

Sermon preached by Mr J K Popham
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PHILIPPIANS 2 v 9/10/11

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name: That at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father"

There are four persons necessary to vital religion, absolutely necessary; God the Father, in His eternal election of a sinner; God the Son, in His eternal redemption of a sinner; God the Holy Ghost, in His gracious work in a sinner, and the sinner, the object of that love, of that redemption, and the subject of that gracious work. And all religion that has not this Trinity for its source and a person for the reception of grace, is false. Well, this will narrow us up; it will say to us if we be right, that nothing of an external nature can save us; that everything that excites nature, and is called religion, is deception; that all confidence that arises in the mind that is short of this blessed Trinity, is a delusion; that all faith that does not fasten in this Trinity, is nothing better than notion. And it says that a church that is not built on this foundation, does not derive its life from this source, is a false church. And moreover the Trinity is known in the Person of Christ. So the Person of Christ becomes the centre, the circumference, the foundation, the life, the light, the hope, the object of faith and the end of all. Great is that religion that has such a source, such a foundation, and such an end. It has pleased the Father that in Christ should all fullness dwell. Does it not follow that, if we be Christ's, Christ will have all fullness for us? Shall not we, in a good measure, answer to this, that there is none but Christ, no life but His, no grace but His, can do for us? This then will bring out into a sweet relief for us, this text, this word: "At the Name of Jesus every knee shall bow and every tongue confess". "Jesus" is the designation of that blessed Son of

the virgin Mary. It is His proper Name; it is within the New Testament from Matthew to Revelation given no less than about seven hundred times, and "Jesus Christ", "Christ" added to "Jesus", is given about two hundred times. So within the compass of the four gospels, one narrative, and twenty two epistles, this Name is thus set forth, uttered, written indelibly. He is mentioned all these times. Mentioned, did I say? He is described. Described as going about doing good, healing all manner of sicknesses and diseases, doing miracles, deeds of mercy, raising the dead, giving sight to the blind, speech to the dumb, hearing to the deaf, food to the hungry. All these acts of mercy done by Him whose Name is Jesus. And ere I pass on, may I say this, the constant setting forth of this wondrous Name may be a lesson to us, may be of some use, this namely, if the Holy Ghost has revealed His delight in honouring the Son by thus setting Him forth and occupying so much space, if He has done this before our eyes, will it not be a good thing for us if that blessed Person of Jesus should occupy our affections and fill our minds; if we should find ourselves taken up with Him as the Scripture is taken up with Him? Would it not be a blessed thing for us to find that we could no more do without Him, than the Scripture could be the Scripture without Him? If He is that Sun in the firmament of the Scripture, shall we be His people and we not regard Him? Surely if we belong to the Lord Jesus, there will be, again and again, such a going out to Him, such an appreciation of Him, and such a regard for Him, as that He will fill, so to speak, fill the firmament with light and warmth and every good thing for us.

I would like, in the first place, a little to explain what this Name implies. In the Old Testament it is used; it is a Hebrew word, given in the New Testament a Greek form of Jesus, and it means a Saviour. Broadly it means a Saviour. Joshua had this name and he was the saviour in this respect, that he was to lead the people of Israel into the land of promise. Moses had instructed them, had brought them on to the edge of the goodly land; - that goodly land he was not to enter, but a beautiful view of which he was granted - then he died and the Lord buried him. Ah and Moses will be buried to you when Joshua comes and you wont know where to find Moses when Christ fills you. A lesson indeed I believe the Scripture has in all these things. Well, when the land was to be entered, there was the Saviour to save

them, bring them out of the desert, a land of darkness and trouble, and they were to go into the land of promise. The Lord Jesus is a Saviour; He came to save the lost; He came to redeem captives; He came to pay the mighty debt His people had contracted and could not pay; He came to give His life a ransom for them to be testified in due time. It means, therefore, first that He was a Substitute; one in the place of others, that is what a Substitute is; one in the place of others. He stood thus, as Watts has it finely

He took the dying traitor's place
And suffered in his stead
For man, O miracle of grace,
For man the Saviour bled

What an amazing thing. The most wonderful sight you can have, I can have, by the Holy Ghost, is that Jesus was in our place

