

Called to Bow

August 24, 2025

Lesson Summary

Main Passages

Romans 14:7-12; Philippians 2:5-11; Revelation 7:9-10

Session Outline

1. Every Knee Will Bow (Philippians 2:5-11)
2. All Will Give an Account (Romans 14:7-12)
3. Every Nation, Tribe, People, and Language (Revelation 7:9-10)

Theological Theme

One day, every knee will bow before Jesus. Every person we meet will face that day, and God wants to use us to introduce others to Jesus before that moment arrives.

Call to Action

Consider each person you meet as someone who will one day bow before Jesus, one way or another. Now is your chance to introduce him or her first, and in doing so, drastically change the nature of that eternal meeting.



Leader Guide

Called to Bow

Introduction

Have you ever been introduced to royalty? Not many of us have this opportunity. Etiquette and tradition often dictate that certain courtesies should be extended when meeting royalty. To help put people at ease before meeting them, the King and Queen of England's website gives guidelines on how to behave when meeting Their Majesties. It recommends simple courtesy, and, while it's not required, says many like to greet them traditionally:

"For men this is a neck bow (from the head only) whilst women do a small curtsy."¹

The tradition of bowing before royalty as a sign of respect has existed for millennia.

Bowing is a practice we see in the Bible, too. Abraham's servant bowed in worship when he met Rebekah at the well (Genesis 24:26); the Israelites bowed their heads in worship when they learned that God heard their groaning and sent Moses and Aaron to them (Exodus 4:31); Moses bowed his head before God when God met him on Mount Sinai (Exodus 34:8); Jehoshaphat and the people of Judah bowed before the Lord in worship when they learned He would be with them in battle (2 Chronicles 20:18); and Scripture tells us that we will all bow before Jesus, the King of kings, one day. This ultimate bowing before Jesus is the focus of our study today.



What do you associate with the practice of bowing to someone or something?



What does it mean that every knee will bow at Jesus's name? Why is that important?

Session Summary



Jesus is the ultimate example of humility. During His earthly ministry, He lived as both God and man yet never exploited His divinity for His own gain. He humbly and obediently submitted Himself to death on a cross for our sake as the ultimate example of putting others first. When we are

likewise concerned about others over ourselves, we will tell them about Jesus openly.

We will all one day bow before Jesus, and we will all stand before His judgement seat to give an account for how we have lived. Our daily choices affect that meeting, and this truth has serious implications for everyone we know.

In the end, the Great Commission will be fulfilled (Matthew 24:14), and we are called to join that work today. Salvation comes from the Lord, but we can be used by God as a part of someone's salvation story when we are humbly obedient, as Jesus modeled. The Lord changes hearts, but He desires for us all to be workers in the field (Matthew 9:37-38), planting seeds that He will water and grow.

1. Every Knee Will Bow (Philippians 2:5-11)

-  How is Jesus described throughout this passage?
-  How does this passage sum up the reason that all people will bow before Jesus one day? Why is He worthy of this?

Just before this passage, Paul urged his readers to “consider others as more important” than themselves (v. 3). He called for ultimate humility, not looking first to our own interests or operating out of selfish ambition. This attitude is precisely what Jesus modeled in His earthly ministry, and it's the heart behind verses 5-11.

Paul said, “adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus” (v. 5). As Christians, Jesus is our ultimate model. In fact, when we become Christians, we enter the life-long journey of sanctification, during which the Holy Spirit turns us away from our old life of sin and points us to Jesus, molding us to speak, act, and live more like Him.

In our society, we could be formed by an endless number of things: Our culture, social media, politics, our work, money, power, the standard set by those in our neighborhoods, and the list goes on. But, as believers, we are meant to be formed by the influence of Jesus. We are formed with the help of the Holy Spirit and by the example of Christ. How did Jesus live? What did He do? How did He speak? What did He teach and how? These are all questions for consideration as we seek to reflect Christ in daily life.

