

# Using Our Inheritance In Christ

## Introduction

My main goal when preparing a sermon is to show the applicability of God's Word and try to highlight the position our hearts and mind should have in the situations addressed in the passages. Psalm 119:105 tells us God's word is **"a lamp to my feet and a light to my path."** Paul expresses to Timothy **"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."** Although these words were written thousands of years ago by men under the direction of the Holy Spirit, they are just as applicable then as they are now. Hebrews 4:12 says, **"For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart."** The entirety of God's Word points us to Christ, leading us on a path from justification to sanctification, and ultimately to glorification.

We are living in a time where God's word is more readily accessible than ever. Less than twenty years ago, smartphones were extremely uncommon and nearly everyone was using flip phones that could call, send texts and take blurry photos. For those here today with pre-teens and teenagers in service, be prepared to answer the question during lunch of "Mom, dad, what's a flip phone?" You can really surprise them when you tell them you grew up without a cell phone, the internet or possibly even a computer. You can then refer them to their grandparents for further technological horror stories. Looking around this room in 2025, many of you are using your cell phones to read the Bible. We literally have access to the Bible wherever we go without having to carry a book. We are running out of excuses to not be in God's Word daily, allowing it to fill our minds and work in us in conjunction with the Holy Spirit.

The Bible is our instruction and encouragement, revealing who God is, what He has done and what He is going to do. As one Christian author puts it, “[The Bible is not a storybook with a few moral principles; it is the lens through which we understand the world.](#)” Today I’d like to look at Paul’s words to the church in Phillipipi found in Philippians chapter 2, which can be viewed as practical instructions in sanctification, or how we are to be more Christ-like. Turning there now, we’ll be starting in verse 1, reading through verse 11.

**Philippians 2:1-11: <sup>1</sup> So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, <sup>2</sup> complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. <sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. <sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. <sup>5</sup> Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

We can better understand these verses by putting them in context by reading what Paul was discussing directly before in Philippians 1:27-30: **<sup>27</sup> Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or am absent, I may hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel, <sup>28</sup> and not frightened in anything by your opponents. This is a clear sign to them of their destruction, but of your salvation, and that from God. <sup>29</sup> For it has been granted to you that for**

**the sake of Christ you should not only believe in him but also suffer for his sake,  
<sup>30</sup>engaged in the same conflict that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.**

Paul is instructing believers to live their lives in a way that's worthy of Christ and to live it in oneness with other believers. As we dig in to verses 1-11, we see Paul giving guidance and encouragement to put that into practice.

## **Breakdown**

**<sup>1</sup>So if there is any encouragement in Christ,**

The Greek word translated as encouragement is more than just receiving a pep talk from Jesus. It's deeper; it's relational. It's Jesus calling us near to Him so He can exhort us, counsel us with reassuring words or gentle reproof, and provide comfort. Believers in Christ aren't left to transverse all the things of this life alone. Jesus is calling us into relationship with Him so we can receive his ultimate guidance and care. We do this by regularly being in the Word and regularly praying, not just seeking God when we're struggling. Jesus quotes Deuteronomy 8:3 when rebuking the temptations of the devil in Matthew 4:4 **“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that comes from the mouth of God.”** We develop our relationship with God through his Word, which allows us to better understand who He is.

**any comfort from love,**

Paul uses 'agape' here as the word translated as love. As a reminder, there are a few different Greek words that are translated 'love' in the Bible: eros, philia, and agape. Eros is physical love or sexual desire. Philia is an affectionate love, one that involves friendship. Agape is an unconditional, sacrificial love. It centers on the needs of the one loved and does whatever is necessary to meet those needs, without expecting anything in return. We can find true comfort in this unconditional love.

**any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy,**

The word translated 'participation' is also translated as 'fellowship'. I think using the word fellowship here gives us a better understanding of how Paul wants believers to be in relation to the Holy Spirit. Paul sees fellowship with the Holy Spirit as a blessing to believers, indicated by his final greetings at the end of 2 Corinthians where he writes **"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."**

Jesus promised the Holy Spirit to believers in John 14. Let's look at what Jesus says, starting in verse 15. This takes place at the last supper, right after Jesus tells the disciples he will soon be leaving. <sup>15</sup> **"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. <sup>16</sup> And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, <sup>17</sup> even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you."**

We need to understand the Holy Spirit dwells within us. If we live in a house with another person, it would be difficult not to have a relationship with them. We are encouraged to be in fellowship with the Holy Spirit, participating with Him as we face our daily situations. It's a partnership designed by God; a helper who is with us as we walk through this life. We are not going through this life alone; God isn't distant from our situation. When we recognize God is within us and wants to be there, it's encouragement for us to be in fellowship with Him. God is a god of relationship, and the relationship between us and Him has been restored by the work of Christ on the cross.

