

## Paul's Letter to the Philippians - Lesson #6

Philippians 2:5-11

Dr. Bruce Bickel

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**Bruce:** Gracious and sovereign Lord, it's in Your presence that we exist. In Your presence we live. In Your presence we will go to be with You in glory. Father, we pray that You would give us a sample of that this morning as we open Your word, that we might see You in all of Your glory. For Jesus' sake we pray. Amen.

**Men:** Amen.

**Bruce:** Let's turn in our Bibles, please, to Philippians 2, verses 5-11, reading again from the English Standard Version of the Bible. Philippians chapter 2, beginning at verse 5.

*“Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though He was in the form of God, did not equate equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”* This is the word of the Lord.

**Men:** Thanks be to God.

**Bruce:** Amen and Amen. Now the last couple of weeks, brothers, Paul has been teaching the church at Philippi the need for church unity. And his approach has been that *unity comes from humility*. We've been talking a lot about humility. Humility is not thinking less of yourself. Humility is not thinking of yourself at all. Humility is the guideline by which we will have unity, because it puts us in a position of thinking more about other people than we do ourselves. And the best way that Paul can encourage his friends at Philippi to live a life of humility and so to have true fellowship in the body of Christ in unity is by reminding them of the example of the Person and work of Christ.

Now we have this very important statement that I just read of what was believed from the beginning of the life of the church about the true humanity and Deity of Christ. This is one of the most important sections and that is why we want to spend some time on it, because it's really describing for us what the early church believed about the Person and work of Christ. When we talk about His Person we talk about His perfection. When we talk about His obedience we talk about His submission to the Father. So we have the Person and the work of Christ—His perfection and His obedience.

And I want you to notice the important things that Paul teaches and reminds the church of at Philippi. If we're going to be motivated, we need to understand what Christ has done for us and who He is. And the outline I gave you today is a very good outline of what the early church believed to be the Person and work of Christ. They describe the character of the Lord Jesus. And Paul encourages us to put into practice the same characteristics in our own lives that he's going to walk us through in chapter 2, verses 5-11.

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Now to be sure there is a part of the area of the life of Christ of which He cannot be our model. For example, We cannot copy His redemptive acts. We cannot do that. We cannot suffer and die vicariously. We cannot do that. It was He alone who was able to satisfy the divine justice and bring people to glory.

But I do think we should understand this, men. What the help of God we can and should copy the spirit that is behind those redemptive acts. When you think of the redemptive act of why did He go to the cross and what is the spirit behind that, we can have that spirit in our relationships with people inside the church. We cannot perform these redemptive acts, but we can have the spirit behind those acts—the love, the sacrifice, the obedience, the compassion, the mercy, the justice, those types of things—in our relationships with each other. And the attitude of humility with a view of helping others should be present and should grow in the lives of every one of us.

So we need to take those redemptive acts of Christ and think about them as we're going to walk through them today. What is the spirit behind those acts that caused Him to do that? Can we take that spirit and apply that to our own lives? We cannot perform the act itself. But we can basically have the spirit behind the acts. And that's the point of verses 1-4.

Now one thing I'm going to do today, men,--and I encourage you to do this,--I'm going to give you a lot of Bible verses to support these premises of the Person and work of Christ in our passage. And I'd encourage you to review them at home.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** Just because I've given you verses, I'm trying to support the premise that Paul is teaching us. Use them at home in your own devotional life. Let the Holy Spirit teach you things that will be important to your own life personally. Now I'm going to give you a lot of verses. I'm not going to read them all. But I encourage you in your own devotional life and your own quiet time to look at these verses and take them in the context of Philippians chapter 2, verses 5-11.

One of the things we're going to talk about today is the *oneness of Christ, the lowliness of Christ, and His helpfulness, His servanthood*. They are all manifested by Christ and should be manifested with us.

Let's take a look at John chapter 10 verse 30. Now again these verses and what we are talking about today is what the early church believed about the Person and the work of Christ.

John 10 verse 30. *"My Father who has given them to Me is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."* There's a oneness that Christ is talking about that the early church believed, that God the Father and God the Son were one. *"No one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. I and the Father are one."*

How about Matthew chapter 20 verse 28? *"Even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many."*

Do we have a servant's heart? Do we have the spirit behind that act? The act was that He gave Himself as a ransom for many. Do we have the spirit behind that, the spirit that

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would say that I'm going to sacrifice myself for the sake of the body of Christ, for a brother or a sister?