In this passage, Paul exhorted believers to adopt the same attitude as Jesus. Paul proceeded to describe the great level to which Jesus humbled Himself in His earthly ministry. If we think about someone considering others as

A Hymn of Praise

Jesus's self-emptying served as the basis for the apostle's exhortation. Philippians 2:5–11, possibly a quotation from an early hymn in praise of Christ, taught that Jesus's self-emptying led to His exaltation by the Father. Jesus existed in the very nature of God and made Himself nothing, not giving up His deity but His heavenly glory and privileges. He lived a life of humble obedience and humbled Himself even to the point of dying for sinners on the cross. He was then gloriously exalted in His resurrection and ascension.

better than themselves, we will find no better model than Jesus. During His life, Jesus could have exploited His deity to make things much easier, but He didn't. Instead, He came as a servant and humbled Himself so fully that He faced crucifixion for our sake. It is hard to wrap our minds around this level of humility.

If we are to be formed by Christ, the lesson here is to think of others first, even when it means we will face discomfort or need to forego our preferences. Jesus was both God and man; He could have chosen the easy road and exercised His deity at any time, but He didn't. He humbled Himself. When we share the gospel with those around us, we must humble ourselves and enter uncomfortable situations and conversations in Jesus's name.

Paul wrote that because Jesus humbled Himself, "God highly exalted him" (v. 9). The church at Philippi was made up largely of Gentiles and, in a city that was so heavily Roman, high social status would have been a point of great pride.² In a city where the desire was to be exalted, Paul's proclamation that Jesus was exalted because of His humility was quite a challenge to the worldview of his first-century audience.

Paul made clear that Jesus's name is above every name and has power. Jesus also taught this idea (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:17-18; John 16:23-24). Also recall that, when we see the apostles heal in Acts, they heal in Jesus's name. Jesus's name has power (Acts 3:6-8).

At Jesus's name, every knee will bow (Isaiah 45:23). We get a small glimpse of this reality when the soldiers arresting Jesus fell to the ground as He proclaimed the name given to Moses at the burning bush, "I AM" (John 18:6). We are all destined to bow before Jesus. Every knee, "in heaven and on earth and under the earth" (v. 10). We will all bow before Jesus, confessing that He is Lord, an act that glorifies God the Father (v. 11). On that day, there will be no exceptions.



Application: How can we better mirror Jesus's humility as we share the gospel?

2. All Will Give an Account (Romans 14:7-12)



How does this passage further emphasize the reality of Jesus's exaltation over all people?



What implications did Paul give for the believer in these verses?

As Christ followers, we don't belong to ourselves (1 Corinthians 6:19). We were bought with a price and, though we have free will, our lives are not our own. Our lives should be oriented around this truth: We belong to the Lord. This should affect the way we live daily—our conversations, how we interact with those around us, and how seriously we take the command of the Great Commission.

Just as we read in Philippians, every knee will bow. No one is exempt. Paul stated clearly that each of us will stand before the judgment seat of Jesus and give an account of our lives (2 Corinthians 5:10). How are we using our lives? Are we seeking humility and obedience or are we putting ourselves first? Are we following Jesus's command to go and make disciples (Matthew 28:19-20), and act as His witnesses to those who don't yet know Him (Acts 1:8)?

This truth has serious implications for every person in history. Think about the people in your life who don't know Jesus. They will one day bow before Christ. You have been placed in their lives for a reason, and God wants to use you to share the truth of Jesus with them.



Application: Paul said we will all one day give an account of our actions before the Lord. How does this truth influence your thoughts around sharing the gospel?

3. Every Nation, Tribe, People, and Language (Revelation 7:9-10)



Who is described in this passage and what are they doing?



What stands out to you about this group? What are the implications for our lives now?

In this passage in Revelation, John looked upon an innumerable multitude of people from “every nation, tribe, people, and language” (v. 9). This group, believers “coming out of the great tribulation” (Revelation 7:14), stood before the throne of Jesus, worshiping Him. In these verses, we see the fulfillment of the Great Commission, as Jesus promised in Matthew 24:14: “This good news of the kingdom will be proclaimed in all the world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.”³

Note the truth they cry out in verse 10:

“Salvation belongs to our God,
who is seated on the throne,
and to the Lamb!”

Salvation comes from the Lord, and He is seated on the throne. That is cause for celebration!

