A scenic view of a mountain valley. In the foreground, there are lush green trees. The middle ground shows a small village with a prominent church featuring a tall, thin steeple. The background consists of steep, forested hillsides leading up to majestic, rocky mountain peaks under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

Book 3

Philippians: Twin Passions

**To Know Christ and to
Make Him Known**

Vistoso Community Church

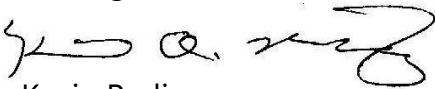
Foreword

I don't know how many times I've read through the Book of Philippians: A dozen times! Two dozen! And yet, I never cease to be amazed at what happens when I return once more to the infinite source, the Word of God, and ask,

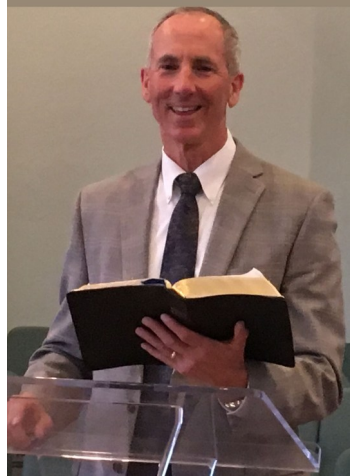
"Lord, what do You have for us today?"

Part of the answer I received in Philippians is in these Philippians booklets, of which this is Book 3. I trust you will be blessed to the same extent as I have been!

In His grace,



Kevin Redig



All Scripture quotes have been taken from either the NIV (1984 edition) or the NKJV (1982 edition).

Vistoso Community Church
Publication: April 2026

Introduction

As we begin to work our way through Philippians Chapter 2, I want to prepare you for what we are going to find.

The first is that we are still working under the *umbrella* of Philippians 1:27:

Just one thing: As citizens of heaven, live your life worthy of the gospel of Christ. Philippians 1:27

What that means is that we are continuing to develop the picture of what it means to walk worthy of our heavenly citizenship and the Gospel of Christ. These are not *take it or leave it* suggestions for the one who wants to live in obedience to God's call on the Christian. The things we are going to cover are the very substance of the Christian Life!

Frankly, I am glad we are being reminded to consolidate and develop our heavenly citizenship. This idea must permeate our thinking if we are going to have any success in living the quality of life to which God has called us. This challenge to a changed perspective is nicely stated in the following quote. We are saints with a spiritual citizenship, and so we need:

... a spiritual atmosphere in which to breathe; spiritual food to eat; spiritual garments to wear; spiritual companions with whom to fellowship; spiritual exercise to keep fit and strong; spiritual strength to endure suffering and affliction; spiritual weapons with which to war.

R. Paxson

Second, I want to impress upon you the fact that we are unpacking truth from an infinite source of riches. I read through the New Testament multiple times each year and have done so for many years, so I am reasonably familiar with the text. But we are not simply reading it again! We are going verse by verse—sometimes word-by-word—to see what God has preserved for us in His Word. What we are doing is a little bit like a gold miner who has found a promising spot to dig and starts a simple excavation. From that humble start, he has found a rich seam of gold that goes down and down and down.

The Word of God is an infinite source of riches for the child of God! You are going to be amazed at how much we unpack from each group of three or four verses throughout this chapter. Yet, all we are doing is uncovering what God has for us right now. When we return to the same verses at some future date, we will find that infinitely more spiritual truth remains!



An Unforgettable Passage

If I achieve my goal, Philippians 2:1-4 will become an unforgettable passage. Here is a simple outline of what we are going to find:

1. Our Encouragement in Christ
2. The Call to be *Like-minded*
3. Bringing Joy to Our Heavenly Father

After an explanation of each point, we'll draw some conclusions and make some application.

1. Our Encouragement in Christ

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion ...

Philippians 2:1

If any encouragement ... The Greek word translated *encouragement* has a very broad range of meanings, including: to comfort, encourage, exhort, rebuke, and guide. This word is often used in describing the ministry of the Holy Spirit, for He *comes alongside* to do all of these things, dependent upon our need.

... from being united with Christ ... This brings every Christian face to face with a very simple question: "*Are you encouraged, comforted, exhorted ... by your personal relationship with Christ?*"

You and I should be! Twenty-three times in the Book of Ephesians, the child of God is said to be *in Christ*. For this reason, we find that we are with Him where He is, have a share in what He has, and have the promise of a share in His future!

Paul sums it up this way:

For in Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form, and you have been given fullness in Christ ...

Colossians 2:9-10

Are you aware of the breadth of what this includes? Jesus saved us! We were the joy set before Him that led Him to the cross. Now, He lives to intercede for us as our advocate before the Father; He is our High Priest; He is, right now preparing a place for us in His Father's house; and He loves us with a love from which nothing can separate us! Everything in this life pales into insignificance in comparison to the encouragement and comfort that is ours in Jesus Christ!

Praise be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

Ephesians 1:3

Finding encouragement in Christ is the birth-right of every child of God! We must seek to understand and believe in the precious promises in God's Word that reveal all of what it means to be ***in Christ!*** We dare not leave untouched what is meant to be ours!

... if any comfort from His love ... In the midst of trial, we may *feel* unloved, but a review of the Scripture will always set the record straight. No trial in this life will ever be able to separate us from that in which we are meant to take comfort—the love of Christ!

Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? ... For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 8:35, 38-39

... if any fellowship with the Spirit ... Consider what God has done for every child of God:

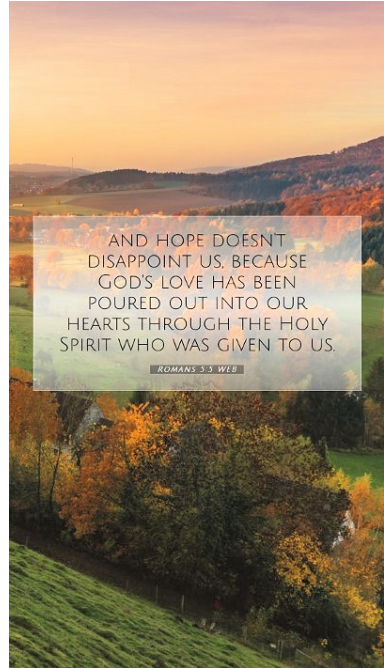
... God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us. Romans 5:5

... your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God ...
I Corinthians 6:19

God has made every provision necessary for us to enjoy fellowship with Him by means of the Holy Spirit. If we do not have such fellowship in our experience, it is because we have grieved or quenched the Spirit by sin.

To regain that ongoing fellowship with the outpoured Spirit, we must confess our sin (I John 1:9), trusting in the *Blood of Christ* to cleanse us (I John 1:7). It is only then that we can press on to being *filled with the Spirit, walking by the Spirit*, and bearing the *fruit of the Spirit*.

... if any tenderness and compassion ... These two words speak of our passions and emotions. They are not at the beginning of the list for a reason. They are meant to be our proper response to what we have in Christ. Run through this single verse from the beginning. As you do, meditate on the intimacy of your union with Christ, the depth of His love for you, and the exceeding blessedness of fellowship with the very *Spirit of Christ*.



You should have a response of wonder, awe, and praise from within your heart. If there is not this response, unbelief is in the way. Simply ask God to help you take Him at His Word, and trust that He has provided what He has promised.

Passing the test. Philippians 2:1 is a test of our level of spiritual growth:

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion ...

Philippians 2:1

In that regard, this is a very challenging verse of Scripture. It is asking, no matter your personal circumstances: Have you found your encouragement centered in your union with Christ, are you always comforted by His love, do you have continual fellowship with His Spirit, and do you have the joy of the Lord come what may? I can tell you this is only possible if the following are true:

- You have the Son!

He who has the Son has life ... I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

I John 5:12-13

- You have grown in grace and knowledge to the point you know the basics of what is yours in Christ.

Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation ...

I Peter 2:2

Paul is challenging the church in Philippi and every church down through the centuries. He is asking: Have you trusted in Christ unto eternal life, and have you

made progress in growing toward spiritual maturity, such that you have a measure of what is meant to be yours in Christ? If we answer these two questions in the affirmative, then we have arrived at the crux of the matter regarding this short, but unforgettable, collection of four verses of Scripture!

2. The Call to Be *Like-Minded*

This is the *Crux of the Matter!* If Philippians 2:1 is true of you, and it eventually should be in the life of every Christian, then you have reached a *crossroads* in your journey as a disciple of Christ! Of course, if you are not yet there, keep seeking to know God through His Word, continue to sit under good teaching—and you'll get there!



The *crossroad* is this: You would have given some degree of joy to your spiritual mentors, but, more importantly, you would have given joy to your heavenly Father. Here is what remains as unfinished business:

... fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. Philippians 2:2

As we shall learn, this is a call to take of the blessings we have received and begin to redirect them toward others.

We love to receive, but to learn to give in grace is often quite a challenge!

3. Bringing Joy to Our Heavenly Father

The church in Philippi was so dear to his heart that Paul wanted something from the church in order for his joy to be complete. By virtue of including this in the Canon of Scripture, I am suggesting that God wants something from our fellowship as well, in order that His joy in us would be complete!

Verse 2 begins to unfold what God desires, and Verses 3 and 4 complete the picture. I would also suggest to you that, by virtue of Paul's needing to point this out, the church in Philippi had not yet arrived at the desired degree of spiritual maturity. Neither have we in God's eyes, so let's pay careful attention.

Understanding the Means. *God desires that we not just taste the goodness of God's grace, but grow in grace until we reach spiritual maturity.*

There is rejoicing in heaven over the salvation of each lost individual—over every transfer from the dominion of darkness to the Kingdom of the Son. (Colossian 1:13-14) However, this is not an end unto itself but rather just the beginning. Every child of God is meant to grow spiritually, and it grieves the heart of God when we remain spiritual *babes in Christ!*

... though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's Word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil.

Hebrews 5:12-14

Having the Same Love. *We make our heavenly Father's joy complete by "having the same love" as our Savior!*

We begin by learning to be a recipient of the love of Christ, but maturity requires us to take that which we have received *in the vertical* and allow the Holy Spirit to produce the fruit of love *on the horizontal!* It makes the Father's joy complete when everyone knows:

"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another."

