

Fil-Am Community Church

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4 January 2015

Exalting Jesus in the New Year

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

(Phil. 2:9-11 NIV)

At the beginning of each new year, we announce a theme for the year along with a theme verse or verses. I usually start thinking and praying about it in November. This time as I pondered the spiritual condition of our congregation, the conviction came to me that in 2015 we should intentionally exalt the name, person, and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ. I’m hoping that we would get to know him more intimately and personally because I believe our growth as individuals and as a church hinges on that. Three years ago, our theme was “It’s All About Jesus” and it seemed right somehow that we should return to a Christ-centered theme. Therefore, our theme this year is “Jesus Christ is Lord of All” and our key verse is Philippians 2:9-11. I was drawn to that verse because it talks about the supremacy of Christ aside from the fact that this verse means a lot to me. And I’ll talk about that later.

And so in the weeks to come we will focus our worship around the Lord Jesus Christ. My prayer is that we as a congregation will come to know him better than ever, to love him more and more, to serve him with renewed enthusiasm, and to declare His Name with increasing vigor. To help us to learn more about Christ,

next Sunday we will begin a new sermon series that is centered on Jesus. Please watch.

VIDEO on “Jesus is”

The title of the series is “Jesus is”. Each week we will talk about the titles and roles of Jesus.

We'll look at the significance of his titles and their relevance in our lives today.

Now, please look at the screen and I want us to read together this passage.

“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:9-11 NIV)

Charles Haddon Spurgeon is known as the “Prince of Preachers”. He began his ministry in 1854 at the age of 19 at New Park Street Chapel on the south side of London. It wasn't long before the Chapel was filled to capacity so an expansion was made and that was also outgrown. Eventually, a hall had to be rented to fill the large crowds that came to hear Spurgeon speak. Soon that was outgrown as well and an even larger hall, The Surrey Music Hall was leased by Spurgeon to accommodate the large crowds that came to hear him speak. This hall was designed for 10-12 thousand people. The first service was held there on October 19, 1856. The building was packed that day. Shortly after the service began someone cried, “Fire!”. Panic set in and as people rushed to leave the building, seven people lost their lives that day and many more were injured. Spurgeon was terribly grief stricken by this tragic event but within two weeks preached his first sermon after the tragedy.

In Spurgeon's first sermon after the awful October 19 events he said, “The text I have selected is one that has comforted me, and in a great measure, enabled me to come here to-day—the single reflection upon it had such a power of comfort

on my depressed spirit. It is this:—"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 on earth, and things under the earth; And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

This passage has greatly comforted Spurgeon not only immediately after that great tragedy but also for many years because he struggled with depression as a result of that sad event. I'm sure as we reflect on that passage it could be a source of comfort also for many of us, it not all of us, because those verses clearly talk about the supremacy of Christ in all things. It tells us that Jesus is in control. He is in control of what's happening in this world.

He is in control of what's happening in your life. As we begin the year 2015, perhaps some of us may be struggling with fear, anxiety, indecision, and even depression, but know this, only Jesus can calm a troubled soul, comfort a grieving spirit, and ease the pain of an aching heart. Amen?

Now, the focus of my message this morning is on the name of Jesus. Admittedly, Jesus is controversial. And his name alone is controversial. We Christians hold it in high regard and we don't use it flippantly or invoke it unnecessarily. The world at large, however, don't want to hear or say the name of Jesus. They avoid it like the plague. Or they use it with disrespect or use it as a curse. When they say "Jeez" or "Gee whiz", that's disrespecting the name of Jesus.

The name of Jesus was given to him by God the Father. Jesus means "Jehovah is Salvation". For truly it is Jesus who saved us from our sins by dying on the cross for us. That's why he is exalted.

In the message this morning, let me share with you that there is power in the name of Jesus. But first, what's in a name? Names are special and they should be. In Bible times names either described the circumstances or the character of the one

born. Nowadays, people name their children after famous people. I have a brother nicknamed Don-Don after Don-Don Nakar, a famous pop idol in the Philippines in the 80's.

Now, my name is Rolly and it's short for Rosello. That's strange because Rolly is usually the nickname for Rolando.

