

**Russell Kelfer**

# **Every Knee Shall Bow**

**# 1316-B**

**Series: The Mind of Christ**

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INTO HIS LIKENESS RADIO

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Perhaps you witnessed it for yourself. The moment of moments. An Olympic hopeful rounds the bend for the last turn of the race and with a seemingly super-human burst of speed, flows towards the finish line to set a new world record. As he stands in the winner's circle and the national anthem is played, his gold medal glistening in the spotlight, it is as though all of life has been lived for this one moment in time. Thousands trained around the world to receive this award. Only one human being at a time can earn it.

A few hours later a young girl, only fourteen years young, hurls her body towards a piece of equipment filled with hanging bars and hoops and begins to display a kind of grace and perfection that causes even hardened gymnasts to gasp. "A perfect ten!" the judges respond. Tears flowing down her face, she stands and receives the gold medal that signifies that she is the best athlete in the world at what she does. She is only a child, but she has reached the pinnacle of success and already has achieved what no one else alive has done.

"Was it worth it?" the probing journalists ask in a post-awards interview. "What kind of question is that?" the weary viewer wonders. "Worth what?" And then you hear the story behind the story: a girl who gave up her childhood to practice, practice, practice. Then came the impossible; a serious injury and the doctors proclaimed her out of the race. But she persisted. In pain, she practiced. Despite all odds, she persevered. And now this. "Was it worth it?" "Yes," the child beams, "it was worth it."

The young man who so easily sped to victory is next to be interviewed. You learn that he developed a seemingly incurable disease and was counted out. You learn that he lost his trusted coach at a crucial time and was devastated. But still he labored. He kept his eye on the goal and now here he is. Worth it? The question is unnecessary. Of course it's worth it.

Why, Beloved, can't we Christians make the "spiritual switch"? Why can't we grasp that beyond this life there is a rewards ceremony where God Himself will call us into the winner's circle and, placing a crown of victory or a wreath or glory about our necks, He will say, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Matthew 25:14-30

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No, we can't see and feel that moment. We can only dream about it. We can only envision it as we hear it described in Scripture. That's all those athletes could do; but because the possibility of that moment existed, every second of their lives was lived in the light of that day of victory. The pain, the disappointments, the grief, the loss of relationships were all worth it. Nothing could get in their way. They stretched their bodies to the limit and beyond. They gave up the rights to their childhood, their adulthood and their careers for a season. Nothing mattered but winning the gold.

They had to humble themselves and be trained. Hard discipline was followed by harder discipline. They had to become obedient to their coaches who had walked the road before them. They had to die to their desires, their dreams, and their time, in order to make it happen. But because they knew that one day those awards would be given to somebody, they beat their bodies and brought them into subjection. They had only one reason to live. As they stood on that platform, the flag of their home country waving in the background, it was indeed worth it.

You may question their sense of values. You may even scoff at the price they paid for one moment in time. But, Beloved, Paul says,

Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get that prize.

Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last; but we do it to get a crown that will last forever.

Therefore, I do not run like a man running aimlessly; I do not fight like a man beating the air.

No, I beat my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize."  
(I Corinthians 9:24-27 NIV)

The crown you are running for and reaching for, Beloved, is imperishable. II Timothy 4 tells us who will give it to us:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.

Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for His appearing.  
(II Timothy 4:7,8 NIV)

God Himself will stand before you and personally place around your neck the gold medal. He will personally place the laurel

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wreath of victory around your shoulders. He will personally place the crown of righteousness upon your head. The Judge Himself, the only Righteous Judge, will pronounce you the victor on that day as you gather at His Bema Seat and receive rewards for the things done in this life.

The Olympics are out of your grasp. But that gold medal would fade anyway. It would tarnish, decay, and one day be left behind. But there awaits you a crown that cannot decay, cannot perish, cannot be lost. Isn't that day worth giving your life for? It will be your day of exaltation, your graduation, the moment of joy for which all of life has been lived.

