

## Philippians 1:1–2 “Man Leveled, and Christ Exalted, by His Grace”

*Christ's grace exposes how we have all been leveled in the fall, by raising us up only in Him—by which He is exalted not only as our only hope, but as very God of very God... the God of grace and peace!*

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Philippians chapter 1 will have as our portion this afternoon just the first two verses, let's pray.

We ask you oh Lord that you would be our teacher by your spirit. Who pray that the word might be faithfully opened. And that it would be soft heartedly received. That you would shape our thinking our emotions our choices our wills. By it that you would glorify yourself. And do us good in Jesus name amen.

Philippians one versus one and two let's take heed how we hear these are the words of God. Paul and Timothy. Bond servants. Of Jesus Christ. To all the saints in Christ. Jesus who are in Philippi. With the bishops and the deacons. Grace to you. And peace. From God our Father.

And the Lord Jesus Christ. So far the reading of God's inspired and inherent word. We see here in the opening not just a common greeting although it is very similar to many other greetings, this was a common way to open a letter at least an identifying who was writing it and to whom and give some form of greeting but we see especially man leveled and Christ exalted.

In the first place we see man leveled Paul and Timothy bond servants the word here is. Of those who have lost the right to themselves, they are slaves, you can see that in the front part of the word bond. They are bound to do whatever their master says they don't actor live in their own behalf anymore, they don't have the right to themselves someone else has a right to them and Jesus Christ has a right to them.

This is unique and Philippians at least in the letter in the letters of Paul in almost all of his other letters he if when he names himself he says Paul an apostle twice in first and second Thessalonians, he doesn't give himself a title at all he just gives his name and.

This is the only one where he self-identifies or he identifies himself as they slate and he and Timothy as slaves together so he and Timothy are leveled counted as slaves here together, but also leveled with the saints in Christ Jesus, he refers to himself as a slave and then he refers to the church but he's writing to as the holy ones.

The saints and he indeed he is leveling that entire congregation to all the saints in Christ. Jesus, no doubt from the tone of the rest of the letter. Paul had his favorites in Philippi and they were many. There were a couple couple women that he will name and probably others as well that were maybe not as favorite but he writes to them all and he calls them all Saints even in the same breath as calling himself and Timothy slaves to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, many of you children.

I'm sure or maybe I'm just weird but I suspect that you may have this in common with me like to get the mail and perhaps you are even like me in that one or. Twice or maybe a whole seven times a year there was a letter for you in the mail, but every single day you check to see if one of the pieces of mail was a letter for you well every single man woman boy and girl in Philippi went to church one day and they got a letter it was just as much for them as it was for anyone else in the church, but last we think that it wasn't that this was because the regular people in the church needed it but the elders and deacons they didn't need this.

Instruction so much he goes on to name them specifically Paul and Timothy bonslaves or slaves of Jesus Christ to all the saints in Christ Jesus who are in Philippi with the bishops and deacons yes elders and deacons are overseers and deacons are pastors and deacons and that word elder and pastor is used interchangeably with the word that we have here overseer or bishop in the New Testament, yes they are.

Saved by grace and gifted by that grace and grown in that grace so that there are characteristics that we can recognize in God's work in a man first Timothy 3 and Titus 1, especially lists those characteristics by which we can recognize but this does not mean they are less needy of that ongoing grace so they get special mention here not because they are greater but perhaps because the office which to which they have been called makes them especially needy for the sake of the congregation as a whole.

Of the grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ and so it's not just all the saints but even the overseers and the deacons in the congregation are leveled man is leveled before God not just all brought to the same level but the say that the same use of the word level that that every one of you children feels a compulsion in the core of your being to do whenever you see a jenga tower getting set up or a block tower getting high and I know that some of you.

Do little ones especially like it because some of your older siblings and cousins like to make the high tower just waiting for you to notice how high it's gotten so that you can come level it. And man has been leveled by sin in a very sad way but he's also been leveled by grace and a marvelous way in which God says yes, there is nothing good in you at all but God gives his grace to all kinds of sinners there is no sinner outside the reach of the grace of God, there's no sinner that is more easily reachable by God, we're all leveled and even the way that he addresses the Philippian church communicates that teaches teaches that and that's a hint.

Forward there's going to be emphasis on humility and an emphasis on humbling ourselves before God and serving one another ahead of ourselves there's going to be an emphasis in the third chapter on not considering ourselves highly just because of what God has done in us so

far and not considering ourselves something or that we have already attained to something so that leveling of man is not just something that he's introducing here, but it's something that the apostle.

