

They follow the Lamb wherever He goes (2)

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Name that is Above All Names

Philippians 2:5-11—For let this mind be in you which [was] also in Christ Jesus; who, subsisting in the form of God, did not esteem it an object of rapine to be on an equality with God; but emptied himself, taking a bondman's form, taking his place in [the] likeness of men; and having been found in figure as a man, humbled himself, becoming obedient even unto death, and [that the] death of [the] cross. Wherefore also God highly exalted him, and granted him a name, that which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of heavenly and earthly and infernal [beings], and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ [is] Lord to God [the] Father's glory.

Let's have a word of prayer:

Dear Lord, as we gather here this morning, we are conscious that Thou art here because Thy promise is true that "where two or three are gathered in My name, there I am in their midst." Dear Lord, because Thou art here, we pray that Thou would give us a spirit of humility so that all of us will bow before Thee and offer ourselves completely to Thee knowing that Thou art our Lord. We do desire to see Thy lordship over each and every one of us. Do prepare our hearts that we may all be open to Thy Spirit, and may Thy Spirit speak to us this morning. Lord, we are here. Speak, Thy servants heareth. In Thy precious name we pray. Amen.

Thank God we are here! On the one hand, we hope that we are not here because our Lord has come back and we are left. But if it is His will that He gives us another opportunity, we are thankful. So we give ourselves totally over to Him. We pray that He will open our understanding so that we will allow Him to do what He wants to do in us. Every time we gather together in His name, I am always conscious that we are still here because we are expecting our Lord to come back at any moment. He has

promised that He will come back to take us to Himself that where He is, there we shall be. There is nothing more blessed than this!

The Lord Jesus can Come at any Moment

We thank God that we are living in the last days, and the Lord's return may come at any moment. Do not think that there are still prophecies to be fulfilled before His return. I want to assure you that all the prophecies before His return have been fulfilled. Even though there are still prophecies to be fulfilled, all of these prophecies concern His coming and afterwards—not before His return. All the prophecies before His return have been fulfilled. Our Lord Jesus can come at any moment. Don't you see that we are living at a very thrilling time? And it is because the Lord may come at any moment. But it is also a very serious time because whether we are ready or not is an urgent question. We thank God for giving us another opportunity this morning. He knows that we still need some preparation. May He prepare us to be ready for Him.

Do not think that the Lord will delay His return like the bad servant who had this evil thought. He began to eat and drink and beat His fellow servants because he thought the Lord would not come during his lifetime. But we know that the Lord will come suddenly, and what will happen to him? So this is something that we should all think about. On the one hand, we are living at a very glorious time. On the other hand, we are living at a very critical time. What if the Lord should return now? Do you think it is possible? I believe it is possible because our Lord Jesus may come at any moment in our time. The problem is: are we ready?

Are We Ready?

We thank God for giving us this opportunity to meet together because He wants every one of us to be ready. Hopefully there will be no exception. Think of it! If the Lord should come now, are you ready? Are you ready to go to Him? Or are you still lingering here on this earth? The Bible tells us that those who are ready will enter into the kingdom with the Lord and they will reign with Christ together for a thousand years. What a glorious time that will be! This is our blessed hope.

However, if we are not ready, then we will be cast into outer darkness, and there will be gnashing of teeth which means repentance. If we do not repent today, on that day we will repent because we will know that the Lord has come.

We thank God for this opportunity of giving us more time to be ready. So the urgent question is: Are you ready? May the Spirit search our hearts, and if there is anything evil within us, we still have time to be delivered, we still have time to repent, and we still have time to be prepared for His return! Thank God for this opportunity! As we gather here we thank God for His mercy that He still gives us time to repent. He still gives us time to be ready for Him. So the one question is: *Are you ready?* May we be able to answer this question positively—“Yes, I am ready for Him!”

The Lord’s coming is very possible. Are we ready? May the Lord search our hearts, and if there is any evil in us, may we repent before Him and make ourselves ready for His imminent return! I want to emphasize this again and again. The Lord may come at any moment in our time. Are you ready? Have you allowed Him to search your heart to see if there is still anything evil in you so that you may repent and return to Him? So the urgent question today is: are you ready? How many of us here this morning can say to the Lord: “Lord, I thank You because by Thy grace I am ready.” Oh, how blessed that will be because those who are ready will be able to enter into the kingdom and reign with Christ for a thousand years.

