Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Exaltation of Christ, Part 1
Scripture: Philippians 2:9
Code: 50-17

Let's open our Bibles this morning for our continued study in Paul's letter to the Philippians....Philippians chapter 2. And we come this morning to verses 9, 10 and 11 as we continue to flow through this great epistle. Philippians chapter 2 and I will read verses 9, 10 and 11 that you may fix in your mind the Word of God on which we desire to comment this morning. "Therefore God also highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

A familiar text to me, to most students of God's Word. It speaks about the exaltation of Jesus Christ. In fact, it is God's great response to Christ's humiliation. Go back with me for a moment to verses 5 through 8. You remember the great section that we have studied on Christ's humiliation, how that Christ Jesus existed in the form of God but did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied Himself taking the form of a bondservant and being made in the likeness of men, and being found in appearance as a man He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, says verse 9, God highly exalted Him.

Paul then takes us from the humiliation of Christ to the exaltation of Christ. This is Paul's great declaration of how God responded to Christ's incarnation and humiliation. And let me remind you that it is very likely that verses 6 through 11 were a hymn of the early church. The form indicates to most commentators all that is necessary to make that conclusion...very likely a hymn. Certainly the theme of all the Christian faith is bound up in this wonderful hymn. And it has basically two parts: the humiliation of Christ and the exaltation of Christ. His humiliation pointed out in verses 6, 7 and 8; His exaltation pointed out in verses 9, 10 and 11. And you will remember that Peter said that the great theme of the Old Testament prophecies was the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow, 1 Peter 1:11. Those are the two themes that always make up the life and ministry of Christ...the sufferings of Christ and the glory to follow, humiliation--exaltation. The writer of Hebrews says of Christ that He endured the cross, despising the shame for the joy that was set before Him, Hebrews 12:2. Christ understood His sufferings in the light of His exaltation. He endured the pain because He could see the joy.

And so, the Apostle Paul is showing us here both the humiliation and the exaltation of Christ. But you will remember also that his purpose here is not simply to detail the humiliation and exaltation of Christ but to use this section as an illustration of a practical point. Verse 5 points that out, "Have this attitude

in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus." And then he goes on to describe His humiliation and exaltation. In other words, it has application to us. You should have this same attitude. What is the attitude? The attitude is one of humiliating oneself in order that one may be exalted by God. That's the attitude. And that's the message here of a pragmatic moral and ethical nature.

You remember that the main idea in this section is unity. Back in verse 2 Paul says, "I want you to be of the same mind, I want you to maintain the same love. I want you to be sure that you are one in spirit, one in purpose." He's calling for unity. Then he says in verses 3 and 4, "Your unity is a product of your humility. As you consider others superior to yourself and as you look on the things of other and not only your own, you will work out a humility that will manifest unity." Then he says, "If you need an example of such humility, take it from Christ. Christ humbled Himself and that is the way you are to humble yourself." Then he turns to say, "And Christ was exalted," and the implication is "so will you be exalted who have humbled yourselves as well." This then is a principle for practical application. The principle is this, he who humbles himself is what? Is exalted...is exalted. So, "Let this attitude be in you which was also in Christ Jesus" is simply saying when you humble yourselves willingly, God will lift you up.

This obviously is a principle not only that Paul wants to reiterate but one that our Lord taught on a number of occasions. Listen to His words in Matthew 23:12, "Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled, and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted." Really they're really one principle with two sides. You lift yourself up, God will push you down. You push yourself down, God will lift you up.

It's the promise of a reward for faithful humility. It's a promise of blessing for sacrifice. In Luke 14, again we read the words of Jesus in verse 11, it says, "For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled and he who humbles himself shall be exalted." That's a truism. Luke 18:14, "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other," that is the Publican rather than the Pharisee, "for everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled but he who humbles himself shall be exalted." A very simple principle. Jesus said it in at least those three occasions. James reiterates it in James chapter 4 verse 10, "Humble yourselves in the presence of the Lord and He will exalt you." Peter said it in 1 Peter 5:6, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God that He may exalt you at the proper time."

Now you have a truism here...in the mouth of our Lord, in the mouth of Peter, in the mouth of Paul, in the mouth of James. The truism is simply the one who humbles himself is the one whom God exalts. The one who lifts himself up is the one whom God will humiliate. This is a truism. This is a principle. In the divine economy of things it is by giving that a person receives, it is by serving that a person is served. It is by losing one's life that one finds it. It is by dying to self that one lives. It is by humbling oneself that he is exalted. And one follows the other as surely as night follows day. Self-sacrifice and humility is rewarded by God.

