

# The Costs and Benefits of Unselfish Living (Part 2)

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[ 0 : 00 ] One of my favorite Old Testament stories is about the life of Joseph, and I'm going to guess that's a popular one among our church family. If you're familiar with it, then you know the story begins with Joseph living comfortably at home.

He's the favored son of his father. Well, we soon learn in Genesis 37 that he had a dream of how he was going to one day be elevated to a position of power and glory over even his family.

Joseph had 10 brothers. They were jealous for many reasons. He was the favored son. But they hated him even more after he told them about that dream.

Well, Joseph's jealous brothers, their hatred was such that they wanted to kill him, or at least they talked about killing him. But some of the more, I'd say, less violent ones talked them out of it, and they sort of, I guess you might say, to reach the compromise, they sold him into slavery in Egypt. Well, as a slave in Egypt, Joseph demonstrated he was really a man of faith. Joseph is really in the Old Testament and all the Bible, one of the great men of uncompromising faith and trust and confidence in God.

[ 1 : 38 ] And he was put to the test being sold in slavery in a foreign country. But he was faithful to God in the way that he lived.

And he was faithful in the circumstances to serve his master, his owner, as faithfully as he could. Well, it was noticed. He was such a man of integrity that his owner put him in charge of everything he owned. But somewhere along the way, he was falsely accused of a crime against his owner's wife and unjustly thrown into prison.

Now, as a man in prison, formerly a slave, you would think he's hit rock bottom.

He's just going to give up, pray to die. But he didn't. He was faithful as a man of God, a man of integrity in the prison. And he was even put in charge of some things in the prison.

[ 2 : 49 ] Well, about 17 years after his downward spiral began with being sold into slavery, Joseph's dream came true. God elevated him to a place of real power and glory, second in command over all Egypt.

Now, this eventually led to his brothers who came to Egypt looking for food. bowing down before him, just like he had said in the dream.

Now, from that position of power and glory, Joseph saved his family from starvation and saved or preserved, what you might say, the foundation for the future nature, future nation of Israel.

Because the people of Israel came from Joseph's family. Now, that is certainly an unlikely sounding path to a position of power and glory, isn't it?

But if you know the story of Joseph, it was all planned. That was by God's design. He didn't make those brothers hate him and set him into slavery.

[ 4 : 07 ] But God used what they did to accomplish his good purpose, the ultimate good of Joseph, his family, and through the nation of Israel and Jesus, all the world.

Now, Joseph lets us know he understood all that happened to him, good and bad. It was a part of God's plan. He makes it known in what has really become a memorable statement to his brothers toward the end of the book of Genesis.

He looked at his brothers and he said, As for you, you meant evil against me, but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive as they are today.

Now, what I want us to think about now is that Joseph's path to glory is really not all that unusual.

More often than not, that's how God works in the lives of his people, including his son, Jesus.

We saw in last week's study, Philippians chapter 2, verses 5 through 8, that Jesus has always existed as the son of God in glory in heaven.

[ 5 : 28 ] He did not, his origins are not, cannot be traced to the stable in Bethlehem. He left the glory of heaven to be born into this world. He humbled himself to become a man, to become a slave, to become a prisoner who was actually executed by crucifixion, the most humiliating, degrading, and torturous death that the Romans could think up in the first century.

Today, I want us to look at how God elevated Jesus, exalted Jesus to the highest position in all the universe. The position of power and glory over all things, following his humbling himself.

Turn, if you would, to Philippians chapter 2. Philippians 2. And what I want us to do is read what we looked at last week, verses 5 through 8, where we see Jesus starting out in heaven, equal with God, fully God, but he didn't hold on to it.

He didn't just use it for himself. He laid aside that glory for us. Let's look at it.

Philippians chapter 2, beginning in verse 5. After he had told them, told these church people just like us, to do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility, count each other more significant than yourself, that each of you look not only to his own interests, but also the interests of others.

[ 7 : 08 ] How in the world are we going to do that? Well, he tells us, have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, he's always existed.

He's divine, the Son of God. Did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, or a thing to be held on to, or a thing to be used just for himself or his own advantage, but emptied himself, laid aside that glory.