Jesus gave up everything to win the prize, not for Himself, but for you and for me. He laid aside His royal robes and came to earth's training ground. There he humbled Himself, obeyed the Coach, His Father, to the letter. Never once did He argue or question the Father's discipline or the pain that ensued. He gave up everything. He died to everything man deems valuable, until He literally paid the price and died physically. But it didn't end there. There was waiting for Him a time of exaltation, a return to His Father and to the glory that was His before ever the world was. And having returned to that level of exaltation, He gently whispers to each of us, His chosen ones, called out to run the race in His absence, "Now let this mindset be yours." It is to be the mindset of one who gives up everything for the eventual exaltation that will one day be worth it all.

### "LET THIS MIND BE IN YOU"

For 31 lessons now we have taken the microscope of His Spirit and placed it over those incredible words in Philippians, chapter two, looking for how God looks when He lives in a body like ours in a world like ours. We found out. He looks humble. He looks like a slave. He is totally in submission. He is ready, yes, willing to die to self, to his desires, to his ambitions, to his very life. Why? Because he knows that henceforth there is laid up for him a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the Righteous Judge, will give to him on that day. One day the rewards will come. For now, the demands will be rigorous, the pace strenuous, the discipline sometimes harsh.

The enemy, whose goal it is to take your sights off that goal will whisper to you, "Is it worth it?" Answer him, Beloved, "Oh, yes, it's worth it, and it's necessary if I am to have the Mind of Christ."

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The mind of Christ. What an incredible thought. God's mind at work in our bodies. God's heart beating in us. God's will superseding our wills until all we think about, care about, live for is being the slave we have been called to be, our motivation the eventual exaltation that we have been promised will be ours.

That passage awaits us one last time. Remember? It said this:

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God,

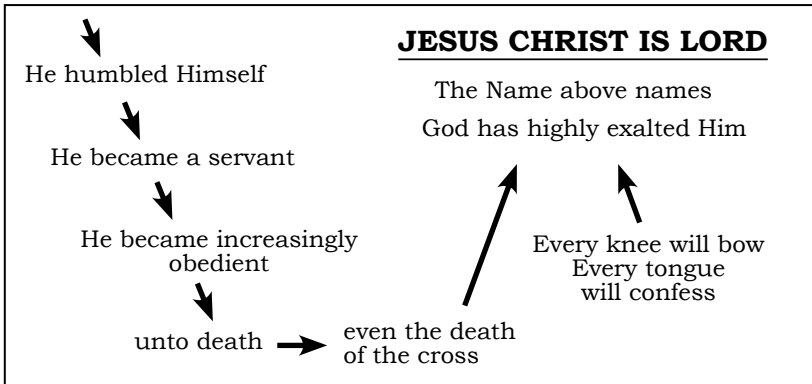
but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men.

And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,

that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11 NKJV)

And so you have that glorious picture of the victorious life in Christ. In diagram form, His life looked like this:



Five characteristics dominated His life:

- 1-**He humbled Himself** (made Himself nothing).
- 2-**He became a servant** (laid aside all rights and became a doulos; the slave of God and thus the slave of man).
- 3-**He remained totally obedient** to His Father.

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4- **He gave up His life** even amidst the humiliation of the Cross and counted it worth it all.

5- **The Father exalted Him**, gave Him back the glory that once was His, gave Him the Name that His Holiness deserved, and guaranteed Him that one day all mankind, living and dead, will recognize that Name for what it is.

Then He said, “Let this mind be in you.” We have looked in detail at the first four of those characteristics or steps in the life of Christ. We turn now, in closing, to the last one. It is detailed in these verses:

Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name,  
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth,  
and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:9-11 NKJV)

### “THEREFORE...”

It begins with the word “therefore”. Therefore ties in this passage with the verses before it. What is the therefore, there for? It is there because Jesus humbled Himself, became a slave, and was obedient unto death. Because of that, or in the light of that, God exalted Him. As one Bible commentator put it: “because of his voluntary and supreme humility.” That thought is verified by an absolute that God promised to all those who have the mind of Christ. It is found in Luke 14:

“But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes, he may say to you, ‘Friend, go up higher’. Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you.