Think of it. What we have today in the world is temporary, but what you will have in the millennium is a thousand years in the kingdom. What a difference that is! And would not everyone want to be ready? That is the reason for our gathering here that by the grace of God every one of us here will be ready.

Can we lift up our heads and say, “Come, Lord Jesus”? Or do you still feel you cannot say this? If so, then may you be prepared now, for there may be no more time. This is the day. Are you ready for Him? May the Lord search every heart, and if there is still something evil there, may He lead us into the way everlasting!

So this is the burden of the conference. Hopefully every brother and sister will be prepared so that if the Lord shall come there will be no one left behind. This auditorium will be emptied, and it will only be by the mercy of God. The purpose of the conference is to help us be ready for the Lord’s return. Thank God, He has made every provision for us. He has sent His Son into this world in order to save us, and save us to the uttermost. So may the Lord have mercy on every one of us!

God Reveals His Son to Us

We are now going to concentrate on the Lord Himself. In these few verses in the letter of Philippians 2:5-11, God reveals His Son to us. We are told that in the

beginning there was God, the triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Because of the love of God, He sent His Son into this world to save sinners that we may be partakers of His glorious kingdom.

Lucifer, a Created Angel

The Son was equal with the Father. From the very beginning, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are One. That is the Son's position; it is not something He tried to grasp at. In this very verse, we get the hint of something. It shows us that once upon a time there was someone who tried to grasp the Son's position, and it was Lucifer, a created angel. He was created almost perfect and was given the highest position among the angels. He was the anointed one over the throne of God, and he was supposed to lead the angels in worshipping God. But unfortunately, he began to look into himself. It is always dangerous for us to look into ourselves, but if we allow the Spirit to search our hearts, that will be good. However, if we try to look into ourselves, it is always dangerous because the more we look at ourselves, the more proud we are. Lucifer tried to take the place of God's beloved Son, and this is something God will never allow. So Lucifer was dismissed from heaven, and the earth that was his domain became a waste and empty place. This age entered into the ice age, and we do not know how long this lasted. Thank God, one day the Spirit of God moved upon the surface of the deep and God restored the earth to be habitable. Then on the sixth day, He created man.

As we said before, it would have been easy for God to destroy His enemy. His breath could have finished him off; but that would not have given God glory. God wanted one lower than the angels that could be used by God to defeat Satan, and that would bring glory to God. So man was created for the glory of God—not for himself.

The Lord Jesus Emptied Himself

The Bible tells us that our Lord Jesus emptied Himself. So we will meditate on the word *emptied*. How much do we have to be emptied? There is not much. But for God's Son to empty Himself was a tremendous thing! Of course, He could not empty Himself of His Godhead because that is what He is; but He emptied Himself of everything connected with the Godhead. He willingly emptied Himself, and for this, we are ever thankful. He emptied Himself of His glory; He emptied Himself of His

position; He emptied Himself of everything that was connected within the Godhead. Of course, He could not empty Himself of His Godhead; He is still God. He emptied all the glory and honor and power connected with His Godhead. What an emptiness that must have been!

When we try to empty ourselves by God's grace, we find very little that can be emptied, and yet we find it very hard to be emptied. How about the Son of God? He is so full and yet because of His love, He was willing to empty Himself. Nevertheless, He is still God. This is something that He cannot be emptied of. He laid down all that was connected with His Godhead. So what an emptiness that must have been! It is just the opposite of the rebellious angel. Instead of emptying himself, he tried to lift himself up and thus he became Satan, the adversary.

The First Step in Our Life is to Empty Ourselves

So the first step in our life with Christ is that we need to empty ourselves. And of course, there is nothing to be emptied except our sins. Yet strangely, we cling to our sins and transgressions. So what the Lord desires of us is to empty ourselves, to allow ourselves to be exposed to the light of God, to let the Holy Spirit search our hearts and see if there is anything evil in us. Have we emptied ourselves? That is to say, are we willing to expose ourselves to God's searching? As the Psalmist said, "Search my heart and see if there is anything evil within me. Then take it away that I may be wholly the Lord's." This is the first thing in our being emptied.

