

“Who Jesus really is”

Philippians 2:5-11 NIV

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

“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.”

Good news today about a worrisome issue.

Today’s text gives us some needed info.

Life inundates us with concerns.

Will the coronavirus affect my family?

**Will my IRA shrink to nothing?
What can I do about that relative
who’s driving me crazy?**

**I originally planned to ask, “Will Iowa go
far in the NCAA basketball tournament?”
All the cancellations made this concern moot.**

**How we handle these questions depends
first on our worldview:**

**Some folks think that the Universe and life
came about by chance and that life-events
occur in a haphazard fashion.**

**Is it your view that life is subject to
continual random events?**

Some religious people think God created
everything, but events occurred the Lord
didn’t plan; now life runs out of control.

**This means that some believers agree with
unbelievers that stuff happens randomly.**

**Is this life merely a frenzied, chaotic mess?
Or does history move to a conclusion that
a higher power completely planned?**

**The Bible informs us that God is Alpha
and Omega, beginning and end.**

When he created the Cosmos, God knew how events would develop and he remains in complete control right to the finish He planned

Márton Váró



Wikipedia

Few of us get to watch sculptors who picture in their minds the images they eventually produce from a rough piece of stone.¹

God moves history according to His plan.

He works in history and us.

Folks who allow God to mold them and make them according to his will usually become beautiful new creations.

But our stubborn minds resist God’s rule.

Do you live by the view that God knows what He is doing, or that stuff just happens?

A second big question relates to how we make choices.

What guides you in making decisions?

Many folks go by hunches and feelings:

“Does this feel right?”

“What did that little voice tell me?”

Some use family guidance:

“My mother taught me this.”

“That’s how our family has always done it.”

Many use authority figures:

“My life coach advised me on this.”

“My professor’s really smart; I trust him.”

“My psychiatrist told me.”

“My spiritual adviser leads me.”

Some let dollar signs guide them.

What will bring me the greatest return?



¹ Most Iowans have probably watched chain-saw sculptors begin with a virtually formless log and create an attractive image.

Not long ago I asked a young man about his life-direction: he replied, “I just doing what normal teen agers do at this stage of life.”

I didn’t ask for details.

Many church people seem to be eclectics.

They go here and there choosing what they like from various sources.

They want religion cafeteria-style.

In the final analysis, some controlling factor or combination of factors guides us.

Who wields the most clout in your life?

What influences guide and control you?

Let’s talk a moment about authority.

Luke’s gospel tells Jesus’ final preaching tour.

The temple stood on one of Jerusalem’s tallest hills.

King Herod built a large paved area around the temple with huge Corinthian-like columns on the outside perimeter.



They called most of this paved outer section “the Court of the Gentiles.”²

In this outer court, Rabbis often lectured under the colonnades (porches).

Jesus taught and preached one day in one of those sections and an officious group of chief priests, law experts, and elders (likely the highest Jewish court) came up to him.

They demanded his credentials:

² The accompanying photo of a model shows the high walls that surrounded the Temple itself. That area was raised and gated with warnings (in three languages) to Gentiles that they were forbidden to enter under penalty of death. In closer proximity to the main building, they designated inner courtyards for priests, men, and women.

“Tell us by what authority you are doing these things,” they said. “Who gave you this authority?”³

Jesus came as an outsider from the northern hill country.

He didn't learn at the feet one of the great Jerusalem law teachers.

By presenting God's word in stories people could understand, Jesus drew great crowds.

He performed real miracles.

Everybody talked about Jesus.

Few consulted these powerful elites.

Their jealousy flamed into rage.



So they tried to entrap Jesus with questions.



“Who gave Jesus authority to teach?”

Envy caused the leaders to ask this question.

But all should enquire re: Jesus' qualifications.

Are you sure about who Jesus is?

Compared to the facts behind this question, all other issues you face shrink to zilch.

Notice how Jesus often answered a question designed to entrap him with a question:

³ “He replied, ‘I will also ask you a question. Tell me: ⁴ John's (the Baptist's) baptism—was it from heaven, or of human origin?’” ⁵ They discussed it among themselves and said, “If we say, ‘From heaven,’ he will ask, ‘Why didn't you believe him?’” ⁶ But if we say, ‘Of human origin,’ all the people will stone us, because they are persuaded that John was a prophet.” ⁷ So they answered, “We don't know where it was from.”