**<sup>2</sup> complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.**

When Paul speaks of having the same mind, being in full accord or of one mind, he's calling the Philippians to think like Jesus. When we as believers are of the

same mind, we have the mind of Christ, thinking as Christ thinks. We can do this because, as one Christian author puts it, **“A Christian receives a renewed mind that is given the capacity to reason, think, observe and demonstrate logic correctly at the moment of salvation. As he walks with the Lord and progresses in sanctification, his mind is renewed even more.”** The ability to think like Jesus is accomplished through the work of the Holy Spirit, and it’s not just a one-time event. As we purposefully walk with Christ throughout our lives, our mind is continually transformed.

**<sup>3</sup> Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.**

When I read this verse, it reminds me of Solomon’s words in Proverbs 11:2 where he writes, **“When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.”** Jesus tells us in Luke 14 that it’s better to humble ourselves than choose to exalt ourselves. When we exalt ourselves, we are only opening ourselves to being humiliated. This lack of humility also applies to how we view others, especially when we feel they’re doing something we wouldn’t do or when we’re judging their actions (a ‘holier than thou’ attitude). Looking at next verse, we find Paul beginning to tell us how to best consider others.

**<sup>4</sup> Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.**

While Paul acknowledges the need to look after our own interests, he also states we should also hold the interests of others in the same regard we have for ourselves. In Acts 4:44-45, Luke records how believers fellowshipped directly after the Pentecost: **“<sup>44</sup> And all who believed were together and had all things in common. <sup>45</sup> And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need.”**

Now I'm not saying that you need to go out today and start selling all your possessions to fulfill the needs of other believers, although it might be time to sell the items in that storage unit you haven't visited in ten years. However, we should be looking to bless others out of the abundance God has given us. And it doesn't have to be money; we can also bless others with our time and service. Jesus explains what this looks like in Matthew 25, starting in verse 35, which I'll read: **“<sup>35</sup> For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, <sup>36</sup> I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ <sup>37</sup> Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? <sup>38</sup> And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? <sup>39</sup> And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ <sup>40</sup> And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’”**

I believe the NIV provides the easiest to understand translation of what Paul and Jesus are ultimately instructing, which is found in Matthew 7:12: **“So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.”**

**<sup>5</sup> Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,**

Paul reiterates that we should be thinking like Christ. Jesus tells us in Matthew 20:28 that **“the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”** In everything that we do, we should have the actions and words of Jesus in our minds. We also find a description of this mentality in 1 Peter 2, which we'll turn to now. In this epistle, Peter is giving instructions to believers on how we should interact in our relationships with those in the world around us. Starting in verse 13 it reads:

**<sup>13</sup> Be subject for the Lord's sake to every human institution, whether it be to the emperor as supreme, <sup>14</sup> or to governors as sent by him to punish those who do**

evil and to praise those who do good. <sup>15</sup> For this is the will of God, that by doing good you should put to silence the ignorance of foolish people. <sup>16</sup> Live as people who are free, not using your freedom as a cover-up for evil, but living as servants of God. <sup>17</sup> Honor everyone. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the emperor.

<sup>18</sup> Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. <sup>19</sup> For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. <sup>20</sup> For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. <sup>21</sup> For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup> He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. <sup>23</sup> When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly.

Pastor John MacArthur put this all concisely when he said, [“Christ is the ultimate example of selfless humility.”](#) When we desire to be like Christ, we will put aside our selfish nature and instead be thoughtful of others.