He didn't cease to be God, but he didn't use what he had for just himself. But he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, a slave, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross, shameful, degrading, torturous.

That's what we looked at last week. But look on in verse 9, therefore, as a result of Christ humbling himself like he did, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that 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.

As we go through this passage, I want you to think, grasp hold of this idea. The path of Jesus, that was the path of Joseph, and it's the path of you and me as Christians.

[ 9 : 07 ] Paul wants us to see that. He wants us to see in this. So he's writing to a church. There's some problems with unity in the church.

He's trying to help them to see, humble yourself, love one another, serve one another. Don't just look out for yourself. And he points to Jesus. Have this attitude.

But then, in verse 9, he's pointing out, if you humble yourself, one day God will make it worthwhile. For just as he raised up his son, lifted him from that lowly position, one day he will lift you up. The Bible makes it clear, this is God's normal way.

I want you to look at what is said in Romans 8, verses 16 and 17. Paul writes, the Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we're children of God, and if children, then heirs.

[ 10 : 09 ] Heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him, in order that we may also be glorified with Him. Think about what he's saying there.

He's talking about how God calls us to be sacrificially faithful, even suffer.

But that's not the end of the story. There's a time coming, it may be in heaven only for most of us, but that'll be for eternity. But the time is coming when we, you and me, will be glorified with Jesus.

Peter says it like this, humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time, He may exalt you. What we're going to look at this morning is not some isolated thought about Christians being honored, exalted, lifted up, elevated, blessed by God.

It's found throughout the New Testament as an incentive to you and me. Live the Christian life as a faithful follower of Jesus, and it may cost you.

[ 11 : 33 ] You may suffer physically. You may not make all the money that you have the ability to make if you follow the path that God lays out for you. You may not be as popular as you would like to be and maybe could be if you took the wrong direction.

The Christian life, regardless of what Joel Osteen and other positive thinkers say, the Christian life is not your best life now.

Most, I have to watch myself. The most utterly ridiculous book title by a Christian that I can think of, everything that the Bible says is contrary to the idea.

This life and this world is our best life. The best is yet to come. And what we're looking at this morning is a guarantee that just as God raised Jesus up from his lowly position that he chose to serve God's purpose, he will raise us up one day.

Let's do a quick review. I mean a quick review of what we looked at last week. Number one, we looked last week we need to look at Jesus as the ultimate model for what it means to be unselfish. He is the ultimate model.

[12:52] And it begins by developing an unselfish attitude. It all begins with our mind, our thinking, our attitude. If you haven't read it, look in this week's newsletter. A great article by Chuck Swindoll on the importance of attitude, the power of attitude, and the fact that we choose our attitude.

Last week we looked also at number B. We must not hold tightly to all of our rights. And I emphasized last week, we're talking about we can't hold on to our rights as brothers and sisters living and working together in this church.

We can't hold on to all of our rights at home. and have a healthy family. We're not talking about never using your rights as an American citizen or at your company or in other settings.

The Apostle Paul insisted upon his rights as a Roman citizen on several occasions recorded in the book of Acts to save himself from beatings, from imprisonment, and what would have been death.

We don't have to give up all of our rights and just be a doormat to the world. That's not what this passage is talking about. That's not what Jesus did. But we are called to humble ourselves in this family of faith and serve one another.

[14:19] Don't think of anybody better than you. Don't think of yourself being better than anyone. And certainly not in the home. You know, I've talked about, you know, we can't think of ourselves as kings and queens at home.

But here's the thought. So I've had more feedback about that than anything. If you, as a husband, if you want to think of your wife and treat her like a queen, good for you.

Ladies, you can't demand it. If a husband, love your wife as Jesus loved the church, Paul says. If you want to think of her as a queen, treat her that way. Ladies, if you want to think of your husband as a king and treat him like that, good for you.

When I said that in the first service, I looked at Jesus, I looked at Lisa and she said, uh-uh, just like that. She wasn't going to do it. It's a thought, but it's not going to happen. We can't demand our own rights, but consider yourself blessed if there are people in your life who sacrificially show their love to you.

Number three, we looked at last week, we must humble ourselves and obey God sacrificially. As Christians, we can never, think about it this way, we can never look at God and say to Him, I won't go that far.