How about 1 Peter 2:21? 1 Peter chapter 2 verse 21. *“For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example that you might follow in His steps. When He was reviled He did not revile in return. When He suffered He did not threaten, but continued entrusting Himself to Him who judges justly.”*

Remember, the word *entrusting* is a very interesting thing. Now we're told to submit to authority. But we're never told to entrust ourselves to an authority. There's a difference. Jesus submitted Himself to men, but He entrusted Himself to God. We are never told to entrust ourselves to an authority. We can submit to them as citizens. But we take that submission, that act of submission, and we entrust that to God. We give that to God and say, “Lord, You use this act of my submitting for Your glory.”

Now I could give you illustration after illustration in the corporate world where I had to follow that. I had to submit to someone who I thought was not necessarily the person with the most smarts, not with the greatest ability. But that was a non-issue. The issue was this. Was I willing to submit to her because that was her position. She had a divine appointment in my life as my authority. My responsibility was to submit to her, not entrust to her, but submit. And you take that act of submission and then you entrust that to God and say, “Lord, You use this act of submission for Your glory and the benefit of the Kingdom.” It's a wonderful verse for us to understand—the difference between submission and entrusting.

That's one of the things where we can have the spirit of Jesus. In His redemptive acts, He was entrusting it all to God. We can entrust the activity of our submission to our authorities, entrusting them to God.

How about 1 John 2:6? *“Whoever says he abides in Him ought to walk in the same way in which He walked.”*

Now what Paul is saying is to look at the Person and the work of Christ. Look at His activities. And what is the spirit behind those activities that He gave for us? Have that same spirit be within us, so we can give that to other people. You've heard me say before that ministry is giving to someone else what God has given you. Let's pray for the Lord to give us the right spirit in the way that we relate to people, so that we can be an example of the Person and work of Christ in those activities where we can.

Now because Jesus is our Lord, He can be our example. He is our Lord and He can be our example. But notice this. If He's not our example, our faith is barren and our truth is dead. If He is not our example, we have no faith. If He is not our example, truth is dead. That's what he means in verse 5. *“Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus.”*

*“Have this mind among yourselves.”* Do you have the right attitude? The word *attitude* means this. How do you view something? How you view something is going to determine how you're going to respond and act toward it.

Let's just take the example of your boss at work. How do you view your boss? Do you view him as somebody who is a competitor, somebody who is going to harm you and hurt

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you in your activities, somebody who is after you? Or do you view him as a divine appointment because Romans 13 says that *"all authority has been given by God?"*

You see, in my work at PNC, I had to change my view of my authority. And once I changed my attitude toward that, He gave me a different response. I could then submit. I could then entrust. How you view things is going to determine how you act. And what Paul is saying is to have the same mind as Christ Jesus. When you have the mind of Christ, you and I look at things differently.

If you walk down the streets of Pittsburgh and you ask somebody, "Who is Jesus Christ?", you'll get as many answers as the people that you ask. You see, their view of Christ is going to determine how they act.

How do you view Christ? What Paul is teaching the people at Philippi is how to view Christ correctly, because when you view Him correctly you will act correctly and follow His example. So it's important to realize that how you view something determines how you're going to act.

Now notice that the world says that we must be open-minded. Let's go to Romans chapter 8, verses 5-11. And men, I hope that you'll take the chance to look at these verses on your own, just in your own meditative quiet time.

*"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh. But those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit. For to set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God. For it does not submit to God's law; indeed, it cannot. Those who are in the flesh cannot please God."*

Now notice, friends. The person who is not redeemed can't do anything else but act that way. We just need to realize that sometimes we get so frustrated with people. But they can't act any other way. If they view the flesh as their god and the world as their god, they're going to act that way. We just have to understand that they can't act any other way.

Notice the contrast now, beginning in verse 9. *"You, however, are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if in fact the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to Him. But if Christ is in you, although the body is dead because of sin, the Spirit is life because of righteousness. If the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you."*

We just need to understand the difference between those who are regenerate and those who are not. The unregenerate cannot act in any other way than what we just described in Romans 8. That's just who they are. And part of the reason is that they have a view of God that permits them to act like that. We need a view of God that is different. We need to have the mind that Christ had about these issues, and just understand that when we see somebody who can't act any other way, we don't put him down. We don't feel high and mighty. We're not proud of the fact. We just need to pray for them. That's all they can do. They can't act any other way.

Sometimes in counseling situations somebody will say, "Well why is she doing that? Why is he doing that?" They just can't do anything else. You know, that ought to provide

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what for us? What ought to motivate you when you hear that statement? They can't do anything else but act that way. What does that prompt in your heart?