Like the believers from Revelation 7, we will all one-day stand before the throne of Jesus. Everyone responds to the gospel, either by accepting and believing it or rejecting it. Where do you stand today?

If you have never come to know Jesus, there is no better time than now. Our church staff would love to talk to you about this.

If you are already walking with Christ, now is the time to share Jesus with the people God has placed in your life. As the believers in Revelation 7 proclaimed, salvation belongs to the Lord, but it is our job to sow gospel seeds. The Lord changes hearts, and He desires to use us to help lead people to Him. This participation is a privilege and a blessing. Are we being faithfully obedient in walking out the Great Commission?



Application: In our current series, we've been focused on sharing the gospel. How does this passage connect with our call to share the gospel?

Conclusion

In Philippians 2, Paul wrote beautifully of Jesus's humility. Jesus is both God and man, and yet He never used His divinity to get ahead or make things easier on Himself. Instead, He became like a servant and humbled himself so fully and obediently that He went to the cross to die for our sins. His ultimate humility is an attitude we should seek to adopt.

Through His obedient humility, God the Father highly exalted Him, giving Him the name above every name. The name of Jesus has power, and one, day every knee will bow down to Him and confess that Jesus is Lord.

In our passage in Romans, Paul wrote that we don't belong to ourselves. We have free will, but we were bought with a price (1 Corinthians 6:19). As Christ followers, we belong to the Lord, and this truth should drive our lives.

We will all one day bow before Jesus, and we will all one day stand before the judgment seat of Christ to give an account for how we lived. Our choices today affect that meeting, and this truth has implications for everyone we know.

In Revelation, John described the throne of Jesus, in front of which a great multitude, "from every nation, tribe, people, and language" (v. 9)

worshiped Him. In the end, the Great Commission will be fulfilled (Matthew 24:14), and we have a chance to join that work today.

Salvation comes from the Lord, but we can be a part of someone's salvation story when we are humbly obedient, as Jesus modeled. The Lord changes hearts, and He desires for us all to be workers in the field (Matthew 9:37-38), planting seeds that He will water and grow.

- ❓ Why is humility important when we share the gospel? What is holding you back from humbly sharing the gospel with those who don't yet know Jesus?
- ❓ How can we pursue the goal of exalting Jesus as a group and not only as individuals?
- ❓ We've been talking about sharing the gospel for several weeks now. Have you had the chance to tell someone new about Jesus? How did it go? What can we pray for?

Prayer of Response

Thank God for all you are learning about Him and about sharing the gospel through this study. Ask for His help as you think about people in your life you can share the gospel with. Ask that He would give you both opportunity and courage share the gospel with the people in your life who don't yet know Him.

