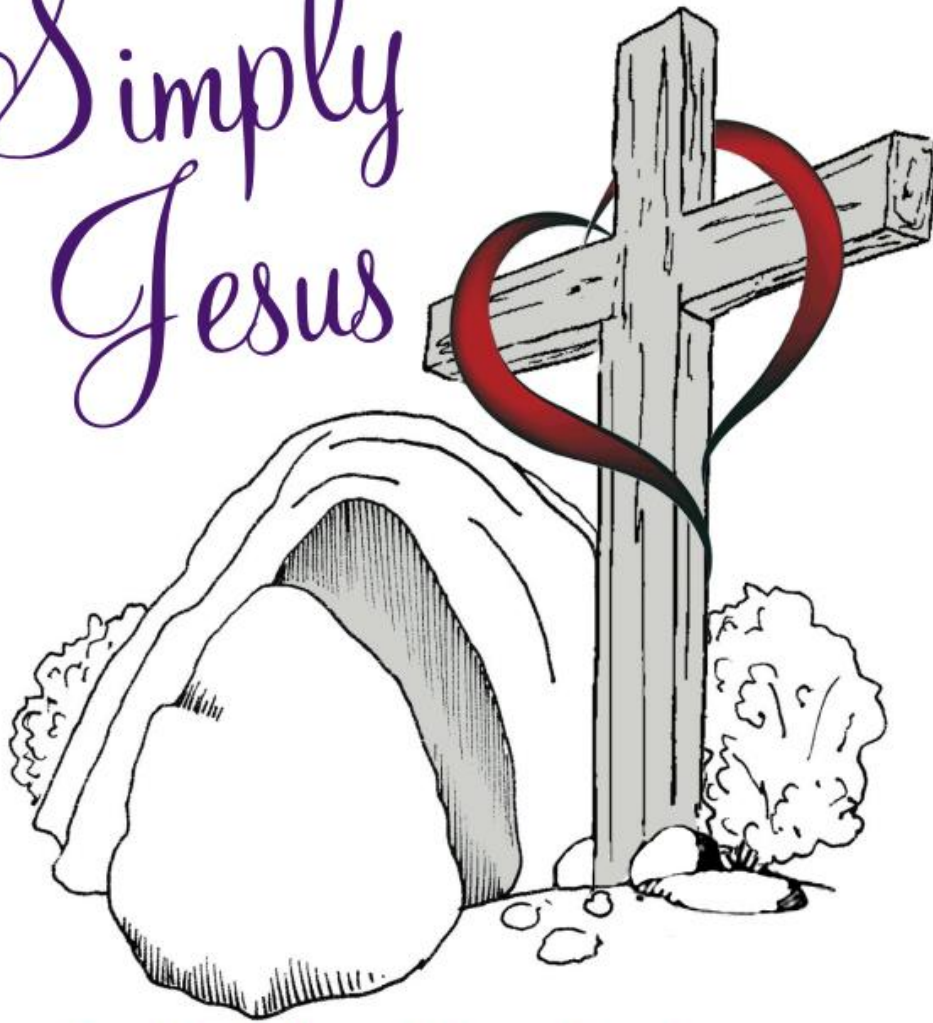


Simply
Jesus



But Not a Simple Jesus

Paul R. McCuiston

Teaching **4** Jesus
MINISTRIES

Form of God



Being found in appearance as a man,
He humbled Himself by becoming
obedient to the point of death,
even death on a cross

Philippians 2:8

Chapter 5

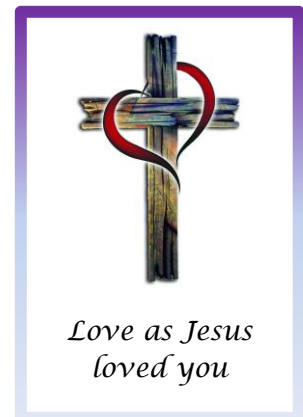
The Form of God Philippians 2:5-11

What brings real joy to your life? Have you ever really thought seriously about that question? You should. I'm not talking about being happy. That lasts as long as the event or reason for our happiness. *Joy is happiness on steroids!* Joy penetrates the very depths of who we are. It does not depend on our situation, our finances, or any external part of our life. Let me give you an example. I love my wife passionately. She is my best friend. Without hesitation, I would take a bullet for her. Sometimes we don't agree, but that doesn't change my love. Why? She brings boundless joy to my life that the ups and downs of marriage can never take away.