**<sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,**

The Amplified Bible translation provides a bit more detail regarding this verse: **“who, although He existed in the form and unchanging essence of God [as One with Him, possessing the fullness of all the divine attributes—the entire nature of deity], did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped or asserted [as if He did not already possess it, or was afraid of losing it];”**

Just as the apostle John writes at the beginning of his gospel, **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup> He was in**

**the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup> All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.”** Jesus was with the Father from the very beginning; there should be no question to His deity. Jesus never had to earn or achieve equality with the Father – He always had it, and He would certainly not have to worry about losing it. However, He could choose to lay down some of those divine attributes, which we see in the next verse.

**<sup>7</sup> but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.**

The Greek word translated as ‘emptied’ is *kenoo* (ken-ah-oh), from which we get the theological word ‘kenosis’: the doctrine that Christ relinquished His divine attributes to experience human suffering. There is debate as to what Christ laid down, but I believe David Guzik provides a good explanation of what occurred. Quote: *“Some develop the **kenotic theory** of the incarnation to the point where they insist that Jesus divested Himself of many of the attributes of deity – such as omniscience, omnipotence, omnipresence, and even suffered the elimination of His own divine self-consciousness. Yet Jesus did not (and *could* not) become “less God” in the incarnation. No deity was *subtracted* (though Jesus did renounce some of the *privileges* of deity); rather humanity was *added* to His nature.”*

Jesus willingly gave up some heavenly privileges for this short time yet remained fully God while being fully man. He came as a servant of God the Father and carried out the will of the Father. Jesus speaks of this Himself throughout the gospel of John, telling His followers He did not come of His own will or own accord, but instead is doing it all in service to the Father. I’ll read a few of these statements.

**John 5:19: So Jesus said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.**

**John 5:30b: I seek not my own will but the will of him who sent me.**

**John 6:38: For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will but the will of him who sent me.**

**John 14:31: I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father.**

**<sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**

Jesus coming to earth in human form, taking the sins of humanity upon Himself and suffering the wrath of God so that we could be forgiven has been God's plan since Adam and Eve first sinned in the garden. God promised a redeemer throughout the Old Testament. He knows we are unable to redeem ourselves and therefore sent His Son to satisfy eternal justice. When we realize that Jesus chose to do this, we begin to grasp the heaviness of the situation and that it was God Himself who wanted to repair the broken relationship with man caused by sin. Jesus willingly carried out the will of the Father to the point of dying on the cross. As I just read from John, Jesus came down from heaven not to do His own will but the will of the Father who sent him. However, this work was not without suffering. Hebrews 5:7-9 tells us **"<sup>7</sup> In the days of his flesh, Jesus offered up prayers and supplications, with loud cries and tears, to him who was able to save him from death, and he was heard because of his reverence. <sup>8</sup> Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. <sup>9</sup> And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him,"**

**<sup>9</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,**

Jesus perfectly and completely fulfilled the will of the Father, glorifying God during His time on earth and accomplishing the work which the Father had given Him to

do. When Jesus said **“It is finished”** as recorded in John 19:30, He acknowledged he had drank the cup of God’s wrath, and His sacrifice removed the barrier between God and fallen man.

God rewarded Jesus for His faithful submission, as the writer of Hebrews explains in Hebrews 1:3: **“He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high,”** Jesus is seated because His work is done; it covers all sin past, present and future. Acts 4:12 tells us **“there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”**

Peter speaks of Jesus’ exalted position in 1 Peter 3:22 that Jesus **“has gone into heaven and is at the right hand of God, with angels, authorities, and powers having been subjected to him.”** God has placed Jesus in the ultimate position of authority, **“far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come.”** (Ephesians 1:21). This leads us directly into verse 10 of our passage where Paul writes

**<sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,**

Paul’s inspiration here comes from Isaiah 45, where we’ll turn to now starting in verse 18. God is speaking through the prophet Isaiah about eternal salvation.

Isaiah 45:18-24: <sup>18</sup>For thus says the Lord, who created the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it empty, he formed it to be inhabited!): **“I am the Lord, and there is no other. <sup>19</sup>I did not speak in secret, in a land of darkness; I did not say to the offspring of Jacob, ‘Seek me in vain.’ I the Lord speak the truth; I declare what is right. <sup>20</sup>“Assemble yourselves and come; draw near together, you survivors of the nations! They**

have no knowledge who carry about their wooden idols, and keep on praying to a god that cannot save. <sup>21</sup> Declare and present your case; let them take counsel together! Who told this long ago? Who declared it of old? Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no other god besides me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none besides me. <sup>22</sup> “Turn to me and be saved, all the ends of the earth! For I am God, and there is no other. <sup>23</sup> By myself I have sworn; from my mouth has gone out in righteousness a word that shall not return: ‘To me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear allegiance.’ <sup>24</sup> “Only in the Lord, it shall be said of me, are righteousness and strength; to him shall come and be ashamed all who were incensed against him.

