

*Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

**The Christmas Story from Paul's Perspective  
Philippians 2:5-11  
Part 8**

I am sure that you have all heard of John Walker commonly referred to as the “American Taliban.” He has just recently made his first court appearance in order to be formally charged with the following crimes:

Conspiring to kill Americans outside the United States.

Providing material support and resources to a terrorist organization.

Providing material support and resources to Bin Laden's Al Qaeda.

Contributing goods and services to the Taliban and to people whose property and interests are legally blocked in the war against terrorism.

If he is found guilty of these various crimes he could receive life imprisonment. I doubt when he made the choice to become a radical Muslim and involved with the Taliban that he was thinking about the possibility of appearing before an American judge in an American court to answer for these charges that have been made against him. But here he is and the day of reckoning is quickly approaching.

The same thing is true for the vast majority of the people in this world today. They are making choices today that they will one day be held accountable for not in an American court but rather in a heavenly court, not before an earthly judge but rather before a heavenly judge. And what will be the charges against them? This weekend's message hopefully will hopefully answer that question.

We have been studying a very lengthy passage beginning in Philippians 1:27 and going all the way down to Philippians 2:18. This passage of scripture explains to us what it means to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ. In order for us to make this claim we first of all must be standing firm for the faith of the gospel. We saw this in Philippians 1:27-30. Secondly we saw that we need to be striving for church unity in Philippians 2:1-4. The key to successfully doing this was to have the lowliness of mind, attitude, the humility of mind attitude of Christ which we saw during His humiliation which is described for us in Philippians 2:5-8. This was early phase of the Christmas story from Paul's perspective. But Paul was not satisfied with just giving us the early phase. He also gives us the later phase of the story as well. The latter phase of the Christmas story describes for us the exaltation of Christ in Philippians 2:9-11. This is the passage that we have been studying for the past several weeks.

As we have been examining this passage and the exaltation of Christ we have broken it down into four major areas of truth.

The first area of truth was that Christ's exaltation involved four different steps.

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

The second area of truth was that at Christ's exaltation God bestowed on Him the name "Lord."

We are now ready to go on to the third area of truth. My hope for this message is that as we will see the eternal ramifications of the exaltation of Christ. My hope for this message is that we will see how the exaltation of Christ not only impacts Christ but impacts everyone. My hope for this message is that we will see how the exaltation will impact everyone if not in this life in the life to come. My hope for this message is that our growing appreciation of the exaltation of Christ and its far reaching implications will impact the way we choose to live.

Let us once again visit this passage but this time let us look at the third area of truth concerning the exaltation of Christ.

The third area of truth concerning Christ's exaltation is the proper response. And what does Paul tell us will be the proper response to the exaltation of Christ? Let us read **Philippians 2:9-11** **"Therefore also God highly exalted Him (super exalted Him), and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, (10) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth. (11) and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord....."** Christ was exalted in order that He might receive worship from every created being.

There are many different ways for created beings to express worship. This morning hopefully we are expressing worship. But worshipping Christ through song is not the focus in these three verses. What is the focus? Paul mentions two specific expressions of worship in verses 10-11.

The first expression of worship is bowing the knee to Christ (Isaiah 45:20-25).

What is the significance of bowing the knee? Paul is saying that the rule of the one who emptied Himself, who humbled Himself, who became human, who became a slave, who was crucified, who died a criminal's death will be acknowledged. But by whom? By everyone. What does it say? Every knee shall bow. Your knee, my knee, the knee of your neighbor, the knee of the person on the other side of the world, the knee of John Walker, the knee of Osama Bin Laden. Every knee of every person who is alive. But it goes beyond this.

In order to drive home the point Paul mentions three different groups who will bow their knee. It is difficult to know for certain who exactly are included in these three groups. But I will give it a shot.

The first group he refers to as "those who are in heaven" ..... I believe that Paul was referring to all those who were either in heaven or had or would have access to heaven. This could include the spirits of the redeemed, righteous angels, certain fallen angels, and even the devil himself. I would say this because it is quite apparent that Satan still had access to heaven. We see in the story of Job and we see this in Revelation 12:10 where Satan is pictured as standing night and day before God accusing the brethren. "Of those who are in heaven" is the first group. Who is the second group?

The second group he refers to as those "on earth" ..... I believe Paul is referring to all those human beings who were then physically alive or would be physically alive on the earth just prior to the final judgment.

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

This group would include the righteous who were among the living as well as the unrighteous who were among the living. This is the second group. He then goes on to a third and final group.

The third group he refers to as those “under the earth” ..... I believe Paul is referring to all those whose eternal fate had been sealed or would be sealed and who were waiting or would be waiting the final judgment. This would include not only the unrighteous dead being held in a place called “Hades” as we see in Luke 16 but also certain fallen angels who Jude 6 tells us are being kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgment of the great day.

No matter who you specifically include in these three different groups of people Paul meant to include every created being who has every lived or will live in one of these three groups. When Paul refers to those in heaven, on earth, and under the earth bowing their knee to Christ he is telling us that the rule of Christ will be acknowledged by every creature. This is the first specific expression of worship that Paul identifies as ultimately being given to Christ.

The second expression of worship is confessing Christ as Lord (Isaiah 45:20-25). Let us again look at the Phil. 2:9-11, “Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, (10) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, (11) and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord .....” What does Paul mean when he uses the word “confess? The word that is translated “confess” (EXOMOLOGEO) means “to declare openly or confess publicly.”

There is not a single person here this weekend or in the world who will not, given enough time, bow their knee before Christ and acknowledge His right to rule. There is not a single person here this weekend or in the world who will not, if given enough time, publicly proclaim that Christ is Lord.

We will bow and we will confess. The only question that is still outstanding is when we will do this? The only question that is still outstanding is, “Will we bow before and Christ and confess Him as Lord in our present life or in the life to come?”