On the other hand, I told her that if someone burst into our home, put a gun to **her** head and told me to deny Jesus or she would die, I would look at her lovingly and say, "Babe, I love you. Say hello to Jesus for me!" You see, what I have done is to place such a high value on my love for Jesus that it would take priority over everything else. By the way, she understood. To be fair, I did tell her that if the gun was at my head and she was watching I would tell her I loved her and would say *hello to Jesus* for her!

The love Jesus has demonstrated and *who he is* gives the joy worth dying for. More than that, it gives the joy worth living for! This is what Paul had in mind when he gave the Romans instructions about how to offer themselves completely to Jesus. To be a living sacrifice, "do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2). Think about the picture Paul paints. The Old Testament Sacrifices had to die to be effective. Jesus, the "Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29), died but then became the *living sacrifice* by his resurrection. By the gift of his Spirit to us, we then become the living sacrifices that live and serve King Jesus. To summarize, complete joy comes when I crown Jesus King of my life. We do this when we live in a way that honors the gospel of Christ.



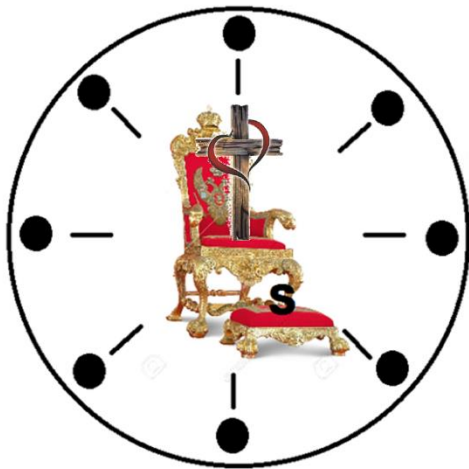
Make My Joy Complete

In Colossians, we talked about Jesus having the first place in our lives. This idea raises a very crucial question. If Jesus is Lord, demanding first place, it has to mean something. It has to affect the way we live. In our Philippians passage, Paul leads us to Jesus by showing us how to live. His description of the Christian life was crystal clear. "Make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not *merely* look out for your personal interests, but also for the interests of others" (Philippians 2:2-4). What a laundry list! This describes sacrificial living. In chapter three, we made the point that sin is selfishness. Paul's ideal Christian sees the world through the needs of others, and the greatest need is to know Jesus as Lord. Many Christians have not put Jesus on the throne of their lives because they know him only as savior.

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OK. I know this is getting tough. This kind of Christianity is not very popular. Real Christianity can be a very hard life. I think this is why many are attracted to prosperity churches. These churches preach that life can be balanced and blessed if you become the best version of you. This is not New Testament Christianity. The best version of you is one who imitates Jesus. We are his body in the world today. Do you remember what they did with his body? Paul's audience was told that they would suffer for Jesus (Philippians 1:29). They were to have joy. The only way to do that is to be like Jesus.

"To Him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever" (Revelation 5:13)



- 👑 The **Lord Jesus Christ** (†) is on the throne of my life
- † **Self** (S) is yielding to the Lord Jesus
- ☑️ ● **Heart**, ● **mind** ● **body**, all of the **points** (●) of my life, are aligned to the will and purpose of Jesus, resulting in a life dedicated to his service

IT'S ABOUT WHO JESUS IS & WHAT HE IS DOING!

