**Philippians 2:5-11** Indeed, let this attitude be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. 6Though he was by nature God, he did not consider equality with God as a prize to be displayed, 7but he emptied himself by taking the nature of a servant. When he was born in human likeness, and his appearance was like that of any other man, 8he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. 9Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, 10so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Honestly, I worked at shortening our reading for this sermon, but it is just too awesome of a text to let it be shortened. This text is one of the most intense theological revelations concerning Jesus there is. To study this text is to study and contemplate the life and work of Jesus. Not just on a shallow plane, but rather you will need to look deeply into the wonder of Jesus to grasp all that he was and still is for us today. On this Palm Sunday, a day that reflects the way the world should look at Jesus, this is a great text to consider. For this text will lead us to grasp all the more the importance and awe of Jesus in and for our lives. Our theme will be: **JESUS CHRIST IS LORD.**

Now I realize that I have broken the first rule of preaching by not having some sort of “grabber,” some opening paragraph or story to really draw you in to what I am going to say. But I don’t feel bad about that, I don’t because in truth this section literally provides its own grabber. That is the very first verse before us. It says, **“Indeed, let this attitude be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.”**

 This verse calls for so much. First, recognize that we are being encouraged, it would even be possible to say that we are being commanded, concerning the attitude that is in us. The word here is one that is telling you that you need to be concerned about your way of thinking, the habitual way of thinking that you do. This verse wants you to do that by point blank telling you that your attitude is to be the same attitude that was found in Jesus. Pay attention, in Christ Jesus! The use of that title and name is reminding you that you are going to imitate and take on the same attitude as the Lord of the universe. You are being invited to examine, explore, dig into and contemplate the entirety of the life of Jesus, who is the Christ, the promised One of God. Jesus is to be your model. You are to walk his walk and talk his talk. His mindset and life are to be found deeply engraved in your heart. These words are a unique call to faith. I say that because I don’t think it is possible to dig into the life of Jesus, as God’s Word reveals it, and not be deeply impacted and moved. Without a doubt we are being encouraged and invited to make Christ Jesus our Alpha and Omega, our beginning and end, yes, our Way and Life.

 Second, I like it that the Holy Spirit knows us so well here. He doesn’t just put out that statement and let it sit there for you to decide how, what, when and where. The Holy Spirit now goes on and focuses the rest of these verses on Jesus and on exactly what you need to know and grasp about him. The revelation is marvelous because as you study each aspect of what is said, the complete and wonderful picture of Jesus the Christ of God emerges. Yep, all in this one little section of verses. Let’s look closer.

 Verses 6-7a **“Though he was by nature God, he did not consider equality with God as a prize to be displayed, but he emptied himself by taking the nature of a servant.”** Note that this is simply one sentence. This sentence tells us two very important things about Jesus. It tells us that by his nature, his form, even by his visible appearance Jesus was God. The depth of this word is astounding. It speaks to both the internal and external nature of Jesus. He was God! In Colossians 2:9 we hear this same truth this way: **“For all the fullness of God’s being dwells bodily in Christ.”** In Hebrews 1:3 we hear it put this way: **“The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact imprint of the divine nature.”** This is the absolute marvel of Jesus. The eternal, almighty, all-knowing, present everywhere God existed in the finite human nature of a man. His name was Jesus. Even the angel announced to Mary: **“So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”** The first thing we must grasp is that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, who is the entirety of God!

 Yet our passage goes on and reveals something else. Jesus did not desire to appear as the Almighty, glorious God, he didn’t come to make a display of total power and might as He could have. Jesus **“emptied”** himself. He took on the form of a servant, yes, a slave, when he came to this world. This speaks to what we call the “humiliation” of Jesus. Jesus, of his own, sets aside the full use and power of His Godhead, his glory, to live a lowly life and be a part of this lowly and distraught world of ours. We do see glimpses of his divinity, that’s how the disciples were able to confess: **“You are the Christ, the Son of God.”** Think of the miracles of Jesus. Think of their marvel and wonder. We are told only a fraction of the miracles that Jesus did and yet every single miracle was done not to exalt himself but rather to serve and help mankind in the distresses of their lives. Jesus used his power to serve us! That fraction of power that He allowed himself was only for the purpose of being our Savior, the one who would redeem us from sin. Jesus, the Son of God, God himself was so ordinary, so blasé, just so he could serve us. Isaiah had prophesied about him: **“He had no attractiveness and no majesty. When we saw him, nothing about his appearance made us desire him.”** Humble and lowly is the Lord our God. Humble and lowly to come and to save!

 Our text then goes on. Verses 7b-8. **“When he was born in human likeness, and his appearance was like that of any other man, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross.”** This sentence again draws to our attention the lowliness of Jesus, the Son of God who came into this world. He seemed plain and ordinary, with the exception that at the age of 30 he began to do all sorts of miracles such as this world had never seen. Those miracles were for the sake of mankind, to help mankind grasp that Jesus was the solution. Now if Jesus was the solution for the things of this world, the how much more would Jesus be the solution for the things not of this world?

 We know he was the solution because of his obedience. Jesus obeyed the Father in everything, yes, even in taking on the cruelty, the horror and the reality of death. But I fear that all too often we fail to grasp the scope of what is being said here. You see, I believe that the first death mentioned here is a reference to “eternal death and damnation”. It is speaking to the horror of the punishment of sins, all the sins of all of mankind. This statement is taking you through the progression of the Passion. Jesus’ suffering is first. His absolutely deep agony and anguish, on the cross. The first death Jesus took on was highlighted by Jesus himself when he cried out, **“My God, my God why have you forsaken me?”** Jesus took on the complete totality of sin and its punishment as he suffered “eternal death”

 And then on that cross, that horrible instrument of shame and disgrace, that tool reserved only for the worst of the worst (which Jesus was for us!) Jesus succumbed to the reality of physical death. His body stopped. His spirit departed from that body and that body ceased to be alive. That body got buried, like all human bodies usually do. In one fell swoop, this verse speaks to the atoning sacrifice Jesus took on for all of us in the form of eternal death and the substitutionary physical dying that Jesus took on for all of us as his human body ceased to live.

