The Glory of Christ

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Preacher: Dr. Michael Staton

[0:00] This is the First Mustang Pulpit Podcast, a podcast of the weekly preaching and teaching at First Mustang.! Thank you for joining us. Open with me to Philippians chapter 2.

! Philippians chapter 2. We are returning to this study. I had planned to do it a couple of weeks ago, but things changed. We did with weather and such last week, and so we are returning now to Philippians 2, where we will be, Lord willing, on Sunday mornings for a while now.
And we come to what is one of the most important, beautiful, worshipful, instructive, practical, theological passages in our entire New Testament that has already been read to us today in verses 5 to 11.
I know it's been a number of weeks since we were in Philippians, but in the context, as always, is critically important. So I want to take us back to chapter 1.
And I do just, let me kind of give you a heads up here, that what we're looking at today is, in some ways, is deeply theological.
[1:27] In some ways, at the same time, is highly practical. And so I just want to encourage you to listen carefully. We've got to make sure, of all things, that we are clear on the biblical Jesus.

We cannot afford to be wrong in worshiping the Savior of our mind's creation or of a false religion. We must ensure that we know the biblical Jesus.
So today is just really important that you're dialed in. Really important that you're listening. As much at all possible, if you can, let's try to not have any distractions, because this text is worthy of our greatest focus.
And we need our minds to be fully engaged to catch all that is here. And so, even for our children and youngest ones who are in here, I want to ask you to listen carefully and to try to really lock in with us, because what we're talking about today is so important that you would understand who our Savior is.
This is a passage that has so much richness and beauty in it, and sadly is also where so much false teaching comes in, that we just really, as a church today, need to ask the Lord to help us to listen, to abstain from any distractions, and to carefully hear what the Lord would say to us through His Word.
[3:07] Let's ask the Lord's help to do that. Our Father and our God, we do ask for Your Spirit's help today, that we would be able to grasp what You have for us, that we would know more of our Savior, and worship truly in spirit and in truth.

Would You help us to do that today? Amen. Chapter 2, verses 1-4 we've covered, but it's been a few weeks, speaks of the unity that we have as believers.
It tells us that we have encouragement in Christ, and comfort from love, that we participate in the Spirit, that we have affection and sympathy. Verse 2, Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord of one mind.
So as believers, there is a unity that we experience, because we are one in Christ. We have been encouraged by the Gospel, we have been comforted by the love of the Lord, we have fellowship in the Holy Spirit together, and because of what we have in Christ, we are of one mind, one love, one accord together.
Verse 3, Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility, count others more significant than yourselves.
[4:38] So, the Gospel that we have received, is to work in us in such a way, that our unity is present, even though there are things that we would be different amongst ourselves.

We don't have to be the exact same opinion and preference in all things, but there's a unity that we have that's greater than those differences, because of what we have in Christ.

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And that unity produces humility within the body of Christ. And so, as believers, the point here is that the Gospel is antithetical to pride.
The Gospel is antithetical to divisions among us, but instead, the Gospel cultivates humility and cultivates unity amongst us.
Verse 4, Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. We're to love each other, and care for each other, serve each other, carry each other's burdens, that the church and the Christian life is not about just me and my interests, and it's not about you and your interests, it's about we together as a family, as the body of Christ, loving and serving and caring for each other, and that we would fight against pride and fight against division by holding high the message of the Gospel.
[6:10] It is the Gospel that creates unity. It is the Gospel that forms humility within us. It's the Gospel that allows us to enjoy what we have as the body of Christ.

And then in verse 5, he gives an example. It's an illustration. And the illustration of how we are to live, and how we are to love, and how we are to serve each other, is Christ Himself.
Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.
So, for the next couple of Sundays, we're going to just go deep into verses 5-11. And so, the first thing I want you to make note of, we're looking at the work of Christ.
The incarnation of Christ. Christ leaving heaven, taking on flesh, walking this earth, and all that this passage teaches us about who Christ is and what He did.
[7:29] So, the first thing I want you to write down is the word eternality. Eternality. Meaning, Jesus has always existed. He wasn't created.