John 13:35

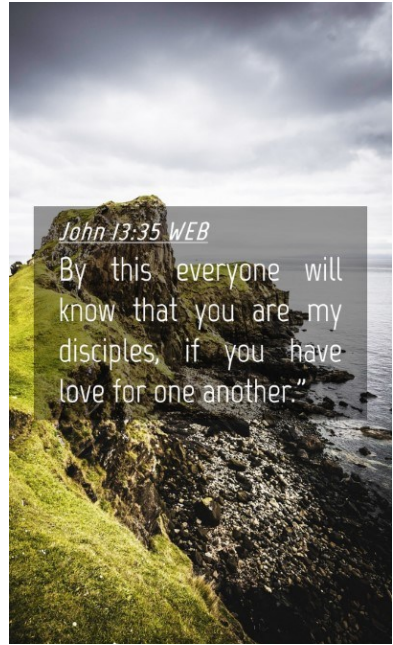
This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.

I John 3:16

Being of One mind. *We bring joy to our Father by "being of one accord, of one mind."*

Phrases like this are often used to promote unity within the church as a singular criterion, as if unity is the only thing that matters. Unity certainly does matter, but it does not stand alone. Our Father's joy is related to a Biblical understanding of unity around the truth!

... I am writing you these instructions so that ... you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the Church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth. I Timothy 3:14-15



Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one Body and one Spirit ... one hope ... one Lord ... one faith ...

Ephesians 4:3-5

On earth, God's household is the Church! What are you to find in the Church? Notice, this passage doesn't say truth, it says the unity! Of course, if we are all of *one accord and one mind* with respect to the truth—unity will be a natural by-product.

Likewise, notice how, in the Ephesians passage, unity is based upon fellowship with the Spirit, the church's singular hope, and the content of what we believe—our one faith. Differences in theological nuance will always exist among a body of believers, but we must understand that we only bring joy to our heavenly Father as we are thinking His thoughts after Him—as we are unified with respect to the truths we believe.

Understanding What Doesn't Work. *The "flesh" will never bring joy to our heavenly Father!*

Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or vain conceit (empty-glory) ... Philippians 2:3

Here we have the negative, and it is a very powerful reminder of what the flesh, our sinful nature, always seeks.



Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.

Philippians 2:3

I told you that this was an unforgettable passage of Scripture. It is meant to convict and shape our thinking from this point forward! Is this pleasant to hear, to uncover things we have all been guilty of in the past? Of course not, but we are on a mission to do those things which will please our heavenly Father! We desire to follow our Savior's example in a life of devotion to the will of the Father in the strength that He provides.

But, on the positive side, consider the rest of the verse:

... in humility consider others better than yourselves.

Philippians 2:3

The quality of humility is foreign to the flesh. The flesh seeks to elevate self, while God is pleased when we lower self. There is perhaps no better example of the difference between God's ways and man's ways than the character quality of humility. As proof, there is no direct word for humility in Hebrew, and both the Greeks and Romans found no virtue in humility, but instead disparaged it! Thus, in our Bibles, you will often find references to humility translated something similar to *lowly* or *lowliness of mind*.

"I live in a high and holy place, but also with the one who is contrite and lowly in spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly and to revive the heart of the contrite."

Isaiah 57:15

In the above verse, God is speaking, and He clearly is pleased with the *lowly in Spirit!* Now, note how another translation handles the verse:

"... with him who has a contrite and humble spirit ..."

Isaiah 57:15 (NKJV)

Why the difference? Since there was no Hebrew word for humility, when it came time for God to communicate

what He desired, he choose a word that described something that was *brought low*.

The very word translated lowly/humble is a word used to describe a river during a season of drought. Can you picture this? When there is just a trickle of water flowing between the banks, you have a *humble* river! That brings us to a fuller understanding. It brings joy to our heavenly Father when we lift others up after first lowering ourselves. Oh how beautiful this is when it is functioning in a fellowship of believers!

Just to make sure we understand, Philippians 2:4 clarifies Verse 3!

Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:4

In my experience, we usually don't need to be told to look out for our own interests. The challenge comes in putting the interests of others on a par with or ahead of our own! This brings to my mind the content of the twelfth chapter of Romans. After being exhorted to *put ourselves under orders to God as living sacrifices*, the text focuses our attention on: not thinking too highly of ourselves (that would be humility), being devoted to one another, honoring one another, letting no debt remain outstanding but that of continuing to love one another!

Summary of the Four Verses

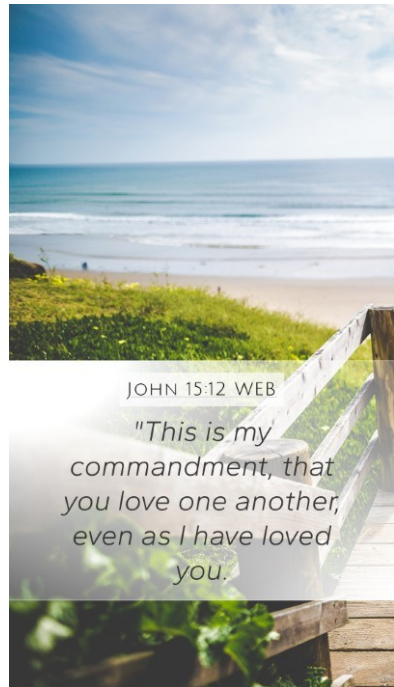
Allow me to summarize these packed four verses.

First, it would seem to bring joy to our heavenly Father when we progress along one particular line of thinking as laid out in Philippians 2:1-4. What we are learning is one particular aspect of spiritual maturity.

Second, to be more specific, we are to go from finding our comfort and encouragement in God's tremendous grace to us to manifesting that same grace to others!

