

Reach Texas 2018: Proclaim the Name of Jesus . . . Everywhere We Go!

Philippians 2:9-10

*For this reason God highly exalted Him
and gave Him the name
that is above every name,
so that at the name of Jesus
every knee will bow—
of those who are in heaven and on earth
and under the earth—*

Teaching Tip: Prior to the session, write the lesson passage above on the board or on a tear sheet posted in the room.

Introduction

At this very moment throughout Texas, disciples of Jesus Christ are proclaiming His name in different regions, to different people groups, in different ways. From the Panhandle to the Piney Woods, from the DFW Metroplex to the Hill Country, and down to the Gulf Coastal Plain, churches and other ministries are “reaching Texas” by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ in word and deed to people of different cultures, languages, and stations in life.

Teaching Tip: The examples below are just a few of the many ways Texans are reaching their communities and the world for Christ. Introduce the lesson by sharing these stories or other examples of churches and people who are proclaiming the name of Jesus everywhere they go!

- Amarillo Deaf Church began as a ministry of Paramount Baptist Church. Back in 1980, Paramount would send out vans through Amarillo to provide transportation for the deaf population to attend interpreted worship services. The ministry has grown from three people, who attended the first service, to over 100 people who now constitute a standalone church.
- In the midst of a transitioning neighborhood, Fort Worth’s Wedgwood Baptist Church started an outreach ministry to the Hispanic population in their North Texas neighborhood. Pastor Lemuel Lara now leads Wedgwood Español with an onsite worship service and small group Bible study on Sunday as well as midweek services and other ministry activities.
- Throughout Texas, Upward Sports programs are reaching families through recreation ministry for children. First Baptist of Lake Jackson has been sponsoring Upward

programs for 19 years, including Basketball, Flag Football, and Cheerleading. Families in the community are reached for Jesus Christ through the proclamation of the gospel and the witness of volunteers, who selflessly model biblical values.

- In 2012, the pastor of Sherwood Baptist Church in Odessa challenged his people to adopt an unreached people group. From that challenge came an ongoing mission initiative to reach the lost in the Loreto region of Peru, along the Amazon River. Through the ministry and witness of Sherwood, more than half the village of Nuevo Jardin has trusted Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord.

These examples are just a few of the ways in which Southern Baptists in Texas are making a difference for the Kingdom of God. They proclaimed the name of Jesus, and God used the fruit of their witness to glorify Himself. Philippians 2:9-10 speaks to this truth: when Jesus is exalted, people respond. The Apostle Paul's life was a living example of this message. His passion in life was to proclaim the name of Jesus Christ and exalt the Lord. Through Paul's passion, lives were transformed, churches were established, and the Kingdom was advanced. His words to the Philippian church exhorted them to joyfully take up the banner of Christ and carry it out of the church and into the world.

Teaching Tip: Summarize the following information about Paul's letter to the Philippians including the context for the lesson passage (Phlp 2:9-10).

Paul's Passion, Paul's Predicament

The letter to the Philippians reflects Paul's passion, but also his predicament. Throughout the letter is a recurring theme: rejoice! Paul uses the Greek words "joy" (*chara*) or "rejoice" (*chairo*) at least 15 times in the epistle. Some examples include:

- Paul's **joy** in his gospel partnership with the church (1:4-5)
- His **joy** when Christ is proclaimed (1:18)
- His **joy** when the church is unified (2:2)
- A reminder of the source of **rejoicing**: "in the Lord" (3:1)
- The challenge to **rejoice** in all circumstances (4:4)

Paul's passion was in Jesus Christ and in sharing the Good News about Him. He was even passionate about eventually dying for Jesus' sake (1:21). This infectious passion permeates Paul's letter to this church in Macedonia (modern-day Greece). Yet, his words ring with a tinge of irony, because in the moments they were penned, Paul was imprisoned in Rome (1:7). He was not certain about the outcome of his trial, but he was confident in the power of the gospel. God was using Paul's current circumstance to spread the message of salvation into the halls of

power in the Roman Empire (1:12-14). Paul's predicament was actually fueling his passion for the gospel.

In Acts 16, we find the story of the Paul's ministry in Philippi. While he was in Troas, Paul had a vision of a man calling him to Macedonia. When they arrived in Philippi, Paul and his team sought out people who would be receptive to the gospel of Jesus Christ. They found an audience among a group of women who were gathered at a river outside the city gate. Lydia, a wealthy Philippian business owner, was the first person in Europe who responded to the gospel; many others in her household were also saved.