So, Jesus then was exalted. And Jesus becomes then an example of the kind of exaltation that God will grant to every humbled believer. This then in great measure is the promise attached to our humiliation. When God says through the Apostle Paul, "Look at others as superior to yourself, be not concerned with your own things only but the things of others," in other words, when he says humble yourselves it is not without promise. The promise is seen in the illustration. As Christ humbled Himself and was by the Father wonderfully exalted, so shall we who humble ourselves be so exalted.

So I want you to see in this passage the ethical implications. This is not just a picture of the humiliation and exaltation of Christ but it is a profound illustration of a divine principle which will benefit our lives as well.

Now as we look at the passage we will focus on God's marvelous exaltation of Jesus Christ. We'll be looking at four points. Let's begin with the first one and we'll look at the first two this morning, the second two next Lord's day.

First of all, as we examine the exaltation of Christ, the first issue is the source of His exaltation...the source. Verse 9 indicates that the source is God...the source is God. "Therefore also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him," and we'll stop at that point. Whatever Christ was given came from God. God exalted Him and God literally gifted Him. The word "bestowed" is gifted, *echarisato*. God exalted Him and God gifted Him.

Notice the word "therefore" at the beginning of verse 9. It indicates..."therefore" also indicates that this is connected to verses 5 to 8. Because of His humiliation therefore also God exalted Him. The two are inseparable. I wish I could bury this in our hearts deeply. Exaltation is connected to humiliation, there is no short cut. That is a truism, that is a principle. If you desire to be lifted up by God, you will humble yourself. And so it is in Christ's case. He who so magnificently lowered Himself to death, even the death on a cross, is equally magnificently lifted up and exalted by God. Notice that phrase "God highly exalted Him," that is the divine principle in operation and that principle applies to your life and my life, the life of every believer. The word "highly exalted," a wonderful word in the Greek, it means "super exalted...hyper- exalted." It uses the preposition *huper* as a prefix from which we get hyper, super exalted, hyper exalted. And it has the idea that in a moment of redemptive history God highly exalted Christ, lifted Him up.

There's a lot in that. Let me kind of enrich your understanding of the super exaltation of Christ by reading a few Scriptures. In Acts 2:32 Peter preaching at Pentecost says, "This Jesus God raised up again." Verse 33, "Therefore having been exalted to the right hand of God." So the exaltation of Christ includes the resurrection and it includes the coronation. He was raised up and He was exalted to the right hand of God. He went to sit on the Father's throne at His right hand, that's resurrection and coronation. Those two elements are part of the exaltation of Christ.

In the fifth chapter of Acts, again we read, Peter and the Apostles are speaking and they said, "The God of our fathers raised up Jesus," again God exalted Him through resurrection. That was part of God's exaltation of Christ. Verse 31, "He is the one whom God exalted to His right hand as a prince and a Savior to grant repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." Now we see resurrection, we see coronation and we see a third term, forgiveness of sin, including intercession. The exaltation of Jesus Christ involved His resurrection, His coronation and His intercession. He intercedes as the one whom God has ordained to forgive sins.

In Ephesians we read even further about this, regarding Christ's exaltation. It says that Christ was raised from the dead, that's resurrection, seated at the right hand in heavenly places, that's coronation. And then it describes that coronation. Far above all rule and authority and power and dominion and every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the age to come. That gives us even more detail about His coronation. He is far above all rule, authority, power, dominion and every name that is named in this age and in the age to come...resurrection, coronation and intercession were elements of exaltation.

There is another element and we find it in Hebrews chapter 4, "God granted to Jesus Christ that when He went into heaven," verse 14, "He became a high priest who has passed through the heavens." What does that refer to? Ascension. So you have a four-fold factor in the exaltation of Christ...resurrection, ascension, coronation and intercession. Those four things make up the four-fold exaltation of Christ. Raised from the dead, ascended to heaven, seated on the throne of God to intercede as the high priest for the sins of His people. And, of course, we have a high priest. We have a high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God. And not a high priest who can't sympathize with our weakness but one who has been tempted in all things as we are yet without sin. Chapter 7 verse 26 of Hebrews says that He is a high priest holy, innocent, undefiled, separate from sinners and exalted above the heavens. And verse 25 says He always lives to make intercession for them. Resurrection, ascension, coronation, intercession, that's the exaltation of Christ, the steps up. We saw the steps down, didn't we? We saw...He was in the form of God but was willing to let go of it, humbled Himself, became a servant, made in the likeness of men, found in fashion as a man, obedient unto death, even the death of the cross, all the steps down. The steps up: resurrection, ascension, coronation, intercession.

