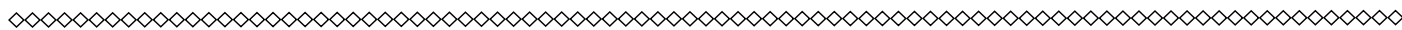




Pastor of the  
International  
Baptist Church  
in Cologne Ger-  
many.

**Sermon Brief**  
**Text: Phil. 2:1-11**  
**Title: Becoming Like Christ**  
Lorin L. Cranford

Seeking to faith-  
fully proclaim  
the whole coun-  
cil of God in  
scripture!



### INTRODUCTION

Today in our celebration of the Lord's Supper we are focusing on the death and resurrection of Christ as the very foundation of our Christian faith. In His sacrificial giving of Himself for sinful humanity, we as believers and followers of Christ have experienced the cleansing of our lives from the guilt of our sin. In coming to Christ for salvation, we committed ourselves to Him as our Lord and Savior. Thus we began a spiritual journey of discipleship that will eventually lead us to stand before Almighty God in final judgment, as we anticipate an eternal existence with God in Heaven. The heart of this discipleship journey for every true Christian is the issue of becoming like Christ. Christ took over control of our life at our conversion and He now guides us through the leadership of His Spirit dwelling in us. Christian discipleship then is fundamentally a process of Christ transferring His character and commitments into our lives, so that as we grow spiritually we become increasingly like the Lord. One of the richest passages in all of the New Testament addressing this theme is Phil. 2:1-11. Hear Paul's words:

1 If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, 2 make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others. 5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, 8 he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.<sup>1</sup>

In the idea of becoming like Christ, some foundational attention should be given to the "imitation" motif that is found in the New Testament, although not directly in our passage. The Greek verb μιμέομαι (miméomai; 'I imitate') occurs some four times in the NT: 2 Thess. 3:7, 9; Heb. 13:7; 3 John 11. The noun form μιμητής (mimetés; 'imitator') is found six times in the NT: 1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; Eph. 5:1; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2:14; Heb. 6:12. Our English word 'mimic' is ultimately derived from this Greek word. Additionally, several words are used in the NT related to the idea of 'example': δείγμα (deigma; Jude 7), συμμιμητής (summimetés; Phil 3:17); τυπικῶς (typikós; 1 Cor. 10:6, 11); ὑπογραμμός (hypogrammós; 1 Pet. 2:21); ὑπόδειγμα (hypódeigma; John 13:15; Heb. 4:11); ὑποτύπωσις (hypotúposis; 1 Tim. 1:16).

The imitate concept in the NT ranges from Paul encouraging Christians to imitate him (1 Cor. 4:16; 11:1; 1 Thess. 1:6; 2 Thess. 3:7, 9) to imitating either Christ or God (Eph. 5:1; 1 Cor. 11:1). Sometimes groups of people are to be imitated, either other churches (1 Thess. 2:14) or other Christians (Heb. 6:12). Elsewhere the emphasis is sometimes on imitating something, rather than a person: faithfulness (Heb. 13:7); the good rather than the bad (3 John 11). In the ancient world with a major emphasis upon relationships, the personal example that could be observed and copied by others, especially new Christians, played in an important role in helping define Christian behavior. Particularly was this significant in a culture that followed very low moral standards, as did the ancient Greco-Roman culture. This is still important in our world.

Thus the theme of 'becoming like Christ' has particular significance against this backdrop of imitation. Paul's more detailed treatment in Phil. 2:1-11 provides an invaluable insight into what this should and can

<sup>1</sup>GNT: 2.1 Εἴ τις οὖν παράκλησις ἐν Χριστῷ, εἴ τι παραμύθιον ἀγάπης, εἴ τις κοινωνία πνεύματος, εἴ τις σπλάγχνα καὶ οἰκτιρμοί, 2.2 πληρώσατέ μου τὴν χαρὰν ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε, τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, σύμψυχοι, τὸ ἐν φρονούντες, 2.3 μηδὲν κατ' ἐριθείαν μηδὲ κατὰ κενοδοξίαν ἀλλὰ τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ ἀλλήλους ἠγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν, 2.4 μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστος σκοποῦντες ἀλλὰ [καὶ] τὰ ἑτέρων ἕκαστοι. 2.5 τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ἡμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, 2.6 ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, 2.7 ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος 2.8 ἐταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ. 2.9 διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερύψωσεν καὶ ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πᾶν ὄνομα, 2.10 ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πᾶν γόνυ κάμψῃ ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων 2.11 καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσῃται ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς.

mean to us as followers of Jesus today.