All About Jesus

Verse five takes us to this point. Paul told the Philippians and us that we are to *think like Jesus*. Most bible versions translate this idea as *having a mind like him*. The New American Standard Bible uses the idea of attitude. I prefer this translation because it expresses more of the idea of thinking, assessing, and processing information. We know what Jesus thought because of what he did, taught, and left us. Actions are the visible images of our thoughts. He told us that he came to serve, preach, and do God's will. We should do the same. For many Christians, this requires a major paradigm shift. Please allow me to illustrate how a paradigm shift *feels*.

One Sunday, a man gets on the subway in New York City. He likes to ride the subway on Sunday because there isn't the normal busyness of the week. Before long, his peaceful ride is interrupted by the appearance of a father with four rather boisterous children. The children create such a disturbance by jumping, running, and shouting that our friend is no longer able to enjoy his ride. He turns to the father who sat down beside him. He says, "Sir, don't you think you need to do something with your children?" The father lifts his head. He had been staring at the floor the whole time. He replies, "Yea, I guess you're right. You see, we just left the hospital where their mother had just died. I guess none of us know how to act."

Did you sense a change in your emotions? Were you upset with the father and his children? When you found out the reason for their actions, did your emotions change from frustration to sadness or empathy? This reaction is typical every time I've told this story. Is it time for you to experience a significant paradigm shift in your thoughts and feelings about King Jesus? Perhaps it's time for you to realize that **It's Not About YOU!**

As in the last chapter, we need to summarize our main point in this passage with a proposal of what this lesson offers.

Proposal

WE MUST MAKE IT ABOUT JESUS! Why? Paul gives 3 reasons

- I. Jesus existed in the form of God (6-7)
- II. Jesus was found in the appearance as a man (8)
- III. Jesus was highly exalted by God (9-11)

Let's examine these in detail. These reasons should provide the motivation to give meaning to the Lordship of Jesus.

He existed in the form of God (6-7)

The translators used several different ways to express Paul's thoughts.

- He existed in the form of God (New American Standard Bible)
- He was in the form of God (New Revised Standard Bible)
- Being in very nature God (New International Version)
- He was in the form of God (English Standard Version)
- Existing in the form of God (American Standard Version)
- Being in the form of God (King James Version)

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The words “existed” and “was” express Jesus’ true nature when he was not a man walking on earth. Notice especially the NIV. This version does the best job of expressing the meaning of the verse while the others are a closer translation to the way the Greek reads. These options show how difficult it is to express something in English that was written 2,000 years ago in a different language. The main idea was what we said earlier. Jesus was everything that God was. Any qualities God had, so did Jesus. There are no exceptions, exclusions or gaps. Jesus was God. He did not have to rob God of his nature. He didn’t force God to share his essence with him. It was his naturally. This point is the impact of the phrase about *grasping* or *robbing*, as used in some translations.

Paul uses two expressions that are the same – form and equal. The Jews used these double expressions as a way of emphasizing their point. Paul wanted his readers to know that there was no doubt in his mind that Jesus and God shared the same essence. If you recall, we’ve already talked about the idea of essence. Remember the Play-Doh?

The idea of equality is not hard to grasp. It was the same for Paul and the Greeks as it is for us. This equals that. They share the same number, size, quality, or characteristics. There are no differences. It is the concept of form that gives us a problem. Does God have form? Well, the answer is yes. At least that’s the indication from what he said. What is that form? No clue! The Bible does not give any clear descriptions. Despite that, there are some times when human form is given to God. God tells Moses that he can’t see his face (Exodus 33:20). In the same section, God uses his hand to cover Moses and then shows him his back. So, is God human? Well, of course not. Do you recall the language of Genesis and the creation of Adam? He is in God’s image. As far as we know, Adam had all of the standard human characteristics – head, trunk, arms, and legs. So, again, it would seem that God has the same. The problem is that we don’t know if the writers are using human concepts to portray ideas and images that make God understandable or whether these actually describe God. There is no way of knowing. The best we can do is to say that Paul and the Jewish Rabbis understood that God could be known. He could give himself form if he wanted. He could look like a man if that fit his needs. Whatever the form, according to Paul, God had something. There was a form.

