

From Cross to Crown—For You!

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:
⁶ Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;
⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!
⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

There is the story of a young prince who ran daily errands for his father, the king. His errands would take him through the poorest part of town where he would see this young lady. He eventually fell in love with, but he had a problem. If he awed her with his wealth and his kingdom, she would marry him, but it would not be for love. She would marry him for his money. If he ordered her to marry him, which he could do as prince, she would never love him because she was forced to marry him. So, he decided to dress up like a peasant when he ran his errands. Every time he saw her, he would stop and talk with her. Over time she fell in love with him and they got married.

Every analogy limps a little, but his shows what God does for you. He doesn't force you to love him because you never will. He doesn't bribe you either, because you will love what he gives you and him. So he became one of us. Look at Jesus riding that donkey! We see a man. But he is 100% God, and yet he didn't strut around showing off his divine nature as God. Rather, Jesus became nothing, lower than the lowliest human on earth. He literally became a servant and slave to everyone. When people should wash his feet, he washed theirs. When bothersome children should be kept away, he ordered that they be brought to him. And he died the death of a slave on a cross. He didn't do this for himself. He did it for you. Remember when they mocked him while he was on the cross, saying, **He helped others, but he cannot help himself?** They unwittingly spoke a truth. Jesus refused to help himself so he could help and save us.

So, let this reading from Philippians what Jesus did. He went to the cross to a crown, and he did it for us!

1. Jesus lowered himself for us.

God through Paul tells us how we can have a very happy life in this world. **In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:** ⁶ **Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;** ⁷ **rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, ...** Think of how much happier you would be if you had the same mindset of Christ that always puts other people ahead of yourself. Imagine what a fulfilling life you would have you were content and not discontented. You would be happier if you were not plagued by greedy and selfish goals which will never be met, or jealous over what others have.

But that is not the case. We don't teach kids how to lie or cheat, or to care only for yourself (though they are teaching that.). We don't teach a person how to be jealous, angry, vengeful, hateful, to hurt others or to use others for your own selfish gains. That is natural to us. We do such things instinctively. We don't have the mindset of Jesus. We have the mindset of sinful man. I don't see the Humane Society with ads saying, "Please take home this rabid dog." No, rabid dogs should be put down. We are instinctively and naturally sinful. Why hasn't God destroyed us, then? Because he wanted to save us, and look at how far God will go to save us.

⁶ **Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;** ⁷ **rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.** ⁸ **And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!** Jesus confused so many people. Jesus spoke with the authority of God. He performed miracles which only God can do. Yet, they saw someone who looked extraordinarily plain. Pilate was confused when asked if Jesus was a king because he didn't look the part. Isaiah told us this would be the case when he prophesied, **He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.**

Don't let your eyes deceive you. This Jesus is God. The hands of Jesus, the mighty God, the creator of the universe who formed the mountains and holds the universe, must grab on the mane of the donkey so he doesn't embarrassingly fall off. He did not use his power to make the donkey ride easier, or to swoop into Jerusalem in a fiery chariot or in the clouds. He did not use his godly power to make the devil's temptations easier, or to make the pain from the nails less painful or not painful at all. He set aside his glory and power. He still had it. He didn't use it.

How "nothing" did he become? ⁸ **And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!** Jesus wasn't naïve. He knew exactly what was going to happen. He was going to die, not by a freak chariot accident, or heart attack or disease. He would be rejected by the people he came to save. They wouldn't demand he be humanely beheaded, but to suffer the most excruciating death on a cross reserved only for the most heinous of criminals.

As much as that rejection and death would hurt, nothing compared to the rejection he would face from God his Father. Jesus had a close, intimate relationship with his Father, praying to him constantly, trusting in his protection, submitting to his will. But at one point on the cross, Jesus looked around and there was no Father. "My God," he would cry out, "why have you forsaken me?" Yes, God does the impossible. The first person would abandon the second person of the Trinity. God will reject Jesus. Why? Jesus' knew. We know. Because he became sin. Sin separates the sinner from God now and forever in hell. Jesus became sin and then suffered the separation of hell.

For us. He did it all for us. If a small child spilled milk again, my natural reaction would not be, "Thank you. I would love to clean that up." Not Jesus. When faced with sin and hell itself, he welcomed it. Hebrews tells us, **For the joy set before him Jesus endured the cross and the shame.** With flesh and blood it will hurt terribly, but it gave Jesus great joy to become obedient to death, even death on a cross for us.

II. He is exalted for us.

So the Lord went from his throne to the cross. Then he will go from the cross back to his throne and his crown. ⁹ **Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name,** ¹⁰ **that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,** ¹¹ **and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

After his death, Jesus rose from the grave. God also raised him to the highest place. In Ephesians it says to the right hand of God the Father above all rule and authority, even the laws of nature. Before he emptied himself by not using all of his godly power and glory. Now he will use it all again. Being God he is above all. Gravity, orbits, even the most powerful rulers, the devil himself, are subject to him.

But his name is above every name in another sense. The one thief who was crucified with him understood that. He called on that name with his plea, **Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.** He called upon the only name that can save him, not from the cross, but from the eternal punishment of sin. I can give you the name of surgeons who saved lives, firemen and soldiers who saved lives. I can give you the name of a good plumber. But Jesus' name is far above their names because it is the name that saves us from our sins.

It is frustrating that so many people ignore Jesus, even oppose him. But the day is coming when every person will acknowledge that he is Lord. For so many the opportunity to hear and put their trust in him will be past, but they will nevertheless understand he is Lord. Even those who rejected him like Pilate, Herod, and Caiaphas. Revelation tells us, **Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be.**

But Jesus doesn't want people to mourn when he comes again on clouds of glory. He would rather that all people raise their palm branches and wave them in honor and glory to him. Again in Revelation it talks about people from all over the world standing recreating Palm Sunday: **They were wearing robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice; "Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne and to the Lamb."** All because Jesus went to the cross back to his crown for us.

So, what are you going to do about this? Heaven has been laid in your lap free of charge. Well, it actually cost Jesus a lot, but it is free to you. Well, our text tells us what's next. **In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus ...** First, don't wait until the Last Day to bend the knee and acknowledge him as Lord and Savior. By then it will be too late. Believe it now. Regard his name above every name. Call upon that name for your forgiveness and salvation. Second, start waving your palm branches now. No, we will not give you palm branches when you leave, but with the same spirit and gusto. Praise him, confess him, submit totally to him, whatever you do, do it all to his glory. And third, adopt his mindset. Discover what a happy, carefree life we have if we put others ahead of ourselves, making ourselves nothing, being servants of all. Amen.