

# Let's Worship God

16th-21st September 2019  
Philippians



PHILIPPIANS:  
PRESS ON WITH JOY



### Monday - Philippians 2:5-7: Our Humble God

It is no exaggeration to say that these passages are among the most important of the whole Bible. We should pay close attention and think reverently and carefully about what we find here concerning the person and work of Jesus. We saw last week that Paul wants the Philippians to be humble Christians who put the needs of others ahead of themselves. Now, he gives the greatest example of this imaginable.

Notice the **description of who Christ is** (verse 6). Paul says Jesus "was in the form of God"; other translations say Jesus, "being in very nature God...". Our minds struggle to understand this, but before Jesus was the baby in the manger he was God from all eternity. Jesus had no beginning. Father, Son and Holy Spirit were there before the earth itself existed.

Notice also the **position Christ gave up** (Verses 6-7). Paul says that Jesus "did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped" - in other words, Jesus didn't try to cling on to his rightful place as God to avoid doing an unpleasant job; he sacrificed his authority, the highest place in heaven, to come down into the misery and darkness of this sin-cursed world. Sometimes we try to excuse ourselves from difficult or unpleasant tasks because we think we're too important for them. Someone else can talk to that strange new neighbour; someone else can clean up after the big event; someone else can serve in that way in the church. We avoid these things perhaps thinking we are too important to do them.

But Jesus Christ, the second Person of the Trinity, didn't cling on to his rightful place as **highest, greatest**, most significant; he gave it up - "made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant". We will consider tomorrow what Jesus the Servant did for us. But for now, consider this: the most important Person who ever lived came to earth and took the lowest position on offer. He came to **serve**, and to save. Yet, should we not remember the heights of glory in which our God dwells; and the depths of service to which he was willing to stoop?

### Questions

1. What do you find most remarkable about verses 5-7?

### Prayer Points

1. Praise God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the eternal God of glory!
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross - Philippians 2:8

**Praise: Psalm 113A:3-4 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**



## Tuesday - Philippians 2:8: Our Humble Saviour

Paul has described Jesus' humble willingness to let go of his exalted status as God and come down into the world, "being born in the likeness of men" (verse 7). But more was to come. Consider **the utter humiliation of Jesus** (verse 8). Paul says he "humbled himself". In the New Testament, humility is an **action word**. You don't sit still and "be humble"; you do things. Jesus humbled himself by "becoming obedient" - that is, obedient to the will of his Father.

Paul is almost shocked to write the words, but he says, "obedient to the point of death - even death on a cross!" In 2019 we tend not to appreciate the full impact of those words, even if we are Christians. The utter shame and torturous brutality of crucifixion is something we cannot fully grasp. The word "excruciating" comes from the word "crucifixion": a whole new category of pain needed a whole new word. Yet, for Jesus, alone on the cross, the worst pain was not physical, but spiritual. The perfect Son of God, sinless in every way, had God's holy wrath against sin poured out upon him. This was pain that no nail, thorn or whip could inflict. The unnatural darkness that descended on Calvary that day symbolised the dark suffering of our humble Saviour. This was hell itself.

Jesus was despised, rejected, by both God and man. He hung on the cross, as one writer says, "suspended between earth and heaven, and rejected by both". The One who deserved all the praise, worship and service we could give, received all the hatred, anger and mockery that our sins deserved. It is only through this utter humiliation of Jesus that our sins can be forgiven. If our sins were not mocked and punished in him on the cross, then they will need to be mocked and punished in the eternal darkness of hell. Jesus humbled himself to be the outcast, the scapegoat, so that we don't have to be. Is your trust in this humble Saviour? Do you love him? Then thank him for his sacrifice.

### Questions

1. Darkness came down on Calvary from 12noon until 3.00pm (see Matthew 27:45). What did this darkness mean?

### Prayer Points

1. Give thanks to God for a humble Saviour.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### Memory Verse

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross - Philippians 2:8

**Praise: Psalm 22:1-2, 5-6 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**



### **Wednesday - Philippians 2:9-11: Our Exalted King**

To humble yourself is to **go down**; to be exalted is to be **brought up**. Having told us what Jesus willingly did for us (verses 5-8), Paul tells us about what **God** (the Father) did **for** Jesus in response to his perfect obedience and sacrificial death.

