

The Humble Christ

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Bible Verse: Philippians 2:5-8
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Our text this morning for our sermon comes from the book of Philippians that we're going through verse by verse, and I invite you to turn to Philippians 2. Philippians 2. The theologians talk about the humiliation of Christ and the exaltation of Christ and we're going to see those aspects of his life and ministry this week and next, and when you come to Philippians 2, Paul, the Apostle Paul has called the church to unity that is based on true humility. If you look at those first four verses that we have studied over the past couple of weeks, 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. 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.

Now we've studied those verses and there's no reason to review them in detail but just to set the context, Paul had said in chapter 1, verse 27, he calls on the believers in Philippi and by extension the church today, to conduct ourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel. Well, what does that conduct look like? What is a worthy walk look like? How is a pattern of life established that would somehow be worthy of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and why is he making that command and that call here to the church of Philippi at the time? Well, there was division in the church. You wouldn't command a church that was already united to be united. That would be kind of pointless. There were fractures. There were fissures that were taking place in the relationships there and you see Paul leading up to chapter 2, verse 14 where he says, "Do all things without grumbling or disputing so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation."

One of the ways that a true church has a testimony in a decaying world is by being united in love and in harmony with one another, and when that is not happening, when there are disputes and divisions within the church, the witness of the church is correspondingly diminished and sullied by it all. Later on in chapter 4, verse 2, he singles out two women

in particular and say, "I urge Eudoia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord." He calls them out by name and their names are recorded for all subsequent centuries of the church until Christ comes as people who needed correction on the matter of church unity. Now Paul regarded them well. In verse 3 he says, "Indeed, true companion, I ask you also to help these women who have shared my struggle in the cause of the gospel." He said, "These women have helped me. They've shared in the gospel but they're divided right now." And so as he writes to the church, he says, "Euodia, Syntyche, you need to solve your problems," and for the rest of the church he says, "I want you to help them to do that."

Now that tells us that even in a church that is supportive of apostolic doctrine, as this church in Philippi was supportive of the Apostle Paul personally, even in a church that is committed to the proclamation of the true Gospel and is a source of joy for its leadership, it is possible for division and arguments to come in at the prompting of Satan and at the carnality of those that are in the church in such a way that it needs to be corrected, and that's a caution to us. That's a call to be diligent to us. As I've said multiple times in these past few weeks, to the best of my knowledge as I stand here as the pastor, this is a church that is enjoying unity in the Spirit of God right now. We are united under the doctrine of God's word. We're united with each other. You see it playing out in relationships and love with one another, so much that I'm just constantly thankful to God for that, but the fact that that exists as far as I know within our body, does not give us reason to drop our guard and say everything is well. If you had precious jewels and you would place them in a place of protection and safety, so a jewel, a gift like unity in a church that is proclaiming the Gospel, if you have unity in a church like that, there's all the more reason to guard it and protect it that it would be the same going forward and grow even deeper.

So we come to these things in God's word, we realize that even true churches can experience division and fractures in their midst, we're humbled by that, we realize that we ourselves are vulnerable to those kinds of things if we're not on guard, if we allow our selfishness to rise to the forefront of things, and so we realize that we need this instruction from God's word. We receive it humbly. We come to the word of God with fear and trembling, even, saying, "God, we tremble at the blessing that You've given to us and we're so thankful for it, and yet we tremble at the prospect that somehow in our sinfulness we might do something that would be counter to what the Lord is doing in our midst." And so we need the help of God's word. We come in utter dependence to God's word. We come in utter dependence on his Spirit to continue the work that he has begun. There is no cause for any boasting in us. Boasting is excluded by those that have been saved by grace through faith in Christ.

So I just want to cultivate in us as we approach the actual text for this morning, a sense of urgency, a sense of humility, a sense of dependence as we see what God's word has to say for us, and let me just say by remembrance and by way of reminder to us, that the church belongs to Christ, right? We've talked about that many times. Christ owns the church because he purchased it with his own blood, as we were singing just moments ago, and therefore we all come from leadership and everyone else in the church, men and women, boys and girls, we all come into the church with a sense of recognition that Christ has

given us a blessing, that he has blessed us out of the abundance of his kindness and resources and given us to share in something that belongs to him, therefore we are all the more diligent. Just as you go into a nice house and you're careful of how you conduct yourselves, you take off your shoes and you walk through the house in respect to the owner of the house and what he has done, what she has done to make her house a special place to be, well, in a far greater way when we come in, as it were, to the household of God, we realize that we are here to contribute, not to take; we are here to honor what the Lord has done with the righteousness of our lives and not be careless and carnal and thereby diminish the work that he is doing. It's so vital and important for us to understand that perspective on the church. It belongs to Christ and it exists for his glory. It's not our plaything. It's not ours to milk out what we want from it. It belongs to Christ and we want to honor him in it and Paul says and Scripture says repeatedly that unity is one of the primary things that Christ is trying to develop in his church. So it's a serious sin and we don't want to diminish this at all. It is a serious serious sin for someone, for anyone to inject a vision and a spirit of argumentation into the life of the body of Christ. That is a sin that Christ takes most seriously and is something that Scripture warns about over and over again and gives provision for how it is even to be dealt with.

