

# No Ordinary Man

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[ 0 : 00 ] Grab your Bibles and stand with me as we read and honor God's word together.

! We'll be in Philippians chapter 2 where we'll continue today.! Verses 5 through 11 will be our text. If you read the Bible, there's one in the pew and you're welcome to use that.

Philippians chapter 2 beginning in verse 5 and going through 11. Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant.

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 in a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, 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, to the glory of God the Father.

May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Will you please be seated? I saw this week on a couple of the news feeds that I follow that there is, either they had it this week or they're going to have it soon, they're going to have a symposium on, or about the Mount Ararat, and the men who will, and women who will gather there are supposed experts on Noah's Ark, and they believe that they have located Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat in Turkey.

[ 1 : 57 ] I don't know if that's true or not, you know. That would be an amazing archaeological discovery, but I have a feeling that even if they found it intact, and not in pieces, but completely together, that people still wouldn't believe in Jesus Christ, you know, because they wouldn't believe that a man came back resurrected from the dead.

They wouldn't believe they would make up some reason for why that is or whatnot. So anyhow, they believe that they have founded, they have found Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat.

And so as I was reading that story, it reminded me of a time when I was in Sunday school as a boy, I was probably about third or fourth grade, and our teacher had taken us through that scripture, and we had studied Noah's Ark for about a month.

And then at the end of that study, he brought a video. You guys remember Mysteries of the Bible? That old show, I think it used to be on the History Channel, I can't remember, but there was this documentary.

And so our teacher brought it in, and he played it for us, and it was all about how, again, they thought that they had discovered Noah's Ark on Mount Ararat. And there was a story, a legend, that a father and his son had been hiking up in that mountain and that they had seen the door to Noah's Ark, and they brought down a piece of the wood or something to that extent.

[ 3 : 16 ] I don't exactly remember, but I do remember the conversation that I had with one of my buddies afterwards. And he told me, and he was kind of afraid, and he whispered it to me after Sunday school.

He said, you know, I hope that they don't find the Ark of the Covenant, or the Ark of Noah's Ark. And I was like, well, why is that? And he's like, well, because you know that if they open Noah's Ark, that's where God has the devil trapped.

And if they open Noah's Ark, then the devil is going to be set free. And that scared me to death. And I remember, you know, thinking, somebody's got to go and tell these people, well, don't open Noah's Ark because the devil will be let out.

And so on the car on the way home with my dad, I remember having that conversation. Dad, they think they found Noah's Ark, and the devil is trapped inside of there, and somebody's going to open it up and unleash him on the world.

And so my dad and I had a conversation, and he taught me, you know, right theology. And so that set my heart and my mind at ease. And I don't know where my friend got that idea.

[ 4 : 19 ] You know, I was thinking maybe he must have seen Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark, right? And so he got Noah's Ark mixed up with the Ark of the Covenant.

But even still, that scene at the end where they open it, and you know what I'm talking about, everybody melts. It's all bad theology. All of that. His story, that movie, it's all bad theology. There's a well-known Peanuts cartoon, and many of you probably have seen it. And it's a cartoon strip where it depicts Lucy and Linus. And they're in their house, and they're looking out the window as the rain is pouring down.

And then Lucy says, boy, look at it rain. What if the whole world floods? Then Linus turns to her, and he responds, it will never do that, because in the ninth chapter of Genesis, God promised Noah that would never happen again, and the sign of that promise would be the rainbow.

And then in the next frame of that comic strip, Lucy has a smile on her face as she's looking outside the window, and the rain continues to come down, and she says, you've really taken a load off my mind.

[ 5 : 23 ] And then Linus replies, well, sound theology has a way of doing that. And that's the truth. There's a lot of truth in that comic strip. This passage of Scripture is critical to our understanding of the person of Jesus Christ.

So we are going to spend the month of January as we dig through it, and I believe that it's going to be a great study that will be a blessing to all of us. Paul is writing to a church that is experiencing practical problems.

Problems back then that the church still has today. And when we get to chapter 4 of Philippians, we will be introduced to two prominent ladies within the church who are having a disagreement that is causing division within the church.

This is, again, a practical problem that churches continue to have and encounter today with frequency. His solution to their practical problem is to apply theology to it.