One thing we can feel good about is the way Paul would have understood the concept. The essence of anything is indicated by its outward form. The form would reveal the *real* characteristics and qualities of what it was showing. Whatever God’s form, it was the real deal. It was God and something that could be understood. Just because we can’t draw a picture doesn’t mean it isn’t real. Here is another thought to consider. Jesus gives us the purest picture of the nature of God! How does he do this? He does it by emptying himself.

Emptied himself

This is where it gets really hard to understand. It is certainly easier to think of Jesus and God sharing some the same basic form and qualities. We can even understand that if God had a form, Jesus could look like him. After all, a son is often very much like his father, but Paul has Jesus *emptying* himself. He doesn’t cling to this privilege of being God, and he willingly empties himself. He doesn’t quit being divine. He doesn’t stop being God. What he releases is the status of being the creator and ruler of the universe. He lets go of that for a very specific reason. He lets go so that he can become a servant! WOW! God to a servant; this is a big change. Here’s the good news: The reason he did this was so he could taste death for everyone (Hebrews 2:9). This *taste* was the experience of taking it into his body for the benefit of creation. Do you remember that he said, “It is finished” (John 19:30)? He said it at his death and not his resurrection because

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this occurs when he shared with all humans in the one moment that most accurately defines their humanity. This raises the question “what was finished?” Do you recall that when Adam transgressed, God cursed nature and afflicted humanity with death? He did this so that we would no longer be like him. By having to die, we fall under the fear of death (Hebrews 2:14), which makes us respond to our bodies because they are real. We then get caught up in the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). By dying, Jesus was able to finish God’s plan to die for us so that he could legitimately offer us life again. Now, we can share his divine nature (2 Peter 1:4), through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. Jesus became like us so we could become like him. He finished what was needed to accomplish this by dying.

While there are many things we share and many differences, all humans share death. Jesus let go of his hold on being God so that he could share with us in the most intimate way. Here is a big question? Are we willing to empty ourselves? Are we willing to take up our crosses for him? Are we willing to become living sacrifices for him? Are we willing to let him sit on the throne of our lives instead of claiming that for ourselves? These are tough questions.

Paul contends that God needed to become the servant of that which was created to free it and be under his rule again. What? This sounds crazy. How does God take the form of a servant and free us? Paul is clear on this matter. What Jesus did was to take a body and die. We’ve already talked about the idea of gods not dying. In order to participate in death, God had to *share* flesh and blood with us (Hebrews 2:14). When the Hebrew writer said this, he did not state that Jesus’ sharing was the same level of intimacy as our sharing flesh and blood. He used two different words. When we share, we have total participation in flesh and blood. It is our nature. The Hebrew writer used the word *koinonia* (pronounced *coy-no-nee'-a*). Most have probably heard a preacher use this expression. It is the most intimate form of sharing that two individuals can have. By the way, we do have *koinonia* with Jesus when we share in his body and blood at the communion (1 Corinthians 10:16). When Jesus shared, he also had his whole, divine nature. As a result, his sharing was in the sense of him taking something that was not his by nature. For this reason, he had to empty himself of his divine privilege. When he emptied, he was able to take on human form. From here, we move to the next point that Paul makes.

OK, back to the idea of how God dying restores his right to be king. Simple. Death was the penalty imposed on humanity when they turned control over to creation. Remember, we’ve discussed this earlier. Humanity, God’s image in the Garden that was to rule, turned the control over to creation. Now the created world is in control (body led!). In order for God to gain control, he had to participate in death like we do. By dying, he took away the power of the devil who was the prince of this world [John 12:31, 14:30, 16:11]. He has been judged. When Jesus declared “It is Finished,” he was telling the devil that judgment was inevitable and God was back in control. The icing on the cake was the resurrection that offered a *new creation* to us (2 Corinthians 5:15-17). Things are getting back in order. We’ll have more to say on this in the last chapter. For now, this should convince us that God in Jesus has reconciled the world (2 Corinthians 5:19) back to himself and has given us a part in taking this good news to the world (2 Corinthians 5:20).