God has called people to Himself for thousands of years yet people throughout history have resisted. Unbelievers have not bowed their knee to the Lord but will ultimately do so in the final judgment as written in Revelation 20. Turn with me there now, starting in verse 11.

**Revelation 20:11-15:** <sup>11</sup> Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done. <sup>13</sup> And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done. <sup>14</sup> Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. <sup>15</sup> And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.

Putting these verses together with what Paul is saying in Philippians, we see that every person, living or dead, Christian or non-Christian, will bow before Jesus and recognize him as Lord. Those who have put their faith in Christ will do this willingly; others will do it begrudgingly. On which side do we want to be when this final judgment occurs?

God's Word clearly describes what Jesus has done and clearly states it's something we couldn't and can't do ourselves. We are called to put our faith in Him who has saved us from our sins. As Peter says in the book of Acts, **there is salvation in no one else**; there is no other way. Placing our faith in Jesus puts us in right relationship with God and entitles us to the rights and privileges that come as adopted sons and daughters of God. Our faith in Jesus entitles us to all God has to offer his children, most significantly receiving the blessing of being in His presence for all of eternity.

**<sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.**

Confessing that Jesus is Lord is part of our justification and ongoing sanctification. Paul tells us in Romans 10 that **"if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.**

**<sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved."** We recognize that Jesus is the Lord of all, including everything in our own lives.

However, just calling out Jesus' name or saying a certain prayer yet having no change in how we live our lives shows that Jesus isn't our Lord. Jesus himself talked about this in Matthew chapter 7, where we'll turn to now. These words are part of Jesus' sermon the mount where he provides many instructions to his disciples which are captured over the course of three chapters. We'll be starting in verse 21:

**<sup>21</sup> "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. <sup>22</sup> On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many mighty works in your name?' <sup>23</sup> And then will I declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.'"**

It's more than just calling out Jesus' name. It's about living our lives in service to God and the works he has planned for us. Just above this passage in verses 16-20, Jesus tells his disciples how to distinguish between true and false believers. True believers will be recognized by their fruits. We must hear the words of Christ and do them, just as Jesus instructs in verse 24. When we do this, it glorifies the Father and our actions confess that Jesus is our Lord.

## **Conclusion**

In the section of Paul's letter to the Philippians we've studied today, Paul is telling believers how they should live and conduct themselves, pointing them to the model Christ provides and proclaiming the power and glory of Christ as proof of why we should do things Christ's way. As believers, we are following Christ because we've already acknowledged we can't do any of this on our own. Although we are all in different situations, some more difficult than others, we are all striving toward the same end goal.

Paul concludes this section of his letter with encouragement and instruction found in verses 12 and 13: **<sup>12</sup>Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, <sup>13</sup>for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure.**

Everything we do as followers of Jesus is done in conjunction with God. Our ongoing sanctification is guided by the Holy Spirit, who resides in us and is working through us to carry out the will of God. God has blessed us with what we need to glorify Him on this earth by the way we live our lives. Theologian Sinclair Ferguson puts it this way, ***“By His grace, each one of us who's a Christian, is going to be conformed to the image of his son. He's going to make us just like Jesus.”***

Living our lives for God and others is the ultimate goal of each day of our lives as believers. Just as Jesus instructed in Matthew 22:37-39, **“You shall love the Lord**

**your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.**

**<sup>38</sup> This is the great and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus is our example, and as he says, “do this and you will live.”**

### Communion

**Luke 22:14-20: “<sup>14</sup> And when the hour came, he reclined at table, and the apostles with him. <sup>15</sup> And he said to them, “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. <sup>16</sup> For I tell you I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God.” <sup>17</sup> And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he said, “Take this, and divide it among yourselves. <sup>18</sup> For I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.” <sup>19</sup> And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” <sup>20</sup> And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, “This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.”**