He didn't have a start. Jesus did not come into existence when He was born in Bethlehem. He has always existed.
He is eternal. Now, let's look carefully at the language because there's so much here that we've got to be precise with. Verse 5, Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus.
We are to strive to have the mind of Christ in order that we might live as we should. And I do want you to notice that in verses, chapter 2 here, verses 5-8, this deep and rich theology about who Christ is and what He did when He took on flesh is here to help lead us to practical obedience.
Have this mind in you. This is how we're to think. This is how we're to live. This is how we're to regard each other. And what comes after that is some of the most profound theology in the entire New Testament which tells us that you don't choose between something that is theological or practical.
[9:08] The theology in the Bible is the most practical thing we can know. And so it makes me really nervous when I hear other pastors say things like, we just want to give you very practical messages.

As if the theology is not helpful for us. As if the theology is best left unstudied, undone, and we'll just give you practical things.
Now, if you don't connect the theology with how we're to live, then we're going to be just puffed up people that love our knowledge and that's dangerous too.
But rightly understood, there is no division between that which is theological and that which is practical. The theology of who Christ is, and you don't get any more theological than talking about the eternality and the deity of Christ.
And yet, it is the life and example of Christ that is given to us so that we would know how to live. You don't get more practical than how you are to live.
[10:22] And so what you see here is this perfect blending of that which is theological and that which is practical. So when you teach your children theology, you're teaching them how to think.

And when they know how to think, you're teaching them how to live. So in your Sunday school classes, in our church services, in your families, don't think you choose between is this a theological study or is this a practical study?
Do I want to be a theological teacher or do I want to be a practical teacher? The Bible takes these and puts them together and says the more you know of who Christ is, the better you will be able to live how you should.
So don't think that a church should choose. We want to be theologically precise so that we live as we should.

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Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus. There is a bit of a difficult textual interpretation here with this phrase.
[11:38] The ESV that I'm preaching from says, which is yours in Christ Jesus. Some other translations say, which was also in Christ Jesus.

It's a small nuance. I think the best way to understand the wording in verse 5 though, I would agree with the other translators who translated which was also in Christ Jesus because I think that's the main point of the entire passage that you're to look at the mindset Christ had and then to use that as our example of how we are to think of Christ and how we are to serve each other.
You also see in back to verse 3 that we are to count others more significant so that we can live in humility.
In verse 6, Jesus did not count equality with God. So we've got this same kind of language here of counting, reckoning, understanding that the way that the Lord thought the mind of Christ is to be the way we strive with the Spirit's help to think so that we live with the mind of Christ.
So we are to have this mind in ourselves which was in Christ Jesus. Christ is our ultimate example of humility.
[13:13] Now, I want to always be clear on this. Christ is far more than just our example. He's more than that. But He's never less than that. He's more than just an example of how we are to live.

He lives a life we cannot live. He dies a death we should have died. He's able to fulfill all righteousness that we could not do. He's more than our example but He's never less than our example.
And the mind that Christ had the way that He counted to use the language of the text here thought, reckoned is the mind we are to pray to have so that we could live like Christ lived.
Our thinking is what determines our living. So let's look at this biblical Jesus this eternal Jesus who has always existed.
Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus verse 6 who though He was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.
[14:29] I actually love the way the NIV translates this phrase in verse 6 it says who being in very nature God that's the point Jesus is eternal God He took on flesh He was a real person who had a real family lived in real places did real things yet He existed before He was born in Bethlehem.

Make sure you're clear on this. Jesus was not created. There are false religions who teach Jesus was created.
You cannot afford to be wrong on who Jesus is. Christ Jesus who though He was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.
Jesus takes on flesh we celebrate that at Christmas time but when He takes on flesh He never ceased to be God. You've got to make sure your mind is completely clear on this.
Jesus was not created He's always existed and when Jesus takes on flesh what we celebrate at Christmas time He did not cease to be God. It's been well written this way remaining what He was that is in the form of God He became what He was not and that is man.
[16:17] It's really well said. He remained what He was which is God and became what He was not and that is man.

Now look in verse 6 who though He was in the form of God you might just mark that word form it's going to be very important these next two weeks.
the form of God Morphe is the word of God. The word used for form here refers to essential characteristics it means your nature it means your essence the essential character of something.
There are two Greek words that can be used that are translated as form we're going to see both of them in this passage this week and next week. You have the word Morphe and you have the word schema.
The word used here in verse 6 He existed in the form of God is the word Morphe. This is very important. Morphe speaks of your true essence that does not change.
[17:30] The word schema also translated as form refers to that outer appearance so to speak that does change.

Let me just give you an example. If we were to speak of your form as a person if we're speaking of your Morphe of your essential character your Morphe is that you are a human being that's who you are that's the essence of who you are that's really what you are who you are you are a human being that doesn't change.