And he does so by presenting the person of Jesus Christ. Christology is the branch of theology relating to the person, nature, and role of Jesus Christ.

[ 6 : 41 ] He uses this important doctrine to confront their issue and to resolve the issue that they're struggling with. Theology has practical implications for the church.

It's not something reserved only for Bible nerds or Bible dorks. It's something that we all must understand. It's something that we all must apply in the church.

And so today's sermon will serve primarily as an introduction to this series of sermons that we will have on the person of Jesus Christ, who was no ordinary man.

In Luke chapter 5, verse 21, if you'll remember, Jesus is preaching to a packed house. And included in that crowd of people were the Jewish religious elites.

And they had come to hear what this untrained carpenter from Nazareth had been sharing, what everybody was talking about. Who is this man?

[ 7 : 44 ] And so they go to this place to hear what he has to say. And if you remember, as Jesus is teaching, there was a small group of men who were outside of that house, and they were devising a plan to bring their paralyzed friend before Jesus to be healed.

These men had heard about Jesus. They knew that he had the ability to heal their friend, and so they carried their friend a long distance to this place, hoping that they might experience, that he might experience this same miraculous healing.

But when they got there, they must have been discouraged to find that there were so many people crowded around Jesus, listening to him teach. He was standing in the middle of this place.

And how in the world were they going to get their friend before the Lord? Certainly, the religious elites were not going to let them through, right? Because in their minds, the man who was paralyzed deserved that condition because he must have sinned, or maybe his parents must have sinned.

So they knew they couldn't ask those guys to give up their spot. So they devised a plan. And so they, if you remember, got up on top of the roof of this house, and they began to pull away tiles.

[ 9 : 00 ] They began to literally dig through the roof on top of the place where Jesus was teaching. So you imagine that as Jesus is teaching, and you're in that room, sand and dirt is starting to trickle down from the ceiling.

Maybe it's landing on top of Jesus' head, or on top of his garments. And then all of a sudden, this hole breaks through in the roof, and then a man is lowered down through it, and he's paralyzed.

And they lay him at Jesus' feet. And then the Bible says that when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the man, Man, your sins are forgiven.

Now, I don't know about you, but I think anyone who was gathered in that room to that day would not have expected Jesus to give that response. He came to be healed of his physical ailment, but Jesus instead forgave this man of his sins.

And I think many of them probably misunderstood what was happening here. All of them except for the religious officials who were present. They knew exactly what Jesus meant, exactly what Jesus was implying when he declared that that man's sins were forgiven.

[10:16] And so if we look in verse 21, it says, Jesus would heal that man, and in so doing, he demonstrated the truth, the fact that he had the authority not just to heal that man, but to forgive him of his sins.

Jesus, this was no ordinary man. A few weeks later, and a couple chapters later in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus is in another packed house, this one belonging to a Pharisee.

And once again, he uses that occasion to teach the people who have gathered there. Jesus was an invited dinner guest, and so he would have been reclining at the table with the others who had been invited.

He would have been lounging, propped up on one elbow, and his feet would have been angled towards, away from the food, towards the wall. Now, in this culture, if you were an invited guest, you were given a place at the table, but they also would open up feasts like this, or dinners like this, to other uninvited guests, but they had to sit around the outside perimeter of the dinner table, against the walls, and they were not given permission to speak, to ask questions, have any interaction with the conversation or the guests who had been gathered.

Especially, this was the case, if you were a woman. And so, as we continue in that story, we see that as Jesus is teaching, a woman creeps up to the table, falls at his feet, and begins to drench them with her tears.

[12:03] And then she dries them with her hair. And then she proceeds to kiss his feet, and empties a bottle of expensive perfume on them.

This did not sit well, with the invited dinner guests. But as Jesus turned to her, you remember what he did? He lifted her face.

He met her gaze. And he said to that woman, your sins have been forgiven. He did it again. The Pharisees would have thought.

He's doing it again. Why does he keep saying that? And so there it says, those who were reclining at the table with him began to say to themselves, who is this man who even would dare to forgive people of their sins?

And then from there, Jesus continued his ministry. He continued to teach. He continued to heal. He continued to forgive people of their sins. And as a result of that, large crowds continued to follow him.

