



Message: **Maturing into Mission** | March 29, 2026 | Speaker: **Pastor Eddie Eddy**

Philippians 2:5-11 New Living Translation

5 You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.

6 Though he was God,[a]

he did not think of equality with God
as something to cling to.

7 Instead, he gave up his divine privileges[b];

he took the humble position of a slave[c]
and was born as a human being.

When he appeared in human form,[d]

8 he humbled himself in obedience to God
and died a criminal's death on a cross.

9 Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor

and gave him the name above all other names,

10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

11 and every tongue declare that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.

L: This is the word of God for the people of God

P: Thanks be to God

"Maturing into Mission"

I would wager to say that most of us who have children have learned that: as parents...we sometimes have to limit what we do for our children so that they can learn how to do things for themselves. (the children...not the parents) The only way to really mature in any endeavor that we are involved in is to jump in and metaphorically get our hands dirty. That's how we learn...that's how we acquire the skills to function in this world.

I think back to when I hired my son to be on my construction crew. He didn't want to go to college right out of high school and I didn't want him to sit around the house and grow mold...so I put him on a crew. Truth be told...He was pretty green when it came to construction work, but he was a pretty good worker.

The challenge was...he was the boss's kid. And even though I didn't treat him like my kid on the job...others treated him a bit different...and he may have had a slight feeling of entitlement when he started.

I remember one day in particular. We were putting up forms for curb and the subbase was all 3 inch rock. I don't know if any of you have ever driven wooden stakes into 3 inch rock before...but I can tell you this...it is almost impossible.

I had my son working shoulder to shoulder with the guys building the forms and he was struggling to get them stakes to pound into the ground. At one point he got so frustrated that he walked away...screamed at me that this was impossible to do and expected me to do it for him.

Well...a few of you may have experienced the way I can react to situation like that. Glory be to God that I am better today than I was back then. So...I had a little chat with my beloved son and explained to him that the guys he was working with...they were getting the job done and that he had a choice too make. He could learn how to drive those stakes in the ground...or...he could find another place of employment.

The bottom line was...I could not allow him to use his privilege as the boss's kid to get out of doing the hard work. He needed to learn. He needed to struggle a bit and maybe...he even needed to ask for some help.

What I did have to do for him though...was show him enough grace to where he was able to have the opportunity to mature into his position. And that is what he did. He did humble himself and asked the guys to teach him what he needed to know. Turned out that the crew found a new respect for him...and for me too...and we all became a better crew together. It was a great learning exercise for all of us and we all matured a bit that day.

SHORT PAUSE

One of the consistent themes in the bible is the idea that God is like a loving parent to us. And as a parent...there are times that it seems like God limits his divine action in creation as a way to help us mature in our faith too.

Our Passage today speaks of Christ "emptying" himself and taking the form of a slave. The apostille Paul encourages us to have that same attitude as well. Jesus could have done things so differently. God could have just started over. But that was not the mission. The mission was to make a way for us to be saved and then for us to learn how to share that with others. And to accomplish that mission...God chose to give up all of the power. To save us...God became a slave to us.

Listen to these words again: "Though he was God, he did not think of equality with God as something to cling to. Instead, he gave up his divine privileges; he took the humble position of a slave and was born as a human being. When he appeared in human form, he humbled himself in obedience to God and died a criminal's death on a cross."

"He humbled himself in obedience to God." When we were young, we obeyed our parents...well sometimes. I know I stretched that boundary a few times. I wonder...as we grow in our faith, and we look to God as a parental figure...are we still stretching the boundaries of obedience there too?

Have we really thought through what that must mean? If God were like a loving parent who has all the hopes and dreams that parents have...if God wants us to mature...if God wants us to be able to live in the world as adults...would he do everything for us? Or...would he give us the opportunity to see how the world functions...and then...help us see how we are called to mature to the point where we can be of service to God in this world?

I guess my question for you is...do you think you can mature if someone else does everything for you...or...do you mature when you have some control yourself...when you have a little skin in the game...even if that means you will make some mistakes along that path of learning?