He was found in the appearance as a man (8)

The final point Paul makes to emphasize who Jesus is comes to light when he says Jesus was “found in appearance as a man” (Philippians 2:8). He changes words here. He had been using the word *morph*. With the popularity of the Transformer movies, we get an idea of *morphing* – complete and radical change. The transformation of Optimus Prime from the semi-tractor to an almost human form amazed us. Oh, the wizardry of the movies does astonish us. Paul astonished his readers (and us) by painting a picture of a God who rules the universe changing (morphing) into a servant to the universe! WOW! What a concept? To complete the picture, Paul changes words. He uses two different words to describe the God-man Jesus.

First, he makes a comparison to Adam by saying Jesus became like a man. This reference is to the incarnation.* Paul is saying that Jesus had a body. Otherwise, he would not have been able to understand humanity, nor would he have been able to die. Remember, gods don’t die! By having a body, he was able to share with us totally. This way, he could be tempted like us (Hebrews 4:15). Do you remember chapter two and the sins of the lust of the flesh, lust of the eyes, and the pride of life? Yep, Jesus came up against all of those. He had to because he had a body. Here’s the great news. Because he had a body and could die, he was able to “render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives” (Hebrews 2:14). He died to take away the control that death has over us. We no longer have to let our bodies tell us what to do. Jesus gave us a new life with better promises. Our bodies may still die, but we cling to the hope of something far better than this life.

While his form was as a servant and his likeness was that of a man, his appearance was more than either of these individually. Paul changes terms again to describe Jesus as having an appearance that could be recognized. Think of the three terms in this way. *Morphing* from the God of the universe to a slave in a human body, he was historically recognizable as a man named Jesus who was born in Bethlehem, raised in Nazareth, and died in Jerusalem. Did you get all of that? Let me break it down for you:

- He was by nature God, King of the Universe
- He changed (*morphed*) by setting aside the right to rule (emptying)
- He took a human body
- That human was the man named Jesus

When you put this together, it sets a course for Jesus to become obedient to the point of death, “even death on a cross” (8). The humiliation was at the hands of his countrymen who would not see that Moses and the prophets wrote about him (John 1:45, 5:46). He faced the curse of a tree (Galatians 3:13) at the hands of the Romans who had enslaved his nation.

To whom was he obedient? Why, to the Father, of course. He learned this obedience by what he suffered (Hebrews 5:8). As God, he was already in tune with His Deity. There was nothing to learn there, but, as a human, he needed to express this same obedience by coming under the will of the father. God had determined before the beginning of time that this was the only reasonable way to keep things in order (Ephesians 1:4). Paul is very clear here that this was humiliating to Jesus. He was at a lower status than being God. He emptied himself of that status. Oh, what a great demonstration of love. Paul said it well, “God demonstrates His love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8). God loved us with a “great

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love” even when we were a disappointment to Him (Ephesians 2:4). This “great love” that he gives us is because he calls us his children (1 John 3:1). Wait, this is God’s love. Jesus did the dying! I know it was hard for God to give his son to selfish people, but what about Jesus’ feelings? Trust me; they share the same nature. It is the same love. Paul confirms this when he says that faith and love are in Jesus (1 Timothy 1:14; 2 Timothy 2:13). In fact, Paul gives the perfect picture of that love when he talks about how patient Jesus is toward us until faith is shown in him (1 Timothy 1:16). Paul ends that statement about Jesus with this great song about him:

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, *be* honor and glory forever and ever.
Amen.

And all the people said, “Amen!”

