

# The Humble Christ

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**Bible Verse:** Philippians 2:5-8  
**Preached on:** Sunday, November 1, 2020

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Well, it was over seven months ago that we were cruising through the book of Philippians and then COVID hit and we were interrupted by divine providence in that task. This morning, in divine providence, we return to the book of Philippians and I want to explain to you how I'm approaching it and just give you a little sense of why I'm approaching it in the way that I am.

I want to go back and cover a couple of passages, the last two passages that we looked at before COVID hit and that interruption took place to us. That will help us kind of reset the context as we move into the material that follows. I've been able to prepare ahead in this, I know what's coming. I'm very delighted and excited about what lies ahead for us as a church as we consider these things, but I think that that's going to be most effective if we refresh our minds on the important context that led into those passages that are yet to come. Along with that, we are careful here to not address matters of politics or what's happening in the world because those things are of such secondary importance in the life of a Christian, but it would be foolish not to acknowledge the fact that there is something happening on Tuesday that people are aware of. What I want to do here today and next week is bracket that event, whatever the Lord has for us in it, bracket it with a remembrance of our Lord Jesus Christ. On the front end and then on the back end, we are going to consider our Lord Jesus Christ and hopefully let that help us set a right perspective on whatever might come. It's not everyone is anxious about that but there's certainly a prevailing anxiety about what the future is going to hold, some more than others, but what we want to do is we want to set those things aside and we want to focus on the object of our faith, the Lord Jesus Christ, to remember him in his humiliation and his exaltation, remember him for the glory of who he is, to remember him for what he has done for his people, and how what he has done reveals to us the nature of his character and his eternal attributes to us. That is far more important than anything that's going to happen over the coming days and so we want to come back to consider our Lord Jesus Christ and for me that is the most comfortable place to be in a pulpit is talking about Christ, and with the Apostle John saying, "He must increase and I must decrease." And that's the attitude that all of us would want to take for those of us that know him and have been saved by his grace through faith.

Now in the book of Philippians, Paul opens up and congratulates and thanks the Philippians for their faith, for their kindness to him, and he tells them a little bit about his

situation as he sits in a Roman prison and he says that he is full of hope. He's full of hope. He says in chapter 1, verse 19, look at it there with me, he says, "I know that this will turn out for my deliverance through your prayers and the provision of the Spirit of Jesus Christ, according to my earnest expectation and hope, that I will not be put to shame in anything, but that with all boldness, Christ will even now, as always, be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." He says, "If the Roman Empire executes me, it's going to be gain for me because I will go into the immediate presence of Christ. If I live, that's going to be great also because it will extend my time of ministry to you." He says there in verse 22, "If I live on in the flesh, it's fruitful labor for me. But," verse 23, "I desire to depart and be with Christ for that is very much better." And so he says, "Whatever comes in the future, I'm at peace, I am content, I will serve Christ." Now every one of us in this particular week in which this passage comes to us should have that mindset as well. We're not facing prison, we're not facing immediate execution, and we should have the attitude of Paul that says, "Whatever comes in this, I am content because I am in Christ and Christ is everything to me and I rest my hope utterly and completely in Him. And to know Him is my highest joy and no one can take that away from me." And so we see how the object of our faith defines the way that we respond to life.

Now Paul goes on as he addresses the Philippian readers and he says in verse 27 as he pivots toward them, he's given a report on his circumstances and now he tells them what their object and their occupation ought to be in their thinking and in their lifestyle and he says this in chapter 1, verse 27, very important verse that really frames the next 2 ½ chapters of what follows. He says this, "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel; in no way alarmed by your opponents--which is a sign of destruction for them, but of salvation for you, and that too, from God." He says, "I am writing with apostolic authority to tell you this on behalf of the Lord Jesus Christ." He says, "You must walk in a manner that is worthy of the gospel of Christ. You must live in a way that reflects His glory. You must live in obedience."