Third, this is to take what we have come to learn and cherish *vertically*—and by that I simply mean between us and God—and apply it on the *horizontal* (toward others). This is harder to do than it might sound simply because we learn to love being the recipients of grace, but are far less keen on being the distributors of grace to others. So, our God is teaching us to do so for the reason that it brings joy to Him. That should be reason enough!

Fourth, can you imagine what a powerful witness to Christ any church fellowship would become if there were a concerted effort to live out the first four verses of Philippians Chapter 2? That should be exactly our goal! We can start by simply being willing to bring joy to our heavenly Father and in doing so bring glory to Him. Of course, the outcome of that behavior will be to become an attractive and compelling place of refuge for the lost and hurting of this world! What a wonderful legacy we would have—making a difference in our communities and extended families!



JOHN 15:12 WEB

"This is my
commandment, that
you love one another,
even as I have loved
you.

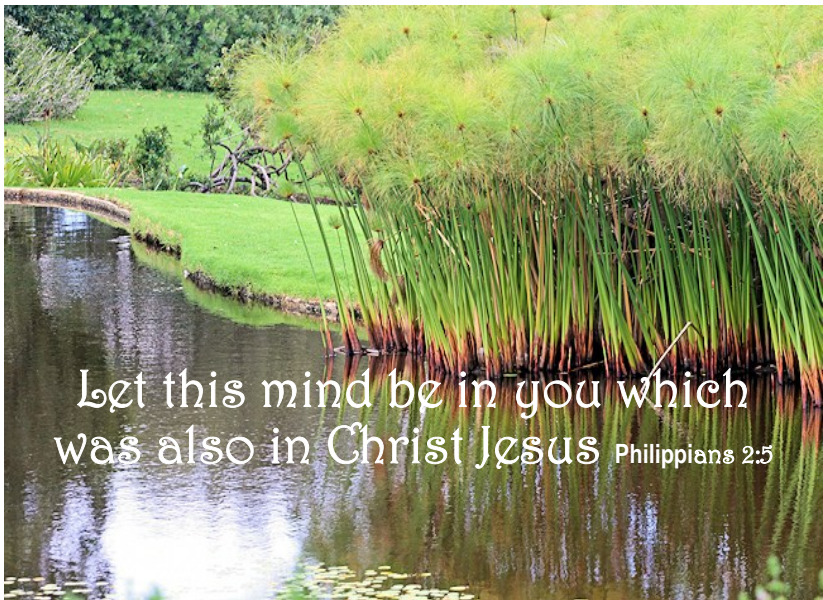
We are at a bit of a fork in the road. We could label one path: *"Let me consolidate what I have learned!"* At this point, this is a very understandable path to pursue. What we have learned is challenging and so foreign to the flesh, that we can feel the need to pause and work this out in our own lives. But there is a second path we could take, and that is the one called for by the Scriptures. We can take everything we have learned in these first four verses, stand back in wonder and say,

"Lord, if this is what you want in my life, you are going to have to do it! So, I will trust You to do what only You can do!"

Then, we can continue right on to the next challenge which is even more clearly going to have to be a work of God in our lives:

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus ...

Philippians



Clarifying the Challenge

The height of the challenge presented in this verse should be immediately obvious! In the Greek language, this is framed as a command—a command to adopt the same mindset as that of our Lord and Savior. We are to share His thoughts, His perspective, His approach. We call this *Divine Viewpoint*, and it is a very, very tall order that I will explore further!

First, having the *mind of Christ* is not natural to us.

Seek the Lord while He may be found; call on Him while He is near. Let the wicked forsake his way and the evil man his thoughts ... “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways,” declares the Lord.

Isaiah 55:6-8

What this Scripture should make clear is that, if we are ever going to comply with the command of Philippians 2:5, we are going to have to work at it! We are going to have to undertake a faith response. It isn't going to happen by itself.

Second, the good news is that we can be certain of sharing His mind as we align with the Word of God! For we have in the Bible the *mind of Christ* which is meant to *dwell richly* within!

For “who has known the mind of the Lord ...?” But we have the mind of Christ.

I Corinthians 2:16

Let the Word of Christ dwell in you richly ...”

Colossians 3:16

Third, we have the Holy Spirit to help us in our pursuit of *knowing His mind*.

“He will bring glory to Me by taking from what is Mine and making it known to you.”

John 16:14

Fourth, this is meant to be a lifetime pursuit lasting as long as we are in this body, as long as we are able to commune with our God through His Word:

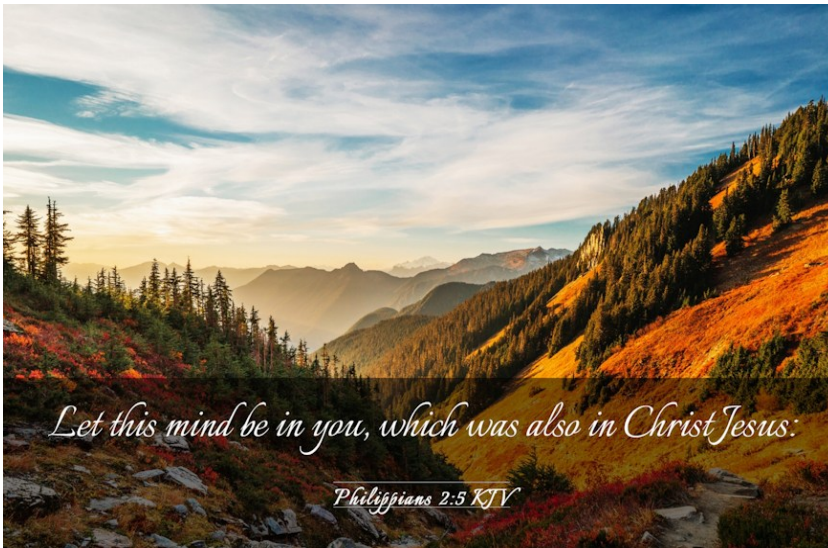
Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus ...
Philippians 2:5

