

Content Without Promotion

#0077

Study Given by Mark Finley and W. D. Frazee—October 20, 1972

[Mark Finley]

Have you ever heard of it? It seems to be a principle in the business world, in the economic world: “There is always room at the top.”

So here is a man working in a machine shop, looking after some machines. And day after day, he comes to that shop, and as he’s working on his machine, that principle runs over and over in his mind: “There is always room at the top.” And so, looking at the foreman’s job, he begins thinking, “I would like to be the foreman of this company someday. I would like to have an opportunity of superintending this section of the plant.” So he pushes himself and drives himself until the time comes when he is able to take over the foreman’s job.

Then after he has worked a number of months at the foreman’s job, this principle rings through his mind again: “There is always room at the top.” So he wonders how he can become a plant supervisor, supervising that section of the plant. So, through manipulation, through hard work, through diligence, through pushing himself some more, he becomes the supervisor of that section of the plant.

But after a number of months, discontented with that position, looking for a still higher-paying job with more prestige, the principle re-echoes in his ears again: “There is always room at the top.” So he sets his sights on a managerial position in the corporation, and through either manipulation or some method of diligence, he pushes himself until he becomes a manager in that large corporation.

This seems to be the philosophy of the world. One must set his sights on a higher goal, a job that is higher-paying, that has greater financial remuneration, a job that has more prestige and more honor, more flattery, more praise attached with it.

Now, tonight, I invite you to turn in your Bibles to Philippians 2, and I would like for us to study a contrast picture, the picture of a Man who had prestige and honor, who had all the riches of the universe at His command. Here in this chapter, we have outlined by God, the true principle in living. It is quite a contrast to the picture I have just described:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be
equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and
took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the

likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth” Philippians 2:5–10.

This is quite a different picture from the one we have described, quite a different picture from that of the man who is trying to press his way to the top. But here is a picture of Jesus. I sometimes call Philippians 2:5–10 a description of the cascade of God’s love, for it pictures, step by step, Jesus leaving Heaven and coming to this earth.

There in verse 6, it speaks about Christ being in the form of God, or Christ being God. Then the next verse tells us about the next step, that Jesus, Who was God, became man. Notice what *kind* of a man He became. He became a *servant*. Notice what kind of a servant He became—a humble, obedient servant. Notice, as we go on there in Philippians 2, not only did He become a humble, obedient servant, but this humble, obedient Servant suffered a death. And notice what *kind* of death He suffered—the death of the cross.

So we have beautifully pictured the cascade of God’s love: God becoming a man, becoming a servant, becoming a humble, obedient servant, and dying a death, dying the lowliest of deaths—the death of the cross.

Who was this Christ that became a man? Before we ever can appreciate the incarnation, before we ever can appreciate the glory and splendor of Christ becoming a man, it is necessary to understand who He was *before* He became a man. Let’s focus our attention on this Christ.

I invite you to turn in your Bibles to Hebrews. Here in Hebrews 1, Paul sets forth for us in clear, explicit language the glory of Jesus before the incarnation, the glory of Christ before He became a man. Who was this Christ who became a man?

“For unto which of the angels said He at any time, Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee? And again, I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to me a Son? And again, when He bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, He saith, And let all the angels of God worship Him. And of the angels He saith, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire” Hebrews 1:5–7.

Now notice in verse 8, this is the Father speaking, and He is speaking to the Son, Jesus:

“But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom” Hebrews 1:8.

Who was this Christ who became man? According to the clear words of the Bible, He was God. His throne was established as far back in the ages of eternity as our minds can comprehend and an infinite amount beyond that.

“Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever...” Hebrews 1:8.

Picture this Jesus in the ages of eternity, myriads of angels worshiping Him, the express image of the brightness of the Father’s glory. At a word from His mouth, thousands of angels were dispatched to various parts of the creation. At a word from Him, these angels carried out His plans. They worshiped Him, and thousands of angels sang His praise, gave Him adoration and homage, brought honor to His name.

