

[standardized quest]

:: philippians 2.5-11 ::

Our text this morning contains some of the most glorious future prophecy in the Bible, alongside incredibly practical principles that direct God's men in life and Godliness.

Chapter 2, verses 5 through 11.

Philippians 2.5-11 - Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 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. 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.

You and I are headed toward an examination. It's not like a yearly physical. It's something much more significant: the reward seat of Christ, where our lives will be reviewed and rewarded based upon our faithfulness to the Lord while we lived mortally here on the earth.

1 Corinthians 3.12-15 - Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire.

Our examination by Jesus Christ is a real event that we're facing in the future. What we do in this life matters. We all can benefit from the reminder that we need to have a healthy fear of the Lord. The Bible says that it is by the fear of the Lord that we get wisdom (*Job 28.28*), by the fear of the Lord that the Church increases (*Acts 9.31*) and through the fear of the Lord we persuade men (*2 Corinthians 5.11*).

Of course, the English language fails us when discussing this phrase. I like what pastor Greg Laurie says:

*"To fear God doesn't mean that we cowering in terror before Him. Rather, the fear of God has been properly defined as a wholesome dread of displeasing Him."
{ Greg Laurie }*

Paul has thus far been detailing how to live an excellent Christian life, full of God's power and plan. Filled by the Spirit, used by Jesus for glory and Gospel preaching.

If we are uninterested in that pursuit, then we find ourselves in a very sad and very dangerous position. We are denying Jesus Lordship in our lives.

Matthew Henry said:

*We must resemble [Christ] in life if we would have the benefit of His death.
[Matthew Henry Concise Commentary]*

What we find in our text is the answer key to the examination we are facing in the future. Making Jesus Christ Lord and imitating Jesus Christ as servant. He is the standard for our living and nothing else. He is the standard we are to follow and He is the One we are to resemble. This is obvious when we remember that God, the Master Creator, is currently molding and shaping us *INTO* the image of His Son as we walk this life with Him.

Here's how we participate and apply this standard to our lives...

Philippians 2.5 - Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus.

First, we're to take on the mind of Christ. It's provided, demonstrated, available to us. How He looks at people, how He speaks to people, how He views life, how He views the Scriptures. His mentality and way of thinking is what we're supposed to have as Christians. Not human thought with an occasional Godly filter attached, but to fully take on the mind of Christ.

How do we get it? By simply letting it in! That's what Paul says. *LET IT IN!*

Oftentimes the Christian life is just about allowing God to do what He wants to do in us. He's ready to make these transformations, but we so often kick against His goads. We make ourselves rigid in His hands. We wrestle against Him and try to keep Him from altering us.

We're given the Scriptures. We're given the Spirit. *Let them in* so that we can have the mind of Christ.

Another way to translate this phrase "let this mind be in you" is, "interest yourself in the mind of Christ." Interest yourself in His plan and His principles. If we find ourselves thinking that Jesus is not very interesting, then we have some work to do. We need to root out whatever it is in our life that does not want to receive the fullness of God and the satisfied life He's offering.

Philippians 2.6-7 - ...who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

Jesus Christ, our standard, is all about service. Others. That's what we talked about last week. Removing the focus from self and living in Godly strength and unity for others.

Jesus Christ, eternal, the Creator of all things, a member of the Trinity, determined to take on a body of flesh, to serve mankind and to live forever as the God-Man. His service to us did not end at the cross. Still, He makes intercession for us. Still, He prepares a place for us. Still, He speaks. Still, He serves.

Verse 7 says that He made Himself of no reputation. Literally, that phrase means that He emptied Himself out on our behalf. He emptied Himself of the comfort and privileges of heaven. He emptied Himself of His rights and position. He emptied Himself of wealth and the free use of His Divinity to be submissive to God the Father, filled by the Spirit, that He might serve and save the people of earth.

This is our standard. This is our example. This is our Lord. And we are to follow Him in emptying ourselves that He might fill us with His Spirit and His righteousness.

When our examination comes, will we have emptied ourselves as He did, or will we have crowded our lives with hoarded worldliness?

Have we emptied our lives of sin? Not becoming sinless, that is impossible. But turning *FROM* sin to God, moving past the snares of sin in His righteousness?

Have we emptied our lives of pride? Willing to humble ourselves that God might be glorified? Willing to stoop to serve others so that they might be nudged nearer to God?

Have we emptied our demands for comfort? Our demands for our rights and our wealth and our position? Relinquishing those things to our God and Savior and allowing *HIM* to determine our activity, our availability, our accounting and our attitudes?

Jesus, God of very God, emptied Himself and was found as a bondservant for you and for me.

Philippians 2.8 - 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.

This is the standard. Not every Believer will be called to lay down his mortality at the hands of God's enemies. But every one of us is called to lay down our lives before the Lord. To take up a cross each day and do what Jesus did. To love and serve. To speak the truth. To pray and praise. To live in the will of the Father, demanding nothing.

This is rough. We're not conditioned to have this attitude naturally, especially in a culture like ours. Ours is a hoarding culture. Ours is a self-centered culture. Ours is a culture that receives and takes and grabs. This is the opposite of the call of Christ.

The call of Christ is downward. That's the way to heaven. By stooping in loyal adoration to our King and serving those around us, demanding nothing.

Matthew 23.12 - ...whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

That's the deal. And we cannot do it without the Spirit of God filling our lives. And the Spirit of God cannot fill our lives if we've already filled ourselves with carnality and sin and selfishness and pride and demands that we're making of God or others. We cannot serve two masters. And here, God has given us the answer key to living a Christian life that pleases God and ends in reward. A life that is filled and not destroyed. And it's all about relinquishing ourselves to the Lord.

Philippians 2.9-11 - 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.

Jesus Christ is our Lord. As Christians, we have pledged ourselves to Him who bought us by His own blood.

How are we saved?

Romans 10.9 - that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.

We've confessed with our mouths that Jesus Christ is Lord, but today is the day that each of us can search within and ask ourselves if we're *following* Him as Lord. 'Lord' simply means 'supreme in authority.'

Have I given Jesus authority over my mind and over my actions? Over my plans and over my attitudes? Over my finances and over my demands? Over my rights and my reputation?

If we confess that Jesus is Lord yet deny Him authority in our lives, we're liars. We're traitors. Deserters from His holy army of royal priests.

When our examination comes, will our lives have been lived for the glory of God the Father? Will we have emptied ourselves and filled up with Him? Will we see the rewards that He is working to give us, or will we watch day after day burn in the fire? We call Him Lord, but have we given Him the Authority that is rightfully His? Are we hoarding the things of this world, or have we bowed and humbled ourselves to take up the call of Christ?

This is not a rebuke, it's an encouragement! Today is the day that the Lord has made, and He's made it so that you and I can follow our Jesus in the life and the strength that He demonstrated on the earth. He's made this day so that you and I can glorify Him. So that we can relinquish ourselves to His will and be used in inexplicable ways to exalt Him and edify others. He's made today so that we might be found faithful.

Will we be found faithful when today is reviewed? We know the exam is coming. We know the answers. We have all the time in this world to prepare for that moment.

Though we fail, we are forgiven. Though we stumble, we can stand again. Jesus is with us. He is within us.

Let's confess Him as Lord today and be empty of this world and our own selfishness and full of His glory.