For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.” (Luke 14:10,11 NKJV)

That promise is repeated in Luke 18:14. It is a principle of divine law. God wanted to demonstrate it graphically. So He allowed His own Son to enact the greatest act of humility ever known so He could be exalted to the greatest place of honor ever known. Now that mind is to be in us. Oh, that in this age of “look at what we’ve done” Christianity, we could re-learn that lesson.

### “GOD HIGHLY EXALTED HIM...”

So the wherefore refers to His laying aside everything to become

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nothing, so that we who are nothing could have everything. The next phrase is equally compelling. It says, “Therefore, God highly exalted Him.” The phrase, “highly exalted” means “to raise to supreme majesty”. From supreme humility to supreme majesty: that is God’s plan. Wuest suggests that this means “above and beyond the state of glory He enjoyed before the incarnation.”

He could not have been more godly, or been more of God. So it doesn’t refer to His nature. His exaltation, however, was *more intense*, because He who had been “in the bosom of the Father before ever the world was” now had been both *Son of God and Son of man*. He had tasted the cup of humiliation, lived in a world of sin and degradation, been tempted in all points like as we, yet without falling. Now not only was He God, man could see Him as God, and thus the stage was set for His exaltation.

### “GIVEN HIM THE NAME”

The name was a gift. It was given to Him by the Father. The phrase literally means “to give with grace.” It doesn’t mean that He didn’t deserve it. It does mean He did not seek it for Himself. He was too humble for that. So the Father gave Him The Name. Your Bible may read “a name”, but in the Greek the definite article appears indicating that the proper translation is “given Him *The* Name.” The definite article means one of a kind. The name “Jesus” has been given to many children at birth. It is not exclusive to the Master. But the Name “LORD” belongs only to Him. What the Name means belongs only to Him. His Father gave it to Him so we could use it in worship and praise. The gift was from the Father to the Son. And, as “joint heirs with the Son (Christ)”<sup>2</sup>, we are the recipients even of that which the godhead gives to itself.

### “THE NAME ABOVE EVERY NAME”

“The Name”, according to many scholars, applies to the sphere of the Spirit in which Christ exists. It means He has been given a place in the spirit realm where no one else can be. That causes us or allows us to worship that Name and in so doing, to bring honor to His Father who gave Him that Name.

always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the  
name of our Lord Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 5:20 NIV)

God gave Him a Name. That Name refers to the sphere of Lordship He alone can occupy. Not only is He God and very God, He is the Son of God who became a man so man could become a son

<sup>2</sup> Romans 8:17

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of God. As such, He can be worshiped in a whole new way. So the Father gave Him a Name commensurate with that worth-ship. Not only is that Name a gift from The Father, it is a Name above every name. No other being can ever be exalted to the place of honor that Christ Jesus occupies. He has a place in the heavenlies at the right hand of the Father that is beyond the reach of any angel, man or woman. That is important, because one day that Name will be seen for what it is, and what it is cannot be shared.

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What will happen on that day? Paul goes on to describe it, and the utter splendor of it all is beyond our comprehension. He says every knee should bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. The word “bow” means universal acknowledgement of His majesty and power. The word “confess” means “to agree openly; to acknowledge with purpose.” The word “should” in the passage might make you wonder if this is something that ought to happen, or something that will happen. We have used the word “shall” in place of “should” because by comparing Scripture with Scripture you know that this will happen. It is described in detail in Revelation 5:

And they sang a new song, saying, “You are worthy to take the scroll, and to open its seals; for You were slain, and have redeemed us to God by Your blood out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation,

And have made us kings and priests to our God; and we shall reign on the earth.”

Then I looked, and I heard the voice of many angels around the throne, the living creatures, and the elders; and the number of them was ten thousand times ten thousand, and thousands of thousands,

saying with a loud voice, “Worthy is the Lamb who was slain to receive power and riches and wisdom, and strength and honor and glory and blessing!