By the spirit is going to open for us as we come through the letter but if we are leveled by having in us the same mind that is in Jesus Christ, we also must remember that Jesus Christ receives that name that is above every other name due to his willing humiliation for our salvation and having humbled himself he does receive that name that is above every name he is king of kings and Lord of lords and so, Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that to the praise of God the Father.

See that. In three different ways even just in this greeting the first is of whom Paul and Timothy are the bond slaves this is a marvelous letter. So encouraging so joyful, you know, some of us are probably at some point in our Christian life. Binge devotional Philippians where perhaps you didn't have a scheme that you were following that that gave you, you know a steady you're very diet and the word of God you're gonna open your Bible and you're like well where do I want to read in the Bible today?

Philippians has a pretty good chance of being the answer to that question and yet this wonderful letter is one that comes from Jesus Christ, in fact, he doesn't just tell us to imitate Christ as a large chunk. Of the teaching of the letter even when he tells them I love you the way he says it and a couple weeks time we'll see is God is my witness how I long for you with the guts we'll talk about that when we get there affection as a much less graphic and maybe slightly disappointing translation the old KJV word was the bowels but we mean something different when we say that now but the point is that it is Christ who loves us so much who wants to encourage us.

That spur us on gladness drive us. And so the letter comes especially comes from them not only in an apostolic duty, but as bond slaves of Christ it is will it is his affection it is his desire. Jesus' personal desire is what is coming through in this letter to build you up and glad in you and strengthen you in himself.

No wonder it's such a favorite of believers. And of course leveled people can only be wholly ones who, All the saints who are in Christ Jesus. It's in him that we're holy ones. He's the one who has achieved the status of our being counted holy. He's the one who is doing the work of making us holy.

And so he is really the one who's exalted and that word saints and then finally he is one God with the Father Grace to you and peace from. And then there's two objects for that. God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. It uses. It uses his titles Lord which of course he is being identified there as Yahweh that word can translate anything from Sir or Mr on up but when it is put in connection with God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ you understand why the early Christians were not willing to say Kaiser Curios.

They were not willing to say Caesar is Lord even though they they could have rationalized to themselves al glorious. Sometimes just means Mr. Sometimes just means sir. But they knew what it was saying. Who is Lord of all? And there is only one. Lord of all and marvelous that Jesus would be called Lord in conjunction with the Father.

It is as if the Apostle is saying that Jesus is at least as glorious as the Father is He is one God with the Father and of course. He is Jesus. He saves us from our sins and he is the Christ the promised prophet priest and King that the little children are telling us about their catechism questions.

These days and we look forward to you telling us all about the prophetic office of Jesus and the priestly office of Jesus and the kingly office of Jesus we thank God dear little ones that you get to tell us such wonderful truths, you might not know this because this might be all the church you've ever known but some of us grew up in churches without learning these things these details about our Lord Jesus Christ, even after many years that you are going to be telling us about.

But Jesus is all of those things. He's your Way. He has God saving us and He is the promised anointed prophets priest and king so much so that the grace and peace with which the apostle blesses these Philippians comes from Jesus every bit as much as it comes from the Father himself.

How exalted is our Lord Jesus? We need to be thoroughly trinitarian not just in the dotting of our eyes and the crossing of our tees when we're doing theology, but in the grandness and the, Glory that we attribute to Christ in our hearts as we think about Him, and as we deal with Him that He would be every bit as exalted unto us and in our minds and hearts as God the Father for He is Yahweh the prayer of all things.

He is the God who has saved us and it is a marvel that this Creator God has become a man so that he could be prophet priest and King for us as well. He in himself as the gospel. You could say Lord Jesus Christ. In the if you just start to tease out some of what those things mean like we have just done you have got the good news of God's saving sinners by humbling himself to become a man and being exalted for that glorious work and recognized as the Lord Himself.

So it is a recognition of the author and recognition of the recipients and an opening greeting but much more than that it is a preview of the glorious doctrines of this letter that levels man and exalts our Lord Jesus Christ. Now he do so in each of our hearts and lives, let's pray.

We thank you Lord for setting before us how your grace has given Christ to us and has given all that you are to us in him and so we praise you for this letter that levels us and exalts him and we pray that over these next weeks and months as we study through it your spirit would be pleased to bless to us even that which we have already heard that he would bless to us this portion that we have heard from your word we ask it in Jesus' name and for his glory.

Amen