Blessed is the man who listens to Me, watching daily at My doors ... For whoever finds Me finds life and receives favor from the Lord.” Proverbs 8:34-35

Fifth, let's look backward in our text for a moment:

- Is this part of what it means to make Christ the center and circumference of our lives? (Philippians 1:21) Yes!
- Is this part of what it means to walk as a citizen of heaven and worthy of the Gospel of Christ? Yes!

I trust you are beginning to see the depth of spirituality that Paul is unfolding for us!



Understanding the Mind of Christ

Our text naturally leads us to the question, “*What exactly is on the mind of Christ?*” Of course, the default answer is: All that is contained in the Word of God. But that is not what Paul intends for us to consider. He is going to lay out a special case in the verses that follow, and they will take a bit of language work to understand.

Who existing in the form of God ... Philippians 2:6

What the Verse Says

The Greek word translated *form* is the root word from which we get morphology, which refers to such things as the structure of living organisms or the structure of words within the context of language. This is telling us that Jesus came as God at His First Advent.

It is a grave error to take this word *form* and make it mean that the Lord Jesus was somehow less than God. If an over translation helps, you can think of this as saying, *Who being structurally God!* It is also helpful to note that this issue has been settled elsewhere in Scripture.

He is the image of the invisible God ... by Him all things were created ... He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together ... For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him ... Colossian 1:15-17,19

The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of His being, sustaining all things by His powerful word. Hebrews 1:3

Continuing our development of Philippians 2:6:

Who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped ...

Philippians 2:6

Jesus, as a member of the Trinity, was reigning in heaven—coequal with the Father and the Spirit. But the Father's plan to redeem lost mankind required someone who could represent mankind and pay the penalty for sin, which is death. Jesus was of the mindset that He did not have to hold tight to His privileged position in heaven, as if it were going to be taken from Him. Instead, He:

... emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in human likeness.

Philippians 2:7

We have our word *form* again. We have now learned that if you wanted to know what God in the flesh would look like, it would be Jesus. And, it would not just be His miracles, but His deportment, character, and sinless perfection. If you want to know what a servant would look like—it would be Jesus. We see it in His humble entry into the human race, washing His disciples' feet, ministering to the needs of others ... even to the cross!

As for *human likeness*, Jesus was in all regards fully human as originally created. This was necessary if He were going to represent us in God's plan of salvation.

Since the children have flesh and blood, He too shared in their humanity ...

Hebrews 2:14

... He suffered death, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone.

Hebrews 2:9

But what does it mean when our text says that Jesus *emptied Himself*?

We must be careful. This phrase has been interpreted in many ways, most of which are incorrect. I consider this to be a point of theological orthodoxy, and we want to get it right! So, again I ask: *In what way did Jesus empty Himself?* Let's work through this carefully.

More About Jesus Would I Know!

The confusion in this passage is caused by the Greek word translated *empty*, which, by and large, has a negative connotation and means to *make of no effect*. So how does this apply to Jesus?

First, Jesus is eternal God! There is no Scriptural debate!



JOHN 1:1 KJV

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him, all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made.

John 1:1-3

You were redeemed with: **“the precious blood of Christ...He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.**

I Peter 1:19-20

Jesus did not come into existence, He has always been! He was there at the creation of this material universe, shaping and forming it on behalf of the Father. In the omniscience of God, He took on the role of mankind's redeemer—before man was created.

Second, one way to consider orthodoxy is as follows. Biblical orthodoxy says:

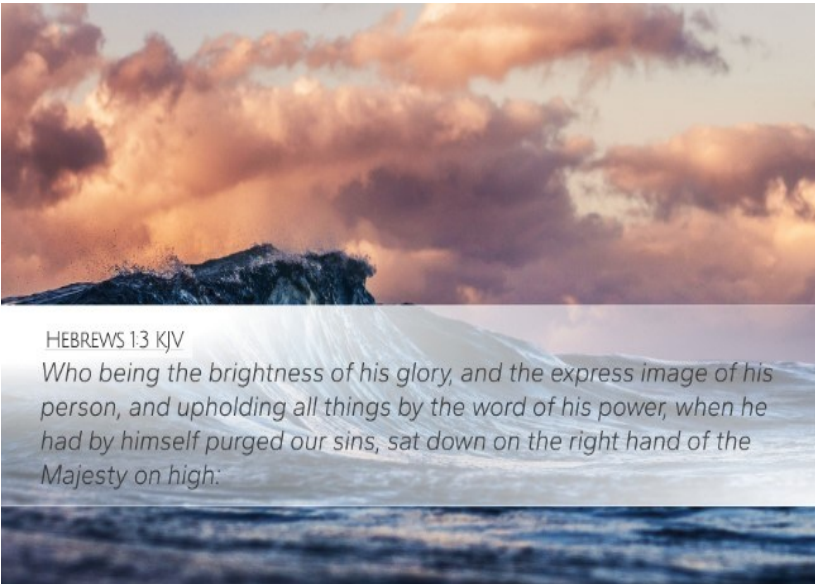
During the First Advent, Jesus Christ was both undiminished deity and true humanity in one person.