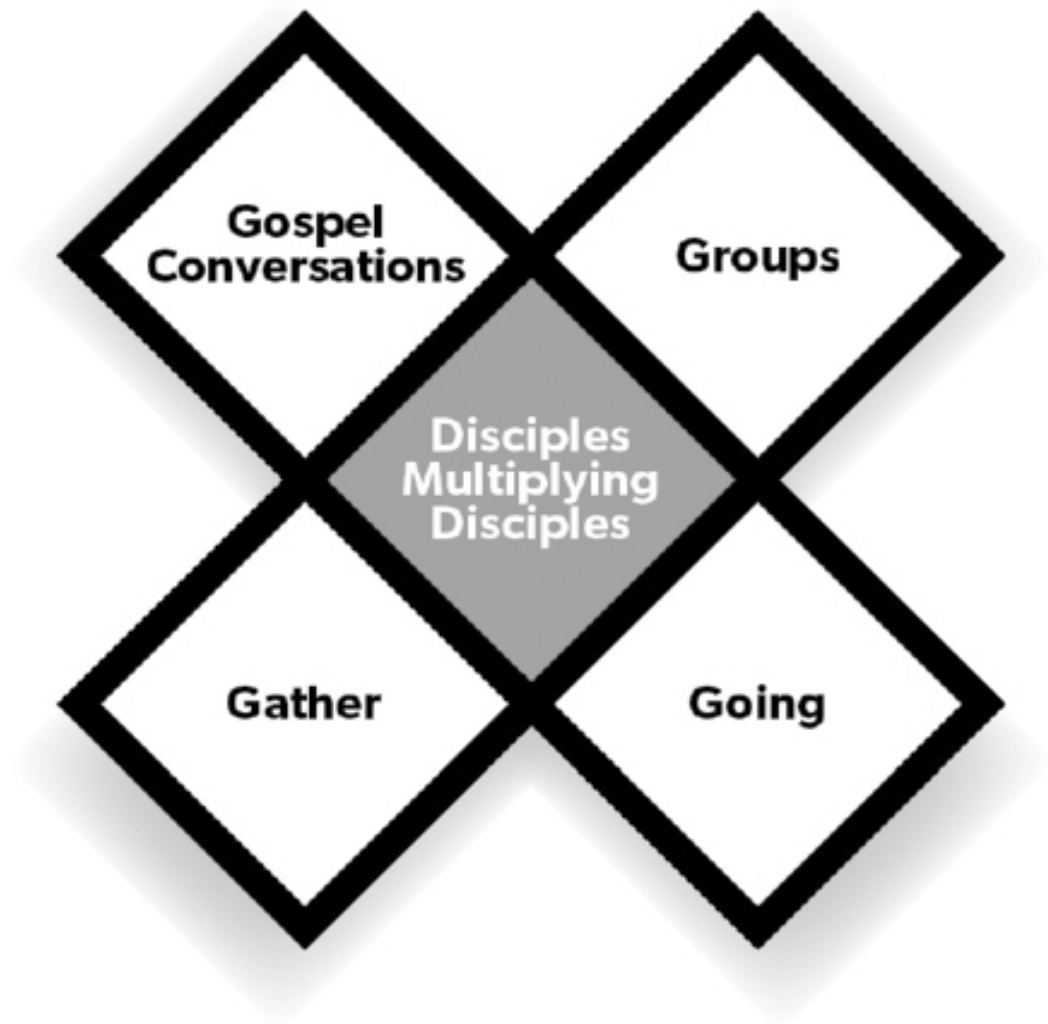
Memory Verse

Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus. —Philippians 2:5

Additional Resources

- *Exalting Jesus in Philippians* by Tony Merida
- *Be Right* by Warren Wiersbe
- *Revelation* by Thomas Schreiner

Disciples Multiplying Disciples



Historical Context of Philippians

Purpose

One purpose of this letter was for Paul to explain his situation at Rome (1:12–26). Although he was concerned about the divided Christian community at Rome, his outlook was strengthened by the knowledge that Christ was being magnified. Paul’s theology of life formed the basis of his optimism. Whether he lived or died, whether he continued his service to others or went to be in Christ’s presence, or whether he was appreciated or not, he wanted Christ to be glorified.

Author

Paul the apostle wrote this short letter, a fact that no scholar seriously questions.

Setting

The traditional date for the writing of Philippians is during Paul’s first Roman imprisonment (AD 60–62); few have challenged this conclusion.

Paul planted the church at Philippi during his second missionary journey (AD 50) in response to his “Macedonian vision” (Ac 16:9–10). This was the first church in Europe (Ac 16).

The text of this letter from Paul suggests several characteristics of the church at Philippi. First, Gentiles predominated. Few Jews lived in Philippi, and, apparently, the church had few. Second, women had a significant role (Ac 16:11–15; Php 4:1–2). Third, the church was generous. Fourth, they remained deeply loyal to Paul.

Special Features

Philippians is Paul’s most warmly personal letter. After initial difficulties in the city of Philippi (Acts 16), a strong bond developed between Paul and the converts there. Paul wrote to thank the church for a gift it had recently sent him in prison and to inform them of his circumstances.

Extended Commentary

Romans 14:7-12

14:7–9 We are not our own. Christ died and rose to be Lord of all. Martin Luther said paradoxically, “A Christian is a perfectly free lord of all, subject to none. A Christian is a perfectly dutiful servant, subject to all.” But most of all, we belong to the Lord.