Actually my nickname was Butch until I was about 5 years-old. But I was a sickly child and in the Philippines, there's the belief that changing a name will change the fortune of the child. So, they changed it to Rolly and lo and behold, I was still sickly but the name stuck anyway.

Any of you here is Chinese? Please don't get offended but I heard that the Chinese have a very interesting way of naming a child.

According to one story, once a baby is delivered, the father throws a pan down the stairs, then names the child according to the sound it makes. So, it could be Ping, Wang, Chung or whatever. Ok, that's a joke.

Now, let's get serious and talk about the name above all names – Jesus. The first thing I want you to see is that in the name of Jesus there is,

1. Authority

"The next day the rulers, the elders and the teachers of the law met in Jerusalem. 6 Annas the high priest was there, and so were Caiaphas, John, Alexander and others of the high priest's family. 7 They had Peter and John brought before them and began to question them: "By what power or what name did you do this?" (Acts 4:5-7)

We see here the Jewish leaders bullying the apostles and asking by what power or by what name they have been preaching. You see, many Jews were becoming Christians as a result of their witnessing about Jesus and performing miracles. In fact, Peter just healed a lame beggar prior to their being arrested.

Peter replied in verse 10, “*It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed.*”

In the Greek the phrase “In the name” means “by the authority of”. When a policeman says, “stop in the name of the law” we know what that means. He’s speaking with the authority that’s been given to him.

That’s why people listened to Peter and John. They spoke by the authority of Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself said right before the Great Commission, “*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*” (Matthew 28:18)

Do you know that the devil flees at the name of Jesus? I remember when I was undergoing training as a missionary several years back. One afternoon, after trimming the grass which was my assignment that day, I went back to my room and lay down in my bed until I fell asleep. Then, suddenly I felt that my hands were being held by someone above my head. My arms were stretched like this as I lay on the bed. I couldn’t move. I tried to wake up but I couldn’t. I then realized I was having a nightmare. Then, I saw a dark figure coming near me and he looked scary. It was the devil. At that moment, I shouted in my dream, “In the name of Jesus, get out of here, Satan!” I said that several times while trying to move and snap out of the nightmare. Until finally, I woke up and I was breathing heavily. And my arms were still like this.

I wondered why that happened until I spoke to my co-trainees and some of them experienced having bad dreams as well. And we realized that the enemy was trying to disturb us because of our commitment to serving Jesus.

Folks, the enemy is afraid of Jesus. The mere mention of his name makes him cower in fear and retreat. But, of course, you must have the authority to say it. If you believe in Jesus as your Lord and Savior, you have that authority. If not, the devil himself may attack you. In fact, that’s what happened to the seven sons of

Sceva as what we read in the Bible in the book of Acts. Listen to this. *"Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?"*

Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding."

(Acts 19:13-16)

Not only is there authority, but also in the name of Jesus there is,

2. Acceptance

People of all stripes are hungry for acceptance and approval. Isn't that evident in the world today? Can you see the moral degradation of our world and see that it directly corresponds to the need for emotional and spiritual fulfillment? Why are there unmarried teen-age girls getting pregnant? Why does the prostitute sell her body? Why does the homosexual march through the streets of our cities declaring to have "Gay Pride"? Why do people turn to religious cults? Why do men and women have a relationship outside of marriage? Why are there people taking drugs?

It might seem like too simplistic of an answer--but I believe it is because they are seeking for love and acceptance. Which is just a symptom of a deeper problem. That problem is the spiritual void in their lives. They walk through life with an empty spot in their heart and they don't know how to fill it. So they turn to the things they think will satisfy--things like booze, sex, and cults. And when these don't satisfy their craving they turn to another vice, and another.

Do you want to know why depression is the most common mental problem in the world today?--it is because people are empty inside and they don't know how to fill it. Religion can't fill it. Relationships can't fill it. Recreation can't fill it.