There's a sense, beloved, in which we shall even follow that partially. The day will come when we experience resurrection, right? And when we experience resurrection we will also experience ascension, that in the Rapture but that also for the bodies of all believers. And when we get to heaven we will experience coronation for we will sit with Christ on His throne in the throne of God. And we will no longer need intercession for the work will be complete. But the path of glory which Jesus followed from resurrection to ascension to coronation is the path of glory that believers will follow as well. That's the promise of God.

Who is the source of all of this? God. God raised Him from the dead. God lifted Him to glory. God crowned Him and sat Him at His right hand. And God gave to Him the ministry of intercession as the high priest of His people.

Now we need to think a little bit deeply about this. In one sense you say, "How could Jesus be exalted? How...Jesus who is already God, how can He be exalted? How can you lift up one who is God?" Jesus prayed in the high priestly prayer of John 17, "Restore to Me the glory that I had with You before the world began." So there's an indication that He gave up something which God gave back to Him. "Give Me back the glory I had with You before the world began." There was something given up, we saw that, something really given up in His incarnation. And there was something given back in His glorification but I want you to note this, I believe that in His coronation and His exaltation He received more than He had before.

You say, "But God is all in all." Yes but there were more privileges and more rights granted to Jesus after His incarnation than He had before. He wasn't any more God, He wasn't any more perfect, Jesus as God could never be given more. Jesus as God could never be elevated beyond the God that He was and He was already the most-high God. He was already the King of Kings, the potentate, the Lord of Lords. But listen to this, He suffered things and was given things that He would not have experienced had He not become the God/Man. For example, He would never have had the privilege of being the interceding high priest if He had never been touched with the feelings of our infirmities, if He had never been tempted in all points like as we are, if He had never become the substitute for our sin by bearing our sins in His own body on the cross. As God He was incapable of elevation, but as the God/Man He could be lifted from the lowest degradation to the highest degree of glory. And there's a sense in which He received from the Father privileges that He didn't have before that He gained because of His incarnation, the privilege of being the intercessory high priest for His people.

He was declared to be the Son of God with power. At His ascension he was surrounded with myriads of holy angels and went to take possession of His Father's throne, was seated there. He was elevated there as the God/Man and that was only His since the incarnation. And so He entered upon all the rights and privileges not only of God as God but of God as the God/Man who had accomplished all that He had accomplished in His incarnation. So His exaltation is not in regard to His nature or eternal place within the Godhead but rather it is in regard to His submission and sacrifice as the God/Man that He was lifted up.

Now we cannot fully understand all of that but I believe that out of that humiliation came an exaltation that was a new experience with new rights and new privileges granted to the God/Man, Jesus Christ. The exaltation was the reversal of the humiliation. He who was poor became rich. He who was rejected became accepted. He who learned obedience had entered upon the actual administration of power that called all other men to obey Him. William Hendrickson writes, "As King having by His

death, resurrection and ascension achieved and displayed His triumphant over His enemies, He now holds in His hands the reigns of the universe and rules all things in the interest of the church. As prophet, He through His Spirit leads His own in all truth. As priest, He on the basis of His accomplished atonement not only intercedes but actually lives forever to make intercession for those who draw near to God through Him."

So He has entered into an exaltation and a glory that is the same glory He had before the world began and yet with new rights and privileges because He is now the God/Man who has accomplished the work of His incarnation. And God did all of this. God is the source of all of it. God gave to Jesus this right, this privilege and this exaltation.

In fact, the Bible makes such a clear, clear case for the fact that this is the work of God that no one could possibly err, no one could possibly miss this. In Romans 14:9 it says, "For this end Christ died and lived again that He might be Lord of the dead and the living." He did that in order that God might ordain Him into a unique place, that God might lift Him up and exalt Him. Paul writes about it in 1 Corinthians 15:24, "Then comes the end when He delivers up the Kingdom to the God and Father, when He has abolished all rule and all authority and power for He must reign until He had put all His enemies under His feet." The implication there is that He is functioning under authority that's given Him of God. And God has lifted Him to the place where He is the sovereign of everything. That role God has given to Him. John 5 says that God commits all judgment to the Son. This is God's gift to the Son. God is the source of Christ's exaltation.

