

# Philippians 2:5-11

<https://thebiblesays.com/commentary/phil/phil-2/philippians-25-11/>

*The attitude of Christ Jesus was that of radical humility and radical obedience. Even though He was with God and was God, He lowered Himself not only by becoming a man, but by dying on the cross. Because of this, God the Father rewarded Jesus with rulership over the earth.*

Paul now commands his disciples to choose a particular perspective. To choose a particular mindset (“*phroneo*”). He commands them to *have this attitude in yourselves*. This makes it clear that perspectives are a matter of choice. The word translated *attitude* is “*phroneo*.” It carries the sense of making a reasoned decision to choose to adopt a particular way of viewing something. We as humans control very little. We don’t control when or where we were born. We don’t control whose genes we received. We control very few external circumstances. However, we do control who or what we trust and what we do. And those decisions are largely shaped by the third thing we control, which is our *attitude* or mindset (“*phroneo*”).

Our *attitude*, or mindset (“*phroneo*”) is the perspective through which we filter all we see. It shapes what we think, and how we think. And if we desire to act as we ought, our *attitude* is something we should choose and shape very carefully.

Paul exhorts his Philippian brethren, who are partners and partakers with him in the gospel to shape their own *attitude* by choosing the same *attitude which was also in Christ Jesus*. Everyone has an attitude, a perspective. In the prior section, Paul implied that our most natural state is to have an attitude that “I know best” and “everything should revolve around me.” Paul called this “selfishness” and “empty conceit.” That might be the natural default. But we are actually responsible for the *attitude* we choose to adopt. And Paul exhorts us to choose the same *attitude* that Jesus chose to have. It was the attitude Jesus had when He made the decision to leave heaven and come to earth as a human, to take on the sins of the world, in obedience to His Father.

First, Paul sets the stage by describing the circumstance Jesus was in when He made the particular choice Paul exhorts us to emulate. When Jesus decided to come to earth *He existed in the form of God*. Jesus was God, and is God. As Paul states in Colossians: “all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.” (Colossians 1:16:b-17). Jesus was in heaven, functioning as *God*. That means Jesus was self-sufficient. He had no need. It is hard to imagine a better state. Then His Father comes along and asks Jesus to leave heaven, go to earth, and die to redeem a rebellious race.

That is the circumstance of Jesus’ attitude-making. Now Paul describes the reasoning behind Jesus’ choice of *attitude*, or perspective. Paul says Jesus *did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped*. Jesus was in the most amazing location, with the most amazing relationships, and the most amazing “job” one could imagine. But Jesus did not regard His high estate, His *equality with God* in heaven as *a thing to be grasped*. Jesus did not cling to His favorable circumstance.

He did not see it as something to be hoarded, to be defended. He held it with an open hand, as a stewardship.

Jesus willingly *emptied Himself* by stepping away from all the great and favorable circumstances He enjoyed. Rather than cling to His station in heaven, acting as the God of the universe, He took on *the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men*, Jesus became human. The God who created the universe became a part of the creation He had made. The King of the world was born to a humble family in an occupied land.

But Jesus' decision regarding His attitude did not stop there. He continued actively deciding, actively choosing a perspective. Now that Jesus was *found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross*. Jesus did not just leave His high and exalted station in heaven. He left heaven to come to earth and complete a great work. And in doing that work, Jesus had to learn to be *obedient*. Jesus, as God, was self-sufficient. But He chose to become dependent upon His Father, and obey Him in all things. He followed His Father's will all the way to *the point of death, even death on a cross*.

Jesus' attitude was to believe His Father's way was the best possible way. So He willingly left a great, comfortable place, and took on a comparatively miserable station. But Jesus expected the reward to be great. And it was. *For this reason also, God highly exalted Him*. The phrase *for this reason* connects directly to the *attitude* Jesus chose. The *attitude* Jesus showed directly connected with the actions He chose. Our attitudes largely shape our actions. Because Jesus humbled Himself, and obeyed His Father, *God highly exalted Him*.

The implication is that we should believe likewise, that if we humble ourselves in obedience to God, He will exalt us as well.

What was the exaltation? *God exalted Jesus and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father*.

Jesus actually stated this after He rose from the dead. He told His disciples: "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18b).

This would mean that this bestowal of the honor of authority was given to Jesus some time between His death and shortly after His resurrection, when He made this statement. It is interesting to note that in Jesus' original state prior to coming to earth He had *equality with God*. This means He already had authority over all things as God. We can deduce that this new bestowal of authority applied to Jesus' station as a human being.

This is stated overtly in Hebrews 2. There the author notes that the original design for humans to rule over the earth is not currently being seen. Humans were "crowned with glory and honor" in being assigned to reign over the earth. But due to the fall of Adam and Eve, that is not what we see. However, here is what Hebrews says we do see:

“But we do see Him who was made for a little while lower than the angels, namely, Jesus, because of the suffering of death crowned with glory and honor, so that by the grace of God He might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting for Him, for whom are all things, and through whom are all things, in bringing many sons to glory, to perfect the author of their salvation through sufferings.”  
(Hebrews 2:9-10)

The phrase “made for a little while lower than the angels” refers to Jesus becoming human. And because Jesus became *obedient to the point of death*, He was “crowned with glory and honor” by being given authority over the earth. This restored God’s original design for humans. When we choose to have the same attitude as Jesus, we have hope to be granted a share of the same reward Jesus received. This is Jesus’ goal, to “bring many sons to glory.” This is speaking of granting the same great reward for obedience to those who adopt the same *attitude* as Jesus, and walk in dependent obedience as Jesus walked.

Jesus states this overtly in Revelation 3, saying:

“He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.”  
(Revelation 3:21)

To reign in this context is to be restored to our original design. To attend to nature, and to one another, in harmony and fellowship with Jesus, our creator. This will be our greatest possible fulfillment. But in order to take the difficult actions required to gain such a reward requires adopting an *attitude* that is the same as *Christ Jesus*. *Jesus* did not need to come to earth and learn obedience *to the point of death, even death on a cross*. Jesus chose to come to earth, in obedience to His Father.

The immense reward Jesus gained is comprehensive. Jesus’ *name*, or authority, *is above every name*. Not just some names. *Every name*. Not just some knees will bow to Him, *every knee will bow*. And this does not just apply to one country of earth. And it is not limited to earth alone. Rather, this applies to *those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth*. This applies to every sort of creature, in the physical as well as spiritual realm. The recognition will be universal, and *every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord*. Jesus will be supreme over all, as a human as well as God. This is because He, as God, became servant to all. And this amazing work will reflect *the glory of God the Father*.

### **Biblical Text**

**<sup>5</sup> Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee will**

**bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**