Who was this Christ who entered into this humiliation; this Christ who became a man; this Christ who became a servant; this Christ who became a humble, obedient servant who died the death of the cross? Who was He? He was God, worshiped by all the angels, the express image of the Father’s glory.

But Paul sets Him forth in the book of Hebrews in another function. Besides being God, notice this other interesting aspect which Paul gives us about Jesus the Christ, the one that humbled Himself:

“God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also He made the worlds; Who being the brightness of His glory, and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high” Hebrews 1:1–3.

We have already noted that Christ was God, worshiped by all the angels. Now here in verses 2–3, Paul sets forth these two additional functions of Christ. First, according to Hebrews 1:2, Christ is the *Creator*. He is the One who made all the worlds, the One who brought the planets into existence, the One who created our world in beauty and splendor.

Let your mind dwell upon Eden and think of the trees, beautiful, without a blight. Think of the trees, heavy laden with fruit. Think of the beautiful lakes, the green verdure of the valleys. It was Jesus Christ who was the Creator of all this. He created the planets that revolve around the sun.

Notice something else that Paul says here about Jesus. Not only was He the Creator, but in verse 3:

“Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power...” Hebrews 1:3.

Not only is Jesus God, worshiped by all the angels; not only was He the Creator, the One that brought all the worlds into existence, but He is the Sustainer of the universe.

It is not by accident that our earth stays on its course around the sun and does not collide with other planets. It's not by accident that, in the springtime, the flowers burst forth in their beauty. It's not by accident that the tulips stick their heads through the damp earth in the spring. It's not by accident that the crocuses bloom. Oh, no. It is God, Jesus Christ, the Creator of the universe, that *sustains* the universe, that causes every flower to burst forth in its beauty. It's not by accident that the squirrels are getting a heavier coat of fur this time of year. Oh, no. Our heavenly Father, through Jesus, sustains the universe.

And why is this significant in our study tonight? Back to Philippians 2. Notice how this fact that Jesus Christ is God—that Jesus Christ is the Creator and Sustainer of the universe—notice how this fact makes more glorious His humiliation and His sacrifice:

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God” Philippians 2:5–6.

Was Christ equal with God? Yes.

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant...” Philippians 2:6–7.

He “made Himself of no reputation.” You think of the great principle of this world—striving to be at the top, pushing men aside, elbowing one's room in, seeking for position and flattery and praise and honor, little men striving to be first—and you think of Jesus, the God of the universe, the Creator and Sustainer of the universe, made Himself of no reputation—not interested in that praise and flattery and honor for Himself alone, but took upon Himself the form of a servant.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” Philippians 2:5.

Which of the attitudes are yours? Are you interested in employment where you set your goal as reaching the top, and independent of other people, you are going to be

at the top? And if it means someone else has to be pushed aside, your goal is on the top? Is that your goal? Or are you looking at things the way Jesus looked at them?

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be
equal with God: But made Himself of no reputation”
Philippians 2:5–7.

As we look about us today, we see multitudes dying of coronary heart disease, some 600,000 alone this year. The leading cause of coronary heart disease in the United States is emotional stress. Could it be possible that one of the great reasons for emotional stress is this dog-eat-dog philosophy, this concept of elbowing one's way in, this concept of striving for the top?

Are there some people in our society today afflicted with stomach ulcers? Could it be possible that one of the great reasons for this is stress, tension, the push, the drive to get ahead? Is our society afflicted with nervous breakdowns? Is it indeed true that many of the doctors in the United States are treating more people for nervous conditions than primarily physical ailments? Could it be that we have failed to understand the true *principle* of life and the true *law* of life?

I would like to share with you a marvelous statement that sets forth the true principle of life, that sets forth the true law of life. It's from this wonderful book, *The Desire of Ages*, on the life of Jesus Christ. And it's found on the first page of the book:

“Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven...” *The Desire of Ages*, page 19.

In Calvary, we see demonstrated before our eyes the law of life. And so, as multitudes press for honor and prestige and think that in attaining that goal they will have life, we see broken health, we see nervous breakdowns and heart attacks. But Jesus invites us into a way of life that's totally different. The law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for the universe.