 Why? To be our servant. To be the one who took our sins and paid for them. In other words his death was the substitutionary death of the Passover Lamb. His death was represented in all the sacrifices made for all the centuries at the Jewish Temple of God. Sacrifices that didn’t do anything but serve as a reminder of what the Messiah, the Savior of God would do. He would die for sin. He would make atonement for those lost in trespass and sin. Our debt would be paid, our iniquities were atoned for. Do you remember how Isaiah prophesied it would be? Isaiah 53:4-5. **“We thought it was because of God that he was stricken, smitten and afflicted, but it was because of our rebellion that he was pierced.”**

 Of course, the history of Jesus does not end there. There is the resurrection that took place. The resurrection that proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that what Jesus came to do was accomplished. God had told us that His Son, our Savior, would die and then be raised to life as proof of who He is and what He has done. Jesus on the third day was raised from the dead. Actually and physically brought back to life to live and reign forever as the victorious and glorified Son of God.

 That’s what our next sentence is addressing. It says, **“Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”** That, dear fellow believers in Jesus, sums up the way it is with Jesus now and forever more. He is exalted.

 That exaltation began with his descent into hell to proclaim his victory to all those who had despised and rejected him. But the reality for us came true when Jesus came back to life. The resurrection of Jesus is everything. He lives, he lives eternally. And because He lives, he has been placed at the right hand of God the Father where he lives and rules over all things for and with the Father forever. Jesus is supreme. Jesus is the victory. Jesus is now the Lord of Lords and the King of kings. No one is greater than He is. The risen and ascended Jesus is “The Everything” for the world and its souls.

 God himself simply declares: **“every knee will bow…and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.”** It would probably do us well to deeply contemplate those words and all their implications.

 These words simply and boldly declare that there will be a time when everyone, everyone that is, everyone that was, and everyone that will be, will bow their knee in homage to Jesus and will confess clearly and absolutely that Jesus is the Lord of all. No one is excused. No matter who you are or when you are, you will confess to the Lordship, the utter sovereignty of Jesus over all that is.

 Now did you notice exactly how this text stated that? The text actually says, **“Every knee will bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth.”** The phrase, **“in heaven”** means that every creature that dwells and lives in the realm of God will give Jesus homage and glory as the Lord of all. Cherubim, seraphim, archangels, the saved and departed of this world and whatever other creatures that live with and serve the Lord God will shout the praise and glory of Jesus.

 That makes the phrase **“and on earth”** fairly easy to understand then. Every creature of this world, and I believe it means every creature: man or animal is going to bow before Jesus and acknowledge in the way God has given them, that Jesus Christ is Lord of all. All humans that are alive when Jesus returns will give honor, praise and glory to Jesus. Nothing will stop this. Nothing will be able to prevent each one of us from bowing and confessing Jesus. Whether you believe in him or not, you will confess the glory of his name and the truth of his status as Lord over all.

 And then there is the phrase: **“and under the earth.”** With not a shred of doubt I believe that phrase refers to each and every creature dwelling and existing in that place called hell, a place revealed as the eternal existence of those who are dead. Dead to the goodness of God. Dead to God’s grace and mercy and recipients of nothing less than the complete torments of eternity. Satan, every demon, every soul that has despised and rejected Jesus and left this world is being spoke of. They will bow and proclaim Jesus the Lord of All. They hate him, despise Him and will do all they can to resist Jesus but at the great Day of Judgement they will bow and worship Him! It will be from the realm of eternal death, but they will bow and worship!

 In light of all of that, that part alone is enough to make me realize the real truth of the matter. I can easily today, because of God’s grace, mercy and love, keep the faith that God has granted and give Jesus worship and praise now as should be, or I can reject Jesus and all that He is and in the end, I will still give Jesus worship and praise, but from the horror of hell. It is that simple.

 And now do you see how we have gone right back to that opening phrase: **“Indeed, let this attitude be in you.”** It speaks to us of faith. To believe in Jesus. To contemplate his entire life, to consider the point of his coming and the marvel of His victory. To grasp that it was all done for our souls’ sakes. Jesus came to be our Savior. Gave himself to death that we might live in joy and wonder with Him forever and ever. How could you know this wonder of Jesus, hear of this love of God the Father for us in sending Jesus and not want to be a part of what our Lord has won for us? I beg of you, believe in Jesus now and join me in confessing his name and rejoicing in our salvation.

And as this text encourages, then let your attitude be that of the attitude of Jesus! What a glorious thing this is. For today, it means that during this pandemic and the difficulties it is casting our way, we will be just like Jesus. We will trust in God to be our help and stay, our comfort and courage, our sure and certain foundation. We will not be afraid. We will not be disheartened but will trust that God is doing all for the good of our salvation and the glory of his name. For all of time, it means that we will, to the best of our sinful ability, strive hard to live to the glory of Jesus. To confess his name, to declare Him Jesus, the Christ, the Lord and Savior of all. We will confess not only in what we think, but in what we say and do, yes, in every aspect of our life. The attitude of Jesus, humble servant of his Father will be our attitude. Humble servants of God walking that narrow path of salvation and trusting absolutely in the wonder and glory of the one who has been exalted, Jesus.

We do indeed give thanks to God for his Son Jesus. And with that our hearts are calmed, our strength is renewed, and no matter what, our victory is won. This is our Christian faith. Amen.