And what exactly is the obedience that he has in mind, the particular aspect of obedience that this church needed to hear about? Well, he raises it in the first four verses of chapter 2 when he says this. He says,

1 Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, 2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

He is writing for the purpose of cultivating unity within the body of Christ. There were conflicts, there were grumblings in the church. You see that in chapter 2, verse 14, where he says, "Do all things without grumbling or disputing." In chapter 4, verse 2, he highlights, he calls out two particular women in the church and he says, "I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord." There was conflict and division and

strife that was going on in the people, probably to some extent within the body itself, corporately speaking, and if there's strife in the body, you know, over the years you learn that that means that somewhere there's strife in individual homes as well. What Paul says is is that that is not walking in a manner that is worthy of the Gospel of Christ.

He says, "And so I'm writing to you, I'm urging you to be united in spirit." He says, "You've given me so much joy already, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose." You see how concerned he is about this unity that is taking place and I want to tell you for the purposes of God and in the church of Christ, the unity of God's people is far more important than what takes place in any given Presidential election. This is a matter of enduring eternal significance, this matter of unity. This is what Scripture refers to often. You see it in Ephesians 4, for example, verses 1 through 3, that this matter of unity within the body is of supreme importance to the Apostle Paul. Now let's understand what that means. To talk about something being of supreme importance to the Apostle Paul means that it's of supreme importance to the Lord Jesus Christ himself. Paul writes as the authorized representative of Christ and so Paul here is giving the word of Christ to his church to be united in spirit. Well, when Scripture speaks of this theme repeatedly, it means that we need to take it earnestly and to take it seriously.

He goes on in verse 3. He says,

3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

You know, there's a pattern that I've seen, I shouldn't say these things, actually I should, that's why I'm going to say them. There's a pattern that I've seen that takes place in different realms of authority. Whether it's in government or in the workplace or in a marriage, husband/wife, with parents, parents and children, and all of these things, where people with authority, people in the position of God-given authority like to exercise that in a way that is oppressive, that rules over people in order to get exactly what the person with authority wants for themselves, and what you and I must understand in the spirit of unity that Paul is speaking about here, is that that is a completely wrong and distorted way to think about life and to think about whatever position you might have in life. God does not give you authority in a relationship so that you can just do and get whatever you want. That's not the way that it works. God gives you authority so that you are in a position to provide blessing to those that are around you, that are under you. God gives you authority so that you can make it good for those that are underneath your authority. We're going to see how clear and how plain that is in just a moment but I want to enforce and emphasize the point here, is that this is a matter of great significance. And so regardless of our station in life, look at chapter 2, verse 4, where Paul tells this church, "do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." Paul has called the church to unity and he has called the church to a unity that is based on humility.

Now we might toss that word around about humility and humble and what does that look like and what does that mean. Paul understands, Paul knew his audience needed an illustration just like you and I do, and so that call to be a unified humble church brings us to our vital text for this morning which is verses 5 through 8. Now before I read it, I want you to understand what is happening here. Paul has called the church to walk in a manner that is worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. That is his overarching call. That is the introductory command in chapter 1, verse 27, that frames these other things that follow. "Walk in a manner worthy of Christ," he says. Then he says, "Let me tell you specifically what I'm talking about, unity built on humility." And where does that come from, then? He gives them an illustration. He gives to undergird this call to unity that is grounded on humility, he illustrates with a person who was humble to the supreme degree, and that person with whom he illustrates this point is no one less than our Lord Jesus Christ. Chapter 2, verse 5, functions as a hinge verse here.

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

Now this is a hinge verse. He's going from his exhortation to his illustration. He says, "Have this attitude in yourselves." What attitude is he talking about as we begin our text? What is this attitude that he is speaking right now? Well, the attitude is the one that he was just talking about, the one of humility. Verse 3, "with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves." That's the attitude that he says you are to adopt as your own.