Behold a scene of matchless grace
Tis Jesus in the sinner's place

Here is heaven; here is the end of the wilderness; here is the beginning of the land of promise, that the Lord Jesus took on Himself the iniquities of His people. God His Father imputed them to Him, and He put them away by the sacrifice of Himself. A Substitute takes precisely the place and the condition of the person for whom He is a Substitute, and this explains the solemn position of the Lord Jesus, explains the mystery and the mercy of the Father's pleasure in putting Him to grief. Explains how just the death of Christ was, how truly just. Just in divine justice, just in the law, which was broken. Our Jesus was the Substitute for us, and being the Substitute, He had to endure what was due to us of suffering, of shame, of punishment, of death, and of burial. Nothing less would save a sinner; nothing less could deliver a sinner, and if we are born again I am certain of this, that more or less distinctly, it will be a question with us whether Christ was a Substitute for us, and until that is made out to us by the Spirit bearing witness to our spirits, that it was so, we shall have no true rest. Mark God's dealings with you; notice His kindness, notice the helps you get, the comforts you feel, the access you are granted, the Scriptures being made sweet to you; notice what you may

receive in reading the Word of God, or hearing the ministry; notice all these things and thank the Lord for them, but this one thing you must have before you can be said to be in true liberty, namely the knowledge of Jesus Christ suffering in your room, place and stead. "Thou shalt call His Name Jesus". Matthew names it first, that is to say, the angel told Mary and Joseph to call His Name Jesus, for He should save His people from their sins. If He saves us from our sins, if He did it on the cross, if He does it experimentally, two things we shall know. First, the burden of our sins, and then the unspeakably sweet and wonderful relief when that burden is removed. I can tell you about forgiveness, but I cannot make you understand it or feel it; the Lord can. I can tell you the unspeakable relief, the heavenly comfort, the wonderful sweetness, the blessed liberty, that a child of God experiences when he is pardoned, but you must enter into it for yourselves to know what it means. It is a joyful sound. When you hear it, you will say, I know it is. It is the healing of a sick soul; it is the removal of guilt from the conscience; it is the speaking of peace into the mind; it is the reception of the Lord Jesus; it is the eating of His flesh and the drinking of His blood, whereby the soul lives. His Name is Jesus. And when He had suffered the extreme penalty of the law, which He magnified and made honourable, then He was raised from the dead and He ascended into heaven, and there He sits on the right hand of the Father, and the will of God is that everyone should honour the Son even as He Himself, the Father, is honoured, and this Scripture tells us how He is honoured. Every knee shall bow to Him. First, of things in heaven. Two parties unite here. Ransomed people who sing unto Him that loved them and washed them from their sins in His Own blood, and when they have sung that song, then join in with them ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands and thousands of angels singing with the others: "Worthy is the Lamb". O what songsters, happy songsters these are.

Happy songsters, when shall I your chorus join

Blessed souls, redeemed spirits of just men made perfect; no burden of mortality, no darkness of mind, no distraction of thought, no desertion of spirit, just one attention, the whole of the soul in all its blessed and sanctified faculties, purified by the blood of Christ, singing to the praise of the glory of His grace. They bow,

they bow in adoration. The Papists and Ritualists draw from this Scripture the inference that whenever the Name of Jesus is uttered, or read, they must bow, and they do, with their hearts, it is feared, far from Him. But when these spirits of just men and elect angels in heaven adore Him, then they bow; when they sing to Him, then they bow, at the Name of Jesus.

And things on the earth, things in earth, these are also to bow. These things are sinners, sensible, taught, quickened, redeemed, happy sinners; these bow. And in this bowing I understand the following things. First admiration, adoration, the spirit of worship, acknowledging Him to be what He is declared to be in Holy Scripture. This surely is an all-bowing at the Name of Jesus, when your heart kneels before Him, when your spirit prostrates itself before the divine majesty of His Person when you see Him with His Father in His throne; when you see Him, the Lamb as it had been slain; when you perceive Deity in Him, the Man Christ Jesus. When you perceive the infinite merit of His death; when you see that His righteousness, and that alone, can justify you, do not you, of a sweet necessity, with grateful contrition, and humble thanks, bow in adoration before Him? I believe that every redeemed sinner adores the Redeemer. Every one born of the Spirit goes to Him who is Almighty God. Do we so bow? I would like to carry along with me as I go on, this, an experimental part; Do we bow? This blessed Lord Jesus is the proper Object of worship because, though He is the Man Christ Jesus, He is also true Almighty God. What a sight of His divinity must the spirits of just men made perfect in heaven have. What a view of His glorious divinity must elect angels have. Through His sacred Person these beams shoot forth eternally and these happy spirits bow. And the same rays, in different measures, reach the eye of faith on earth. The same Person is seen by the eye of faith and then the sinner, so blessed, worships. "God is a Spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth". And the next part of bowing is this; faith bows to Him. His blood, His righteousness, His intercession, faith looks on and bows, and says, this is the only hope I have of getting honourably through. This is the only door of access for me, a sinner, to Almighty God. This is the only foundation I have to build my hopes upon. This is the only One revealed in the Scriptures and seen by my little faith in whom I can properly place a