Paul continued to proclaim the name of Christ throughout the city, but the next recorded conversion in Philippi occurred when Paul and Silas were thrown in prison for creating a disturbance in the marketplace. At a time when most people would be discouraged, Paul and Silas rejoiced by praying and "singing hymns to God" (Acts 16:25). When God miraculously intervened on their behalf, Paul had the opportunity to share the gospel with the jailer, who was both amazed and distressed by the event. Just like Lydia, the jailer's conversion preceded the rest of his household coming to faith in Christ. Lydia and her family, as well as the jailer and his family composed the seedbed of the church in Philippi.

Nearly a decade later, Paul was under house arrest in Rome. This time, however, God had not elected to free him in the midst of an earthquake. Instead, Paul would spend over two years waiting for his release. Nevertheless, the apostle made the most of his predicament. He maintained a relationship with churches through regular correspondence. The Prison Epistles—Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, and Philemon—are four of his letters persevered as Scripture. He also used his time in Rome to witness to Roman guards, government officials, royal slaves, and anyone else who would listen to his message (Phlp 2:12-14).

To Philippi . . . With Love

Philippians is a letter brimming with encouragement. From the opening greeting, Paul gushes with personal affection and an emotional connection to his Philippian brothers and sisters in Christ:

- *I thank God every time I remember you (1:3)*
- *I have you in my heart (1:7)*
- *I long for you with the affection of Christ Jesus (1:8)*

Paul knew the Philippians were also concerned about him, and he reassured the saints that he was in good spirits and confident that God would be glorified not only through his trials but also through their own suffering (1:27-28).

Although he does not specifically address any problem within the church, Paul may have received word of some type of disunity in the body. He lovingly challenged them to unite as one

and “have the same mindset as Jesus Christ,” an attitude of humility and submission (2:1-5). He follows this instruction with what some believe is an early church hymn.

Philippians 2:6-11, also known as the “kenosis” (emptying) passage, is a thumbnail version of the gospel message. God, through the person of His Son Jesus Christ, emptied Himself of His majestic rights as God and was born into the world as a human servant, a servant who made the ultimate sacrifice when He died on the cross to pay the price for the sin of all people. Just at the point when He emptied out His physical life on the cross, Jesus was glorified in Heaven by the Father, who proclaimed the name of Jesus as Lord of everyone and everything.

Teaching Tip: Lead group members to read in unison the focal passage.

Examining the Scripture—Philippians 2:9-10

Teaching Tip: In the following Bible study section, explain each phrase in Philippians 2:9-10 and then ask the application questions below. Application information is included following the questions to supplement discussion.

- ***For this reason God highly exalted Him***

Verse 9 is the pivot point in Philippians 2:6-11. Verse 6 begins the story of the “humbling” of God, which in itself is a paradox. God is the highest of all and worthy of worship! How can the God of the universe be humbled or brought low? By His own choice, God the Son came in the form of a human being. He was incarnated into this world in flesh and blood, which in itself was a humbling experience. His humbling continued when he assumed “the form of a slave” (2:7). Jesus did “not come to be served, but to serve” the world (Mark 10:45). His ultimate humbling came when he died on the cross for the sin of all people, in obedience to the will of the Father. Yet, at the point when Jesus had spent Himself completely for the sake of mankind, “for this reason” God the Father opened the gates of heaven and welcomed Jesus to take His rightful place on the throne at God’s right hand, a place of exaltation.

Teaching Tip:

Ask: “For what reason” do you follow Jesus Christ?

Ask: How can you exalt Him through your words and deeds?

Think of all Jesus has done for you: His death on the cross for your sin, His resurrection that assures you that one day you will be resurrected with Him for eternity, His Spirit’s

presence in your life transforming you into a clearer reflection of the Master. For these reasons and more, can there be any other response than exaltation? We exalt the name of Christ when we share His story and our story with the lost. We exalt the name of Jesus when we take His example into the world and lay down our lives willingly for the glory of God as we serve the world.

- ***and gave Him the name***

Before Jesus' birth, an angel visited Mary first, and then Joseph, to proclaim the name the baby would be given: "*you shall give Him the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sins*" (Matt 1:21). Jesus was a common name during the time He lived on the earth, but God gave Him a name to describe what His ministry would accomplish.