[13:11] He attracted disciples whom he empowered to spread the good news of God's grace and to heal in his name. And before long, Herod Antipas, Rome's puppet ruler over the region of Galilee, got wind, got word of this extraordinary man.

And then we see in Luke 9, verses 7 through 9, Now Herod the Tetrarch heard about all that was happening, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead, by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen. And Herod said, John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things? And he sought to see him.

Herod repeated the same question that the religious leaders had asked. Who is this man? It wasn't just the political and religious leaders, though, who struggled with this question.

Even Jesus' own disciples remained perplexed for a time as to who truly Jesus was. They knew he was special.

[14:24] They had come to recognize him as the long-awaited Messiah, but they failed to comprehend who he really was. And then one day, after a long day of ministering to people, they saw something that they would never forget.

In Mark chapter 4, beginning in verse 35, it says, On that day when evening came, Jesus said to them, Let us go across to the other side. And leaving the crowd, they took with him in the boat, just as he was.

And other boats were with him. And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat so that the boat was already filling. But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion.

And they woke him, and they said to him, Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing? And he awoke, and he rebuked the wind, and he said to the sea, Peace!

Be still! And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. And then he said to them, Why are you so afraid?

[ 15 : 33 ] Have you still no faith? And they were filled with great fear, and said to one another, Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?

This was no ordinary man. I confess to you that sometimes when I am riding alone in an elevator, when the elevator door stops, when the elevator stops at my floor, and you know that moment just before the door opens, that I play Star Wars with myself, and I pretend to open the door with my mind.

And I do that. So if you see me doing something weird whenever you see me, know that I was playing Star Wars with myself for a brief moment. But, you know, this passage is amazing because it demonstrates not only the full humanity of Jesus, but his full deity.

Could you imagine being there with him when this has taken place? You're afraid that you are going to die. We have no control over the elements. And yet here's Jesus asleep because as a man, he's tired.

And his body needs to rest. Then they wake him up, and guess what he does? He does what we play to do, right? He uses his thoughts, and he uses his words to control the elements.

[ 16 : 57 ] Can you imagine? And he's speaking to the wind, and he's speaking to the sea, and he's commanding it to be still, and those elements obey him.

Why? Because he's no ordinary man. Because he is God. Mark chapter 6, verses 1 through 3, again, records another reaction to Jesus.

This one coming from the people of Jesus' own hometown of Nazareth. Nazareth was a small town, as we've talked about, so people would have known each other very well in this community.

They knew Jesus when he was a boy. They knew that he was the son of Mary, and Joseph, his father, stepfather, was a carpenter by trade. Mary and Joseph had other children after Jesus' incarnation, and they knew this family well.

And then we are told in Luke chapter 2, verse 52, that Jesus grew to gain the respect of his community. So they knew him. They knew that he had extraordinary ability.

[ 18 : 04 ] They knew that he could handle the scriptures like no one else, that he had an understanding of theology that surpassed any other. And then, after a long absence, Jesus comes back to his hometown.

They'd probably heard some of the stories about them, some of the stories that had been circulating about the amazing things that he was doing, but they wouldn't have given much credence to them, because right after all, they knew him way back when.

And so, in Mark chapter 6, we see that Jesus comes to his hometown. He went away from there, and he came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. And on the Sabbath, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astonished, and they were saying, where did this man get these things?

What is the wisdom given to him? How are such mighty works done by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, and brother of James, and Joseph, and Judas, and Simon?

Are not his sisters here with us? And they took offense at him. Even the people who knew Jesus best were perplexed by him, and were asking, who is this man?

[ 19 : 21 ] And then, near the end of his earthly ministry, as questions about his, who he was, about his identity, were reaching a climax.

We have this moment in Matthew chapter 16, where Jesus is with his disciples. And now, when they came to the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, who do people say that the Son of Man is?

And they said to him, some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah, or one of the prophets. So everyone agreed, that Jesus, was no ordinary man.

And everyone seemed to have their own theory, as to who he was, or as to why he was able to do what he did. And when the time came, when it was right, Jesus put his disciples on the spot.

They'd seen him, do amazing things, they'd heard him say amazing things, and now they would have to make their decision. And so Jesus asked this question, but who do you say that I am? [ 20 : 28 ] And the you here, and the Greek is plural. All of you guys. Who do each of you guys think, say that I am?