Robert McLaughlin

Error says that, during the First Advent, Jesus lost some aspect of His divine nature and/or some portion of His divine attributes. In other words, He was *less than* God.

This error is widely held and taught, despite the fact that God has sprinkled the truth throughout His Word:

- The Word is eternally God (John 1:1-3)
- The Son is the exact representation of the Father (Hebrews 1:3)
- All the fullness of deity is found in the Son (Colossians 2:9)



And that leads us to:

Jesus "emptied Himself" in that He gave up the independent use of His attributes in order to obey the will of the Father and redeem lost mankind.

So, on the one hand, in the *form of a servant*, Jesus washed the feet of the disciples. (John 13). On the other hand, in keeping with His divine nature:

- He rebuked the wind and the waves, and it was calm! (Matthew 8:26)
- He called out in a loud voice, "*Lazarus come out*"—and he did! (John 11:43)

Third, rather than take away from who the Lord Jesus Christ truly is, it is much more appropriate for us to stand back in awe and wonder at His devotion to the will of the Father. This devotion resulted in Him being both hungry (Mark 11:12) and feeding the five thousand with an abundance remaining!

Continuing in Our Text

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Philippians 2:8

If you could have looked upon Jesus, you would have seen a human being for:

He too shared in their humanity ... Hebrews 2:14

Jesus humbled Himself by taking on a role far below His divine standing, for the sole purpose of fulfilling the plans and purposes of the Father in providing a means of reconciliation for lost mankind. He modeled an

obedience for us that was all the way to the point of a death on the cross! This is what that obedience looked like:

God made Him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.

II Corinthians 5:21

He Himself bore our sins in his body on the tree ...

I Peter 2:24

... He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon Him ... it was the Lord's will to crush Him and cause Him to suffer ...

Isaiah 53:5,10

Ponder for a moment, the awesome combination that occurred at the cross with regard to the work of Jesus: obedience to the will of the Father and the joy that was set before Him for the saving of many! Oh, the wonder of the so-great salvation found in Jesus Christ.



Summary and Application

Let me take you back to Verse 5, that you and I might see the monumental challenge that has been laid down for us!

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus ...
Philippians 2:5

Allow me to paraphrase the text we have covered, so that you might better appreciate the mindset of Jesus.

We are to think the same way as our Lord and Savior—Jesus Christ. He revealed God the Father to us and, although co-equal and co-eternal with the Father, as an illustration of His selfless nature, He chose not to hold fast to His rightful place in glory. Instead, He set aside His glory and the independent use of His attributes in order to take on the role of a servant when adding humanity to His undiminished deity. During the time of His First Advent, He demonstrated His humility of spirit by His obedience to the will of the Father to the point of death—even the inglorious death of the cross!

Philippians 2:5-8, paraphrased

The Challenge

These verses are so demanding, so difficult, could any good come of it? As we all should know, that question has been decisively answered!

... He too shared in their humanity so that by His death He might destroy him who had the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.

Hebrews 2:14-15

When any of us believe in Him, we receive the very life of our Savior and need never fear death again! But the mindset of Christ and the example He set raises some hard questions for us:

- Are we as willing as Jesus was to respond to the will of the Father?
- Are we even aware of His will for our lives?
- Are we as willing as Jesus to give up what is rightfully ours to serve others?

Let me gently suggest that if we have accumulated a collection of *No's* to the above questions, then we have the wrong mindset!

Allow me to continue to connect the dots:

Have we learned to "empty ourselves," and by that I simply mean set aside the independent use of our time, energy, and material resources in order to take up the Father's calling on our lives? Are we prepared to "deny self, take up our cross daily, and follow Jesus?" (Matthew 16:24)

This is the *normal* Christian Life!

Whoever claims to abide in Him must walk as Jesus did.

1 John 2:6

I think it very reasonable to say that, not only are these opening verses memorable like few others, they present a daunting and seemingly insurmountable challenge to any spiritually sensitive heart. Have patience! The Lord is going to show us shortly how it is possible for us to actually have the *mind of Christ* and *walk as Jesus* did!

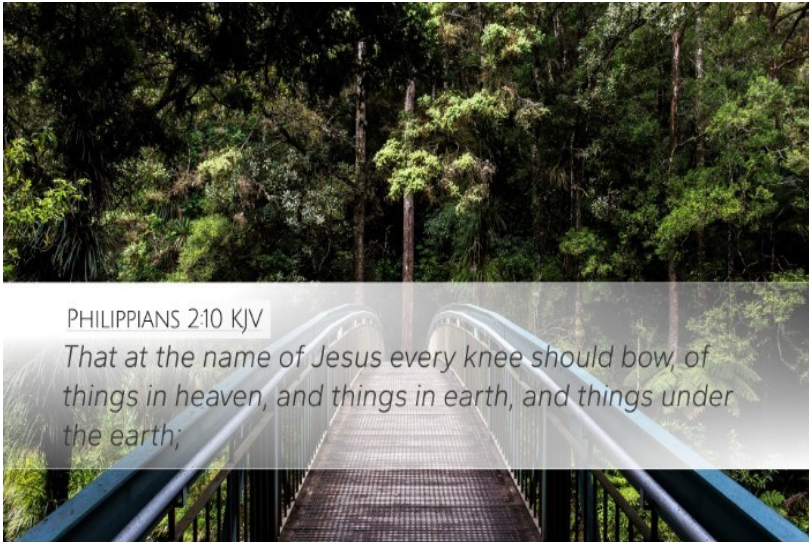
But before we get to the means, God is going to give us a marvelous incentive to respond. He is going to give us more than adequate reason to desire to respond to His call to have the *mind of Christ* and *walk as Jesus did*.