Becoming like Christ in this passage means developing a closeness with one another inside the community of faith. Our model for this is none other than our Lord who by his example demonstrated how we're supposed to live. These are the two points I want to make today in the sermon. These grow out of the internal structure of these verses that is rather clear. Verses one through four comprise one long sentence in the original Greek text with the core emphasis (main clause) in verse three: "fulfill my joy." The second emphasis comes in verses five through eleven and the core admonition here is in verse five: "set your mind on this." The expansion elements are developed from an ancient Christian hymn.

## BODY

### I. Achieving oneness, vv. 1-4

1 If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, 2 **make my joy complete**: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. 3 Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. 4 Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

2.1 Εἴ τις οὖν παράκλησις ἐν Χριστῷ, εἴ τι παραμύθιον ἀγάπης, εἴ τις κοινωνία πνεύματος, εἴ τις σπλάγχνα καὶ οἰκτιρμοί, 2.2 **πληρώσατέ μου τὴν χαρὰν** ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε, τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, σύμφυχοι, τὸ ἐν φρονοῦντες, 2.3 μηδὲν κατ' ἐριθείαν μηδὲ κατὰ κενοδοξίαν ἀλλὰ τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ ἀλλήλους ἠγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν, 2.4 μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστος σκοποῦντες ἀλλὰ [καὶ] τὰ ἐτέρων ἕκαστοι.

One of the major emphases in this letter is the theme of unity. In writing while fellow Christians were trying to get him executed, Paul underscored the importance of Christians finding ways to work together in true harmony and unity. The Philippian Christians had exhibited unity in their support of Paul. Epaphroditus had brought a love offering from Philippi to Paul (4:18) and most likely carried this letter back to Philippi (2:28-30). The role of women in this church had been significant since the outset when Paul first preached the gospel at Philippi on the second missionary journey in the early 50s ([Acts 16:11-40](#)), and a church was formed from these women and they met in Lydia's home. Paul would pass through Philippi again briefly on the third missionary journey in the middle 50s (Acts 20:1-2). Now several years later, two ladies in the church were at odds with one another, Euodia and Syntyche, and Paul urged them to reconcile their differences (4:2-3). This leadership role of women in the church was probably at the heart of the intently missionary orientation of this group. Our passage contributes to this theme of unity and bases it on the example of Christ.

The core admonition in this long sentence found in vv. 1-4 is in verse two: "make my joy complete" (NRSV). A series of assumptions are attached to this admonition in verse one: the 'if' statements. Next, Paul's joy is defined in verse two by the admonition (indirect command in the appositional Greek ἵνα clause): "you should set your minds on the same thing."

What Paul intended by setting our minds on one thing is subsequently defined in a series of eight qualifying statements from the middle of verse two to the end of verse four. These are logically grouped together into three sets of traits that define the unity called for in the core admonition.

We will take each segment in order.

The word 'then' (οὖν) in verse one ties these verses onto 1:27-30 as an implication now made explicit in what was said in those verses. Paul had encouraged the Philippians to live a life worthy of the gospel:

27 Only, live your life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that, whether I come and see you or am absent and hear about you, I will know that you are standing firm in one spirit, striving side by side with one mind for the faith of the gospel, 28 and are in no way intimidated by your opponents. For them this is evidence of their destruction, but of your salvation. And this is God's doing. 29 For he has graciously granted you the privilege not only of believing in Christ, but of suffering for him as well — 30 since you are having the same struggle that you saw I had and now hear that I still have.

The theme of unity is sounded especially in verse twenty-seven, particularly in the context of the community of believers facing opposition. With people opposing what Christians are doing, Christians need more than ever to stand together. We Baptists could learn a lot from Paul here.

Against this backdrop, the aged apostle encouraged the Philippian church to make him happy by standing together. The motivation to stand together is drawn from several sources, as stated in verse one. **Four 'if' statements define this motivation.** Note that the nature of the Greek expressions (first class conditional protasis) assumes the reality of these elements, not raises the possibility of their existence. What are they?

**First, "If there is any encouragement in Christ" (NRSV; Εἴ τις οὖν παράκλησις ἐν Χριστῷ).** The assumption here is that when we are living in spiritual union with Christ, we have an unending source of encouragement. The word translated 'encouragement' (παράκλησις) is broader than just encouragement. It denotes

encouragement, comfort, and admonition from the root idea of that which stands along side of to assist. From our relationship with Christ we find all these things, portioned out to us as we need them. Thus Christ's assistance motivates us to stand together as one.