**Participant:** Love.

**Bruce:** Mercy! That's all they can do. I was once just like that. But God was pleased to redeem me, to regenerate me so that I can now live with the Spirit of God in me.

Now when you see someone like that—friends we have, family members—it ought to prompt you just to pray for them and ask the Lord to open their eyes that they might see Him more gloriously. We just need to pray for friends like that that we have. It's not a sense of pride. It's just a sense of the realization that we need to be merciful. That's the spirit behind Jesus that we can have in our relationships.

Notice that one of the characteristics of Christ's work and life are described in verses 5 and 6. *Even though He was God, He did not cling to His rights as God.*

Now in this paragraph there are two words that we need to understand. One is the word *form* and the other word is *fashion* in verses 5 and 6—form and fashion. They occur in very close connection. It says, "existing in the form of God, recognized in fashion as a human being." Now there's a difference. Existing in the form of God, but recognized in the fashion as a human being.

Now what's the difference? Well in the context of these verses, the word *form* refers to the inner, sensual and abiding nature of a person, while *fashion* points to the person's external fleeting appearing and appearance. One has to do with the internal, one has to do with the external.

And what Paul is saying when he puts those two things together, the word *form* and the word *fashion* is existing in the form of God, recognized in fashion as a human being. Now Paul is saying this in Philippians 2:6, that Christ has always been and always continues to be God by nature, the express image of the Deity. He had always been and always will be the express image of the Deity. The specific character of the Godhead, as expressed in all the divine attributes, are His eternally.

That's the oneness we mentioned earlier. What we are basically saying is that God the Father and God the Son are one. We need to understand that internally and externally. One was in the express image of God, fashioned as a human.

**Participant:** Hey, Bruce?

**Bruce:** Yes, please?

**Participant:** Is not Christ eternally human?

**Bruce:** Yes.

**Participant:** It's not a passing thing. Bishop Rodgers could probably clarify that.

**Bishop Rodgers:** He was made human but He remains human.

**Bruce:** That's right.

**Participant:** It will be permanent, but it hasn't been eternal, right?

**Bruce:** It will be permanent; that's correct. That's what I'm saying. He became human and He always will be.

**Participant:** It was a choice He made, to become human. But He had always been eternally divine.

**Bruce:** Correct. You can't separate those.

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**Participant:** But Bishop, is He human now?

**Bishop:** Forever, with the scars.

**Participant:** Amen.

**Participant:** I mean, to say that Christ was no longer human, that he had a kind of transport,--

**Bishop:** (*Unclear*)

**Participant:** I don't even know what kind of heresy that is. But with what you're saying I think that Bishop Rodgers cleared it up.

**Bruce:** That's right; he cleared it up. He became and He always will be human. Look at Colossians 1:15. Yes, please?

**Participant:** One of the things I think about is that this sort of means that He could never do this again for anybody else. He has sort of committed Himself forever to us, which is mind-boggling.

**Bruce:** That is Now look at Colossians 1:1. "*He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by Him all things were created in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.*" In Him all things hold together.

How about John 17 verse 5? "*And now, Father, glorify Me in Your presence with the glory that I had with You before the world existed.*"

Now that's important for us to understand, the glory that He had before the world existed. Go down to verse 24 of the same chapter—John 17:24. "*Father, I desire that they also, whom You have given Me, may be with Me where I am, to see My glory that You have given Me because You loved Me before the foundation of the world.*"

**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** That's important for us to understand, the glory that Christ had before the foundation of the world. Now when you think about that, I wonder what the angels thought when they realized that He was going to become a Man. I wonder what they thought, that the glory of God's Son was going to become a Man, humbling Himself to do that. I was thinking about that last night. I wonder what they were thinking about when they heard the rumor (*laughter*) that Jesus was going to become a Babe. I just wonder what they thought.

We need to recognize that Christ existed in glory before the foundation of the world. The word *grasp* is an interesting word. He did not grasp His rights to be equal with God. The word *grasp* means *to take hold of*. The opposite is *to let go*.

Look in Isaiah 14, verses 13 and 14. Scripture says that Jesus did not hold on to these things. He did not grasp or hold on to His glory.

Now contrast that with Satan in Isaiah 14, verses 13 and 14. "*You said in your heart, I will ascend to heaven above the stars of God. I will set my throne on high. I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the court. I will ascend above the heights of the clouds. I will make myself like the Most High.*"

Now that's the contrast. Jesus did not grasp those things to be held on to. Satan wanted those things.