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But your schema your form your outer appearance does change. You're a human being all the time but you go from being an embryo to a baby to a child to a teenager to an adult.
Your appearance your form in that sense changes. So your outer appearance your schema changes.
Your essence of who you are your Morphe does not change. The point in this verse is that Jesus is God.
[18:53] That's the essence of who He is. He did not become God He has always been God. He never stopped being God. He is always God.

That is His essential nature. I want to back up and reiterate a point I made a moment ago. What we're talking about right now that's pretty theological is used in the text as an illustration of how we are to live in humility.
the theology in this text is the illustration. The practical example is the theology. And this is why I don't want you to be afraid in your personal Bible studies in your discipleship groups in your home Bible studies in your Sunday school classes don't be afraid to think and to dig deep into the theology of the Scripture because that itself will tell you how to live.
The more you know of who Christ is the more you know how to live. The more precise your theology the higher your worship goes and the deeper your affection goes.
So don't think that you just need to be a theological teacher or a practical teacher they go hand in hand.
[20:29] So Jesus has always been eternally God. How do we know that? Because He was in the form morphe of God. It's His essential essence.

He is God. Now look at this next phrase. Who though He was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.
What does that mean? He didn't count equality with God a thing to be grasped. Did it mean He didn't understand it? Does it mean He couldn't comprehend it?
We use that phrase in English sometimes. If you were to try to explain to me calculus I'd say I don't grasp that. I don't understand that. I don't get that. Does it mean He didn't understand it?
Again I actually think the NIV is really helpful with its translation here. It says He did not consider equality with God something to be used to His advantage. That's a helpful way to think of it.
[21:42] He didn't clutch on. He didn't grasp on. He didn't hold on to that which could be used for His advantage. Did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.

He didn't clutch on to the advantages that He had as the eternal Son of God. Now let me just flood your mind here with some scripture because you need to know that the Bible clearly claims Jesus is equal to God.
Not only in this text where it says it explicitly but in other texts as well. John 1 1 In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God.
John 5 18 This was why the Jews were seeking all the more to kill Him because not only was He breaking the Sabbath but He was even calling God His own Father making Himself equal with God.
Even His opponents clearly understood Jesus claimed that He was God. It's always amazing to me when somebody says Jesus never claimed to be God.
[23:00] That's not even someone being intellectually honest. Even Jesus' opponents understood that's exactly what He was claiming to be and that's why they wanted to kill Him.

John 10 verse 30 I and the Father are one. And the Jews picked up stones again to stone Him.
Jesus answered them I have shown you many good works from the Father for which of them are you going to stone me?
And the Jews answered him it is not for a good work that we are going to stone you but for blasphemy Because you being a man make yourself God.
Does Jesus clearly claim to be God in the Bible? Absolutely. Does the Bible refer to Christ as eternally God?
Absolutely. John 20 28 Thomas answered him my Lord and my God. Colossians 1 He is the image of the invisible God.
[24:07] Isaiah 6 you know Isaiah 6 in the Old Testament this great beautiful passage where Isaiah sees the Lord high and lifted up. In John 12 verse 41 here's what the New Testament says Isaiah said these things speaking of Isaiah 6 he said these things because he saw his glory and spoke of him referring to Jesus and so what we see all throughout the scripture are these very clear

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times where Jesus referred to himself as God where those who followed him understood that and even his opponents understood that let me give you one more John 8 56 your father Abraham rejoiced that he would see my day he saw it and was glad and so the