That at the Name of Jesus ...

As we look at our next portion of text, keep in mind this is all part of developing the idea of what it means to live *worthy of the Gospel of Christ in keeping with our heavenly citizenship!*

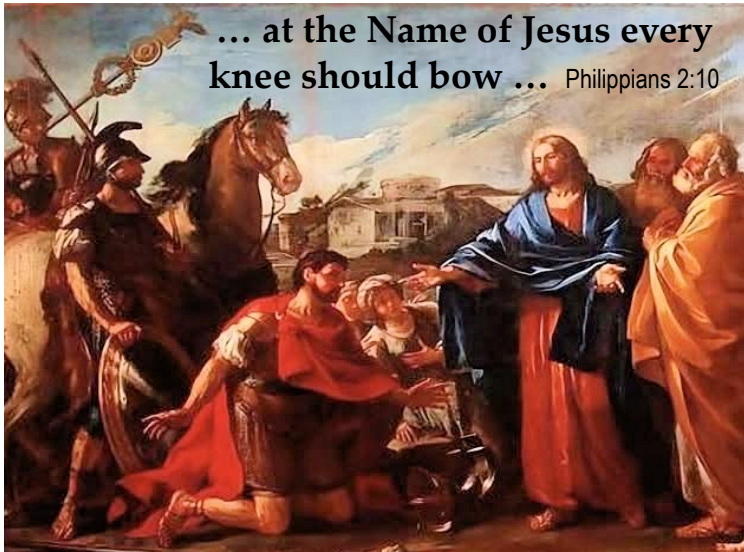
Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Philippians 2:9-11



Let's make sure we understand this passage from Philippians:

- **Therefore.** This word takes us back to what has come before; specifically, the humility and obedience of Jesus Christ and our call to be *like-minded*.
- **God has highly exalted** ... No longer are we looking at an example of humility and obedience to the point of death on the cross. Now, we have God the Father exalting the Son above all else.
- **a Name which is above every Name** ... The concept is that Jesus now has a title that is above every title, office, and rank. What name is this? Let me suggest it is LORD!
- **at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow** ... This is an act of submission to One who is greater. It is an act of reverence or respect.



- **of those in heaven, and of those on earth and of those under the earth...** Although there is much debate on the meaning of this phrase, let me suggest that it is simply meant to be all-encompassing. It includes: angels—fallen and elect, and human beings—dead or alive and saved or lost.
- **and that every tongue should confess...** I think it likely that some will confess willingly and some involuntarily, but every means every! For some, this will be part of our response to the Lord Jesus at the Bema Seat of Christ when we are being evaluated for reward. For others, this will be at the Great White Throne prior to being cast into the Lake of Fire. But one way or the other, all creation—willingly or unwillingly, as an act of praise or by force—has a confession to make!
- **that Jesus Christ is Lord!** In the Greek text, this is the word *Kurios*. Let me suggest that this is meant to connect to the Old Testament word for God—Yahweh.

And God said moreover unto Moses, “Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, ‘The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you. This is My name for ever, ...’ ” Exodus 3:15

When the above passage was translated into Greek, the word *kurios* was used for LORD. The Jesus who came and took on humanity—raised on high to the place of greatest exaltation—is the revelation of God to Moses and Abraham. He is eternal God!

- **to the glory of God the Father...** Obedience and exaltation bring glory! If we are understanding the above correctly, there is a way in which willing submission and confession of the supra-exalted status of Jesus Christ brings glory to God. There is also a way in which the same confession by the enemies of the cross brings glory—or vindication—to God. What is at stake for mankind is whether or not our certain confession of the Lordship of Christ will be done from a position of blessing or of judgment. That is a crucial distinction!

To Summarize

Make no mistake about it! Orthodoxy regarding the identity of Jesus has a *before and after* component! Jesus has always been eternal God:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God ... John 1:1

So that there is no confusion, the resurrected and ascended Jesus is true humanity, undiminished deity, and supra-exalted, having brought glory to the Father. His Name is above every name, because it is the same as the Father's!

He is LORD. Jesus is co-equal with the Father and the Holy Spirit. In Isaiah, God says:

"I am the Lord; that is My Name! I will not give My glory to another or My praise to idols." Isaiah 42:8

But God gives His glory to the Son! Why is that? The reason is that Jesus, too, is Lord! So, predictably, every knee will bow and every mouth confess, just as they should before the Father.

Thus, a controversy of worship has clearly been settled!

"... the Father judges no one, but has assigned all judgment to the Son, so that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him."

John 5:22-23

We are clearly to honor the Son, and this is our grounds for doing so! In fact, we can only come to the Father through the Son. The Son intercedes with the Father on our behalf, and is the basis for our access to the Father. The Son is the revelation of the Father to us—and His Name is LORD!

Who is speaking? In the following scripture, consider who is speaking.



