son of Man. There is no name of mortal man so great in the history of the world that it may not be equaled by another. But when we mention the name of Jesus,

there is no one to stand beside Him. He stands alone, august, unique, supreme. Comparison between Him and any other being in the world is impossible.

"The name of Jesus is so sweet,
I love its music to repeat;
It makes my joys full and complete,
The precious name of Jesus.

"Jesus," oh, how sweet the name!
"Jesus," every day the same;
"Jesus," let all saints proclaim
Its worthy praise forever."

(3) In the future. 2:10-11.

"That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth. And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." Note the terms, the knee and the tongue. We do not bend our knees enough. I think we have very largely gotten away from kneeling before the Lord. And we do not confess Him very much, considering all of the time we have, and all the words we use, and all the talking we do. What a glorious triumph awaits our Lord when every tongue shall confess that Jesus is more than man, that He is Christ and Lord "to the glory of God the Father." All honor paid to Christ must be "to the glory of God the Father."

What are the reasons why the Lord Jesus Christ should be the object of our admiration, reverence, worship and service?

1. Christ deserves it.

In the light of His miraculous birth, sinless life, vicarious death and triumphant resurrection, Christ certainly deserves to be the Lord of our lives. It is His inherent right. Christ's lordship is richly deserved. "And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Philippians 2:8-11). The title of Lord belongs to Christ by right of creation, by right of the Father's appointment, by right of preservation and by right of redemption. Creation and preservation are great works, but redemption is infinitely greater. Meditation upon His sacrifice for us will convince us of His rightful claim to our allegiance.

Unquestionably Christ merits our recognition of His lordship in all realms of life, and it is, therefore, to our infinite advantage to give Him the place to which He is justly entitled.

What a pity that there are those who hail Christ as Saviour and attempt to ignore Him as Sovereign! Yet, these claims are presented with equal force in the Scriptures.

When Garibaldi, at great personal sacrifice and suffering, had delivered Italy from her aggressors, he was hailed by all as the saviour of the nation. No flattery was too fulsome, and no praises were too extreme for the national hero. One party suggested that the logical recognition of such service was to place him on the throne and to entrust to him the scepter of the empire. His saviourhood entitled him to sovereignty. Others, however, although glad enough to enjoy the blessings accruing from his saviourhood, disputed his right to sovereignty and for a few days he was actually imprisoned by those whom he had saved from annihilation by the invading hordes. Garibaldi was later banished

to the Island of Capri which was presented to him in recognition of his services to his country. What a recompense for self-sacrificing heroism!

Is Christ not frequently treated in a similar manner? His Saviourhood is gladly welcomed, but He Himself is banished to some back room of the heart, while Self fills the throne which is His by purchased right. May I lovingly ask, Is this true of you? Do you reserve to yourself the right to have your own way? If so, His claim to lordship in your life is either disputed or denied. In significant fashion Charles Lamb expressed the proper attitude of the Christian toward Christ. He said, "If Shakespeare were to come into this room, we should rise to meet him; but, if Jesus were to come into it, we would all fall upon our knees." Inasmuch as He bought us and we belong to Him, we are under obligation to glorify our Lord. Since He has given His all for us, and thereby delivered us from bondage and death and given us liberty and life, we owe Him all that we are and have. Will you concede His right to be the Lord of all?

2. Christ desires it.

Our Lord wants to be trusted implicitly, loved supremely and obeyed faithfully. He asserts His superiority over the ties of domestic life, the claims of business and the highest earthly positions.

Christ desires to be the Lord of three things:

(1) Our personalities -- all that we are.

a. Our bodies -- the physical.

Dedication of the body to the Lord is the surest safeguard against the tyranny of sensual sin. "Ye are not your own. For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's" (I Corinthians 6:19-20).

b. Our minds -- the intellectual.

The supremacy of Christ in the realm of the mind has been challenged through the centuries. Are you willing to let Christ regulate your thoughts and determine the food upon which you feed them?

c. Our hearts -- the emotional.

The first rival claimant to the control of the heart is self. Personal ambition frequently finds its place where the unselfish and magnanimous Christ should have His throne. Such a heart is not happy, serene and victorious. Christ claims the right to control our affections -- our likes and dislikes, our loves and hates. He desires the first place in our affections for our highest good.

d. Our wills -- the volitional.

One can take the privilege and power of choice and reach the heights of glorious achievement or sink to the depths of ignominious shame. Christ does not want the human will to be enslaved any longer by the dominion of self. He desires the will in order that He may liberate and ennoble it. His will is not something that is to be dreaded or accepted reluctantly. Christ wants our wills to be subject to His perfect will and our lives to be at His disposal.

(2) Our Possessions -- all that we have.

Among our possessions which He desires to control are self, talents, time, money and influence.

(3) Our plans -- all that we hope to be.

When our plans are surrendered to Him, He does not blight them, but He blesses them.

With reference to our personalities, our possessions and our plans, Christ wants us to discover His will and then to do His will.

"Naught that I have my own I call,
I hold it for the Giver;
My heart, my life, my hope, my all,
Are His, and His forever."

III. The Results Of Christ's Lordship.

The lordship of Christ is to be tested in the crucible of personal experience. The history of Christianity reveals that it is truly remarkable what Christ has done and is doing with those who have yielded themselves cheerfully and unreservedly to His lordship. He has mastered many unpromising lives and made them gloriously worth while. Christ satisfies the deepest desires and noblest aspirations of the human soul. The lordship of Christ results in peace of mind, joy of heart, victory over temptation, enrichment of life, helpfulness to others and glory to Christ. Since Christ is the source of our strength and the secret of our success, there cannot be effective service apart from Him. He said, "Without me ye can do nothing" (John 15:5). Without the Lord there will be fruitless toil, but with Him there will be productive labor. Inasmuch as He has saved us and we belong to Him, we are under obligation to enthrone Him as the Lord of our lives and to bring all of the glory possible to His matchless name. Under His lordship our noblest manhood or womanhood will rise to its best.

Before you can experience the noblest and highest and best in life, a dedication of self and substance to Christ is necessary. He is not really your Lord until by a voluntary self-surrender you give yourself to Him, with somewhat the same attitude as Paul who said, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6). A clear and definite act of your will is necessarily involved in the lordship of Christ, for He must be crowned "Lord of all." If you are now willing to concede His right to be the Lord of your life and enthrone Him as such, join us in singing the Coronation Hymn:

"All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall;
Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all!

Ye chosen seed of Israel's race,
Ye ransomed from the fall,
Hail Him who saves you by His grace,
And crown Him Lord of all!

Let every kindred, every tribe,
On this terrestrial ball,
To Him all majesty ascribe,
And crown Him Lord of all!

O that with yonder sacred throng
We at His feet may fall!
We'll join the everlasting song,
And crown Him Lord of all!