The word there in Philippians that we mentioned briefly that says "and He bestowed," I just call your attention to it. It's a very interesting word. It says that He also bestowed on Him the name and so forth. The word "bestowed" means graciously to give, or perhaps better in this connotation, whole heartedly. In other words, Christ so totally and utterly satisfied God's desire for the work of His incarnation, He so fully and completely accomplished redemption that God wholeheartedly and generously and graciously and beneficently poured out on Him gifts, the gifts of exaltation.

So we see Christ who went very low is made very high. And in one sense though He cannot be more than God, He is made higher than He had ever been because He now not only has all the privileges of God but all the privileges of the God/Man whom He now is. And so He enters upon a glorious majestic exaltation.

Now I want to take you to a second point. And this is the key point in this text. The source of His exaltation is God an the title of His exaltation is Lord...the title of His exaltation is Lord. And you know this is an issue close to my heart. I want you to listen carefully as we look together at it. Verse 9 says that God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him this key phrase "the name...the name," definite article, "the name which is above every name." Now let me ask you a question. What is THE name which is above every name? It can only be one name, I want you to think it through, it can only be

one name. Whatever name it is Hebrews 1:4 says it is a more excellent name than the angels have. Whatever name it is consistent with Scripture, Old and New Testament, it will imply not just a means of distinguishing one person from another like we use Bob and Joe, but it will imply something of the nature of Christ, something of His person, revealing something of His inner being. It will not just be a title to distinguish Him from all other beings, but it will be a title that will literally cause Him to be ranked above all other beings. It will be a title that is characteristic of His essence that will identify Him as superior to all other beings because it is the name which is above every name. It isn't a comparative here, it is a superlative. It isn't a comparative name for distinguishing purposes, it is a superlative name, one beyond.

END OF SIDE ONE

SIDE TWO

You say, "Well now why is God going to give Him a name?" God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name. Well let me give you a little bit of history. Do you remember a man in the Old Testament named Abram? Abram met with God, God covenanted with him, God entered into a very unique relationship with Abram and what did God do to his name? Changed it, called him what? *Av-ra-ham* in Hebrew, Abraham. Do you remember a man by the name of Jacob? God entered into a unique relationship with Jacob and He gave his name Israel. Do you remember in the New Testament a man named Simon? Jesus called him to follow Him and Jesus gave to that man a new name and his new name was Peter when he entered a unique relationship with Him. Do you remember that to the church at Pergamos and the church at Philadelphia in Revelation 2:17 and Revelation 3:12, the Lord promised to those who overcome He would give them a new name?

Well if you remember all of that, and those are a few highlights, you will remember that new names are uniquely given to mark out a definite stage in a person's life. And God has done that uniquely through redemptive history. And here He does it even in the case of Christ, amazing. He literally gives to Christ a name. He bestows on Christ a name. It is not a name that will shock us or surprise us, He has had many names. He has been called Jesus, Christ, Son of Man, Son of God, Messiah, but He here receives a new name.

Now some say, "Yes, it's the name Jesus because in verse 10 it says at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." And some have said the new name is Jesus. Is that a new name for Jesus? No. It can't be the name Jesus because God cannot bestow on Him the name Jesus at His exaltation. God bestowed on Him the name Jesus at His...what?...at His birth, "Thou shalt call His name Jesus for He shall save His people." It can't be the name Jesus because Jesus is not a name that's above every name. In fact there are a lot of people named Jesus. And it can't be the name Jesus because that's not the implication here in the context. Down in verse 11 it says that every tongue must confess that Jesus Christ is...what?...Lord. So what's the name? Lord...that's the name. God gave Him the name

that is above every name and the name that is above every name is Lord. Whoever is Lord is in charge, right? That's the name that is above every name. That's the supreme name.