hope for heaven. The only One who can bring me to understand what justification is, what sanctification is. So faith bows. To one whose eyes He had opened, and who was cast out of the synagogue for confessing Him, Jesus went and said: "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" "Who is He Lord that I might believe on Him", was the man's response. Said Christ: "Thou hast both seen Him and it is He that talketh with thee", and he worshipped Him; fell down. His faith received the testimony and he worshipped Jesus Christ. If you have faith Christ will be the Object of it. His precious blood, His justifying righteousness, His sanctifying grace, His sustaining power, His divine wisdom; these, these, all in Him and seen to be in Him by faith will be your object and your trust. "Every knee shall bow". Faith comes here and kneels before the Lord. "O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our Maker". (Psalm 95 v 6) He hath made us and not we ourselves (Psalm 100 v 3) And this is spiritually true of every one brought to bow at the Name of the Lord Jesus. And there is a bowing when you come to Him with your cases. God is accessible to sinners. Think of it. You have a friend perhaps who is at all times accessible to you and of him you say, he is the one to whom, in all my troubles and difficulties I can go. He is accessible to you. His door is open to you; his ear is inclined to you; his hand is open to you. God is accessible to sinners. How is He so? In whom - that is in Jesus Christ, "we have access with boldness" (Ephesians 3 v 12). If ever you get truly near to God it will be in His Son Jesus Christ. Yes sinner, sin has made an infinite distance between you and God, and that can never be removed but by this blessed Person. Access to God is one of the most sweet, amazing reliefs, that the children of God can experience. There they go with their troubles, there they confess their sins, there they pour out their wants, there they make their requests. They come at times with boldness. "Come boldly" says the Apostle "to the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need". He Himself, this Jesus, says: "Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest". God is accessible to sinners. See if you know that. If you know it rightly, you know it in the Scriptures; you know it in experience. You know it in the Scriptures by seeing it there. You know it in experience by having the relief of access, the comfort of access. When we get access to God we get a good deal. Just think of it for a moment. We get a good deal

when we get access to God. We go to a Friend. "I call you not servants, but friends." We go to an able Saviour, able to save unto the uttermost. We go to a willing Saviour. I will be thy help. "I will be thy King, where is there any other that may save thee". We come to a full Saviour. "It pleased the Father that in Him should all fullness dwell". We come to One who is able to do for us what we need to have done. He is able; yes He is able. Almighty Jesus has that power in the horn where is the hiding of His power. He has that by which He can help you and bring you through honourably and deliver you from all trouble. When you come in this way to God, you find a God who is very gracious, whose Name is thus declared: "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity, and transgression and sin". (Exodus 34 v 6/7). You come to this blessed God. And moreover when you get this access, you find you see something. "We all with open face" - the veil of ignorance taken away from the heart is thus spoken of - "We all with open face beholding in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord". What is it that we look upon when we look upon the glory of God? We look upon the Person of Christ. We look on what He has done; put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself. We look on His righteousness, on Him as the righteousness of the unjust. We look on His grace able to sanctify us; on His power able to protect us and defend us and carry us through. We look on the promises of God which in Him are Amen to the praise and glory of God by us. What a sight. "Beholding the glory of the Lord." And this will change you into the image of that glory. You will be righteous, you will be holy, you will be strong, you will be nourished as you see Christ. Christ becomes yours, and His image becomes imprinted on your soul. Then we bow to Him when we come with our cases, when we get access through and in Him.

And may not I say, ought not I to say, here in the next place, when we bow thus to the Lord there is love; love bows. Yes, there is love in all the motions of faith. "Faith worketh by love" and love goes along with faith. Now it is often a question perhaps with some of you expressed in the language of the hymn

Tis a point I long to know

I am sorry that I am aware of one painful fact, that there are people in our congregations here and there who do not like that hymn to be sung in public. But now if you do not know whether you love the Lord, surely you would not, you could not, object to the singing of such a hymn as expressing your own case. But when you know that you love Him, then you are happy.