Jews said to him you're not yet 50 years old and have you seen Abraham and Jesus said to them truly truly I say to you before Abraham was what I am here's Jesus in his thirties speaking of Abraham Abraham was 2,000 years before the birth of Christ and Jesus says I've seen Abraham because before Abraham existed 2,000 years ago I am because he is eternally God we need to be clear on this because there are a lot of religions that will speak of Jesus that do not speak of a biblical
Jesus Jesus did not clutch onto all the glories he rightly deserved but let's be clear he never ceased being God when he took on human flesh he came to serve and becomes our example of how to live as a servant but in doing so he did not grasp did not hold on to his divine right to enjoy worship and the glory of heaven as he rightly deserved to do!
The idea behind this statement that it's not a thing to be grasped as one man wrote he did not forcefully retain this for his own advantage so here is Jesus who is eternal not created eternal takes on flesh so we call the incarnation taking on flesh when he is born at Christmas time in Bethlehem but 2000 years before that Abraham existed and before Abraham existed Jesus existed because Jesus is eternal now write down a second word incarnation!
Incarnation eternality tells us Jesus has always existed incarnation is Jesus becoming flesh though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped verse 7 but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant now church here's where your mind's got to be engaged with me because this statement which is so critical in understanding the gospel is also where so many false teachers and false religions fall off a cliff okay let's be careful here he emptied himself which means we've got to stop and ask the question emptied himself of what and it's in answering this question that you get so many people who formulate a
[28:55] Jesus of their own making of their own minds construction it is here that people see so many times to understand biblically who Jesus is and they build in their mind this picture and this idea of what Jesus is and who he is and what he did that is no longer biblical so do not get this wrong he emptied himself of what well some say wrongly he emptied himself of his deity the idea here is that he was God in heaven this eternal son of God and he takes on flesh incarnation dwells among us and as he becomes a man he ceases to be God I just flooded you with scripture that says quite the contrary Jesus did not empty himself of his deity some say well at his incarnation he did empty himself of all of his deity but he emptied himself of some of his deity how do you become a little bit of

God you can't be a little bit God you either are or you are not God his morphe his essential essence that's what the word in verse six says is that he is God you can't change being God if you are eternally God others would say well he gave up some of his divine attributes this is where we have to be really careful this is where people get really confused here Jesus takes on flesh becomes a man and in so doing does not cease to be God and if he did not cease to be God he's not emptying himself he's not shedding any of his divine nature God can't shed being
God now if you want to go a step deeper into the theological water some say well he gave up what they'll call his relative attributes but retained his essential attributes and what they mean by that is he gave up omniscience for example and retained essential attributes like holiness that's a problem because you read in the gospels where Jesus says he knew what was in their hearts knowing what they were thinking God can't cease to be God and then you get to the complete denial of the deity of Christ where people say that Jesus in the flesh is not God at all this is why we've got to make sure our knowledge of who
Jesus is is rooted in scripture nothing else Colossians 2 9 in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily Jesus does not cease being God God in Matthew 5 Jesus takes and gives directly the word of God you have heard it said that but I say to you he is speaking completely authoritatively as God in Luke 5 he reads their minds!
He forgives their sin and declares that he is God and that he does what only God can do namely forgive sin so when Jesus forgives sin his opponents have all kinds of trouble and say who can forgive sin but God alone that's the point when Jesus says he can forgive sin he is making it crystal clear he is God he didn't cease to be God Thomas when he encounters Christ says my Lord and my God and if Jesus is not God for him to receive that worship would have been wrong angels don't

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receive worship people who are merely humans don't receive worship only
[33:51] God is worthy of worship and so for Jesus the God man to receive worship is to make himself equal with God so we're looking at this question in verse 7 of what does it mean that he emptied himself it does not mean that he stopped being God you can summarize all of that with this one sentence he did not give up being God to become man he did not give up being God to become man it's been well written the son did not empty himself of his deity or his divine attributes in his incarnation so what did he do he added a human nature to his divine nature and so in

Jesus you have one man with two natures a human nature and divine nature so we call the hypostatic union let's go back to our question in verse seven he emptied himself so he didn't pour out his attributes he didn't empty himself of being God in what way can we say he emptied himself let me give you three things that I think are helpful to understand what did happen when he took on flesh number one when Jesus took on a human nature he did veil his pre incarnate glory when Jesus took on a human nature he did veil his pre incarnate glory
I'm thinking here of Isaiah 53 verse 2 speaking prophetically of the Messiah says he had no form or majesty no beauty to be desired now there so Jesus would walk around and he looked like other men he didn't glow he his glory glory that he had in heaven of the worship of the angels that in his incarnation is veiled now there's a couple of times where it is unveiled one example would be at the mount of transfiguration!
there we read about the glory of Christ being unveiled to those who were there remember in the garden in Gethsemane the night before his crucifixion they're coming to arrest him they're coming to arrest him because they want to kill him and Jesus is there in the garden and as he's there in the garden these hundreds of people pursue him and they say they're looking for Jesus and Jesus steps forward and says what I am and what do the hundreds of men do they fall flat on their face in the dirt because when Christ in any way is to unveil the glory of who he is in full man cannot stand so there's a couple of times where that veil is pulled back but in his incarnation in taking on a human nature the essence of that pre incarnate glory that the angels would have worshipped and would have adored and taking on flesh gets veiled a bit we'll see that in just a little bit in a deeper way second thing
Jesus in taking on a human nature chose to not always demonstrate what he remained in his divinity he chose to not always demonstrate what he remained in his divinity give you a couple of examples in the wilderness when Jesus being tempted by the devil and he's starving he did not turn stones to bread when he was hungry he could have but he did not in fact one example of the humiliation of the incarnation is that the eternal son of
[39:21] God takes on flesh and allows himself to live in a condition where he would be hungry and feel that I mean imagine John says in the gospel nothing that was created came into existence that was not created by Jesus in other words the very universe is created by the word of Christ and yet that very creator in taking on human flesh allows himself to feel hunger pains that in itself shows his humility Jesus would walk dusty uneven roads going from town to town rather than just appearing wherever he wanted to be so so he is limiting the use of who he is I think this is a helpful paragraph!