**Second, "if...any consolation from love" (NRSV; εἴ τι παραμύθιον ἀγάπης).** Love has the ability to encourage and console. The text is not certain, but probably alludes to God's love and thus the idea is effectively captured in the *Message* translation as "if his love has made any difference in your life." Also, the *Today's English Version* renders this as "his love comforts you." Additionally see the *New International Version*: "if any comfort from his love." The idea moves along the lines that God's love has powerful persuasive ability.

**Third, "if...any sharing in the Spirit" (NRSV; εἴ τις κοινωνία πνεύματος).** The idea here moves along a couple of possible angles: (1) fellowship with the Holy Spirit; (2) fellowship with one another through the Holy Spirit. The NIV adopts the former, "if any fellowship with the Spirit." Also, the TEV: "You have fellowship with the Spirit." But other translations adopt the latter meaning. NRSV: "any sharing in the Spirit," NJB: "any fellowship in the Spirit," The *Message*: "if being in a community of the Spirit means anything to you." Both meanings are legitimate and based on two possible functions of the word for Spirit. The point in either case is that as a community of believers, we have participation and fellowship based on relationship with the Spirit of God. He is the driving force that establishes relationships of giving and receiving. When His presence is acknowledged, the enormous resources of God are made available to that community.

**Fourth, "if...any compassion and sympathy" (NRSV; εἴ τις σπλάγχνα καὶ οἰκτιρμοί).** The first word (σπλάγχνα; splagchna) literally means 'guts' and was rendered as 'bowels' in the *King James Version*. In the ancient world this part of the human anatomy was seen as the source of emotions and feelings, largely due to digestive problems stemming from eating habits. In the [eleven uses of this word](#) in the New Testament, it serves as a word picture for tender care and concern. The [second term](#) (οἰκτιρμοί; oiktirmoi) stresses a similar concept with the emphasis on pity and mercy. Paul's assumption is that the believing community deeply cares for one another. *The Message* captures this idea well as "if you have a heart, if you care." The *New Living Translation* gets at the idea with its expression "Are your hearts tender and sympathetic?"

Thus four motives underlie the admonition to stand together. These are powerful spiritual dynamics that can overcome differences of every kind. They are assumed to be present in the Philippian congregation. When they are active in our congregation, we have a strong basis for coming together. Without them, any push toward unity becomes shallow and ultimately winds up being a coerced unity that won't last.

#### **Now we need to consider exactly what Paul meant by his admonition to stand together.**

The core expression is the main clause of this long sentence and is found at the beginning of verse two: "make my joy complete" (NRSV; πληρώσατέ μου τὴν χαρὰν). A very pastoral posture is taken by Paul with this admonition. As the one who founded the church and who had had deep concern for its welfare over the ensuing years, he indicated that nothing could make him happier than for them to stand together. This is legitimate concern. Every spiritual leader of a group of believers should long for that group to exhibit basic harmony and unity. In fact, the promotion of divisiveness is frowned upon severely in the New Testament. Interestingly, the word translated as heretic (αἰρετικός; hairetokós) basically means to cause divisions in a group, as is reflected in its use in [Titus 3:10-11](#), "After a first and second admonition, have nothing more to do with anyone *who causes divisions* [αἰρετικός], since you know that such a person is perverted and sinful, being self-condemned" (NRSV).

#### **What is unity, as described in our passage?**

The core depiction of unity comes in the indirect command expression "be of the same mind" (NRSV; ἵνα τὸ αὐτὸ φρονηῖτε). Literally, the biblical text admonishes: "[set your minds on the same thing.](#)" The NLT captures the essence of the idea with its expression "[agreeing wholeheartedly with each other.](#)" The point is that the members of the community of faith share common commitments to serve Christ together.

The series of expansion elements that follow in the remaining verses elaborate some of the details of what Paul intended by this foundational injunction.

**First,** the three expansions in verse two define the first segment with the third one coming back to the core admonition as a boundary marker: "having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind" (NRSV; τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην ἔχοντες, σύμφυχοι, τὸ ἓν φρονοῦντες). [What is stressed here is a posture of genuine commitment to each other.](#) We share a self-giving love (τὴν αὐτὴν ἀγάπην), we are 'soul-mates' (σύμφυχοι), and this brings us back to 'set our minds on the one thing.' We can stand together as believers only in the context of genuine commitment to one another. Remember, the dynamic enabling this is described in the motivating assumptions in verse one.