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I love the Lord with mind and heart (says one)

When you do not feel sure about it; do not say you love Him.

May we never, never dare
What we're not to say we are

But when you love Him do not be afraid to say it to Him. "I love the Lord", says the Psalmist, and sometimes we sing

Jesus, I love Thy charming Name
Tis music to my ear

It is good to love the Lord. He is a proper Object for love, a divine Person manifested to us by His Spirit; a proper Object for love. The best love of your heart belongs to Him, and it is acceptable to Him when you are enabled to give it Him. When you give Him a loving heart He is very pleased with it.

I love the Lord with mind and heart

It is a great grace, this love, and John expresses it thus beautifully "We love Him because He first loved us"; because He manifested His grace in coming to this world to give Himself a ransom for us. Love Him because He shed His blood; because He wrought out a righteousness; because He became Immanuel God with us, even in our experience; we love Him. "Every knee shall bow". Every affectionate heart shall go to Him with an offering; shall follow in spirit the wise men of the east who opened their treasures and gave unto Christ gifts of gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. I do not know if ever you have felt that Scripture in the Galatians to be suitable and acceptable to you, where the Apostle, speaking of the graces of the

Spirit -love is among them - says: "Against such there is no law".
(Galatians 5 v 23). You may say

Lord, it is my chief complaint
That my love is cold and faint

but the law never comes against that love. Grace strengthens it; grace will fortify it against the day of trouble, and in the day of affliction, but there is no law to cut you off because it is not a perfect love. Bless God for the gospel, merciful gospel, receiving the goodwill of a sinner, receiving his desire to love the Lord with mind and heart. Every knee shall bow to Him.

Now there is the knee of open profession. Let me name this; it has its importance. There is a knee of open profession when men, are brought out of the world, stabbed to the heart, as the word is in the 2 Acts. On that wonderful day of Pentecost when 3000 were converted we read, they were pricked to the heart, and the word is, they were stabbed; thoroughly pierced. Not scratched of a little bit of thorn, but the piercing of God's holy Word. And these people, thus dealt with, heard the gospel. Then they gladly received His Word. The Word of Christ, that Christ who had been crucified, was exalted now in heaven, and had sent the promise of His Father, even the Spirit, to these people, and this gospel got into that place that was made by the sword of conviction. They had been stabbed to the heart, and now the gospel came into that place, that wound. They gladly received His word. That is just what people do when they are convinced of sin and are blessed with the gospel; they gladly receive it. Methinks some of you would be glad of it this evening, would not you? O, if it were to come in power, if it were to come now to you, so as that you would say "Surely in the Lord have I righteousness and strength", how glad you would be. I too should. We all want this blessed gospel, and the glad reception in our hearts. Well, when they so received the gospel, in power, in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance, what followed? They gladly received His Word and they put on the Lord Jesus by an open profession of Him. They were baptised and formed into a church, professing the Name of the Lord Jesus. That was very wonderful. One day 3000 people quickened into life, converted by God, brought to know the gospel, to receive it, and then made obedient unto the faith

and obedient to the ordinance that was preached to them, for clearly the ordinance of Believers' Baptism must have been preached. And so they bowed the knee publicly, as it were, and said, that cross which is the shame of men is our glory. That death which men brought to pass, as they thought, is our life. That Saviour who was buried and is raised again from the dead, we believe in. His Name, precious to us now; His Name beautiful in our eyes; His Name, suitable to our case, we profess publicly; tell to sinners round what a dear Saviour we have found. It is a great thing to profess the Lord. And the Apostle Paul, speaking of this open profession, he says, Christ is the High Priest of it, and we are told to hold it fast. Hold our profession without wavering unto the end, is the Apostle's word; let us hold it fast. Profession is a striking thing, a remarkable thing, to be much observed. It means, saying the same thing. Think of 3000 people saying the same thing on that day, speaking of the same Jesus, the same Saviour, the same blood to cleanse them all from all their sins. That was the profession. None but Jesus, none but Jesus, was the substance of the song of these 3000 on that day. And as they made that profession they said, let us show our fidelity to Him, let us exhibit the faith we profess, and as He has commanded us to be baptised, here we are, and the Apostles baptised them. It is an honourable thing. It is a solemn thing. Many have stained their profession by outward falls. Some may be kept from a profession because they are afraid they have not enough to profess; because they think if they made a profession they might disgrace it, but it is good when faith says, now Lord help me to put Thee on as it becomes me, one blessed as I trust with grace, and with some knowledge of salvation by the remission of my sins. Every knee shall bow to Him. There is to be a visible church to the end of the world. There is to be a company of sinners here and there till the end of the world, professing this Jesus. Coming out from the world, coming away from their own Pharisaical religion, coming away from all confidence in the flesh. There is a people who shall profess, put on, and acknowledge publicly, more or less, this Jesus, and this is bowing to Him, owning His authority, acknowledging His supreme place, and finding Him to be the supreme Object of faith, and affection and hope, and confidence. The Scripture knows a church. The Scripture knows two, only two people, the church and the world. The mystical, invisible church is one, never to be more, never to be less; no increase, no diminution.