Firstly, we see the **position Jesus was given** (verse 9). God has "highly exalted" him. Jesus has been placed on the highest, grandest, greatest throne in the universe. He is where he belongs: the ruler of heaven and earth, the King who deserves to sit where he is, and who will have this highest position **forever**.

Paul also says that there is a **name that Jesus has been given** (verse 9): "the name that is above every name". Most preachers and commentators believe that this "name" is the one Paul mentions in verse 11: "Lord", or "Yahweh" from the Old Testament, the special name of God (usually translated as "LORD" in block capitals in our English Bibles). Jesus is in the highest position and he bears the greatest name: the name of God Himself! In recent years, we've seen some Prime Ministers come and go very quickly in the United Kingdom. The position of President of the United States is still considered one of the most powerful in the world - but it is a position that can only be held for 8 years, maximum. Someday, even the long reign of Queen Elizabeth II will end. But Jesus' obedience to the Father means he will keep his place in highest authority over all peoples, nations and tribes forever.

Lastly, Paul describes the **worship Jesus will receive** (verse 10). Paul says a day is coming when "every knee" will bow before Jesus - meaning everyone will worship him as God and Lord and King. How we long for this as Christians! As our country grows more wicked, more than ever we look forward to the return of Jesus, when people will finally humble themselves before **him**. While we wait for that day, we should freely and gladly worship him now. We do so out of thankfulness for our salvation, and as witnesses to our neighbours that they must get ready for the King.

### **Questions**

1. Why does Jesus deserve to have been "highly exalted"?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Praise God for our exalted Saviour!
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross - Philippians 2:8

**Praise: Psalm 22:21-25 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**



### **Thursday - Philippians 2:12-18: The Christian's Workout Regimen**

We have spent this week looking at a deeply important passage, which sets out crucial truths to know about the Lord Jesus. Now, in verse 12 onwards, Paul shows us how knowing this humble and exalted Jesus should change our lives. Paul says here that we have a **spiritual workout** to go through, verse 12: "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling". He immediately adds: "it is God who works in you". If we are Christians, it is because God the Holy Spirit has changed our lives. He has given us faith to believe in Jesus and a heart inclined to obey God. But the Christian faith is like exercising a muscle: our faith only grows and stays strong if we work at it. Thankfully, we work with the power God's Spirit provides.

What does it mean to "work out" our salvation with "fear and trembling"? Paul gives some examples in verses 13-18. He says we are to "do all things without grumbling or questioning". Simply not being grumblers will mark us out from the world, because the world is full of grumbling! To be content, joyful, thankful is a mark of the Holy Spirit's work in us.

Paul also says we are to "shine as lights" in a dark world. Christians have hope for those suffering with illness, addiction, loneliness or grief. In a world of darkness and confusion we can be guiding stars, leading people to the glorious light of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Finally, Paul urges the Philippians to continue "holding fast" - clinging on - to "the word of life" - the Scriptures, the gospel. No workout can be completed without the right equipment, and no Christian will grow detached from God's Word. Paul says in verse 17 that even if he loses his life for his own Christian witness, it will be worth it if he knows that the Philippians are "holding fast" in theirs.

There are no shortcuts to holiness: it takes work and effort. But God has given us the power of the Holy Spirit, so that we can complete a spiritual workout each day. How's yours going right now?

#### **Questions**

1. In what ways is the Christian life like spiritual exercise?

#### **Prayer Points**

1. Ask for the help of the Holy Spirit to be disciplined in daily working out your faith.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

#### **Memory Verse**

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross - Philippians 2:8

**Praise: Psalm 18:25-28 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**



### Friday - Philippians 2:19-30: A Few Good Men

So far in chapter 2, Paul has laid out the need for humble believers who love the gospel. He's already given his readers the supreme example of Jesus; now he gives two other great examples: Timothy and Epaphroditus.