That, by the way, is a New Testament equivalent to the Old Testament Yahweh, the name of God, Jehovah, which indicates sovereign ruler. It signifies rulership based on power and authority. And out of His humiliation He becomes ruler. He becomes Lord. Listen, He had already given hints that this was going to be His name. Pilate looked at Him and wondered if He was a king, wondered if He was really a master and He acknowledged that He was Lord. Thomas looked at Him and said, "My Lord and my God." It was evident all along that He was the living Lord but here in His exaltation He is formally and officially given the name Lord. He now has it as the God/Man. He was Son of Man on earth. Sometimes, a few times, Son of God. He was Jesus, a common name. He was Christ Messiah, now the Father says from here on out you must confess Jesus Christ as...what?...Lord. That's the name which is above every name.

Now we know that because you will notice in verse 10 that it says, "And bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." And verse 11, "Every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord." Let me give you a little hint. You see verse 10? That at the name of Jesus...it does not say this, it does not say...that at the name Jesus every knee should bow. It says that at the name OF Jesus. And what is the name OF Jesus that the Father has just given Him? Lord. The name Jesus doesn't make people bow, that's the name of His incarnation. The name Lord makes people bow. And it is the name Lord that men must confess to be saved.

This is indicated clearly when you consider what is in Paul's mind here when he says that at the name of Jesus, which by the way is Lord, every knee should bow, verse 11, every tongue confess. That's taken right out of Isaiah 45. So if we want to know the meaning of that, we go back to Isaiah 45 we can find out. Isaiah 45 verses 22 and following, verse 21 he says, "Declare and set forth your case, indeed let them consult together, who has announced this from of old? Who has long since declared it? Is it not I the Lord?...here it is...And there is no other God beside Me, I am the Lord...He says...and there's no other God. I am a righteous God and a savior, there is none except Me, turn to Me, be saved all the ends of the earth for I am God and there is no other. I have sworn by Myself. The word has gone forth from My mouth in righteousness and will not turn back and to Me every knee will bow and every tongue will swear allegiance." Now that's talking about sovereignty, isn't it? Lordship. And that's where He got that every knee would bow and every tongue would confess. And God is saying I am the Lord, I am the Lord, there's nobody but Me. I am righteous, I am savior, turn to Me and be saved for I am God, there is no other. I have sworn by Myself. In other words, I'm in charge, I ask nothing, I need no other authority. The word that goes out of My mouth is all there is and it never comes back and you will bow to Me and you will bow to My Lordship.

And so when he says that He has a name, a name at which every knee must bow, a name at which every tongue must confess, that name can't be Jesus, that name must be...what?...Lord. That's the

context of Isaiah 45, that's the only name that makes sense in the context that we are to confess Jesus Christ as Lord...as Lord.

Now listen to me carefully. Is Jesus Christ Lord? Yes. Who declared Him to be Lord? The Father...the Father exalted Him and gave Him a name and the name He gave Him was the name Lord. And Lord is above every other name. If you are Lord, you're above every other name. It implies deity, yes. But it carries the power of sovereignty. It is not just to say that you are God, it is to say that you as God rule. It has to mean that.

There are some who would tell us, "Well it simply means that He's God." Yeah, well it might simply mean He's God but once you've said He's God He's now in charge. He is sovereign.

The source of the exaltation of Christ is God and the title of the exaltation of Christ is Lord. Beloved, we cannot know Christ any other way than as Lord. That's why the basic confession, the first Christian creed in the history of the church is given in verse 11, "Jesus Christ is...what?...Lord." Every Christian must say that. That's the bottom line of our faith. That is the first basic Christian creed ever articulated. Jesus Christ is Lord. That's the substance of Christianity. Lord is above every other name. You don't make Him Lord. Every time I hear someone say that, it's like fingernails going down a blackboard. People say, "Well, you need to make Jesus Lord." You have nothing to do with that. I understand what people mean, but that's not the way to say that. Sometimes they mean you need to submit to His leadership and His authority. Fine, say it that way. Don't talk about making Him Lord, God did that. He is Lord.

In the words of John Flavil, a seventeenth century English Puritan, "The gospel offer of Christ includes all His offices and gospel faith just so receives Him. To submit to Him as well as to be redeemed by Him, to imitate Him in the holiness of His life as well as to reap the purchases and fruits of His death it must be an entire receiving of the Lord Jesus Christ."

Tozer said, "To urge men and women to believe in a divided Christ is bad teaching." People calling on you to receive Him as Savior and not as Lord. He says, "No one can receive half a Christ or a third of Christ or a quarter of the person of Christ. We're not saved by believing in an office or in a work. He is Lord and those who refuse Him as Lord cannot use Him as Savior." And everyone who receives Him surrenders to His authority. He's Lord. That's it...that's it.