There are visible churches; these are raised, these fall. May the Lord grant that His church planted here may increase. There are good people, gracious people, in the congregation who, as far as I am able to judge, ought to be in the church. May the Lord make them feel it and give them enough for it. But it is my duty to tell you this; the Apostles were commanded to teach all nations and baptise them in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, attaching to that gracious instruction this divine promise: "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world". Let us hold fast our profession and may those of us who have not made one, but have grace enough and experience enough to do it, be constrained to do it. "Every knee shall bow". 'Tis an honour to do this; 'tis a great honour and a great privilege to be permitted to confess Jesus Christ. Do you think so? They think so in heaven. Think of the spirits of just men from Adam down to the last saint who has entered heaven; all those blessed ones gazing on Jesus Christ and singing, "Worthy is the Lamb", and these accompanied by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of elect angels joining in the chorus: "Worthy is the Lamb"

We bow the knee of confidence sometimes. I like confidence; it is good when it is good confidence. Confidence in the Psalmist was expressed thus: "Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life". That was confidence. We find in the Psalms another expression of the same spirit: "This God is our God for ever and ever. He will be our Guide even unto death." Whatever we want, says this gracious confidence in our hearts, God will supply. Wherever we are, this God will be. Whither shall I go from Thy presence? Whither shall I flee from Thy Spirit? He is everywhere around His saints. O what sweetness there is in this confidence. It is humble confidence; it is depending confidence; it is confidence in One who is capable of meeting all the necessities, drying all the tears, assuaging all the sorrows of the soul. Happy the man who can trust in the Lord with all his heart and lean not to his own understanding. In this strong confidence there is always love. They kneel before the Lord and they make this humble profession to Him; they protest to Him that they have no hope but Christ, no end but Christ. "Every knee shall bow" in these ways. And lastly on this point they bow the knee of a sweet and gracious anticipation. Some of you will follow me. Have not you

anticipated at times that rest that remaineth unto the people of God? Looked forward to the day when the burden of mortality and the snares of a wicked heart, and the griefs that a tempting devil may inflict upon you, would all end. Looked forward to the day when the Lord would say, come hither. When you would meet your last enemy, and when the last enemy would kill your body and would never be able to go any further. And this anticipation always, when it is in exercise, leads a person to worship Him who is the Object and end of it. "Looking forward and hastening unto the day of the Lord." It is coming, and what a mercy it is to, now and again, feel in your souls, that you have some good hope that it will be well with you when the end comes.

And now brethren, let us ask ourselves whether we are among the people who are blessed with grace to bow willingly, lovingly, believably, and confidingly, before this blessed One, Jesus Christ. If we be of this number we shall owe eternal thanks to God. There are other men who must bow to this Jesus. Yes, other men there are. The professed Atheist, the worldling, the unbeliever, the Pharisee. O the eyes of these people shall see Him; all shall acknowledge Him. It wont be the kneeling of faith; it wont be the kneeling of hope and confidence; it wont be the motion of love that will bring them to this. It will be an acknowledgement that will be extorted from their unwilling hearts. Glad would they be to be hidden from His face. Hide us from the face of Him that cometh and the wrath of the Lamb. There will be no escaping it though. There will be no escaping it. If any of us should die in our sins, there will be no escaping the acknowledgement that will be extorted from men and devils that Jesus is the King. Jesus is the authority; He has authority over angels, powers, and dominions. All principalities shall acknowledge Him. May the Lord bring us to this blessed worship, this sweet acknowledgement of Him.

AMEN.