God gave Jesus the title of Messiah or Christ, related to His role as the One whom God had anointed to be the savior of Israel in the line of King David. The Greek word *Christos* ("anointed one") was used to translate the Hebrew term for Messiah. In the Old Testament, the Messiah was considered to be the one who would come to reestablish the greatness of Israel and rule over God's kingdom on earth (Dan 9:24-27; Isa 53:5; Micah 5:2, etc.). By referring to Jesus as the Christ (Eph 1:5, Col 2:6, 1 Tim 1:15), Paul planted Jesus firmly the role of Messiah, but according to Paul, Jesus would rule over all things and not just one nation. In the days of the early church, those who proclaimed their devotion to Jesus Christ were known as Christians. Those who followed Jesus would be the citizens of the Messiah's kingdom.

Teaching Tip:

Ask: Describe the last time Jesus' name came up in your conversation with someone?

Ask: How do you answer someone who says, "There are many ways to God; Jesus is one of those ways."

Is Jesus' name a regular word in your vocabulary? It would be interesting, and revealing, to track the number of times in a 24-hour period you speak the name of Jesus. While being a godly person and ministering to the needs of others is a way to attract people to Christ, only through sharing the name of Jesus and His gospel can we lead people to a saving and flourishing relationship with the Messiah. Jesus said "I am the way, the Truth, and the Life. No one can come to the Father except through Me (John 14:6). Only through proclaiming the name of Jesus can we offer His salvation to the lost. Only by trusting in the name of Jesus can we become citizens of His eternal kingdom.

- ***that is above every name***

When Paul writes that God gave Jesus a name “above every name,” he did not mean that the name “Jesus” was reserved only for Him. Not only was Jesus a common name during His time, but people today are named Jesus. Even the name Joshua is a derivative of Jesus. Jesus’ name becomes higher than every name when attached to Messiah, Christ, and Lord. In the days of the early church, the Roman government demanded verbal reverence for the name of the emperor, who carried the title of “Caesar” in honor of the great Julius Caesar. Roman citizens were required to declare “Kaiser kurios” or Caesar is Lord. This statement was not only a pledge of allegiance to Rome but a declaration of the emperor’s divine nature. As Christianity grew and the Roman government began to persecute believers, many Christians were imprisoned and put to death for declaring that “Iesous (Jesus),” not Caesar, was Lord.

Teaching Tip:

Ask: Outside the Christian community, what does the world think and say about Jesus?

Ask: If we believe that Jesus is Lord, what should be our response to Him?

Far too many people in American society today use the name of Jesus is a word only when they are angry or when they hit their thumb with a hammer! Jesus Christ and those who follow Him are routinely mocked or scorned in the popular media. There are, of course, many who have a respectful opinion of Jesus as a wise teacher or religious leader. We know, however, that when we say Jesus, we mean Lord. We do not use His name irreverently, casually, or commonly. Because Jesus is Lord, and His name is above every name, nothing comes before Him in our lives. Because He is Lord, we obey Him. Because He commanded us to go into all the world make disciples (Matt 28:18-20), we have no choice or excuse. Jesus is our Lord, and we follow Him.

- ***so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow—of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth***

Verse 10 evokes an image of a royal throne room. In this scene, Jesus is sitting on the throne at the right hand of the Father. Although the royal Son has given honor to His Father, the Father has given the same honor back to the Son. The honor given by the Father is for the Son to be recognized as Lord of Lords and King of Kings, or as Isaiah 9:6 describes the coming Messiah: “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” The image of every knee bowing before Jesus Christ is in stark contrast to the earlier description of the Son who “humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross” (Phlp 2:8). Notice also that “every knee” will bow before Jesus. Since we know that every knee is not bowing to Jesus today, there is a future implication to this statement. There will come a time when the Son will receive due honor from everyone. Not only those who have proclaimed His name in this life and

followed Him as Lord, but also those who rejected or neglected Him will one day acknowledge His majesty. Even those who will be separated from Him for eternity will, along with those who are welcomed into their heavenly home, bow before Him, and declare His glory.

Teaching Tip:

Ask: What are some of the opportunities you and your church are currently using to proclaim the name of Jesus and reach people for Christ? What are some potential opportunities not currently being used?

Ask: What would be the impact if your church took advantage of more opportunities to reach people for Christ? What would be the impact if they did not?

At the final judgment, all will be bowing the knee, but not all will hear “well done, good and faithful servant” (Matt 25:23). In fact, many will rise up to hear the dreaded words, “depart from me” (Matt 7:23). Every person we reach for Jesus Christ will be one less who will hear these words of judgment. Therefore, we must take every opportunity, in every way possible, to proclaim Jesus as Lord and invite others to begin a life-transforming relationship with Him.