[15:50] I'll do certain things, but I won't go that far. We don't tell God that. Whatever sacrifice He calls you or me to make, we've got to be obedient children and say, yes, Lord.

We can also say, and we need to say, help me, Lord. He'll give us the grace to do whatever He calls us to do. Now, the Lord's attitude of unselfishness and humility, that of Jesus, it is radical.

It is costly. But the next verses, 9 through 11, Paul makes it clear it is worth the sacrifice. Number two, we need to look to Jesus as the ultimate model for how God exalts the unselfish.

unselfish. Paul wastes no time in making it clear God exalts the humble. He exalts those who humble themselves. Look again now, first part of verse 9.

Therefore, God has highly exalted Him. I want you to think about what happened to Jesus after He was crucified and buried. Now, think about it.

[17:01] Jesus died on the cross, paid the penalty for our sins. He cried out, it is finished. The penalty has been paid. The wrath of God has been fully satisfied.

He was buried. First thing, He arose from the grave. God raised Him from the dead. We're very familiar with the idea of the resurrection, the New Testament teaching about the resurrection.

That's what our faith is built upon. If there is no resurrection, there is no Christian faith. If there is no resurrection, we are absolute fools to be followers of Jesus, Paul said.

So we don't need to really dwell on the resurrection. As Christians, we're convinced of that, surely.

So let's look secondly. Jesus ascended into heaven after making numerous appearances to His disciples for 40 days following His resurrection.

You can find that at the end of the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and John, and at the first of Acts. Now I want you to notice what happened after Jesus had done whatever it is He needed to do with His disciples, teaching them, preparing them for what was going to happen.

[18:15] He ascended into heaven. Look at it. It's in Acts, the first chapter. And when He had said these things, as they were looking on, He was lifted up, and a cloud took Him out of their sight, and while they were gazing into heaven, He went behind, He went.

Behold, two men stood by them in white robes and said, Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into the heaven? This Jesus who was taken up from you into heaven will come in the same way as you saw Him go into heaven.

Jesus died, was buried. He arose. He was seen. Forty days, it was real. Then He ascended into heaven.

He left this earth and vanished. He didn't go to a, you know, place like you could go on a rocket ship. I don't know.

I've never been there, neither have you, but sort of like He went behind a cloud, He entered another dimension of time or of no time.

[19:27] And then what happened next? After He disappeared, well, God exalted Him, elevated Him, raised Him, and seated Him at His right hand. What we've read in Philippians 2, 9 through 11 is all about what happened.

Jesus was exalted, raised, elevated to this supreme place of power and authority and glory in heaven. But there's many passages like this in Acts 2, 33 where it talks about how Jesus was therefore exalted to the right hand of God, the position of power and authority.

Now I want you to think about what we're talking about. Here's the point. Jesus humbled Himself to the point of submitting to death on the cross to fulfill God's eternal plan to save sinful people like you and me.

Then God acts to raise Jesus from the dead, bring Him back into heaven, place Him in the most powerful, prominent, glorious position that exists, the right hand of God.

Paul wants us to understand this but to show how God will exalt all of us one day if we are faithful to do like Jesus and humble ourselves and unselfishly serve God and other people that God wants us to serve even to the point of sacrificing.

[20:58] Now, Jesus also assures us of this in a statement that you consider it's a warning and a comfort. Look at this. He said, for whoever exalts himself will be humbled.

That's important. You might be thinking to yourself, you won't say it out loud sitting in church but you might think to yourself, I just can't go but so low.

Say it this way, I can't go but so low on my own. God has a way to humble us, put our face in the dirt if necessary.

Jesus said, for whoever exalts himself will be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. See, this is just an idea, a promise you might say.

It's found throughout the New Testament. God exalts his humble people and this principle, that's this idea we're talking about.

[22:09] Somebody described it like this, in God's economy the way up is down. The way for Jesus, the way for him to be up in heaven exalted where every knee will bow and tongue confess that he's Lord.

it happened by going into this world humbling himself as a servant, slave, prisoner, being executed. We humble ourselves and God lifts us up.

That's the way it works. Now, let's look at the next thing. God determines the extent of the exaltation. Here's where we want us to understand. What we're going to read now is unique because Jesus is the unique Son of God.