[W. D. Frazee]

When I was eight years old, I attended a picnic. At that picnic, the one thing I remember was a race for eight-year-old boys. And the prize was a dish of ice cream. For a barefooted boy on a hot summer day, the fourth of July, can you imagine? And I can still see that man standing there with his cap and saying, “Now, boys, all of you put your foot right on this line. When I drop my cap, as soon as my cap hits the dirt, you're

off. Go down there to that mark and turn around and come back. The first boy who gets back gets a dish of ice cream.”

What do you suppose I did? What do you suppose all the other little boys did? Why, we all ran. But oh, I wanted to win, and I did! And I got that dish of ice cream.

But what about all the other little boys? They didn’t get any.

Somebody says, “That’s life.”

That’s life the way it’s lived in this world, isn’t it, friends?

You know, I’m so glad that when I got into my teens, I found something better than that. I found that there was a way of life that I didn’t have to beat somebody else in order to win. I found out that there was something that God had for me that didn’t have to be grabbed from someone else; that God wasn’t in the business of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

You see, folks, there are only two philosophies of life on this planet. Brother Finley has just talked to us about them. One is this idea: “There is room at the top.” The other is expressed in these words:

“God’s plan of life has a place for every human being”
Education, page 225.

And I have come to know that the General Manager of the universe is my best friend, and He runs the whole thing for me, for my benefit. And that doesn’t mean, friends, that He is going to make me president of the United States. No. And I’m not sorry about that. He’s not even going to make me governor of this state. That’s all right, too.

Sometimes I see young people striving, striving, striving to get hold of something, and I think in my heart, “Well, that’s something I’ve already had, and I don’t have anymore.” I’m so glad, friends, that I have learned that there is nothing I have to grab from somebody else, or hold onto if somebody else wants to grab it from me. God is in the business of abundantly satisfying every desire of the soul if we will learn from Him how to be happy, how to be content.

The Great Physician says:

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden...”
Matthew 11:28.

You folks who have high blood pressure, nervous tension, ulcers, coronaries:

“...And I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light” Matthew 11:28–30.

In these words, we have a divine prescription for the healing of all physical, mental, and spiritual ills. Of all the causes of disease, friends, the greatest is the one that Brother Finley and I are presenting tonight—this tension that comes to outstrip others, take something that somebody else has, climb up on the shoulders or the backs or the faces of other people.

Room at the top? My dear friends, if you follow Jesus Christ, you may not be at what the world calls “the top.” Sharing a cross on Golgotha is not exactly the top, as men measure position. Washing feet in the upper room is not exactly a high position. We are to learn of Jesus the way of meekness and lowliness.

In that wonderful book *Desire of Ages*, which Brother Finley was quoting from, on page 88 is this sentence concerning Christ when He was just a young Man in His teens and twenties:

“...He did not strive for worldly greatness, and in even the lowliest position He was content” *The Desire of Ages*, page 88.

Somebody may say, “Well, Brother Frazee, aren’t you afraid that if you give the young people this philosophy, they won’t have any incentive to do anything?”

Well, I’ll risk it. I want to tell you something, friends: there is something greater than the incentive of force and pressure and trying to rule others.

When Napoleon was banished to the Island of St. Helena, and there spent his last days, he had a great deal of time for reflection. As he looked back over his life and recognized that at the end, he had made a failure, as he thought of the difference in the life and work of Jesus Christ, he conversed with one of his generals who had chosen to share his exile with him. He spent a great deal of time talking with him. And in one of those dialogues, he expressed these words. I want to read them to you. This is Napoleon:

“Alexander, Caesar, Charlemagne, and I founded empires, but on what did the creations of our genius rest? On force. Jesus Christ alone founded His empire on love. And at this hour, millions would die for Him.

“If we are Christians, we expect one day to live with Him always. Let us accept now the motive which alone causes the angels and the inhabitants of the other worlds to serve

Him—the motive of love—with no thought of displacing others, with no thought of bettering ourselves at the expense of others” Napoleon.