Only one person can fill it. And that's Jesus. Romans 10:13 says "*Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.*" Turning to Jesus will fill the void in a person's life and will be saved from their misery. The verse says "everyone" for Jesus will accept anyone who comes to him. In John 6:37 he says, "*All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.*"

In the name of Jesus, there is authority and there is acceptance. Lastly, in the name of Jesus there is

3. Assurance

We live in a world where there is so much pain and misery. When you watch the evening news and hear of terrorists who've taken hostages and threatened to behead them if their demands aren't met and then you see the reports over the next few days that they have, do you wonder what in the world is going on? Do you wonder how and why these individuals get away with such atrocities?

Do you hear of the misdeeds of others spread all over the news for us to learn about and cringe at and wonder how human beings can act so sinfully and ruthlessly? Do you see all these things on the news or in the papers or hear about them on the radio and ever wonder how the name of Jesus Christ will ever be honored as it should?

We can easily grow disheartened when we view the depravity and sin that surrounds us. Troubling events in our world may distress us but there is coming a day when every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Let me read again Philippians 2:9-11. "*Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*"

There is coming a day when everyone who has ever lived and everyone who ever will live will bow their knee to the name of Jesus. There is coming a day when every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

You might wonder when that day will be because it's pretty obvious that day hasn't come. Carolyn Copeland shares this fitting illustration of that fact. In an article in the magazine Christian Reader, she says,

"The daughter of our pastor was asked to give the closing prayer at her high school graduation. A Jewish student was asked to give the opening prayer.

The principal asked our pastor's daughter if she would refrain from using the name of Christ in her prayer, "lest someone of other faiths be offended." She replied she would be glad to omit Christ's name from her closing prayer if the Jewish student would mention Christ's name in his opening prayer, "so that I and those of my faith not be offended." She was allowed to give her prayer as originally planned."

In the world we live in the name of Jesus often causes offense. There are many who are lost and do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as Lord. There are many who do not bow the knee to Him. But that doesn't change the fact that He is Lord and there will be a day when everyone will bow to Him.

"When a ruling dignitary approaches his subjects, they all rise in respect. One day as a British king entered a room and everyone stood, he said, "Please take your seats, gentlemen. I'm not the Lord, you know."

"No, Your Highness," replied one of the group. "If you were, we would have dropped to our knees."

He was right. There are three groups of created beings who are going to bow to Jesus. Notice that verse 10 tells us that those in heaven, those on earth and those under the earth are all going to bow before Him. As one commentator points out,

No intelligent being—whether angels and saints in heaven; people living on the earth; or Satan, demons, and the unsaved in hell—in all of God's universe will escape. All will bow either willingly or they will be made to do so.

Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Those who refuse to bow today are going to bow on that day. Those who are offended by His name and fail to confess Him as Lord will do so on that day. But understand that this doesn't mean everyone is saved. It just means that even in their resentment and despair, those who are not saved will acknowledge the lordship of Jesus.

My question to you today is, will you bow on that day with joy and gratitude to your Savior or will you bow with regret for never having acknowledged Him as Lord? If you fail to bow to Him now, one day it will be too late to bow to Him as your Savior.

In Warren Wiersbe's *Meet Yourself in the Psalms*, he tells about a frontier town where a horse bolted and ran away with a wagon carrying a little boy. Seeing the child in danger, a young man risked his life to catch the horse and stop the wagon.

The child who was saved grew up to become a lawless man, and one day he stood before a judge to be sentenced for a serious crime. The prisoner recognized the judge as the man who, years before had saved his life; so he pled for mercy on the basis of that experience. But the words from the bench silenced his plea:

“Young man, then I was your savior; today I am your judge, and I must sentence you to be hanged.”

One day Jesus Christ will say to rebellious sinners, “During that long day of grace, I was the Savior, and I would have forgiven you. But today I am your Judge. Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire!”

The question is not if you will bow before Jesus and confess Him as Lord. Everyone will do that one day. The question is when? Will you bow before Him and acknowledge Him as Lord now? Will you confess Him as Lord today and accept Him as your Savior?

You may be denying who Jesus is today but there is coming a day when you will no longer be able to deny that He is the Son of God and that He is Lord. What a tragedy it would be if you would wait until it is eternally too late! Accept Him as your Savior and Lord today. Know that you will spend eternity in His presence. As Romans 10:9 tells you,

“If you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

We will all bow before Jesus Christ one day. Are you ready for that day?