Now listen, when Scripture comes to us like this, sometimes we miss the significance of what is being said. This verse is presenting to us a command from God that is to define the entire way that we look at all of our relationships but especially in the body of Christ. This is not a passing incidental matter of which he speaks, this is a matter of defining central importance that shapes the way that you view every person in your life and which defines the way that you respond to every person in your life. There is no one, there is nothing in your life that is unaffected by the things that we are considering here today from God's word. I want you to understand before we go any further that everything in your life is on the table with what is being discussed here because he's talking about your attitude, your mindset, the way that you consider others in your life.

He says in verse 5, "Have this attitude, the one I was just talking about, have that attitude inside yourselves. Let it frame your heart," in other words, and he says, "This attitude of which I'm speaking, it's the attitude which was also in Christ Jesus." Wow. Wow. In other words, horizontally everything has been placed on the table for consideration here today and then it's elevated in a vertical way to say that this is what was manifested in the life of Christ. This is what Christ is like. And so there's this vertical dimension that defines things as we are in submission to Christ, and then it has a horizontal application that goes everywhere. This is a most searching passage. Maybe in times past you've read through it fairly quickly but we see here, we understand that we are seeing something that asserts a dominant authority over us to define the kind of person that we are.

Friends, brothers and sisters, distinguished guests, are there any distinguished guests in here? What I want you to see is the significance and the transcendent nature of this passage that we're considering. Anytime you talk about Christ, you're talking about something transcendent. Here what we find is that transcendence of Christ is being applied to define for us the way that we are to think about all of life. It's that significant. You could spend the rest of the day, the rest of the week thinking about these things, going through, cataloging, doing an inventory of your life and everything that you would think of would be affected by the things that we find in God's word here this morning.

And so Paul is illustrating in Christ, and what is it about Christ? Let me read the text finally that we're going to consider here. Verse 5,

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Now before we get into the text and my three points for this morning, I want you to see how this attitude of humility is the central theme of the passage that we're considering here. Look at it, he says in chapter 2, verse 3, "Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves." Humility is what he is teaching here and he illustrates with Christ, and as he closes up the illustration which is of profound theological depth, he says in verse 8 talking about Christ, what did Christ do? "Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."

So humility here is the defining virtue that is being discussed and explained in the passage that we are considering, and so Paul illustrates with Christ the nature of humility so that the people of Christ would apply it to their hearts and adopt it in their relationships, and what we find, I believe as we go through these things, as we talk about humility and Christ's humility, we find that which humbles ourselves by contrast. As we see as the perfect humility of Christ is held up as a spotless mirror before our own characters, it inevitably exposes the pride and selfishness of our own lives. I want to tell you in advance that when the Spirit of God pricks your heart today, when the arrow of the Spirit lands in the middle of your heart, don't resist that. Embrace it. This is something that God brings to us from his word in order to change us, to cleanse us in the confession of repentance, to be cleansed by the blood of Christ and then to be changed going forward in a way that produces permanent results within our lives, within our hearts, within our homes, and within the body of Christ. A divided church, I do not consider our church to be a divided church, I wouldn't say that if I didn't think it was true. I think our church is pretty united. I'm grateful to God for that, but speaking on a broader principle, without exception I will tell you that a divided church is somehow a proud church, at least segments of a church are marked by pride because humility could never produce division, the humility of which we speak here today.

So Paul uses the person of Christ to show us three principles of humility that apply to us that we are to consider and that's what we're going to look at by way of review this morning, you know, and it is just so striking to think that Christ who is truly supreme shows an attitude which none of our politicians ever manifest. This kind of humility is otherworldly, it is godly. It is that humility which marks the very deity of our Lord Jesus and let's consider it now.