Paul had first met **Timothy** during his second missionary journey (see Acts 16:1ff.). After Paul left Philippi, Timothy probably stayed for a while as a temporary preacher and pastor, before later re-joining Paul. However, when Paul writes to the Philippians, Timothy is obviously with Paul in Rome (see chapter 1:1, chapter 2:19). The Philippians would have loved to have Timothy back to minister to them. But Paul can't send him yet: he says in verse 20 that he has "no one like" Timothy. He was a unique blessing to Paul, a son in the Christian faith (verse 20). Unlike others who had fallen away (verse 21), Timothy had "proven" himself to Paul (verse 22) as a humble servant of Christ.

Paul also commends a man called **Epaphroditus**. Paul describes him as a "brother", a "fellow worker and fellow soldier", and a "messenger and minister". Paul's words in verses 26-27 suggest that Epaphroditus had set out from Philippi to Rome to visit Paul, probably with gifts for him from the Philippian church. On the way, Epaphroditus fell ill. Rather than turn back, or stop to recover, he pressed on, knowing how much it would mean to Paul to receive the gifts of the Philippians. Epaphroditus may not have been a preacher and teacher like Timothy, but he still performed invaluable service: he **encouraged** Paul in prison, even risking his own life to do so.

We need more young people like Timothy and Epaphroditus in the church. What will you do with your gifts? Will you humbly learn from older Christians? Will you encourage them? Will you be content to do the "small jobs", until, after training and maturity, you are given bigger tasks in the church of Jesus? What can you do this week to humbly serve a member or members of your local church the way Timothy and Epaphroditus served Paul and the Philippians?

#### Questions

1. Why do you think Timothy was such an encouragement to Paul?

#### Prayer Points

1. Pray for someone to encourage this week.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

#### Memory Verse

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross - Philippians 2:8

**Praise: Psalm 112B - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**





## **Saturday - Philippians 3:1-11: Joyful Loss and Joyful Gain**

There are some things that Christians should be joyful to live without; others that we can be joyful to live with.

Paul describes his own experience of joyful loss in verses 3-7. Before he became a Christian, Paul (Saul) was someone who thought he had it all: a top-flight religious education, a perfect record of obeying man-made religious laws, a pure, "good" person. This is what he is describing in verses 4-6. He was a "Hebrew of Hebrews", he ticked all the boxes that the Jewish religion had, he was the best of the best... But he says in verse 7 that he lost it all - and he's glad about it! Paul had been trusting in his own "goodness" as salvation, without realising that he could do nothing about his own sins. Today, people still want to trust in themselves: being a "good Protestant", or a "good Catholic", or just a "good human being", who recycles, or gives to charity, or never murders anyone, or does their bit for the local community. Paul describes all of this as "rubbish" in verse 8 - in fact, the word could be "dung". The Bible says we cannot save ourselves. Everything that we're tempted to rely on, we will someday lose. We can take nothing with us out of this life.

But then Paul describes his joyful gain. In verse 8, he says everything is a loss "compared to the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord". In verse 9, he describes how he now does not trust in his own goodness, but instead trusts in the goodness - the "righteousness" - of Jesus Christ, which he has received as a free gift. What we gain in Christ, by faith, is a perfect record of sinlessness - past, present and future. This leads to the greatest gain of all, which Paul describes in verse 11: "resurrection from the dead". If God took away everything else from you, could you still rejoice in this: that Jesus Christ has taken away your sin, and someday, you will rise again to live with him forever?! What else could we possibly need?

### **Questions**

1. Have you lost anything for putting your trust in Jesus?

### **Prayer Points**

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

### **Memory Verse**

And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross - Philippians 2:8

**Praise: Psalm 49:4-6, 10 - See [www.rpglobalalliance.org](http://www.rpglobalalliance.org) for Psalm tune helps.**

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that  
Ezra read from  
the book of the Law  
day after day  
and that  
the people of God  
were filled with joy!**

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