**Second,** the next three elements in verse three define action, first negatively and then positively: "[Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves](#)" (NRSV; μηδὲν κατ' ἐριθείαν μηδὲ κατὰ κενοδοξίαν ἀλλὰ τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ ἀλλήλους ἡγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν). Here, interaction among members of the community is the emphasis. The first two negative traits depict interaction

stemming from a bloated ego that is self-centered [κατ' ἐριθείαν] and arrogant [κατὰ κενοδοξίαν] to the core. No sense of oneness can take place where a 'me-first' attitude prompts interaction. To the contrary, the positive side stresses both humility [τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ] and a conscious elevating [ἡγούμενοι] of the value of the other person [ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν]. The NLT captures the idea well: "Don't be selfish; don't live to make a good impression on others. Be humble, thinking of others as better than yourself."

**Third**, the last two elements in verse four finish out the depiction of unity: (1) "Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others" (NRSV; μὴ τὰ ἑαυτῶν ἕκαστος σκοποῦντες ἀλλὰ [καὶ] τὰ ἑτέρων ἕκαστου). Somewhat related to the second set, this negative/positive admonition shifts the perspective from 'doing' to 'looking out for' (σκοποῦντες; the source of our English expression 'to scope out'). The [idea](#) is to 'pay close attention to.' In the [four uses of this verb](#) in Paul, Gal. 6:1 contains a somewhat similar emphasis: "My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. (2) Take care [σκοποῶν σεαυτόν] that you yourselves are not tempted." The temptation is always to look out for ourselves first. But standing together demands that we take the risk of valuing the welfare of others in the community of faith above our own.

One issue not directly addressed in this text, but typically a concern in our modern discussion of unity: Is there room for diversity of viewpoint in such unity? The model of Paul's example, especially as depicted in Acts, would answer that question with a 'yes.' The Jewish Christianity orientation of James and Peter had different tones to it than Paul's Gentile focus. This is brought out clearly in Acts. But as [Acts 15](#) and [Gal. 2:1-10](#) both stress, there was agreement on the basics. The challenge is finding the common ground and also respecting the diverse viewpoint on the peripherals.

God has been blessing our church so wonderfully in recent months -- I believe -- in large part because we are working hard to do exactly what Paul described to the Philippians in these four verses. There is a sense of togetherness in this church that is wonderful. And this unity is in the midst of tremendous diversity. With so many cultures represented in the church, there would be no human way for a church like ours to work. But it works -- and works well -- because we stand together on the basics and respect the differences. We see ourselves as one body of believers and are committed to one another. People, this is what we must constantly work toward. This is the path to God's continued blessing on our church.

## II. Christ's example, vv. 5-11

5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, 8 he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

2.5 τοῦτο φρονεῖτε ἐν ὑμῖν ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ, 2.6 ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ, 2.7 ἀλλὰ ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβών, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος· καὶ σχήματι εὔρεθεις ὡς ἄνθρωπος 2.8 ἑταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ. 2.9 διὸ καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερέψωσεν καὶ ἔχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα τὸ ὑπὲρ πάντων ὀνομα, 2.10 ἵνα ἐν τῷ ὀνόματι Ἰησοῦ πάντων γόνυ κάμψη ἐπουρανίων καὶ ἐπιγείων καὶ καταχθονίων 2.11 καὶ πᾶσα γλῶσσα ἐξομολογήσεται ὅτι κύριος Ἰησοῦς Χριστὸς εἰς δόξαν θεοῦ πατρὸς.

The second part of this passage continues the theme of 'setting our minds' on something (φρονεῖτε). In 2:1-4, the central thrust was setting our minds on the same thing (τὸ αὐτὸ φρονῆτε, v. 2a). Now the content of what we're to passionately commit ourselves to changes. It is to be the same thing that Jesus was committed to (ὃ καὶ ἐν Χριστῷ Ἰησοῦ).

And what was that? By incorporating an ancient Christian hymn into the text (vv. 6-11), Paul defines what Jesus was committed to through the use of familiar words that were sung in worship. ***This Christus Hymnus, as it's frequently labeled, revolves around two motifs: humiliation in incarnation (vv. 6-8) and exaltation in resurrection (vv. 9-11).*** Although the word ἀγάπη (agape; love) is not directly used, this passage provides one of the best definitions of the concept found anywhere in the NT. Jesus' willingness to give up the splendors of Heaven to become a human with the humiliating treatment he received stands as the supreme depiction of love. The exaltation of Jesus in resurrection and lordship reaffirms the Heavenly Father's commitment to the same principle.