First of all, I want you to see the service of humility. The service of humility. When Jesus Christ was on the earth, he was God in human flesh. He still is, but when Christ came in his Incarnation, God became a man, full deity took on full humanity and two natures resided in the one person of Jesus Christ. Now think about the significance of that for just a moment, one aspect of the significance of it, and when we talk about the Lord Jesus Christ, we're talking about he who is of the very essence of God. He is deity. He is Lord of all and, you know, step back from that somewhat familiar truth perhaps and ask yourself kind of a preliminary question. What is God doing on this cursed planet doing that? Why would God leave heaven in order to walk in humanity on this cursed sod? Well, there's something in him, there's something in Christ, there's something about his character that prompted him to do that.

Verse 6, look at it with me, "who," speaking of Christ, he's now going to in this relative clause, he's going to describe something about Christ to us,

6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

Now when it says that he existed in the form of God, that's really an important word. This word "form" refers to the essential nature of something. What he's saying is that Christ before his Incarnation existed in the essential nature of God. He shares the very essence of God himself. Everything that God the Father is in perfect deity is true of Jesus Christ. Jesus said in John 14, you know, "If any man has seen Me, he has seen the Father." He can say that because there is no distinction in essence between the Father and his Son. God the Father and the Lord Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit all share in the one, indivisible, perfect essence of God; that eternal, uncreated essence that is by very nature who God is, that's who Christ was and is and always will be.

Christ, look at it there in verse 6, although he existed in the form of God, he lived in the essence of God, he had the essence of God is what that is referring to, Christ was like that. That's his essence. You want to talk about authority, you want to talk about being a boss or being the head of your home or being the head of your children and talk about your little realm of authority and who you are, blah, blah, blah? Well, let's multiply authority by infinity and look at the Lordship of Christ and that's who we're talking about. Before his birth, Jesus Christ shared in the glory of heaven, angels worshiped him, and we struggle to find the vocabulary to express these things adequately to talk about the majesty of who he was in his essence before his Incarnation. Uncreated God. No beginning. The full essence of God, the one through whom God made the heavens and

the earth, John 1 says that nothing has come into being apart from him, this is the one of whom we speak, high, exalted, glorious deity, and that's who he was before his Incarnation.

Sharing in all of the attributes of God, all of the prerogatives of deity were at his disposal and what you and I must understand as we're walking through this text is that that deity that is Christ's is the foundation for everything that follows and that instructs us in what humility looks like and the question is, then: what did Jesus do, so to speak, what did he do with that deity? How did he handle the fact that he was God and is God? We say "was" only because we're looking back to that which in time precedes us, understanding that he always is God, always was, always will be. Even our verb tenses start to fail us when we talk about the majesty of Christ. What did he do with his deity? Look at verse 6 with me again, "who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped." Here he was fully equal with God but in his mindset, in his mind he did not view it as something to be grasped. What does that mean? Well, this phrase is referring to something that was present in his being, and something that was at his full disposal. Our Lord Jesus Christ had full equality with God before his Incarnation and it was fully at his disposal to do with as he pleased. There was no external higher authority instructing Christ on what to do with being God. There is no higher authority. There is no Supreme Court above him.

The word "grasped" raises the issue, you can state it in a question: would he grasp it, meaning would he take that position that he has and use it to his own advantage? He is God, would he take it all to himself? He had the right to. Stating the question differently: would Christ exploit his deity to somehow further his own interests, or to avoid suffering, to avoid service from that position of absolute authority, would Christ actually let that go? I'll explain what I mean by that in a moment. Would Christ actually let that go in order to become a servant? And the answer is he did. Stated in the negative, Christ did not use his status as God to take what was his and to keep it for himself and to secure his own benefit thereby. Instead, he did something remarkable.

You know, when you start to study biblical truth in any kind of serious way, you study biblical Reformed doctrine, but I repeat myself when I say that, biblical doctrine is Reformed doctrine, you come in every significant area of theology, you come to that which overwhelms your intellect and overwhelms you in your heart at the majesty of the things that you are seeing. As you study truth and understand it, it overwhelms you because it is simply from a transcendent realm that is unlike anything that you know on earth and in humanity and in human relationships. Totally different. Completely distinct is what it is, and this issue of the Incarnation of Christ and his humility in it, is certainly one of those things.