And every creature which is in heaven and on the earth and under the earth and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, I heard saying: “Blessing and honor and glory and power be to Him who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb, forever and ever!”

(Revelation 5:9-13 NKJV)

This, Beloved, is not a make-believe drama of something that could take place some day. This is a specific prophetic portrait of an incident that God has staked His reputation on by describing



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it in eternity past as an event that will come to pass just as surely as Christ's return.

In a moment in time, the heavens will issue forth an anthem of praise. The angels will be the lead singers. And every one in heaven and everyone on earth and every creature in the sea will break forth into singing. The passage in Philippians says "those under the earth" will be included. Most scholars seem to think this refers to the dead.

"The mountains and the hills shall break forth into singing before you, and all the trees of the field shall clap their hands."

(Isaiah 55:12c NKJV)

All of nature will join in. The birds will sing a new song. The animal kingdom will emerge from its laborious tour of duty under the curse and begin to acknowledge a new kingdom in which sin no longer has dominion. The passage says they will all sing a new song, a song of worth-ship; for "worthy is the Lamb who was slain."

If you have been in an auditorium when the "Hallelujah Chorus" was being sung and suddenly the whole audience rose to their feet in wonder and awe and began to take part, you will have experienced one ten-trillioneth of the majesty of that moment that is to come. Every tongue will confess...confess what? that Jesus Christ is Lord.

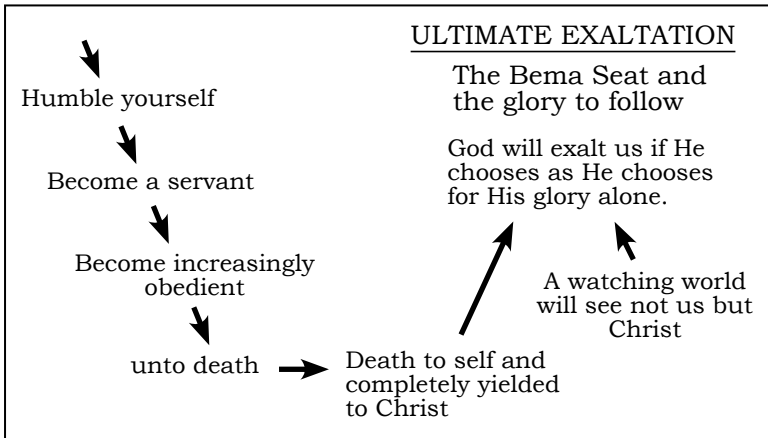
Jesus Christ, Lord. That Name is incomparable. "King of Kings!" "Lord of Lords!" And every creature, great and small, and every being on earth, in heaven, and in the grave, and every seemingly inanimate object the Creator has made will rise up in unison, singing, "Worthy is the Lamb! Worthy is the Lamb!" And we will be there. The opening celebration of the Olympics or the crowning of a king in our day seems to take our breath away. But eye has not seen nor ear heard anything even to suggest what this will be like.

It will be the moment for which all mankind has waited on tiptoe all these years. It will be the crowning conclusion to the conflict of the ages between darkness and light. It will be the grand finale to the story of stories. Satan and his evil entourage will have been put away. Kings, princes, and presidents who dared to shake their fist in the face of God will be long since forgotten. The nations who persecuted tiny Israel will be heard from no more. The battle will be over. The victory will be complete. And all of mankind and all of nature will bow in humble adoration at the One who is, and was, and ever shall be. And He shall reign forever and ever.

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Now, Beloved, aren't you even slightly moved to consider how God will view your life on the day of His appearing? He only asks one thing of you. That ought to be simple enough. He only asks that "this mind be in you".