We need to close this point but not before one final emphasis on the point of his obedience – his death. You’ve probably heard it more than once that Jesus was born to die. This picture says it all. Even in the womb, he had the cross in view. Mark gives us this picture. Three times Jesus tells his disciples that he is going to Jerusalem to die (8:31, 9:31, 10:33). For this reason, he became so upset with Peter, calling him *Satan* because he tried to get in his way.



What about us? Are you willing to go to the point of death? Am I willing, as I’ve already stated, *to take a bullet* for Jesus? We live in a country where Christianity is becoming less popular. Are we willing to stand up for Jesus and what we believe about him? Okay, let’s bring it down a notch. Maybe you and I will never have our lives threatened. Would you be willing to go to jail for him? How about losing your job? Would you stand up for what Jesus teaches if it meant losing your job? Paul encourages us to pray for our leaders “so that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and dignity” (1 Timothy 2:2). He says this is *good and acceptable* in God’s sight (1 Timothy 2:3). God says it’s *good* just like he did when he created the world. Being at peace gives us the freedom to speak freely of Christ Jesus. Whether you like the current leaders or not, pray for them that we can be at peace. God wants this.

He was highly exalted by God

To take us back to our proposition, **“It must be about Jesus!”** So far, Paul’s reasons have been that Jesus existed in the form of God (6-7) and he was found in the appearance as a man so he could die (8). Now, Paul brings us to the final point supporting why it **must** be about Jesus: **He was highly exalted by God.** Note the shift in the subject in the text. Up to now, it has been about Jesus. Now, God is the subject. Paul states two actions taken him. First, God exalts Jesus and gives him a superior name! Let’s examine these to see how God puts the *Focus on Jesus*.

Highly Exalted

Twice in the Gospels, God speaks out verbally regarding his son. The first is at his baptism. “This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased” (Matthew 3:17). The next is when he meets Moses and Elijah on a mountain. “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased; listen to Him!” (Matthew 17:5). These are statements that exalted Jesus above all the others who were involved in these events. He is humbled by death, but, thank God, “because of the suffering of death,” he finished what God intended for him (Luke 22:42).

While Paul does not give much detail regarding the exaltation, the book of Hebrews does. God crowned him with glory and honor, appointing him over the works of his hands. He put all things in subjection under Jesus’ feet. He affirms this by stating, “For in subjecting all things to him, He left nothing that is not subject to him” (Hebrews 2:7-8). In this, Jesus, the *man*, regained what Adam lost! Paul says it best, “For since by a man *came* death, by a man also *came* the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive” (1 Corinthians 5:21-22). We are made alive in him. He has cleaned up our act by forgiving our sins. He did not clean us up just to go to heaven. If that were the case, we would have died right after he forgave us. How do I know this? Because he knew we would get dirty again. No, he cleaned us up and keeps us clean so that we can serve him. This is one way in which we crown him with glory and honor.

Because of death, he was crowned – crowned with glory and honor. Let’s join the choirs of heaven and proclaim

“Worthy are you to take the book and to break its seals; for you were slain, and purchased for God with Your blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. “You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth.” (Rev. 5:9)

“Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing.” (Rev. 5:12)

“To Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, be blessing and honor and glory and dominion forever and ever.” (Rev. 5:13)

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Jesus was honored to *taste of death for everyone* (Hebrews 2:9). The slain Lamb deserves blessing, honor, glory, and dominion. This is why God gave him a name above every name.

Superior Name

The angel told Joseph, “You shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21). At the end of Jesus’ ministry, Pilate gave him a different name:

THIS IS JESUS, THE KING OF THE JEWS

Like the Gentiles from the east at Jesus’ birth, the designation of King lifts Jesus to the position of blessing, honor, glory, and dominion. This last word confirms this as it has the idea of having the power to be able to rule. Jesus has that right and power because of who he is (by nature, God with us) and what he has done. We have already seen this in a previous lesson. Do you remember the Beloved Kingdom? As Revelation 5:13 confirms, Jesus sits on the throne. We saw this in the last lesson. This is one way of showing what Paul tells the Philippians when he says every knee shall bow and every tongue confess (Philippians 2:11). The question is, do we do it now as a willing participant in his kingdom or will we do it when he returns to judge the living and the dead (Acts 10:42; 2 Timothy 4:1; 1 Peter 4:5). Your answer will depend on your faith in what the Bible tells us about Jesus. It depends on whether your focus is on Jesus or yourself. In fact, it even depends on why you are doing church! Yes, that’s right. If church isn’t about Jesus, it isn’t his church.