"Turn to Me and be saved, all you ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is no other. By Myself I have sworn, My mouth has uttered in all integrity a word that will not be revoked: Before Me every knee will bow; by Me every tongue will swear. They will say of Me, 'In the Lord alone are righteousness and strength.' All who have raged against Him will come to Him and be put to shame."

Isaiah 45:22-24

Could this be an Old Testament quote revealing to us Jesus, who came in great humility and obedience to save and is now the recipient of honor from all? It would

certainly seem so—isn't this exactly the description in our passage?

The text promises that Jesus has the last word, that He is utterly vindicated, that in the end no opposition against Him will stand. There will not be universal salvation; there will be universal confession as to who He is. That means that 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.

Carson

How Does This Apply to Us?

At its center, Christianity is meant to be a personal response to Jesus Christ as Savior, followed by an ever-deepening relationship with Him.

Oh, how we have gone astray from this simple understanding. How often have we allowed Christianity to be communicated as a set of rules and regulations, a philosophy of life, or life by the *golden rule*? This is not how we come into a saving relationship with the Lord Jesus, nor is it how we are meant to continue in Him. Instead we begin by recognizing our hopeless, helpless, and hell-bound condition, and realize we can do nothing to address our desperate need. We put our faith in a person (Jesus Christ) and His work on our behalf (His death on the cross).

This is the sole basis by which we are able to enter into a relationship with Him. Once saved in this way, we are meant to *bow the knee* to Him as Lord as we seek to follow after Him. This is a personal, one person at a time, faith and follow-up confession.

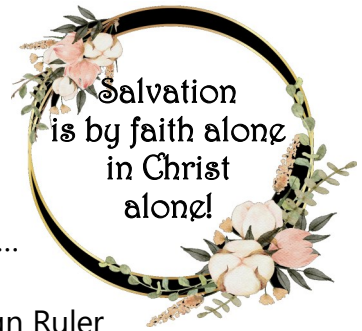
We need to look no further than the next chapter to see how this unfolds in the life of a disciple:

I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of sharing in His sufferings, becoming like Him in His death ... Philippians 3:10

Does the above reveal a certain depth of relationship in the life of Paul? I certainly think so!

First, Faith. *We must grab hold of the certainty of Philippians 2:9-11 by means of faith!*

The victory has already been won, and the end is certain. Every knee bowing ... and every tongue confessing Jesus as Lord has been decreed by the Sovereign Ruler of this universe. The fact that we are waiting for it to occur has nothing to do with the probability of it occurring! Perhaps you are thinking, "But what about all the events of 2025 ... or 2026 ... or 2027?" Our hope is the same: Jesus is coming, and all creation will bow and confess!



Then, an Example. *God is gently, but firmly, leading us to a point of understanding what I consider to be one of the most encouraging things in all of Scripture for every child of God—God's resurrection of Jesus from the grave.*

Consider the model, the Father and Son have developed for us. The Son acts in humility and obedience to the will of the Father, and the Father, in turn, shows His approval and vindication for the Son's response. Just to be clear, the Father's approval and vindication glorify the Son. Allow me to firmly state, this was not a bargain between the Father and Son, but an example, so that we, the creation, would know what to expect!

If we take the model to heart, what is our expectation? The short answer would be: *First the Cross and then the Crown!* Or, to spell it out, we should have an expectation of the Father exalting each and every one of us who follow the example laid down by Jesus Christ. To be specific, I refer to a life of dependent trust, humility, and obedient service. If we do so in the power of the Spirit, we should expect a share in Christ's outcome! Impossible, you say. Really, what sayeth the Word of God? Can we find the same outcome repeated in Scripture regarding the believer in Christ?

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all.

II Corinthians 4:17

I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.

Romans 8:18

When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with Him in glory.

Colossians 3:4

What is potentially ours in the above verses? *Eternal glory, glory, and with Him in glory!* Glory to come should be our expectation because this is how our God does things. I know you will ask, how much do I have to do in order to get such glory? That is to focus on the wrong thing. What has the Scripture already told us?

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ

Jesus ...

Philippians 2:5

What mind? I'll say it again: *dependent trust, humility, and obedient service!* What is at the far end of such a life? *GLORY!*

The Outcome. *As I understand the above, there is an added benefit—I grow an evangelistic backbone!*

I'm sure some are thinking: *"That's a strange outcome and exactly what do you mean?"* Have you ever been told some or all of the following: *"I am glad you find comfort in your faith, but I don't need that. I am managing things very well myself. Thank you, but I'm not interested. If our relationship is to continue, you need to keep your faith to yourself ..."*



You probably responded by clamming up. Now, although it is true we never want to force our faith on anyone else, there is also a place for setting the record straight, and here is what that might look like.

I don't want to lose your friendship, but the Jesus to whom I bear witness is not my personal coping mechanism. This Jesus is Lord of all—He created you, you live and breathe at His allowance, and one day you are going to stand before Him and give an account. You will bow the knee and confess His name with the greatest of joy or the greatest of trepidation. I am not seeking to share with you for my therapy, but for your eternal benefit. You may choose to disregard, but make no mistake about it, you do so at your own peril! I am simply bearing witness to my personal response after weighing the evidence and finding there is only one reasonable course of action to choose! I choose to bend the knee in humble adoration and confess the Name of Jesus in awe-struck praise!

And all God's people said... "Amen!"

VISTOSO Community Church

He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit...*John 15:5*

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