



**KING'S
CHURCH**
EDINBURGH

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Total Victory

Philippians 2:5-11

If you consider the locations Paul mentions Jesus being in, you can see the journey Paul is trying to take our imaginations on:

1. Jesus in the highest place: God Himself with God (verse 6).
2. Coming to earth and putting Himself in the lowest place: taking on flesh, being a slave to others, dying, and that death being on a cross – the worst of all deaths (7-8).
3. Raised to new life and highly exalted with the name above every name (9-11).

Paul's use of the word "Lord" is very significant, for two reasons.

1. At that time, everyone said that Caesar was Lord – because Caesar killed you if you didn't. This is a shocking statement that the most powerful forces known on earth are inferior to Jesus Christ: His claim of allegiance trumps all others.
2. The title "Lord" here was the same word used by Greek-speaking Jews to translate the name of God Himself, YHWH, into Greek. Paul's not just saying that Jesus is great, but that He is God. (See also Isaiah 45:23.)

The story is U-shaped, going from the highest height, to the deepest depth, to the highest height again. And Jesus invites you to become part of this story, for however deep in the depths you are right now you do not have to be trapped there.

How do we respond to this?

Humility

We're being told to think like Jesus thought (5): not seeing our privileges as ours to

enjoy and exploit for our own benefit but rather to serve others with them. Make yourself lower so that others are blessed. This is hard but God helps us: the Spirit of Jesus is at work in those who follow Him (2:13).

Humility is also about seeing who the story is about. It may be U-shaped but it is not you-shaped. This is God's story, we're all just fitting in. Meaning in life does not come from deciding who you are but by discovering who He is and getting in line with that. We're told the exact opposite of this every day, so we need to tell ourselves God's truth to help us think differently (for example, Matthew 6:9).

Hope

This story is the best news, it is our only hope: however deep a trough we feel in right now, Jesus can bring us out. For Paul, it was imprisonment, yet he is full of hope (1:6, 21; 2:9-11; 3:13-14, 20-21). What kept him from giving up and enabled him to live for God whatever the circumstances, not

collapsing in unbelief or compromise, was that he knew that today wasn't the end of the story. This is true for everyone who trust in Jesus.

In his description of the salvation story in our passage today, Paul's imagination goes into full-throttle to do Jesus justice. You can read a poetic response to this here (<http://www.lukesblog.org/2016/02/a-poem-of-philippians-25-11.html>).

Questions

- What did you learn about God, or were reminded afresh about Him, on Sunday?
- How, practically, does confidence in the U-shaped story work itself out?
- "Jesus Christ is Lord" (11) is still the most radical thing to believe and declare – where in your life are you feeling the tension of this?
- Which of the two responses Luke suggested, humility and hope, are more challenging for you at the moment?
- Why is it really important to know Philippians 2:13 when we're discussing how to have the same mind-set as Jesus?
- How can we ensure that this glorious vision that Paul had of Jesus' exaltation and second coming stays in our minds?



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