For the last 31 lessons, we have been seeking to discern what that means. In very simple form, it means that our lives would so reflect His life that others, seeking Him would see Him in us. But it is so much more and yet so much less than so many make it to be. Once again, overlaying His life on ours, it ought to appear like this:



You and I ought to be concentrating, not on being seen, but on being His. We ought to make a lifetime study of humility. It is the cardinal concept of the Christian faith, but you would never know it by the theology of modern man. Beloved, the mind of Christ is humble. It never seeks its own. It considers every other person alive as more important than itself. It "lets nothing be done through strife or vainglory but in lowliness of mind considers others first."<sup>3</sup> It doesn't toot its own horn, doesn't run ads in the paper about its spirituality, doesn't make sure its friends know how much it prays. It goes into a closet, and only the Father who sees in secret knows. It doesn't fill out cards or make statements about how much it gives. Its right hand doesn't know what the left hand is giving. Only the Father who sees in secret knows. It "suffereth long and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up."<sup>4</sup> The mind of Christ is only known by the presence of Christ. The life in which it lives is nothing more than a frame that does not detract

<sup>3</sup> Philippians 2:3

<sup>4</sup> I Corinthians 13:4

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from the beauty of the portrait that resides within. And until and unless the Body of Christ returns to an understanding of the kind of humility that caused the King of Kings to lay aside His royal robes and become nothing, we will not grasp what true spirituality is all about.

Secondly, the mind of Christ in all its humility, takes on the garments of a slave, a *doulos* of God. The slave of God lives to serve the guests of God's kingdom. So he or she gives up his or her rights to "self" and all that holds and begins to see his or her mission in life as one of giving self away in order to make others spiritually successful. That will mean lowering yourself to the lowest level of mankind when it comes to being willing to serve others. It will mean doing away with man's class systems, racial barriers, and the spiritual walls man has built through the ages in the name of Christianity. You will not give up your convictions, but you will, in love, lay aside your prejudices. There is a world of difference.

This servant heart will be marked by the essence of obedience. To serve others while disobeying your Master, does not please Him at all. "If you love Me, keep My commandments"<sup>5</sup> means just that. But more than that, it means a level of commitment that will be obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross. That means a desire to serve Him that is so consuming that how you die and when you die and if you die before your time or if He leaves you longer than you deem proper, is inconsequential. You are His *doulos*, and to die for Him would be the greatest honor known to man; to live for Him a little longer, if that be His will, is an honor equally as great. All you want is to please Him, to see His will done on earth as it is in Heaven.

That kind of life will one day be exalted. It is a promise. On this earth? For a few. Be thankful that it is not for many, for most of us simply cannot handle the temptations that accompany spiritual recognition, and the beauty of the servant's life often evaporates when the spotlight of attention is focused on its service. But, oh, Beloved, every one who allows the mind of Christ to saturate and emanate from their lives will one day be exalted.

They will stand before the King. It will be the final day of the Olympics of Eternity, the first day of forever. And God Himself will be there. He will call you up to the awards platform of Heaven and place around your neck a laurel wreath of love. He will place upon your head a crown of righteousness, and He will say, "Well done

<sup>5</sup> John 14:15

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thou good and faithful servant, enter into the joy of the Lord.”

And every moment of pain, every second of persecution, every hour of tribulation will seem like nothing. More than that, those very things that brought us to grieve, mourn, be merciful, will flash before our eyes and become the very moments in our training that made possible the gold medal that now envelops us and overwhelms us because it was the things He did through us that made us victors.

Quietly, we will lay the medals and the wreaths and the crowns at His feet. He alone is worthy. And as the heavenly chorus swells into an anthem of “Worthy is the Lamb” our entire beings will be filled with the presence of God.

We will be His, all His; and we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is, and, Beloved, we will have the mind of Christ in all its totality at last.

Never again ask, “Is it worth it?” Oh, Beloved, it will be worth it all.

### WORTH IT ALL?

Worth it all? Oh, Christian, yes!  
One glimpse of all His blessedness,  
When all the cares of life are done  
And we behold Him, God’s own Son.

As all mankind sings one refrain,  
“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain!”  
The trees of the field will clap their hands,  
The birds will form orchestral bands.

And all of life with one accord  
Will sing in triumph, “He is Lord!”  
And as we at His feet then fall,  
Oh, child, it will be worth it all.

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