Hopefully most, if not all of us, have already done this. Why would I say this? I say this because acknowledging Christ’s right to rule and publicly proclaiming Christ as Lord in this life is just another way of saying that we have responded to the Gospel message and are saved (Romans 10:9-11).

How do we know this? Listen to **Romans 10:9-11** “... if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved; (10) for with the heart man believes, resulting in righteousness, and with the mouth he confesses, resulting in salvation. (11) For the Scripture says, “Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed.”

40 years ago, while I was in high school, I exercised genuine, living, saving faith. How do I know that I exercised genuine living saving faith? It is because I confessed and continue to confess that Jesus is Lord and I acknowledge and continue to acknowledging His right to rule over my life. Have I been without sin? No!

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

But have I been persevering in the midst of my personal failures? Yes. I know what He wants from me and by His grace I will continue to strive to give Him all that He is asking. Why? Because I have by faith acknowledged and continue to acknowledge His right to rule over my life. This is the proper response to Christ's exaltation when God the Father bestowed on Christ the name "Lord."

Does this describe you? If it does then hallelujah. If it does not then you need to be concerned. Why? Those who know Christ is Lord, but who choose not to acknowledge His right to rule over their lives should be terrified (Hebrews 10:26-31). Let me read for you **Hebrews 10:26-31**, "**For if we go on sinning willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, (27) but a certain terrifying expectation of judgment, and the fury of a fire which will consume the adversaries. (28) Anyone who has set aside the Law of Moses dies without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. (29) How much severer punishment do you think he will deserve who has trampled under foot the Son of God, and has regarded as unclean the blood of the covenant by which he was sanctified, and has insulted the Spirit of grace? (30) For we know Him who said, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay." And again, "The Lord will judge His people." (31) It is a terrifying thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**" I shared with you that those who know Christ is Lord but who choose not to acknowledge His right to rule over their lives should be terrified. I believe based on Hebrews 10:26-31 that this is a true statement. If this describes you I would hope that this Scripture would penetrate your heart this weekend that you would immediately confess whatever sin that you are willfully holding on to and give the Lord His rightful place in your life.

Not only should those who know for a fact that Christ is Lord, but choose ignore Him be terrified but all those who suppress the truth about God in unrighteousness should be terrified (Romans 1:18-19). Listen to **Romans 1:18-19** "**For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, (19) because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them.**" God is speaking continually to this world, but most of the world are choosing not to listen.

Is God a God of love? And the answer is yes! Is God a God of mercy? And the answer is yes. But if the world is unwilling to listen to what God is saying to them through His creation, if the world is unwilling to listen to what God is saying through His Son then they have rejected God. When people reject God's efforts to save them they will ultimately become the recipients not of His love, not of His mercy, but rather of His justice (Revelation 20:11-15).

Where do we find God's judgment in respect to those who have spurned Him? We find it in **Revelation 20:11-15** "**And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. (12) And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged from the thing which were written in the books, according to their deeds. (13) and the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. (14) And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.**

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

**(15) And if anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown in the lake of fire.”** Who is the one who is sitting on the throne? We would have to assume that it is God. And more specifically Christ. What does John 5:21-22 tell us? **“For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom He wishes. (22) For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son.”** Christ is the one sitting on the great white throne in judgment. And who will He judge? He will judge all those who have failed to demonstrate by the way they have lived their lives that they truly have come to know Him as Savior and Lord by faith and faith alone. And how will those who are saved demonstrate the fact they they possess saving faith? By worshiping Christ. By bowing before Him and acknowledging His right to rule over their lives and confessing that He is Lord.

What have we learned so far about the exaltation of Christ? We have learned that the exaltation of Christ involved four different steps. We have learned when Christ was exalted God bestowed on Him the name “Lord.” And we have no learned that the proper response to Christ’s exaltation and the bestowal of the name Lord is “worship” which specifically involved “every knee bowing before Christ” and “every tongue confessing that Christ is Lord.” What is the last area of truth that we learn about Christ’s exaltation?

The fourth area of truth concerning Christ’s exaltation is the ultimate purpose. Let us again read **Philippians 2:9-11, “Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, (10) that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, (11) and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”** This is very important for us to understand.

After understanding the proper response to Christ’s exaltation you might say, “Wait a minute. Isn’t every knee bowing and every tongue confessing that Christ is Lord and embarrassment to God the Father or an irritation to God the Father?” And the is answer to that question is, “absolutely, not!” God the Father and God the Son are not in competition with one another for worship (John 5:22-23). Let us read **John 5:22-23 “For not even the Father judges anyone, but He has given all judgment to the Son, (23) in order that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father who sent Him.”**

This is the mystery of what we call the doctrine of the trinity: three persons; God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, in the One God. God is not calling us to worship Him through Jesus. He is calling on us to worship Jesus as we would worship Him.

When we confess that Jesus is Lord and acknowledge His right to rule over our lives we are not dishonoring God we are glorifying God. And we must call people to do this. For if we fail to honor Christ in the ways that God has purposed in the exaltation of His Son we cannot know the Father, worship the Father, or serve the Father. And if we cannot know the Father, worship the Father, or serve the Father we are not saved.

## *Valley Bible Church – Sermon Transcript*

### CONCLUSION

John walker has made choices that he is now being held accountable for those choices. But .....

The possible punishment that John Walker faces pales in comparison to the judgment that awaits anyone who fails to understand the significance of the exaltation of Christ and dishonors the Father by dishonoring the Son.

This morning can you say that you have bowed your knee to Christ and our bowing your knee to Christ.

This morning can you say that you have confessed Jesus as Lord and are confessing Him as Lord.

This morning can you say that you have honored and are honoring the Father because you have honored the Son.