Napoleon mentioned Alexander the Great as one of those who had founded an empire on force. You remember how this young man, with his great driving genius, took his soldiers across into Asia Minor and defeated Darius in those battles. And finally he had the whole world, the known world of that time, at his feet. It is said that he sighed for other worlds to conquer. Then he had a great victory celebration in old Babylon. In that night of revelry and debauchery, he drank and drank and drank, until finally, he died as the result, just 33 years old.

Some 300 years later, there was another young Man who died at the age of 33. That was Jesus; He died on a cross. Alexander died on the throne of the world. Jesus died on the cross. Someone has put it in verse. May I share it with you?

Jesus and Alexander
Died at thirty-three;
One lived and died for self,
One died for you and me.

The Greek died on a throne;
The Jew died on a cross;
One's life a triumph seemed;
The other but a loss.

One led vast armies forth;
The Other walked alone;
One shed a whole world's blood,
The Other gave His own.

One won the world in life,
And lost it all in death;
The other lost His life,
To win the whole world's faith.

Jesus and Alexander
Died at thirty-three.
The Greek made all men slaves;
The Jew made all men free.

One built a throne on blood;
The Other built on love.
The one was born of earth;
The Other from above.

The one won all this earth,
To lose all earth and heaven;
The Other gave up all,
That all to Him be given.

The Greek forever died,
The Jew forever lives;
He loses all who gets,
He wins all things who gives.

And let me tell you, my dear friends, the Devil's most subtle lie is that you can have some of both. But in the end, these things are mutually exclusive. When the Shepherd divides the sheep from the goats, there will be no middle class. Those who have given all for Jesus, and those who have lived for self will be clearly distinguished.

Brother Finley has pointed out that this is a very practical thing when it comes to our daily work. There is many a man toiling along in some department, in some factory, in some office, longing for the time when he can have a better job, a higher position.

"Well," somebody says, "Sure. Why shouldn't everybody try to advance?"

Let me read an interesting statement from what I believe is an inspired source. It is in this old book, *Gospel Workers*:

"...Many suffer grief, pain, and disappointment, because they are unwilling to fill the humble place which God's providence assigns them, where they will remain unnoticed and unknown" *Gospel Workers*, page 459.

But it is that verb I want you to notice: remain. Many are unhappy, disappointed. Why? "...Because they are unwilling to fill the humble place which God's providence assigns them where they will remain unnoticed and unknown."

Here I am a deacon in the church. But I've already been a deacon five years. I think it's about time they made me an elder. Don't you think so?

But I've been an elder for a number of years. Now, where do I go from here?

Well, you see, dear friends, no matter where we aim on the ladder, there is something we think of as 'higher up.'

Several years ago, I went back to a place where I had been early in my ministry, and I met a man whom I had the joy of seeing baptized in my work. It had been several years since I saw him, and he said to me, "Brother Frazee, what are you doing now?"

"Well," I said, "I'm pastor of a church in Oklahoma."

“Oh,” he said, “I would have thought by this time you’d be conference president.”

And I saw that I had a little work yet to do with that convert. I explained to him that the Lord didn’t call everybody to be a conference president, and that no matter how long a man was a pastor, that didn’t mean that he was someday to become a conference president.

Did I tell him the truth? Did I? Oh, yes.

Let me use a political illustration, for I would rather use that than the religion of Christ. How many states are there in the United States? Fifty. That’s right. Do you suppose that among them are governors that aspire to be president of the United States? It seems to come out every now and then. But do you know how many presidents there are in the White House? There’s one. What are the other 49 governors going to do?

Do you see what I’m getting at, dear friends? And whether you are thinking of it in government or in business, in work or in the church, remember:

“God’s plan of life has a place for every human being”
Education, page 225.

And the highest place in the universe that you can be in is the place that God has made you for. That’s where you can find real contentment if you will *accept* it. Of course, if you don’t accept it...