I don't want to carry this idea to any extreme because the Bible doesn't. Certainly, God will exalt us if we're faithful as we've been looking at it.

But we will never be exalted like Jesus. None of us have ever started out like Jesus, the divine Son of God in heaven. None of us have truly humbled ourselves to the point that Jesus did.

[23:25] And none of us will ever be raised to such a supreme place of honor and glory and power like Jesus. So don't think that for a minute.

Let's look now at the unique exaltation of Jesus. Jesus received the name that is above every name. Look at it, verse 9.

And bestowed on him the name that's above every name. But Paul doesn't say what that name is exactly. But it most likely, in all probability, in most every commentator I've ever read, the name is Lord.

We can think that because the first time it's used in this section and he's talking about Jesus, is in verse 11. After he is exalted, it says, and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

And also the name Lord here in this New Testament, it refers to God's most sacred name in the Old Testament, Yahweh or Jehovah.

[ 24 : 33 ] And the idea is God the Father bestowed upon his obedient son, the highest, most holy name he could give. His own name.

Here's what I want us to understand. When Jesus returns to this world one day, I might need to say it this way. The Bible is a supernatural book.

The Christian faith is a supernatural faith. You know, we live our days, seven days a week, 24-7.

We live in the here and now.

We see, we think, we hear, we feel. But there is more to life than what we see and think and feel and touch.

There's a supernatural dimension. If you're a Christian, you have to believe in the supernatural, that Jesus is the Son of God who came from heaven, that he died on the cross as a substitute for sinners, that he died, the spiritual as well as physical death, that he arose from the grave, went back in heaven.

[ 25 : 47 ] That's supernatural. We don't see that. We can't reproduce that. We have to accept that by faith. And likewise, we have to really believe, just as sure as we're here in person right now, one day, Jesus Christ will come back to this world in great power and authority.

Here's my point here. He's the King of King and Lord of Lords now. When Jesus comes back, he is not going to come back as a little powerless baby in a stable.

He's not going to come back into this world as the suffering servant man that he was the first time. when Jesus comes back in this world, he's going to come in great awesome power and authority and glory.

And if we're alive and we see him, there's going to be cold chills going up and down us. We may just pass out in awe of what we see because then it won't be by faith.

It'll be by sight. That's how he's going to come back into this world. Now, Jesus received the name that every created being in the universe will bow before on judgment day and confess he really is Lord.

[ 27 : 12 ] Look at this in verses 10 and 11. So 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.

I want to make this simple. I think what Paul is saying there is is that every intelligent, rationally thinking, created being in the universe is going to bow before Jesus and going to confess he is the sovereign Lord of the universe.

Now, when that happens, or think about it this way, if we're alive when Jesus comes back, or if you die and go and stand before him, it's going to be a great day for everyone who has a relationship with Jesus during their earthly lives.

You see, we who are Christians today, if we know Jesus through faith, trusting him, loving him, talking to him in prayer, truly seeking to follow him, if that's our life here on earth, then when he comes back, and we sort of come to from the awe and wonder and being just struck, you know, speechless, we're going to smile.

Because that's our Lord that we know and love, and he's promised to take care of us for all eternity. we're going to want to confess him as our Lord.

[ 28 : 53 ] We're going to jump down on our knees, fall on our knees to honor him. Now don't worry if you're not able to bow now.

Sometimes your knees wear out in this life. Some of you have had yours replaced. Well, when that day comes, we'll have a new body. So we'll be able to have good knees, we'll have good knees and be able to do this without any effort.

Now, for those who do not trust Jesus during their earthly life, when he comes back or when they die and go stand before Jesus, this is going to be a day of nothing but horror.

Every unbeliever is going to be forced to bow before Jesus and confess that he is truly the Lord of all. They're going to do that just before they're ushered away from him, spend eternity in hell.

On that day when Jesus comes back, even the devil and all his demons are going to be forced to confess that Jesus Christ really is Lord before they wind up in the lake of fire.

[ 30 : 08 ] God's coming back to God's God's coming back to him. The day will come when everybody you know will know the truth, believe the truth that Jesus is the eternal Son of God.