Have you prayed that the Lord will search your heart? Or are you afraid for Him to search you? May we open our hearts and let the Spirit of God search us and take away anything that is not of Him. That is the first thing in our Christian life. Have you done that?

The Lord Jesus Took a Bondman's Form

Then we read in Philippians 2 that He took a bondman's form. The word *form* here is image. We often think of form as something external, but here it is image; it points to the inward life. So when our Lord Jesus took a bondman's form, it meant that before God He was nothing. You remember in the Gospels, the Lord said, "I cannot do anything by Myself; I do it because I have seen My Father do it. I cannot say anything

by Myself; I say it because I have heard My Father say it.” Throughout the life of our Lord Jesus, He never did anything by Himself. He always waited for His Father.

The Miracle of Changing the Water into Wine

In the beginning of the Lord’s ministry, He and His disciples were invited to a wedding during which the wine ran out. Evidently the couple must have been very popular because there were more guests than they expected, and the wine ran out. What a loss this was for the couple! But our Lord’s mother noticed the situation and told the Lord they had no more wine. In other words, she expected her Son to do something. But the Lord Jesus said, “My time has not yet come.” However, He still did a miracle; He changed the water into wine. And when they brought that wine to the master of the feast, he tasted it and said, “This is the best wine. Why did you reserve it until now?” Ordinarily they would serve the good wine first, and when people were filled, then they would serve the inferior wine; but here you find just the contrary. The water that became wine was the best wine, and it represented the first work of our Lord Jesus.

Our life should be like wine; it should be tasty; however, our life is not like wine. It is just like water, but the Lord Jesus is able to turn the water into wine. He is able to transform the tasteless life into a tasteful life. He is able to change us to such an extent that our life becomes meaningful.

Before we knew the Lord, our life was meaningless. We were dead in sins and transgressions, and there was no hope for us. But thank God, when He saved us, He turned the tasteless water into a tasteful wine and made our life meaningful. We did not have a meaningful life before we were saved because we lived without hope, knowing that our future would be eternal death. But thank God, in Christ Jesus, we have hope. He has transformed our life and makes it tasteful, meaningful, and a glory to God that He may be glorified. This is what our Lord Jesus has done for us.

“Having taken the form of a bonds slave.” When our Lord Jesus came into this earth, He took the form of a bonds slave, and this form is image. It does not refer to the outward flesh but to the inward quality. It was intensely inward. It is what you are inwardly before God. So when our Lord came into this earth, He took such a form—the image of a bonds slave. What is the image of a bonds slave? The image of a bonds slave is that within himself there is nothing.

The Story of a Slave Girl

I always remember a story of the early days when there were human auctions in this country. The slaves were captured from Africa and brought to this country and sold as slaves. In the early days, the people had plantations with much land and they needed someone to work the land. So these slaves were sold to them to work in the fields.

This story is of a girl who had been captured from Africa and put in the auction. We do not know what was going on in her heart, but she must have been filled with sorrow. She wondered what the future would be and whether her master would be a good one or a cruel one. While the bidding was going on, a stranger came in and gave the highest bid and bought the slave girl. To the surprise of everyone, he called someone to come and break off the chains of the girl. Then he said to her, "I did not buy you to be my slave; I bought you to set you free. Now you are free." After he said that, he turned around and left. It was such a surprise to the slave girl, but then she realized what had happened and followed the man. She said, "I am willing to be your bondslave for life because you have saved me."

This is a perfect picture of what the Lord Jesus has done for us. He set us free from slavery, but that does not mean we are free to do what we want. We should be touched by His love and willingly submit ourselves to be His bondman; we are here to serve Him. This is our burden.

Are you serving the Lord? Or are you serving yourself? If you serve yourself, what will happen? It will end in nothing. If you are touched by His love and offer yourself to Him to serve Him, then your life will be meaningful. So what is your position? Are you serving the Lord or are you serving yourself? Everyone who has been bought by the Lord's price has no right to live for himself or herself. We are the Lord's and our whole life should be dedicated to serve Him.