And if you remember, Peter doesn't miss a beat. And he gives a very definitive answer and response. He says, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God.

So Peter's answer is in two parts. First of all, he says of Jesus, you are the Christ. Christ in the Greek is the same term as in the Hebrew, for Messiah.

Messiah. Both words mean anointed one. And if you remember, for centuries, the Jews had hoped for a special king. They had hoped for a Messiah.

They had hoped for a Christ, whom the prophets of old had promised, who would supersede all of Israel's past priests, and prophets, and kings.

[ 21 : 27 ] This Messiah would rule over the world. He would establish an unprecedented time of peace, and prosperity. And so Peter's declaration was that Jesus was indeed this one, this long-awaited king.

But he didn't stop there, did he? He continued on, and he went on to affirm another truth about Jesus, when he said, you are the Son of the living God.

You are the Christ. You are the Son of the living God. In the Hebrew vernacular, to be a son was to share all the Father's qualities, and to inherit all the Father's privileges, and all of the Father's power.

No one would dare to call themselves the Son of God in this culture. Or he would be guilty of blasphemy, which we know is eventually what the Sanhedrin brought as the charge against Jesus for his crucifixion, that he says he's the Son of God.

But here, for Peter to give Jesus this title, meant that he understood that Jesus was no ordinary man, but that he was the Son of God, that he was the God-man, that he was the one in whom the fullness of deity dwelt in bodily form.

[ 22 : 45 ] Jesus did not object to Peter's declaration. Wait a second, Peter, you got it all wrong. No, what did he do? He said, no, blessed are you.

Simon Barjona, for flesh and blood, has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. So you see, what we say, and what we believe about Jesus, is important.

In fact, there is no greater question in life that a person must answer than this. Who do you say that Jesus is?

And it's so important because our eternal souls are at stake based upon how we answer this question.

And you must give a response. There is no avoiding this question. There's no glossing it over. Your life is on the line. What you say and believe about Jesus has infinite consequences.

[ 23 : 54 ] Either you will spend your eternity with God in bliss, or you will spend your eternity separated from God in eternal torment. The Bible offers no middle way.

There is no middle ground. It's all or it's nothing. And that's clear. Today, many opinions surround the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Historians, all credible scholars of history, accept the fact that Jesus existed, that he was a Galilean Jew, that he lived and taught during the first century.

And many would agree that he was even crucified because of his teachings, that they were radical, that they were controversial. And so he was put to death for that. However, that's where they stop.

To them, Jesus is nothing more than a historical figure. There's religions today. There are, in fact, there are cults, but they say different things about who Jesus was and who Jesus is.

[ 24 : 55 ] Jesus. Jehovah's Witnesses, for example, believe that Jesus was created by God, that he was the Archangel Michael before the physical world existed, that he's lesser and separated from God the Father.

They deny the Trinity. They believe that Jesus was separate from God, a lesser deity than him.

Mormons believe that Jesus was the firstborn child of the Heavenly Father and a Heavenly Mother, who they don't identify.

They also teach that God the Father was a man who worked his way towards becoming a God, and they teach that other people can do the same.

They claim to know Jesus Christ. They claim to know and teach the truth about Jesus Christ, but upon further review of God's Word, it's clear that they do not know this man.

There are many different opinions of who Jesus was back in his earthly ministry, and they continue today. And many people draw the wrong conclusion about him, seeking to make him into who they want him to be, don't they?

[ 26 : 03 ] A book called Putting Jesus in His Place, written by Robert Bowman, he has this excerpt that I want to quote to you. He says, Interpretations of Jesus are fraught with bias.

He's a powerful figure whom people want on their side, and they're willing to recreate him in their image to enlist his support. Animal rights activists imagine a vegetarian Jesus.

New Agers make him an example of finding God within, and radical feminists strip him of his divinity so that Christianity does not appear sexist. Frankly, he continues, it's hard to escape the feeling that our culture has taken Jesus' question, who do you say that I am, and has changed it to be, who do you want me to be?

And unfortunately, that is the case. We see, not just in cults, but in the church, people who are recreating Jesus into the image that best fits their personal agenda, and we cannot do that.

It wasn't long after Jesus' ascension that misconceptions about him began to invade his church. If you remember, 1 John was written by the apostle in defense of Gnosticism.