I know a church whose vision is “To be a loving, caring church whose arms embrace all that come.” This sounds good doesn’t it? The problem is that you can be loving and not be Jesus focused. If you ask the minister or the people, many, if not most, would say that they are Jesus focused. Since the vision is how you want to be seen, how would the people reading this know if Jesus was the focus? They wouldn’t. This illustrates what I’m saying. Our vision and mission must be Jesus focused. In the same way, the church’s vision and mission must be Jesus focused: “To Present Christ to all men everywhere, at every available opportunity” states a good mission that focuses on Jesus because he is the best example of care and love. What is your personal vision statement? Is it Jesus focused?

Jesus sits on the throne because of who he is and what he has done. His name signifies his place of authority. *Jesus* means savior, which declares his mission. *Christ* describes one that God anointed for a special task. *Lord* reinforces his distinctive and essential power that gives him the right and ability to be king. *Lamb* pictures the humbled Jesus on a cross. *Son of God* points to his inherited nature as God. *Only begotten* confirms his uniqueness over all others. *Firstborn* of creation confirms his importance and position. *Immanuel* verifies that God is in him as well as with us. He is our advocate lawyer who always lives to make intercession for us. He is the beginning and the end as well as the firstborn from the dead. He is the *Apostle and High Priest* of our confession. As the *bread of life*, he constantly sustains us. Any name or title given in the New Testament serves as a testimony of Jesus’ nature and what he accomplished. Will you with Paul, the early Christians, and all believers since make the common confession? The word

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translated “confess” means that we all say the same thing. Here is a common confession from Paul:

He who was revealed in the flesh,
Was vindicated in the Spirit,
Seen by angels, proclaimed among the nations,
Believed on in the world, taken up in glory (1 Timothy 3:16)

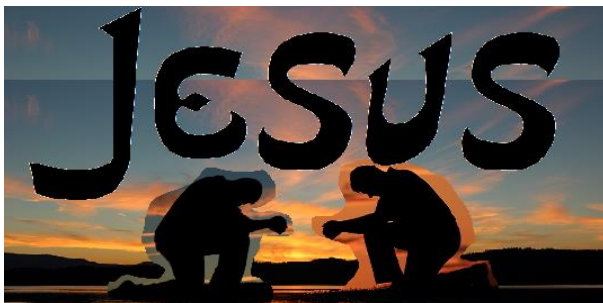
Language of triumph!

Do you sense the language of triumph in these descriptions? These are not cleverly devised tales. Rather, this is the story made known to us regarding the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ (2 Peter 1:16). What’s odd to me is that people love to think about Jesus as their friend but not their Lord. I was in the store once, wearing a witness shirt that said, “A little coffee and a whole lot of Jesus.” The cashier commented that she liked the shirt. Another person in line stated that Jesus was her friend. I responded that he was my friend too. We are very comfortable with this. What I wonder is whether people know what the condition of friendship is. Do you?

Jesus qualified friendship by stating, “You are my friends if you do what I command you” (John 15:14). **WOW!** Obedience is the basis of friendship. We are expected to obey the command to “Go, make disciples” (Matthew 28:19). Then there is the command to “Seek first the kingdom of God” (Matthew 6:33). Oh yeah, there are commands to forgive (Matthew 6:12; Mark 11:26) and love our enemies (Matthew 5:44; Luke 6:27, 35). Then, there is my favorite, “Do not forsake the assembling of yourselves together” (Hebrews 10:25). I don’t have to go on. You know the commands. If you don’t, then I would question if you are truly bowing the knee or confessing his name. After all, you are a friend *only* if you keep his commands. You do want to be his friend, don’t you?