Now, beloved, this truth rings through the New Testament, literally rings through the New Testament, that Jesus Christ is Lord. Though the Father didn't bestow it until the exaltation, it was coming and we could feel it coming all along. You can go all the way back to Luke chapter 2 and verse 11, "Today is born in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord." Even at His birth it was affirmed that He was Lord and that the name would be bestowed upon Him is no surprise to anybody. That's who He was and rightfully did He bear the name. God held back giving Him the official bestowal until His work was

done.

Jesus even said it. John 13:13, "You call me teacher and Lord and, He says, you are right...you are right, I am." And then, of course, after His wonderful work and after He was lifted up and exalted in heaven, Peter preaches on the day of Pentecost, "Let all the house of Israel know for certain that God has made Him Lord." Oh, I love that. Acts 2:36. God made Him Lord. God bestowed the name that is above every name on Him. God made Him Lord. Who? "This Jesus whom you crucified." God made Him Lord.

Chapter 10 as you flow through the book of Acts, you hear so much about Christ being Lord...by the way, Christ is referred to as Lord 92 times in the book of Acts...twice as Savior...92 times as Lord. Acts 10:36 it says, "The word which he sent to the sons of Israel...here's the message of the Apostles...preaching peace through Jesus Christ, He is Lord of all." You preach Christ? You preach Him as Lord. You preach Christ? You preach Him as Lord. And so did the early church, 92 times in the book of Acts as they preached the gospel they refer to Him as Lord.

Romans, do you remember this? Chapter 10 verse 9, "That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as...what?...Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved for with the heart man believes resulting in righteousness; with the mouth he confesses resulting in salvation. For the Scripture says, Whoever believes in Him will not be disappointed for there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord is Lord of all,"...that's who He is...and you confess Him not only as Lord deity but Lord of all. He is Lord over all, abounding in riches, it says. "And whoever will call on the name of the Lord will be saved."

A lot of people like to talk about Jesus, don't like to talk about Lord. He is Lord. Romans 14, "As it is written...verse 11...as I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me and every tongue shall give praise to God." Who's he talking about? Back to verse 9, "For to this end Christ died and lived again that He might be Lord both of the dead and the living, and you will bow your knee to His lordship." By the way, Romans 14:9 to 11 is also a quote of Isaiah 45:23, the same passage used in Philippians 2. And again it emphasizes that Christ is Lord and it is to the Lord that every knee bows. "As I live, says the Lord, every knee shall bow to Me."

In 1 Corinthians chapter 8 and verse 6 we read this, "For there...for us there is but one God the Father from whom are all things and we exist for Him, and one Lord Jesus Christ," that's His new name after His exaltation. After He went up into heaven and the epistles were written He was the Lord Jesus Christ, always the Lord...always the Lord. First Corinthians 12:3 says, "No man calls Jesus Lord except by the power of the Holy Spirit." The Spirit moving on the heart enables one to call Jesus Lord.

Paul at the end of 1 Corinthians 15 says, "Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Always Lord...always Lord. Second Corinthians 4:5, "We do not preach ourselves but we preach...I love this...Christ Jesus as Lord." Christ Jesus as Lord. Revelation 17:14; 19:16, "King of Kings, Lord of Lords."

Now listen to me. Scripture never speaks of any person making Jesus Lord...never. God made Him Lord...Acts 2:36. And yet you read things like this, from a Christian periodical, well- known, "It is imperative to trust Christ as personal Savior and be born again. But this is only the first decision. The decision to trust Christ as Savior and then make Him Lord are two separate distinct decisions. The two decisions may be close or distant in time." In other words, he's saying you can receive Christ as Savior over here and some time later make Him Lord. "But salvation must always precede lordship," he writes. "It is possible to be saved without ever making Christ Lord of your life." That's an absolute nonsense statement. What are you saying? Are you telling Christ He's not Lord unless you give Him permission? What kind of a statement is that? It's nonsense. I don't even think this person believes it. It is possible to be saved without ever making Christ Lord of your life...I don't think so. I don't understand my Bible if that's true because to be saved you must confess Jesus as...Lord. How clear is that? Even I can understand it. What in the world are people talking about?

By the way, He's called Lord no less than 747 times in the New Testament. That seems to me significant...747 times? I don't know what you're going to do with invitations to salvation if you eliminate lordship. Acts 2:21, "Every one who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Acts 16:31, Philippian jailer, Paul says, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you'll be saved."