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**Participant:** Amen.

**Bruce:** So what did Jesus do? He laid aside His glory—verse 7. He laid aside His glory. His condescension made it possible for our salvation.

So how did He let go? Let's take a look at 2 Corinthians chapter 8 verse 9. *"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for Your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich."* He did not hold on to his glorious status that He had before the foundation of the world. He gave that up to accomplish our salvation to honor the Father. What the Father ordained the Son accomplished, and the Holy Spirit applied.

*He took upon Himself the nature of a human servant*, not by subtraction of His divine attributes, but by the assumption of a human nature. Now that's important to understand. He did not sacrifice His divine attributes. He just assumed a human nature. He maintained His divine attributes. He just took on a human nature. He humbled Himself.

Charles Spurgeon makes this wonderful statement. *"The Infinite has become an Infant."*

Now I wonder what the angels were thinking when they realized that the infinite God the Father was going to become an infant. Just ponder that for a moment. That's what Christ has done for us. He humbled Himself.

Notice that the Scripture says that He became a Man. But the real issue is what kind of a Man did He become? He became a servant. Read John chapter 13, washing the disciples' feet.

**Participant:** Bruce?

**Bruce:** Yes, please?

**Participant:** I'm sorry. You meant the infinite God the Son, didn't you? You said that the infinite God the Father became a man.

**Bruce:** God the Son, correct. That's right.

**Participant:** That's another heresy. *(Laughter)*

**Second Participant:** He said that the Infinite has become an Infant.

**First Participant:** I know.

**Bruce:** The infinite Son became an Infant.

**Participant:** Yes.

**Bruce:** Correct. So taking on the form of a servant *"He made Himself nothing."* He emptied Himself.

Now notice. He did not empty Himself of His Deity but of His glory. He did not empty Himself of His Deity; He emptied Himself of His glory. That's what He did not grasp onto. Yes?

**Participant:** I don't know if I can articulate this, but I remember that as a new Christian that one of the things that was most convincing to me was that if I would talk to my friends who were unbelievers, you talk about God becoming a man, they would think it just sounded impossible that God could do that. And what convinced me of its truth was that it wasn't an issue. God could do anything. Why would He? And that never seemed to occur to them. It's just that human pride is so great that it never occurred to them why God would do this. They would just think that He couldn't.

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**Bruce:** Right.

**Participant:** But of course He could. Why would He?

**Bruce:** Do you really think that I need somebody to save me? That's their attitude. You're exactly right. You see, that's the attitude they have about God. The only way they can act is that way. Yes sir, you're absolutely right.

**Participant:** Bruce, I'm sorry. As you were talking I was thinking of that song written by Michael Card, "To the Mystery." Some of you know Michael Card. He's really a profound theological song writer. And what you described he summed up with these words.

*"When the Father longed to show  
A love He wanted us to know,  
He sent His only Son,  
And so became a holy embryo.  
A fiction as fantastic and wild  
As a mother made by her own Child,  
A hopeless Babe who cried  
Was God Incarnate, a Man deified."*

**Bruce:** Excellent. Thank you. So we need to remember these things, men, as our own expression of our Christian walk. We just need to remember these things and the spirit behind them. Where appropriate, what kind of a spirit do I need to have as an example in my life that Christ modeled for us—the spirit behind these things that caused Him to do these things?

He stooped lower still *and became obedient to death*. He lived a life of utter obedience—Romans 5:19.

**Transcriber's Note:** Romans 5:19. *"For by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one Man's obedience the many will be made righteous."*

**Bruce:** Even to the extent of dying. Now this death on a cross was a death of unimaginable pain and shame, a curse in the eyes of the Jews because of what the Law said in Deuteronomy 21 verse 23 and Galatians 3:13.

**Transcriber's Note:** Deuteronomy 21:22-23, NKJV. *"If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the LORD your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God."*

**Transcriber's Note:** Galatians 3:13, ESV. *"Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.'"*

**Bruce:** Now here's something that I found interesting. What the Crucifixion meant to the Romans is expressed in Cicero's words. Here's what the Romans thought of the cross. *"Far be the very name of the cross not only from the body, but even from the thought—the eyes, the ears of Roman citizens."* In other words, it was such a heinous thought that Cicero was saying, "Don't even think about it." It's not even worth pondering because it's so unimaginable.



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And so when you think about that, think that Christ stooped down to do that to accomplish our salvation.