Here is Christ existing in the form, the essence of God, and what did he do with that? With that position of supreme unchallenged authority, what did he do with it? He laid it aside. He laid aside his privileges for his people. Look at it here. We'll see that in verse 7, I should say, in just a moment, but we know getting ahead of the story just a little bit, we know that Christ left heaven in order to be born a babe of a virgin and to live a life of

humble Incarnation that was headed toward the cross. Do you know any human leader like that? You don't. The King, the high King, the highest King became a servant in order to secure good for others. Jesus said this very plainly in the Gospel of Matthew 20:28 when he said this, "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." This eternal King laid aside the privileges of his essence, stepped into humanity, stepped down from heaven to come to earth, and he did it not so the subjects would serve him and recognize and honor him in his first advent, he did it so that he could serve them. He did not come to be served but to serve.

The simplicity of the difference between the passive voice and the active voice is everything there. Christ did not come to receive service during his time on earth, he came to give it. He came to serve. And what Paul is saying here is this, he says that that example of Christ is the attitude that should prevail in the church. It's the attitude that should prevail in the people of Christ. If you are here naming the name of Christ, God's word is telling you this is the preeminent attitude that should define the way that you think about everything else. You are not here to get your own anymore that Christ was here to get his own. You are here to be a humble servant.

What does that mean? Well, my friends, brothers and sisters, boys and girls, to one degree or another God has blessed you with time, with giftedness, with resources, and for some of you with authority. What you are to understand is that's not for self-promotion, that's not given to you so that you can get your way in what you want in disregard for others, whatever package God has given you in life, he has given it to you so that you could adopt the same attitude toward your position in life, in your lesser realm you adopt the greater attitude that Christ had in his greater attitude and you view everything that's been given to you from that perspective. Men, you're not here to be served, you're here to serve. You're here to serve, not to be served. The position of Paul that he's saying is, "Christ served us, now you go and do likewise." Understand the mindset that motivated Christ to do that. What Christ did was he laid aside what was his in order to serve his own people and say, "Adopt that as your mindset and then go and do likewise." And yeah, I emphasize the men without apology here today.

Now look, for all of the rich theological truth that we're seeing here today from the text, I want you to understand something really important. This is not complex. Oh, it's deep and it's profound but Paul's point here is not complex at all. Christ was like this. Christ was humble enough to lay aside his position in order to come to earth and serve. It's a supreme act of humility. You can get that. He says, "You get that. This is what Christ did, now you be the same way." This isn't complicated. You might resist it because you don't like the implications of it, but it's not because you can't intellectually comprehend it.

And what's that look like? How does that apply? Well, maybe a simple act of love. Maybe you let go of an argument, you say, "You know what? It doesn't really matter who was right here. I don't care, I just want to be reconciled. We can do it your way. Sure, why not?" Humble yourself to that point in those practical kinds of ways and for you young people, for you young people, I like to say these things, this act of humility of



Christ, it might change and redefine your life ambition, what you want to do with the one life that you have. That's the service of humility.

Well, how does that play out? Let's go to point 2: the sacrifice of humility. The sacrifice of humility. Paul goes on to show how Christ acted upon his humility in verse 7. He existed in the form of God, remember from verse 6, right? Now look at verse 7,

7 but [He] emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

He emptied himself. That word "but" at the beginning of verse 7 introduces a really sharp contrast. Verse 6, he was like this, high and exalted before his Incarnation, that's who he was, that's where he was, but he did something that you'd never expect on human terms. By contrast to the highness of his position, he took on this humble position instead. He was existing as God but he emptied himself. What does that mean? Paul immediately explains what he means by that. He says, "He emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant." You could translate it this way, "He emptied Himself by taking the form of a bond-servant." In other words, he emptied himself in this manner, by taking the form of a bond-servant. Same word. He who was of the very form of God, the very nature of God, verse 6, did this, he took on the form of a slave, the very essence of a slave and that's how he emptied himself. His Incarnation was his act of self-emptying.