to share with you Christ did not cheat he acted just like the people in the world around him acted he did not use his power for his own convenience!
he did not survive living in the world by constantly using his power as God to make life easier he used his power often but it was to advance his message and his ministry never for himself that's what we mean when we say he emptied himself he didn't stop being God he didn't lay aside the essence of his attributes but he does not use them for his own advantage Matthew 26 at the cross Jesus says he could call down 12 legions of angels but he does not do that and then a third thing by taking on a human nature Jesus did submit himself to the father one way to understand it is this that as
God the son he had every right to exercise his divine prerogatives at will yet as a suffering servant of Yahweh he surrendered himself to the will of the father in everything his divine will is never separate or contrary to the will of the father yet in praying in the garden Luke 22 he will say nevertheless not my will but yours be done John 5 19 Jesus said to them truly truly I say to you the son can do nothing of his own accord but only what he sees the father doing for whatever the father does the son does likewise John 5 30 I do nothing on my own as I hear I judge and my judgment is just because I seek not my so Jesus in the form of God eternally God did not count equality with

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God a thing to be grasped not hold on to it for his own advantage but he emptied himself he didn't pour out his deity he emptied himself in the ways I just described but let me give you the greatest answer to the question of what the Bible means when it says he emptied himself it tells us verse seven but he emptied himself by here's the answer taking the form of a servant that's what Jesus did for us taking the form morphe of a servant do do loss being born in the likeness of men if you want to summarize all that I just said last number of minutes do it with this sentence he emptied himself by adding human flesh his emptying is an addition he emptied himself by taking on human nature that's the whole point he becomes what he was not without ceasing to be what he was [44:05] Christ emptied himself by taking by adding he never ceased to have his divine nature he added a human nature and all of that is to remind us in verse 5 that we are to have the mind of Christ and as an example of extreme humility we get the reminder that the Christ of glory would leave heaven to take on human flesh and dwell among us

Philippians 2 makes no distinction between the high theology and Christology of who Jesus is and the difference it makes in our life as we live in unity with each other the example is the theology the theology is the practical the more you worship Christ the more unified the body of Christ will be that's the point we don't need to gather here to talk about how good we are we don't gather here to talk about earthly worldly!
things we gather here to know Christ deeper more fully more precisely because it's in the knowing and worshiping of Christ that our unity as a church is best lived out let me just close with a couple of brief things for you number one make sure that you know the biblical Jesus make sure you know the biblical Jesus don't worship the Jesus of your own creation make sure you know the biblical Jesus number two are you trusting in Christ it would be possible to be here today and even to let your mind be engaged and you may even enjoy the theology of trying to wrestle with these things but the question is not just are you listening but are you trusting do you trust in
Christ and number three do you love Christ do you love him it's possible to love theology and not! love!! It's possible to love information and not love Jesus do you trust him and do you love him Christ left heaven took on human flesh to become one of us to live the life we could not to die the death we should have an order that we would be given the righteousness of Christ the more you know who Christ is and what he has done the more you will love him and the more that you love him the more that you love his people and the more you love his people the more the church enjoys unity and that is the entire point of the passage that Christ is our perfect example of how we are to live though he's more than just an example he's never less than that and so the point of [48:31] Philippians 2 is lift your eyes on Jesus because by knowing and worshiping him it will lead you to love and serve each other we'll look at the second part of this passage next Sunday Lord willing God we thank you today for your word and pray that in our study and theology of this passage that we would worship that we would love the Christ of whom we learn today that we would trust in him love him serve him worship him and as an expression of that that we would love and serve each other we pray that in Christ's name amen to that we have to have to to recordings recordings of

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