The centrality of the lordship of Christ is very clear in the New Testament gospel. You can't separate Savior from Lord. Now some have said, "Well but, but...but the word Lord just means deity...it just means deity, doesn't mean sovereign master, doesn't mean ruler." Well it...that's completely someone's opinion, it just doesn't carry any weight. How can you say Lord means deity but the deity doesn't mean sovereignty? If you're God, you're in charge, that's pointless. That argument doesn't hold water. It's an impossible separation because inherent in being God is authority, dominion, rulership, the right to command, it's all there. If you say He's God, you've said it all. Even from a linguistic viewpoint, however, the word Lord is kuriosand kuriosoverwhelmingly refers to the idea of rulership, rulership. In fact the word is used to refer to people who aren't even God because they are rulers. So its inherent meaning is not deity, its inherent meaning is rulership...rulership.

The word kurios, to give you a little bit of a background on it, began by meaning master or owner. And it was always a title of respect. It became the official title of the Roman emperors. The Roman emperor in the Greek was kurios. In the Latin he was dominoswhich means master and lord. It became a title of the heathen deities. It was the Greek word from which the Hebrew was translated, the Hebrew word Yahweh or Jehovah. So it did have the idea of deity in it buy the key thought was rulership. When it says Jesus was kurios, sure Yahweh is implied there but that only means God and

God means authority. But even the word itself, kurios, means master and owner. So whether you look at it from the standpoint of the term kurioswhich means one who rules, one who leads, one who is master, or from the concept that it means God, you've got the same problem...God is in charge.

Now what are we saying? It is at the very center of the Christian confession that Jesus is Lord, is at the very center of a gospel message that Jesus is Lord. That's what you must affirm to be saved. And that's what Paul says every tongue will ultimately confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The source of that exaltation is God. The title of His exaltation is Lord. And Paul says everyone is going to acknowledge it sooner or later. It would be my prayer for you that you would acknowledge that He is Lord by choice and not by force. Let's bow together.

We acknowledge You, Jesus Christ, as Lord. And we acknowledge that the Father has made You both Lord and Messiah, that You are Lord. We don't make You Lord, we just bow to Your lordship, we just confess it. Lord, it's our prayer today that You might show us clearly Your exaltation, take us in our mind's eye and in our hearts through the resurrection, the ascension, the coronation, the intercession, to see that You have been lifted up to be bestowed with the name which is above every name, even the name Lord which, yes, means You are God, but more, means You are sovereign God, You are the ruler. And when we confess Jesus Christ is Lord as Christians have through the centuries, we are affirming Your sovereignty over our lives, we are affirming Your rulership, Your mastery, Your dominion, Your authority, Your power to which we submit our sinful souls. I pray, Father, that there's not a person here who is living under some kind of illusion that Jesus Christ can be received as Savior and ignored as Lord, for they have received a half-Christ which is no Christ at all. May we acknowledge, Lord, as best we can that You're Lord even though we don't understand the full implications of that, and may we rejoice that You are the sovereign one in our lives. We come to You as Lord for that is Your name, that is the name the Father gave You. We do not make You Lord, we submit to Your lordship in an ever awakening obedience for which we give You praise and thanks for the privilege of such submission.

And, Father, I would pray today that we might not only see the truth of who You are but we might apply the principle of the passage. We thank You for what we see in the exaltation of Christ that gives promise to our own lives, for as He being humbled was exalted, so we being humbled will be exalted as well. And to that end we pray, Lord, that You might be glorified even as You were in His exaltation. We know that the heart of the passage is unity, that the key to unity is humility, that the example is Christ and the promise is exaltation.

Press those truths deeply in our hearts, Lord, that we in humility might know the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace that brings joy to the Spirit and the Son that we might experience the exaltation that comes to those who have humbled themselves before You. Lord God, we so long to be lifted up by You. Protect us from lifting ourselves up and being humbled by You when what we long for is to

put ourselves down and be lifted up by You.

Minister to every life today, Father, those things which are needful for spiritual growth, encouragement and strength in Jesus' name. Amen.

Available online at: http://www.gty.org
COPYRIGHT (C) 2015 Grace to You
You may reproduce this Grace to You content for non-commercial purposes in accordance with Grace to You's Copyright Policy (http://www.gty.org/connect/copyright).