Now understand that when Christ became a man, he did not surrender or give up any of the attributes of deity. God cannot change and so Christ did not change in any of the nature as it pertains to his deity, rather what he did was he took on something new, he took on humanity, he took on human flesh. Theologians use the term hypostatic union here. If you can't remember that, that's okay. There will be time for that in another place. But it simply means that the one person of Jesus Christ has two natures: fully God, fully man. Full deity, full humanity. And when Christ took on that humanity, he did something that Paul describes as an act of self-emptying. What he did was he laid aside the independent use of his privileges of deity during his earthly life. He was still God but he was not asserting his rights as God. He was not displaying his unveiled glory as he walked about in humanity. He looked like anyone else. His contemporaries thought he was just the son of Joseph, to give you an idea of how humbled his position was. They looked and saw a man and he was really a man but he was so much more. As we sing in the Christmas hymn, "Veiled in flesh, the Godhead see. Hail the Incarnate deity."

And think about this self-emptying in this way. When Jesus Christ left heaven to come to earth, what did he do but this, he took a great step down. From his position in the royal throne room of the universe, Christ stepped out, stepped down, came to earth and walked about as a man with human limitations, not using the deity that was at his disposal to change his circumstances. He submitted to the Incarnation for over 30 years in order to fulfill the mission of redemption and a vicarious substitutionary sacrifice for sinners that he came to do.

He left heaven to dwell in human flesh. Who would do that? Who would do that, I ask you? What is the nature of Christ, what is the mind, the character of him who did that, just to leave heaven to come to earth? But not only that, I mean, maybe you could say, maybe if he came, in his first advent he came so that he could prove and manifest that he was the King and he could hover about humanity at 50 feet in the air with great purple royal robes to prove who he was. That wasn't how he did it. He walked on earth as a slave. He was fully obedient to the will of his Father. He had submitted himself completely to the will of his Father and voluntarily had no rights of his own to assert to his own benefit.

Think about it. Early in his earthly ministry, Jesus said this, speaking of himself he said, "The Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." The one who created the heavens and the earth voluntarily took on a form, a life, a humanity in which he lived without the most basic of human comforts while he was here. This is who God is. This is who Christ is. This is what he did. What does that say about what he is like is the point, and you and I are to reflect on these truths and come to this conclusion: he is profoundly perfectly humble, humble in the sense that he comes as a servant. He comes to sacrifice himself for others who hated him, for rebels against his will. Jesus Christ spent most of his earthly life in obscurity working with his hands. He was known as the son of the carpenter. Think about it, the Creator, the Creator, the uncreated Creator was working as a carpenter in a first century wood-shop. Whatever else you say about it, that's emptying yourself. That's humbling yourself. Christ laid aside all of the prerogatives and benefits of deity, not the attributes, the benefits, the position, so to speak, in order to do that. Jesus Christ sacrificed heaven in order to sacrifice himself on the cross for sinners like you and me. That's the sacrifice of it. It's profound. What you must understand is the greatness and the depth of the love within the three members of the Trinity. We tend to dismiss this because it's so alien to our existence and our understanding, but for Christ to leave heaven was to leave the place where the fullness of that intra-deity fellowship took place.

So we see the service, the sacrifice, finally, we see the submission of humility. The submission of humility. You know, if we just stopped, if we just stopped with what I've just said, we would have every reason to honor and glorify Christ forever and ever, that just that he did that for a time would be an act of profound humility that surpasses anything that we've ever seen in our lifetimes or in anyplace in the course of human history. No one has done anything like that in humanity, to do what he did. Just there if I closed in prayer, that would be enough for us to be astonished at the majesty of who Christ is but that's not all. He keeps going in verse 8 and we see the submission of humility. Christ humbled himself by coming to earth but there's so much more to this. In verse 8,

8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself [even further] by becoming obedient to the point of death,

He didn't just come and live and go back up to heaven. He humbled himself to enter into the experience of death itself that all humanity faces since the fall of Adam. And even more at the end of verse 8,

even death on a cross.