That's how I see God working in my life...in your lives. Things happen in the world every day without God intervening at every moment. Things happen for our benefit we have the capacity to learn from them...to become smarter...more

mature. We learn that if the weather turns cold...we need to put on our coat. We learn that if we eat peanuts, and we can't breathe afterwards...we don't eat peanuts again. That's how we mature.

Now...while God is always active in the world, God doesn't force his creation to do things that would stifle our will to choose. God has never exploited the privilege of omnipotence. God came to us as a baby. God came to experience life in the way that we do. With all the weakness and emotions that we deal with every day. God gave up everything accept his mission to redeem us.

Jesus has always been...and until he returns...will always be the perfect model for how we are to carry on the mission he left us with. As Christians...we are expected to learn and struggle and make some mistakes along the way while we are maturing into our mission.

That's how we become mature citizens. We learn, we grow, we mature...we want others experience the peace we feel and sharing that peace become our mission.

So, I'm sure you're wondering what the heck any of this has to do with Palm Sunday? Why we are ...holding these palms and talking about our maturity level? Because this passage speaks to what we are about to experience this next week. We are kicking off Holy week and it starts today with Jesus triumphantly entering Jerusalem with a parade.

But the truth is...this coming week is the culmination of Jesus' mission. The one who came to set us free from our sin and offer us eternal life. We have followed Jesus from birth, to baptism, to temptation in the wilderness. We have heard the stories of his miracles, healing people, feeding thousands, teaching.

We have walked with Jesus as the religious and political leaders feared him and plotted against him. And now...here we are with him as he enters the final stage of his earthly mission. He has grown...he has matured...and now...he faces the toughest test of his life. We will witness firsthand...how far he was willing to empty himself for our benefit. He will give up everything...offering himself as a slave and facing the cross in servitude to you and me.

PAUSE

Our attention for the next few days is drawn inevitably to the cross. "And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death...even death on a cross." That was the ultimate mission for our salvation: "Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures."

But the meaning of the cross goes even deeper. It is not God's "Plan B," ...a shot in the dark... not just some kind of clever maneuver that God came up with to deal with a crisis situation. You see...by refusing to cling to divine privileges...by willfully denying himself and taking the form of a servant...the Son of God shows us the actual heart of God. By revealing himself at our level...Jesus shows us what God is really like.

Think about it...What does God get out of this?

It would be so simple for God to show up...give us all the stuff we would like in this world. He could make us all rich with these worldly trinkets. But would we truly be happy. More importantly...is that what God wants from us...is that what he wants for us?

I don't think so. I think God has always been looking to be in relationship **with us**...not so much to Lord **over us**.

The true God genuinely is a God willing to go down even into death...in order to prove that he is faithful to his word...and that the mission has always been to redeem his creation...where God would dwell among us and with us.

Isn't that the hope of everyone of us here today? Are we not here trying to mature into that same mission so we can share eternity with God as he created us?

PAUSE

That is what I believe God is expecting from us. God knows we will make some mistakes along the way. And yet...God loves us so much, that he sent his son to be our proxy. To pay the cost himself for our fall.

That is a hard lesson to learn. A tough reality for us to shoulder. But it is also part of the maturing we need to do to be faithful witnesses for Christ.

SHORT PAUSE

I'll be honest with you...it broke my heart that day to break my kid's spirit and remind him that we are all the same on that crew. I wore my tool belt and swung that 12-pound stake mallet everyday too. I beat those stakes in the ground just like we all did. My son saw that...my crew saw that...and my son matured and became part of the team that day.

He went on to different things. He is now a fireman/paramedic and he has saved many many lives. He did that by letting go of any of the status or privilege he inherited...and learned how to be a servant.

How many lives could be changed...could be saved...if we too can find the courage to follow Christ example and always be maturing into our mission?

To God be the Glory.

Next Steps:

- I will read Philippians 2:5-11 this week
- I will invite someone to Easter Sunday Worship