One additional point needs emphasizing here. The resemblance of this hymn to [Isaiah 53](#) is striking and probably reflects the originating source for the core ideas of the hymn. The humiliation and exaltation of the Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53 is here reproduced in application to Jesus as the prophetic fulfillment of that

prophecy.

**The first segment** in vv. 6-8 revolves around three declarations about Christ: (1) “did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited” (NRSV; οὐχ ἀρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ); (2) “emptied himself” (NRSV; ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν); (3) “he humbled himself” (NRSV; ἐταπείνωσεν ἐαυτὸν). Everything else qualifies these three core declarations in some way.

**(1) Equality with God** (v. 6). The contrastive “though he was in the form of God” (NRSV; ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων) affirms Christ’s deity prior to the incarnation. In spite of this status, which is then defined as “equality with God” (NRSV; τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ), this glory wasn’t something that Jesus selfishly clung onto in steadfast refusal to give it up in order to fulfill a task.

**(2) Self-Emptying (v. 7a):** “emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness” (NRSV; ἐαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν μορφὴν δούλου λαβὼν, ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος). The emptying of himself has occasioned considerable discussion over the past couple of centuries and is related to the study of what is called [Kenotic Theology](#), based on the Greek word here for ‘emptied.’ Without going into the complicated discussion of this topic, let me just say that whatever the extent of the self-emptying that Jesus underwent in incarnation, what is affirmed here is that it meant taking on the form of both a slave and a human being. The point is to contrast the drastic change of status as a voluntary act for the good of others. Here is Paul’s point contextually. Christ gave up so much for us; this challenges us to give up self-interest for the sake of others in the community of faith.

**(3) Humiliation (vv. 7b-8):** “And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death — even death on a cross” (NRSV; καὶ σχήματι εἰρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος 2.8 ἐταπείνωσεν ἐαυτὸν γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου, θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ). The core expression “he humbled himself” is qualified by two modifiers: (a) “being found in human form” and (b) “became obedient to the point of death.” The first simply reiterates the last statement of the preceding statement “being born in human likeness” while using different words. Jesus could be ‘discovered’ as a human being. In that existence He humbled himself, that is, submitted Himself utterly to the will of God. This submission to God’s will is measured by Christ’s obedience, and that obedience is unconditional, “to the point of death.” Even more, it was a crucifixion kind of death -- the worse way possible for a human being to die in that ancient society. What we see here in the context is Paul’s use of Christ’s total submission to God’s will as a challenge to members of the community of faith to be equally committed to God’s will in regard to their participation in that community.

**The second part of this Christus Hymnus (vv. 9-11)** focuses on God’s acknowledgement of this obedience of Christ. These verbs revolve around **two actions of God:** (1) “God also highly exalted him” (NRSV; καὶ ὁ θεὸς αὐτὸν ὑπερέψωσεν); and (2) “gave him the name” (NRSV; ἐχαρίσατο αὐτῷ τὸ ὄνομα). These statements are connected to the preceding by the conjunction denoting strong inference, “Therefore” (διὸ). As an outgrowth of what Christ did, the Heavenly Father responded positively since His nature and character prompts response.

The exaltation idea grows out of the ancient world’s political structures with kings and emperors who claimed royalty. In order to stand in their presence in acceptance, one had to meet specified qualifications. The image here is thus a word picture of dramatic acceptance and approval. God responded to Christ’s self-giving with dramatic approval. Secondly, God gave Jesus the name. The verb translated “gave” is more the idea of to favor someone. That is, God showed his favor by granting Jesus the right to the name above every name, that is, the name “Lord.”

**The purpose of this divine acknowledgement** is so that eventually there will be complete human acknowledgement (vv. 10-11) of Jesus as Lord as well. To be certain, this will only be fully realized at the return of Jesus at the end of human history. But to believers, this confession already made in conversion forms the basis of their daily living in this life.

The point of this second segment of the hymn contextually seems to be at least that when we follow Christ’s example in self-giving we can be certain that the Heavenly Father will respond in approval. Just as He approved Christ’s self-giving for the sake of others, He will likewise approve ours. Particularly, when it grows out of our commitment to Jesus as Lord.

## CONCLUSION

Thus we return to the early question, What does being like Christ mean? In Phil. 2:1-11 it means primarily the sacrificing of personal interest for the sake of the community of faith. We have the necessary resources and the right example. Now we just need to do it! And to keep on doing it. The more we grow into Christ, the more God will be able to do in our church.