⁸ Jesus said, “Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.”

Those leaders cared little about Truth.

They felt no concern about God's will.

Those guys only wanted to protect their power and position by getting rid of Jesus.

This raises a point hardly anyone mentions.

³ Luke 20:1 NIV

Consider the story Jesus told the religious elites: ⁹“A man planted a vineyard, rented it to some farmers and went away for a long time. ¹⁰ At harvest time, he sent a servant to the tenants so they would give him some of the fruit of the vineyard. But the tenants beat him and sent him away empty-handed.”

The ex-mayor of New York might not understand this parable, but just about every mid-westerner does.

A landowner plants a crop, goes out of town for an extended period, but beforehand arranges for some tenant farmers to sharecrop and harvest for him.

Whether this was fifty-fifty, sixty-forty, or forty-sixty agreement doesn't matter.

When the owner sent his rep to collect the rightful owner's share, the tenant farmers maltreated him and sent him packing:

“He (the owner) sent another servant, but that one also they beat and treated shamefully and sent away empty-handed. ¹² He sent still a third, and they wounded him and threw him out.”

¹³ “Then the owner of the vineyard said, ‘What shall I do? I will send my son, whom I love; perhaps they will respect him.’

¹⁴ “But when the tenants saw him, they talked the matter over. ‘**This is the heir,**’ they said. ‘**Let's kill him, and the inheritance will be ours.**’ ¹⁵ So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.”

Jesus came to this planet, not just to die for us, but also to remind us that we're tenant farmers.

God owns everything we set foot on, wear, use, stake claim to, rent, or build on.

Jesus is the owner's son.

Recall how our text reads?

“Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.”

Jesus came to our planet in humble form.



**But he was/is
God, who
created the
Cosmos.**

Freestockphoto of
outerspace.

He owns every acre and every blade of grass on earth and every cubic mile in space farther than any physicist can imagine.

This Luke 20 parable clearly tells us.

None of us would act violently as the tenant farmers did in Jesus’ parable.

Yet, we don’t give God His due; neither do we give His son Jesus the honor due him.

Years ago I spent long hours debating and trying to define what this Philippians 2 verse means in theological terms.

Using human reason or logic, we can’t define the eternal, all powerful, all knowing God.

Someday, God willing, we can spend some time better understanding who Jesus is.

For now, Jesus’ parable helps us recognize an assignment that we easily grasp, but stiffen our necks against getting done.

We don’t give God the honor due Him or his share of His possessions under our charge.

Jesus came in humble circumstance to show us how to honor God and to act toward others.

Believing Jesus divinity’ is important.

Behaving as Jesus did is equally vital.

Few people put God first, and few act as Jesus acted.

Jesus endured ultimate humiliation.

He gave up the honor due him as God and suffered the worst disgrace imaginable.

Religious people hired crooks to lie about him; he took horrible abuse; he accepted Pilate’s unjust ruling; and he died on a cross.

Theologians call this emptying “kenosis,” the word in the original for emptying.

Many people witnessed him alive 3 days later.

After his resurrection, Jesus returned to God’s right hand.

When history ends, he’ll be visible to everyone on the planet and be glorified.

We’ll honor Jesus, Creator of the Cosmos.

Imagine standing in your yard some day and some meddlesome person walking up to you and in a bossy voice demanding to know:

“Who gave you authority to be here?”

Wouldn’t it be interesting to see the reaction of that bunch of elites when they see Jesus return in glory?

One summer evening during a violent thunderstorm a mother was tucking her small boy into bed. She was about to turn off the light when he asked with a tremor in his voice, "Mommy, will you sleep with me tonight?" The mother smiled and gave him a reassuring hug.

"I can't, dear," she said. "I have to sleep in Daddy's room."

A long silence was broken at last by his shaky little voice: **“The big sissy.”**

On Judgment Day, there’ll be lots of “big sissies.”

No one will point fingers or mock others, though.

We’ll all be too busy trying to answer for our own life-actions.

**Who has authority in your life?
To whom do you go for life decisions?
To whom do you give honor?**

“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.”

**God bless you and your loved ones
as you honor and glorify Him
through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.**

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