[ 27 : 21 ] They were attacking the humanity of Jesus Christ. They were saying that he didn't really come in bodily form, that he was just some kind of a hologram, an apparition, that he wasn't truly in the flesh.

And so John writes, and he says at the beginning, right, you remember, that which we've touched, that which we've seen, he's saying this man was, in fact, in the flesh.

And that is so critical, that he thought to defend the humanity, the person of Jesus Christ.

Misconceptions continue to abound today about Jesus, because this question is so important.

We must be diligent to defend it and to proclaim it so that people have opportunity to hear the gospel, the truth about Jesus Christ, who he is, and what he's done.

And so while this scripture passage is filled with theological hot points that we are going to closely consider in the weeks to come, we must not lose sight of Paul's purpose for writing it.

[ 28 : 27 ] This passage isn't here for, primarily for argumentation, but it's here for our adoration. It's here for our emulation. And in this passage, Paul presents Jesus as the supreme example that we are to emulate.

And he is urging the church to be unified, and he is saying that this unity is only experienced when each of us imitate Christ's character.

The better we understand this passage, the more I believe we will be in awe of who Jesus is and what Jesus has done for us. And then the more we are in awe, the more we will behold his glory.

The more we behold his glory, the more we will seek to imitate Christ's character.

And the more we seek to imitate Christ's character, the more united our church will be. And the more united our church is, the more we will glorify the name of Jesus Christ.

[ 29 : 43 ] The Holy Spirit is revealing to us through this scripture that knowing and believing the truth about Jesus will change your life. In fact, it must change your life.

If it hasn't changed your life, then it could very well be because you don't truly know him. Jesus was no ordinary man.

So who was he? That's what we'll be digging into this month, and we'll see that Jesus was fully man and fully God.

One man with two natures. This is what the Bible declares. And there is no safe middle ground upon which you can stand but to affirm that in fact this is the truth of Jesus.

Jesus was no ordinary man. There have been men of renown, hasn't there been? Alexander the Great conquered almost all of the known world at his time, in his life.

[ 30 : 51 ] He did amazing things. Plato was somebody whose philosophizing greatly impacted human thinking. Men and women have come.

Men and women have gone. They've invented things. They've composed works. They've built amazing structures. They've written wonderful poems and literature that survives to this day that has impacted life on earth.

But understand this, that not one of them has come close to impacting this world as profoundly or as permanently or as personally as Jesus of Nazareth has.

Rob him of his deity and you are left with a history that makes not more sense but less. Rob him of his deity, rob him of his humanity, excuse me, and you are left without a perfect sacrifice for your sins and a mediator between yourself and God.

There is no middle ground here. You believe it or you don't. C.S. Lewis famously wrote about this fact.

[ 32 : 03 ] I am trying to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about him, referring to Jesus. That they say, I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God.

That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things that Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher, he writes.

He would either be a lunatic on the level with a man who says he's a poached egg, or else he would be the devil of hell. You must make your choice.

Either this man was and is the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit on him and kill him as a demon, or you can fall at his feet and claim him as Lord and God.

But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

[ 33 : 09 ] And so we understand that Jesus is God in human flesh. This is how he presented himself to the world, and in the end, how we must either accept him or reject him.

And as I said before, there is no greater question that you must answer in this life than this. Who do you say that Jesus is?

Jesus. I remember posing this question for the very first time to teens at youth group back when I was a youth pastor.

And going through all the different things, all the different claims that people have made about who Jesus was. And trying to bring it home to them that, listen, you know what you guys?

You've got plans to make. You're figuring out, some of you, where you're going to go to college, what you're going to do for a career, but all of that pales in comparison to this question.

[ 34 : 13 ] Your entire life, your entire eternity is at stake here. What will you say? And man, it broke my heart because some of them, it seemed like, yeah, they were really questioning, concerned.

But then others, it was just as if I hadn't said anything at all. Doesn't matter. Man, it's heartbreaking. We can't control the responses that people will have to the gospel.

That's not our job. That's not our work. But we must proclaim this truth. People must hear this good news. They must be presented with this question.

And our hope and our prayer is that they will respond to it in truth, understanding that Jesus is, in fact, Lord and Savior. .