14:10–12 The judgment seat of God (Gk *beyma*) is elsewhere called the “judgment seat of Christ” (2Co 5:10). Many interpreters distinguish this from the great white throne judgment in Rv 20:11–15. The “judgment seat of Christ” is where believers will be rewarded or suffer loss of rewards (1Co 3:13) based on their deeds and their stewardship of God-given responsibilities. In distinction to this, the great white throne judgment is the place where unbelievers will be raised for judgment. Believers take part in the first resurrection, and there is no condemnation for them (Rm 8:1; Rv 20:4–6). All people will bow before God and give an account of their lives. Christians might think that because they are exempt from the final condemnation they can live any way they want, but Christ the Lord will evaluate his servants.⁴

Philippians 2:5-11

2:5 The phrase adopt the same attitude commands the church to value Christ’s character as a model.

2:6 The key thought of this verse is that Jesus did not consider (cp. v. 3) his own interests, thus allowing them to dominate his actions. Existing: The idea is “although existing,” since it presents an apparent obstacle for Jesus to overcome in becoming human. Form (Gk *morphē*) suggests his complete deity. Equality with God indicates his coequality with God and separate personality (the second person of the Trinity). To be exploited is capable of two connotations. It can mean “to grasp” (steal), but because of Jesus’s deity it probably means “to clutch” (hang on to at all costs).

2:7–8 The phrase he emptied is much debated. Theologians ponder what Jesus emptied himself of. It is certain that he did not divest himself of deity or its attributes. Two statements accompany the verb. First, by assuming the form of a servant indicates that God the Son came to demonstrate true servanthood. Second, the likeness of humanity explains both emptying and servanthood. Two further statements explain the second verb humbled (cp. v. 3). First, when he had come as a man provides the time of his humility. “As a man” contrasts with the “form of God” (v. 6). Jesus was more than human, though he came to earth in the form of a man. Second, Jesus’s humility came through becoming obedient. Servants obey; Jesus obeyed God, even to the point of dying on a cross.

2:9–11 God is described as acting in these verses. Again, two verbs organize the thought. First, God highly exalted him (“super-exalted,” occurring only here) suggests that God gave Jesus a new position, although some take it as superlative (“to the highest”). Second, God gave him the name. This name that is above every name is Lord (*kurios* = *Yahweh*). Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess state one result of God’s exaltation. The posture and the confession imply submissive reverence. “Every” includes spatial dimensions: heaven ... earth, and under the earth. Together they indicate the living and the dead (blessed and condemned). All bring glory to God. This teaches that

Jesus mediates between God and humans. He is the focus of worship (Lord) and the administrator of God's will on earth.⁵

Revelation 7:9-10

7:9–12 In 5:9, the Lamb's worthiness to open the scroll is based on the shedding of his redemptive blood for "every tribe and language and people and nation." In 7:9, this group arrives in heaven. Since every nation is listed first, this scene is at least a partial fulfillment of the Great Commission—where Christ's disciples are commanded to reach "all nations" with the gospel by "the end of the age" (Mt 28:19–20). The vast multitude wearing white robes links them to the martyrs (6:11) and, in the only other context in Revelation where the phrase "vast multitude" is found (19:1, 6), to the bride and the armies of the Lamb (19:8, 14). Some interpreters understand the "vast multitude" to be all martyrs, who arrive in heaven over a period of time. Others see this as the time when the church is raptured, with some who are dead and some who are still alive all arriving at the same time (1Th 4:14–17).⁶

References

1. "Greeting the King and Queen," Royal.uk, accessed June 2, 2025, <https://www.royal.uk/encyclopedia/greeting-the-king-and-queen>.
2. Richard R. Melick Jr., "Philippians," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1882; Thomas L. Constable, "Exposition," in *Notes on Philippians*, 2025 Edition, accessed June 2, 2025, <https://soniclight.com/tcon/notes/html/philippians/philippians.htm>.
3. David Guzik, "Revelation 7 – The 144,000 and the Great Multitude," *Revelation 7, Enduring Word*, accessed June 2, 2025, <https://enduringword.com/bible-commentary/revelation-7/>.
4. Edwin A. Blum, "Romans," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1802–1803.
5. Richard R. Melick Jr., "Philippians," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 1886.
6. A. Boyd Luter, "Revelation," in *CSB Study Bible: Notes*, ed. Edwin A. Blum and Trevin Wax (Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017), 2027–2028.