A Personal Testimony

In the olden days they had gospel meetings, and the last day was always the day of dedication. I remember when I was in my teens, the Lord touched my heart. Somehow I knew I was a sinner; I looked at myself and saw nothing good. Whenever I saw a funeral, my heart hurt me because I knew I had no future. That was when I was fifteen. Sometimes, I sat by myself and wept because I had no hope.

One summer I went to a conference in Bethel in Shanghai. I went there for the sole purpose of getting saved, and morning after morning, I listened to the sermons. There were three young men from Asbury College, which was in America, who had come to preach the gospel. I listened to them, but there was nothing I did not already know. My heart longed to be saved, but I felt nothing. One morning, I was sitting in my room meditating and praying and I said, "Lord, why is it that other people get saved so easily, and it is so hard for me to get saved?" Is it because I know too much? I was brought up in a Christian family, and we had a family meeting every evening. My father would read from the Bible, and we would all kneel down and he would lead us in prayer. That was my life all the time I was growing up.

So while I was meditating I told the Lord, "If You want to save me, save me now; if You do not, good bye." And with that I went to the meeting and again what the preacher said I already knew it all. Nothing touched me. After he finished, he asked everybody to kneel to pray. When I knelt down, a black preacher came to my side and urged me to go to the platform to pray. I had been there a number of times, but nothing happened. So out of courtesy, I went to the front and knelt down and prayed. I confessed my sins and asked His forgiveness, but there was nothing, and the meeting was over.

As people left the hall, a Chinese preacher, Andrew Chi, who was a young man at that time, must have noticed me. So when the congregation dispersed, he stopped me. Everybody had left, so there was only the two of us. Then he pointedly asked me, "Do you believe the Bible?" I said, "From my youth, I have believed." And he said, "Read I John 1:9." I read it, and then he said, "Put your name in it." And I did. Then he said, "Let's kneel down and pray." So we knelt down and I began to pray. I confessed my sins and asked for forgiveness. Somehow, something was different. As I was praying, I got the assurance that the Lord had answered, and I knew He had saved me. So I stood up and Andrew Chi asked me, "Are you saved?" I said, "I am saved." He said, "How do you know?" I said, "Because I feel such peace in my heart." He said, "No. Your feelings may change, but God's Word never changes."

It was based upon God's Word, and I believed it and was saved by the grace of God. Thank God, He has kept me all these years. For eighty years, I have learned to serve Him, and He is always faithful.

Do you have that experience of new birth? Do you know that your sins have been forgiven? Do you know that you have His life in you? Do you know that you are no longer yours, that you belong to the Lord?

Our Lord Jesus took the bondman's form, that inward image of a bonds slave. That is what our Lord was before God. Throughout His life, He never did anything on His own. He never said any words that were His own. He told us in the Gospels that He said it because His Father had said it, and He did it because His Father had done it. Throughout His life, He remained as a bonds slave to God. He never did anything on His own. He always looked to His Father even unto His death and that the death of the cross.

This is what the Lord has done for us. Do you believe it? Do you trust Him? Do you allow Him to take hold of your life and use it according to His will?

For these eighty-some years, by the grace of God, I have been serving the Lord. The more I serve Him, the more I feel I need His mercy. This is what the Lord has done for every one of us. Let us look away from ourselves and look to the Lord. The more you look at Him, faith will rise up within you so that your life may be worthy of Him—not for ourselves but for His glory.

The Lord Jesus has been Highly Exalted

The Father has highly exalted Him and given Him a name that is above all other names. To that name, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus *is* Lord to the Father's glory. This is the full Gospel, and this is the Gospel that has been offered to us. Have you received it? If not, today is your opportunity. You can give yourself to Him, allow Him to search your heart to cleanse you and sanctify you that God's purpose may be fulfilled in your life.

We want to give ourselves to the Lord and allow Him to be our Lord. By His grace, we learn to serve Him, and I believe this is the Lord's will for every one of us. May the Lord bless you all! May He come quickly!

Let us pray:

Come quickly, Lord Jesus. Thy people here are waiting for Thee. Search our hearts and see if there is still anything evil in us and lead us in the way everlasting to the glory of God. Amen.