My lips are not worthy to describe the things that I'm about to say. Jesus Christ not only stepped down from heaven, he stepped down into humanity. He not only stepped down into humanity, he stepped down to die. He not only stepped down to die, he stepped down to die a degrading death on the cross of Calvary. And not only to die a death on a cross but to bear the penalty of sin, the wrath of God against the sins of all of his people. Christ, the one who was perfectly innocent, perfectly righteous, stepped down, down, down, down, down in order to make the ultimate sacrifice of giving his lifeblood to pay for the sins of all of his people.

Beloved, that's humility. Jesus Christ submitted himself to his Father to the uttermost and as he hung exposed to the world, mocked by those who crucified him, hanging there as God in human flesh, the ultimate act of humility was being completed. And beloved, he did it for us morally bankrupt rebels against him. That's how much he served.

Question 27 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism asks this question, "Wherein did Christ's humiliation consist?" Put it in modern language, "What do we mean when we say that Christ humbled himself? What do we mean when we talk about the humiliation of Christ?" The answer is this, can't say it any better, "Christ's humiliation consisted in his being born and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God and the cursed death of the cross, in being buried and continuing under the power of death for a time." That's what Christ's humiliation is. He stepped down into humanity, in a low condition, obeyed the law on behalf of his people, underwent the miseries of this life, subjected himself to the wrath of God that he did not deserve but his people did. Can you imagine the living God placed in a tomb? That kind of humiliation and he continued under the power of death for a time.

Well, beloved, here's Paul's point. He's using this as an illustration about what humility looks like in the body of Christ and in the life of an individual Christian. The message is this: humility serves, humility sacrifices, humility submits. And the whole point going back to verse 5, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus." Here's what you and I are to do as we contemplate this humiliation of Christ, we are to meditate on it. We are to think about it and take it seriously and earnestly, and as we do, then we adopt it as our own attitude toward our own life in the years that the Lord has left for us.

Charles Spurgeon put it this way. Again, you quote others when you can't say it better yourself. I should quote a lot more than I do. Spurgeon said this, "May the Lord bring us in contemplation to Calvary, then our position will no longer be that of the pompous man of pride but we shall take the humble place of one who loves much because much has been forgiven him. Pride cannot live beneath the cross. Let us sit there and learn our lesson and then rise and carry it into practice." Will you do that?

Let's pray.

*O God, we exalt the Christ who humbled Himself thus for us. God became a man, humbled Himself to the point of death, even death on a cross, giving Himself a servant as a ransom for the sins of many. Father, I pray that this presentation of Christ Himself might draw many to the foot of the cross to confess their sins, to repent and to receive Christ in humble submission as their Savior, as their Lord, that You might use the exaltation of Christ from this text to draw many to Yourself for the first time. For Your people, O God, I can only ask that Your Spirit would produce this fruit in us. Begin it with me, Lord, that's fine. Begin it with our elders. Filter it down, as it were, through the deacons and through the men in our congregation. Father, You know far better than we do, You see it far more clearly than we do that we desperately need this work of Your Spirit to, as it were, form this manner of Christ in us that it would spill over in our private lives, our private relationships, our homes, our workplaces, where we attend school, all of our interactions, and here, Father, even in this local church and then beyond to the broader body of Christ throughout the world. Father, we are not naturally like this. Sin makes us oppose this, resist it and not even to understand it. That's why we pray for an overarching, searching, great, powerful work of Your Holy Spirit to bring revival upon the lost and a great, profound, real renewal in Your people. Nothing less will do, Father. O that Your people throughout this country were preoccupied with Christ instead of November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Well, Father, if we ask that, then certainly You could at least start it with us. For the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.*

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