

GATEWAY CHURCH NORTHUMBERLAND

11.11.18

Who is Jesus? – Joss Bray

We've been going through Paul's letter to the Philippians.

We're on chapter 2 – last week was verses 5-8 and this week we are looking at verses 9-11.

Let's read starting at verse 5:

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ who, being in very nature^[a] God,
did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death –
even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

So, in essence – we heard that Jesus was God – but he became a man – and not only that – he became a servant -the lowest of the low.

Not only that - he was humble and obedient - so much so that he died – not a “normal” death – but the worst that the Romans could invent.

But he was God and had the nature of God – he was there in the beginning when God spoke – He was the word that was with God and was God.

If you had to describe God in one word – what would it be?

God's answer to that is Jesus – the word God used to describe himself – the word of God himself.

And Jesus was the very word of life and creation – through him everything was made and came into existence – listen to John 1-

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Jesus had everything –

He was crucial to all of creation – to the universe itself.

He had an amazing and intimate relationship with Father God and the Spirit - which is what we call the Trinity – but is impossible for us to fully comprehend.

God – three people yet one – all community and family originate in God – that's why its his plan for us – its written in our DNA.

Because it is good!

Yet Jesus chose to give it up – he didn't grasp onto his position and relationships – he was totally and sacrificially obedient to His Father.

Why – because he loved his Father and His Father loved the world that they had created together. God loved the world so much that he wanted to rescue and save it.

There was only one way – the Father sent his son so that whoever believed in him wouldn't die – because the world is dying.

Everything we have done wrong, everything we haven't done but should have done, all those unloving thoughts and attitudes, all that time ignoring God and living for ourselves – all of that is sin.

And the bible says sin separates us from God and leads to death - and we see it all around us – and if we are honest – inside us.

But Jesus died that death, so we didn't have to.

His sacrifice meant that we could live forever with him in paradise.

We need to get our heads around that a bit - to realise what he did for us – what he gave up for us – what he suffered for us – so that we can live.

Its only then that we can have that same mindset or attitude as Christ.

When we hear of the sacrifice of people who died for others – that really hits us doesn't it?

It's because there is an echo of an eternal truth about what Jesus did for us.

Are we humbled by what he did? Are we humbled enough, so we can serve and love others that much?

And yet – this amazing story doesn't end there.

Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place

What does that mean?

It means that because of his obedience, he was given back all that he had freely given up.

So now:

There is no one more important than Jesus Christ.

There is no one with more authority than Jesus Christ.

There is no one with more power than Jesus Christ.

So, here's the first challenge from these verses –

How do we see Jesus in our minds eye?

Is he mostly a man who was also God who rose again and sent us the Holy Spirit – and that's about it?

But there is so much more to Jesus as this passage shouts at us!

In the words of a popular kid's song "Have we made our God too small, too small – have we made our God too small?"

We must see Jesus as who he is and where he is now!

If you think about it – what is 33 years on earth compared to eternity – very important for us but there's so much more!

Jesus is Lord – Lord of Lord and King of Kings - absolutely – and we need to remember that – no one more important – no one with more authority – no one with more power – and he is ruling in Heaven.

He showed us what God was like, he did the business for us, and he is now where he should be.

And he is coming back again!

Let's get hold of all that shall we – seriously – let's get our perspective right about Jesus.

And remarkably Jesus – who is all that – is still a servant king – still washing our feet and welcoming us into his Kingdom – and doing it all for because he loves us and loves the Father and wants to glorify him.

The second challenge for us then is –

Do we have that same attitude in whatever position we find ourselves in?

Any of us may find ourselves in some sort of authority or position of power over someone.

It may be part of our work to manage people.

It may be part of leading some church activity – even washing up!

It may be something like complaining to a shop worker, or a call centre operator – where we have a legitimate gripe with something that has or hasn't happened.

In these circumstances – we could feel we have the upper hand – the authority, the right, the power to really “let them have it”.

This is not the attitude that Jesus – Lord of Lords and King of Kings - has towards us.

His attitude is one of love. Full stop. He treats us in the total opposite way of how we sometimes treat others.

We can easily demonstrate the opposite of being humble – when we get worked up and irritated.

Sure, people are irritating – but it is mostly about our attitude that comes from basic pride.

Pride is saying basically I am better than you – and I don't care if I sin against you by not loving you.

Jesus doesn't do this.

He loves us enough to die for our sins and disobedience and arrogance – not condemn us as we so often do to others.

It is possible to lead in whatever you do and to do it properly – the way to do it is by servant leadership – serving – rather than expecting to be served – as Jesus did.

So, we come to the last challenge -

Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place
 and gave him the name that is above every name,
¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
 in heaven and on earth and under the earth,
¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
 to the glory of God the Father.

So, at the name of Jesus – every knee should bow – everywhere and everyone will kneel and submit to him – even to His name!

And that's not even about when he is there

Merely his name – which is above all names – will produce submission.

Every tongue will acknowledge – every person everywhere will say Jesus Christ is Lord.

So, the final challenge for us is this – are we doing that now – are we submitting to Him as our Lord, or are we waiting until we have no choice later – when it's too late.

When we've either died and get to judgement, or if Jesus comes back before we die.

It is very clear in the bible – Jesus is coming back – read Revelation – and Paul tells Timothy in 2 Tim 4:

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: ² preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage – with great patience and careful instruction.

We don't know when he is coming back.

We don't know when we are going to die.

You see – God's existence has absolutely nothing to do with your faith – or mine. It is nothing to do with any religion. Its not about how church is doing.

There are eternal truths that are real – whether you believe them or not.

It is no good saying – well that's ok for them to believe – I'll believe what I like and that's ok – as long as everyone is nice to each other.

God does not cease to exist if people don't believe in Him – what sort of God would that be!

Certainly not one who has shown us so much about himself that it is quite startling that people ignore him.

Just take a look at creation, the complexity, the intricacy, the scale of it all. Coming from scientific background – I can honestly say that the more we find out – the more it demonstrates a designer – a creator God.

Then look at Jesus – who showed us exactly what God is like – then proved he was God by being raised from the dead and ascending into heaven.

It's all there in the bible – the world's most reliable historical document.

Let's not say when we get to judgement – “it's not fair” “I didn't realise” or “well, the church seemed a bit naff”.

These are not valid in eternal destiny terms – whether we are going to spend eternity with God in paradise – or somewhere without God and without hope and without release.

These are eternal truths whether you or I believe them or not – and that's why Paul was so keen for Timothy to do the business:

In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season

So – that's what we do – whether it's trendy or not – whether people take us seriously or not or believe or not.

It's our choice to respond to God's calling – or not.

And because we are created by God, when the chips are down, when its life or death – people do instinctively turn to Him. When the soldiers in the first world war were in that imminent life and death situation – there were plenty who turned to God.

We are made to be in relationship with God our father – Jesus made the way – and the Holy Spirit empowers us to live for Him.

If you've not done it already – bow the knee to Jesus – acknowledge Him as Lord of your life – become a citizen of Heaven - be free to live the life God has in store for you – now and forever.