Please let me close with this final thought. Most probably imagine this picture of people bowing at the second coming. This is not what Paul is saying. “At the name of Jesus” is a *whenever it is spoken* concept. This doesn’t mean we literally have to fall to our knees or start confessing when his name is spoken. Rather, Paul is talking about an attitude. Remember, this is how he started all of this in verse 5. So, let this attitude be in you. Let your life be in full reverence and honor as we confess the Lordship of Jesus, declaring that he is the rightful ruler of the world. Honor him with your life. Be his true friend according to his standards. Give Jesus the place of honor in your life “so that He Himself will come to have first place in everything” (Colossians 1:18).

Wrapping up



Chapter 5 opens with a question about joy. We concluded that *Joy is happiness on steroids!* Joy penetrates the very depths of who we are. It does not depend on our situation, our finances or any external part of our life. To have this kind of joy, we proposed that ...

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WE MUST MAKE IT ABOUT JESUS! The obvious question in response to this is “Why.” Paul gives 3 reasons:

- I. Jesus existed in the form of God (6-7)
- II. Jesus was found in the appearance as a man (8)
- III. Jesus was highly exalted by God (9-11)

This seminar is built on the vision of the church regaining its emphasis on Jesus. This vision is built on the assumption that many churches and Christians are too focused on what we received rather than what we can give to the kingdom. If we, like the Apostle Paul, can reach these conclusions about Jesus, we will make it about him. Do you believe these things about Jesus? Are you willing to submit to his Lordship? If so, we must find the biblical descriptions of how we submit to him. This falls under the third part of the Great commission:

Disciple → Baptize → Teach

Are you teachable? Are you willing to say “yes” to whatever Jesus asks? These questions have easy answers if we are committed to Jesus because of his nature, power, and position.

Simply Jesus

NOTES

Simply Jesus

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the concept of *taking a bullet for Jesus*. What were your first thoughts, feelings, fears, etc. when you read the account of my statements to my wife in the setting I described?
2. What does the statement *Jesus is Lord* really mean to you? Are you truly a servant of the King? Please discuss what this means and how it should work out in your life. Include a response to the illustration about Jesus sitting on the throne of your life. Deal specifically with the *dots* (heart, mind, body). Where does the Great Commission fit into this idea?
3. Paul wanted his readers to know that there was no doubt in his mind that Jesus and God shared the same essence. If you recall, we've already talked about the idea of essence. Remember the Play-Doh? Let's open this conversation again because it is so important. How do you wrap your mind around the truth that Jesus and God shared the same form? Discuss Paul's statement about them being equal.
4. In the last question, Jesus did not have a body. How does a body change our understanding of Jesus being God? How can God and Jesus share the same *essence* (review the meaning in the vocabulary if you need to refresh the memory)?
5. Discuss the idea of Jesus *emptying himself*. How does he do this and still be in nature God? Since gods don't die, how is it that Jesus died and can still be God?
6. Discuss the concept of Jesus *tasting death*. Is that different from dying? Did Jesus die differently from the rest of us?
7. Discuss Paul's statement, "*even death on a cross.*" What was so significant about dying in this way? How does this relate to the curse of the tree? Does this have any impact on creation being cursed (compare Romans 8:20-22)?
8. What feeling did you experience when you saw the image of the baby with thorns and a cross? How does this motivate you to greater service to King Jesus?
9. If we relate our baptism (Romans 6:1-7) and transformation into the image of Christ (Romans 8:29) to Jesus' baptism and transfiguration, how do we plan to please God? Should we be as eager to "preach and say, 'Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand?'"
10. If I am correct that responding to Jesus' name is a *now* thing as well as when he comes, how do we *bow the knee* and *confess the name above all names*? If it isn't always literal, what actions would give us the same attitude of bowing and confessing?