Now notice His exaltation in verses 9-11. We're told that "*God has exalted Him to the highest place*"—verse 9. He has "*given Him the name that is above every name*" in verse 9.

Now in consequence of His humiliation, His sacrifice on the cross and His self-sacrifice, Jesus was given by the Father the name that is above every name. Now that name does not mean a specific name or title, as such, though "Jesus is Lord" is the right and proper Christian profession.

He was not given a name. When we talk about the word *name* in the Scriptures, we talk about all the attributes of the person. When we pray in Jesus' name, we're saying that I am putting all the attributes of Jesus into my prayer. So it would essentially mean this. If I'm praying in Jesus' name, I'm basically saying this: that Jesus would say the same prayer and ask for the same thing if He were in my shoes right now, because when I pray in Jesus' name I'm bringing in all the attributes of the One whose name I'm evoking. And so I'm bringing all the attributes of Jesus down into this prayer. It's as if Jesus were praying the same thing if He were here praying in my shoes right now.

So this was not a name that was given. But the title "Jesus is Lord" is appropriate for us to confess that name. Take a look at Romans 10:9. You're familiar with that verse, I'm sure. It is appropriate for us as followers of Christ to use the term "Jesus is Lord."

*"Because if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."*

Now the word *confess* means *to agree with*. It doesn't mean to make a verbal profession. There's a difference. A profession means to make a statement about someone. Confession means to agree with something. Literally, it means *to agree with what somebody else has already said*.

And notice what it says. "*If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord.*" I'm confessing that Christ is Lord. Somebody else has already said that. And I'm confessing that. I'm agreeing with what has already been said about the Person and work of Christ.

It means that God has exalted Him to the highest place of honor. And it is most significant, especially when people would say that the Christ of the New Testament is less than God. There are some people who would say that Christ in the New Testament is less than God because they don't see all the majestic works. God exalted Him to the highest place of honor. Someday all people will acknowledge that He is the Lord—chapter 2, verses 10-11.

Now it's important for us to realize, men, that in verses 10-11 that the words that are used of God are used of Jesus in Isaiah chapter 45 verse 23, to express His honor and His rule and authority over creation.

**Transcriber's Note:** Isaiah 45:23.

*"I have sworn by Myself;  
The word has gone out of My mouth in righteousness,  
And shall not return,  
That to Me every knee shall bow,*

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*Every tongue shall take an oath."*

To help us understand this in the New Testament, look at Ephesians chapter 1, verses 20-22. *"And He put all things under His feet, and gave Him as Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."* And look at verse 20. *"That He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come."* And now we see that *"He put all things under His feet, and gave Him as Head over all things to the church, which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all."*

And then lastly, men, I would say this. We need to notice that *all of this is to the glory of God the Father*. This is all for the glory of God the Father. Look at 1 Corinthians 15 verse 28. *"When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son Himself will be subjected to Him who put all things in subjection under Him, that God may be all in all."*

We need to realize that we can't separate the work of Christ from the glory of God. It's all for the glory of God. There's no way that it's independent of the Father's glory. It's all for the glory of God. What the Father ordained the Son accomplished, and the Holy Spirit applies. It all goes to the glory of God.

And so with all these tremendous statements that we just did a quick cursory view of, we should remind ourselves that Paul is giving them this description of the Person and work of Christ to persuade them to put aside disunity, discord and personal ambition, and have Christ be their example. And all I would say, men, is let's look behind the spirit of these actions of Christ on our behalf, and see what spirit we can have in our lives and be examples of Christ.

So we have a summary of this. In verses 1-4 we have *an illustration of Christ*. Verses 5-8 is *the humiliation of Christ*—His sacrifice. And verses 9-11 is *the glorification of Christ*. The illustration of Christ, the humiliation of Christ, and the glorification of Christ.

Well men, I wanted to do something different today. And that was just to give you an introduction to this. And I'm going to trust that you'll study this on your own, because we need to probe the depths of what Paul wrote to us and to the church at Philippi about the Person and work of Christ. There's a motivation for us to be examples for the glory of God. And may it be so that He would be pleased to do that through His Spirit.

Let's pray. Father, You've given us a lot today to ponder, much of which is just beyond our comprehension humanly. So we trust that Your Spirit who resides in us because of our regeneration will guide us into all truth, and individually that You will direct us to those things that are important for us to be examples for Christ. And most of all, Father, we just pray that You'd be glorified by who we are and what we do. And may it be done for Your glory. And all the Brave Men said,

**Men:** Amen. *(Applause)*