We have all driven along the highway and smiled as we have seen some cow or a horse in a pasture reaching out over the fence or through the fence. What for? Some grass on the other side. One farmer tried an experiment. He had two pastures. He had his cattle in one, and they were reaching through, so he opened the gate and let them in where they had been reaching for. Do you know what some of them did? You guessed it. That’s right. Reaching out for that which doesn’t seem quite so available.

You and I are not cattle. God has given us brains, and He wants us to use these brain cells to learn from Him the way of life. And it is not seeking for recognition or position. It is not seeking for notice. It is not seeking for promotion. It is seeking to do our best in the place God has put us to reveal the love of Jesus and to live the life of Jesus.

And if God ever wants us to do something else, He can arrange it in His time and way. It won’t be necessary for us to elbow somebody else. And as far as recognition is concerned, the Christian can think of no greater recognition than to hear Jesus say, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant... enter thou into the joy of thy lord” Matthew 25:21.

“Master, where shall I work today?”
And my love flowed warm and free;

He pointed me out a tiny plot,
And said, "Tend that for me."

But I answered quickly, "Oh, no, not there,
Not anyone could see;
No matter how well my task was done,
Not that little place for me."

And His voice when He spoke it was not stern,
But He answered me tenderly;
"Little one, search that heart of thine,
Are you working for them, or Me?"

Nazareth was just a little place, and so was Galilee. But I want to tell you something, friends: everybody in Nazareth wasn't satisfied. It takes more than being in a little place, a humble place, to be satisfied. It takes the light of love that filled the heart of Jesus. It takes the Spirit of the One who once was on the throne of the universe and who humbled Himself, step by step, left Heaven, took the form of men, became a servant, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

Oh, friends! The world is thinking of how to climb the ladder. Jesus went down, down, down. What for? That He might reach you and me, for that's where *we* were, down at the bottom. And oh, if we will let Him fill our hearts with that love, that *kind* of love, then, like Him, we shall be happy in *any* position! We shall not seek methods by which we can get above somebody else or take the *place* of someone else. We shall accept gladly the position His providence assigns.

"Ah," somebody says, "Brother Frazee, I'd be glad to if I thought it was God who was doing it. But you don't know how I got where I am. People have just done all kinds of things to me. They have been mean to me. They had lied about me. That's why I'm not promoted."

The interesting thing about our Lord is, friends, if we are willing to let Him arrange our lives, He uses the strangest things sometimes to accomplish it. Do you know how God got Joseph to Egypt? He used the evil deeds of his own brothers. Not that He *caused* them to do those evil deeds, but when they did them, God said, "Very well, we will use that." God got Joseph to Egypt as a slave.

For 10 years, he worked faithfully in Potiphar's house. Then he was promoted, wasn't he? Where to? The prison, the dungeon. And his feet were hurt with fetters. Oh, my friends, where was God? God was right there with Joseph. There wasn't a day lost. There wasn't a minute wasted. It was all necessary to develop in Joseph this deep, tender love in a practical application to the needs of others.

So tonight, my dear friends, I invite you to think of your own inner heart, for no one can read your mind. Ask the Holy Spirit to illuminate the chambers of the soul and

see. Is there any thought, “Oh, if I will do my job well, maybe I can get a different job, a better job.” Listen, friends, if you do your job well, you may have the joy of continuing in it for quite a while.

“Oh, then I think I’ll do a bad job.”

That’s one way to lose the job you have.

It’s wonderful to be so conscious of God’s leading in our lives and of our decision to walk the humble, unselfish, sacrificial way with Jesus that we can leave with Him all questions of assignment to something else.

This is practical; this is real. There are those all over this world who are demonstrating this. And they know that this is something better than all the thievery, rat race, mad rushing, that is filling the world with tension and stress and its results today. Jesus says:

“Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light”
Matthew 11:28–30.

We will spend a few moments now in witness. And this evening I’m inviting those who feel that God has spoken especially to them tonight, and they feel that there is a decision that they need to make and they’re glad to express it. Jesus says:

“Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven”
Matthew 10:32.

So you may come up here and speak so that all can hear, you who feel that God has given you a call and a challenge tonight, and you are responding to it.

[Testimony service]

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