Everybody not only know that, but everyone will bow before him. everyone will confess that. As surely as I'm standing here and you're sitting there, that's going to happen one day.

That's what the Bible teaches. We'll all be there. We'll probably be able to remember, we'll have perfect minds then, we'll be able to remember, we talked about this today.

You'll be there, you'll see Jesus, you will bow and confess that he is the Lord of this universe. But let me ask you, will you do that willingly, wholeheartedly, enthusiastically, because you know Jesus is your Savior and Lord right now?

Or, let's be real honest, just think, you know who you are, how you think, how you believe, or if you die today and stand before him or he comes back, will you actually be forced to bow before him and confess him because you never do that now?

[ 31 : 52 ] If Jesus is not your Lord, I want to encourage you, wake up now before it's eternally too late. If you're not already, truly, by faith, bowing before him in true, humble submission, confessing him as your Lord, your Savior, your friend, that you love, that you want to be like, just admit that to God.

Admit that your faith is not, what you've been calling faith is not real. humble yourself, repent of your sin, change your mind, trust Jesus that he paid the penalty for your sins when he died on the cross and call upon him to save you, forgive you, make you a child of God right now.

It may be that right now, for the first time truly in your life, you need to do this and bow before Jesus as your Lord, your King.

We need to all make sure that we stand before Jesus on judgment day. Our confession will be a willing one and a one of joy and not a forced confession of regret.

One final point, quickly. God receives the glory of exaltation. It's all to the glory of God the Father at the end of verse 11. It's important for us to understand that whatever glory we will receive, and we will one day, you and me as Christians, it is not God's payment for your good efforts, for your acts of service.

[ 33 : 47 ] Don't let that taint a correct view of what's going to happen on that day. We're going to see next week that our best desires and effort to serve God come as a result of God graciously working in us to motivate us.

Look at this from Philippians 2.13. For it is God who works in you both to will and to work for his good pleasure. God exalts us to a position of glory in heaven or even to a place of prominence in this world.

And God sometimes does that. Joseph, he didn't just get to a position of glory and honor in heaven. He received it on earth. Some people do. Most of us won't. Some will. But whether the glory we have or receive in heaven or even some in this world, we've always got to be quick to give all the glory to God, the praise, the credit for graciously working in us so that we might experience that glory, that honor.

Now, last week and this week, we've looked at how Jesus is our model in two ways, verses 5-11. First, the Lord shows us how to live unselfishly and humbly.

[ 35 : 23 ] Do you have that attitude? Do you have the attitude to humble yourself, to be unselfish, to serve your brothers and sisters in Christ in this church, to serve the people you live with at home?

If you have that attitude, point out some of the signs of progress that you can see in your life that you are making as you relate to people in this church and at home.

But if you don't see any signs of progress, ask God to help you to change your attitude now. And not only to change your attitude, but to start changing your behavior.

Second thing, the Lord shows us that our Heavenly Father will more than make it worthwhile to sacrificially obey Him. Do you believe that? Do you believe it's worth the price?

Some of you delayed working to get an education. You were a poor student. You just put on hold making money. Some of you have done other things in your life where you sacrificed, you waited because you anticipated the reward would be worthwhile.

[ 36 : 43 ] That's how we are to live our lives in this world, serving the Lord. Trusting that no matter what we do, no matter how much it may cost us, He really will make it worthwhile.

Do you believe that? And does your life back it up? If it doesn't, if you know you're not a Christian, ask God to save you now.

Or if you are a Christian but you think to yourself, in light of what we've been looking at in Philippians, I'm not really ready to see Jesus face to face.

Admit that. Talk to the Lord about it. Confess your sin. Draw back close to Him. Paul, Jesus, Peter, God through His Word promises us if we will serve Him faithfully, sacrificially, pay whatever price He requires, one day we will find an experience for all eternity.

It was worth it. Let's pray together. Dear God, dear God, help us to see now what our response should be.

[ 38 : 08 ] And help us to make it. And let's just in attitude of prayer listen to the Lord and do what He's telling us to do. Let's just bow together, pray, and respond to the Lord.

Let You Yeah. We're going so forward you That's what we calls you to do the comfort of the Lord and that it is that If your heart that leads us to the Lord and dear Lord, the Korinalesia you are mult of