Well, with that sense of reverence for what Christ has done to save a body of people throughout the ages, a local church being one manifestation of that, a sense of reverence and responsibility to contribute to it, we come to our text here in verse 5. Philippians 2:5-8 is our text for this morning. Paul says,

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 this text is one of great theological import. You read any systematic theology and you'll find this text referred to often in its discussion of Christology, but it's important for us to understand why this text is here in the context of the book of Philippians. Paul has issued this call to unity in the first four verses which we read earlier, and now in this call to unity, in this call to humility, to undergird his call to humility in the church that he's made in these opening four verses, he is now going to give an illustration of what he is after, what it is that he is calling them to, and his illustration is the person of Jesus Christ.

Now I want to remind you of something that I emphasized last week, that what he is doing here, he is not telling us specifically things to do so much in this text, what he is doing is he is giving us a way to think, an attitude to cultivate, to meditate on, and to let it sink deeply into our heart affections and our entire perspective on life. Look at chapter 2 where he uses these terms for mental thinking and the process of mental activity. He says in verse 2, "be of the same mind, be united in spirit, be intent on one purpose." He is calling us to cultivate understanding and intentions in our heart that are consistent with what he is saying, attitudes that are consistent with the goal of unity and humility, and

attitudes that will feed that rather than diminish it. He says in verse 5, he says, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus." So what we need to understand as we come to the text here this morning is that Scripture is giving us a way to think and it is a way to think at a most profound level. The command here is not so much for something to do externally by way of behavior, but it is no less a command where God is exercising authority on the minds of his people and saying, "This is the way that you are to think and to consider everything about yourself. This is to frame the way that you consider your reason to exist."

And so he says there in verse 5, "5 Have this attitude in yourselves," and what you have here in verse 5 is a hinge verse. Doors turn on hinges, right, they go from one side to another. Paul has been commanding humility and unity and now he hinges in verse 5 and he goes from the command to the illustration to help us understand what the command means and exactly what it is that he has in mind. Look at it there in verse 5 with me, "Have this attitude in yourselves which," there's the hinge, "which was also in Christ Jesus." So connect your attitude toward unity and humility with what you find in the Lord Jesus Christ. Verse 5 is very significant in connecting those prior four verses with the next four verses that come. "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus." Paul has pivoted away from exhortation now to his illustration in the purpose of Christ.

It would be one thing for us to have a command that says, "Well, you need to be humble." Okay, well, I need to be humble. What does that mean? What are you getting at? "I'm actually pretty proud of how humble I am," someone might say. "I think I'm doing pretty good on that score, don't you agree?" Paul makes it so that we can't miss what he's saying when he calls for humility here as he points to the example of Christ, and what we see in these four verses, I believe, are three principles of humility that he's calling us to that are very practical in their outworking but that are first meant to be understood. What we see in this passage is, and in some ways you could say this is the premiere passage on what humility means in the entire Bible because it takes us to the highest example in Christ and leads us to understand what animated everything about him.

So let's look at these three aspects of humility that Paul is calling us to in our brief time here together this morning. First of all, we see the service of humility. The service of humility and here's what we need to think about and remember just by way of preface and overview of what the passage is going to be teaching us. Beloved, Jesus Christ is God in human flesh. He is God Incarnate and yet when he came to earth, he came not in his first advent to reign as king, he came as a servant. He came as one looking to advance the interest of his people in his coming rather than seeking to elevate himself of which he was already preeminently worthy. Christ is God in human flesh and yet he was here as a servant. He was the Creator of the universe and yet here he is walking in the humble vessel of a human body? What is this? Who does that? Who deliberately chooses to live at a level far below what they're preeminence deserves? Who does that? Nobody on earth that you will find, and that's why it is so important for us to consider Christ.

Look at verse 6, Paul says, having said this attitude was in Christ Jesus, "who." He's introducing a clause that's going to describe Christ to us and tell us about Christ. "Who," and then he says this, "who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped." This word "form" in the New American Standard, he existed in the form of God, it's a word that means "the very nature of something." What he's saying is that Christ was existing in the very form of God; his essential nature was deity, he was God, and he existed that way long before he ever came to earth. Christ existed before time began, just as God did. God is timeless. He is outside the bounds of time. Before Genesis 1:1, there was the Triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and Christ existed in that nature, in that essence, and so before he was born, Jesus Christ shared in the glory of heaven. Heaven was his domain. The angels joined in worshipping him and he was in unparalleled, unchallenged glory where everyone recognized his preeminence and honored him, all the angels of heaven honored him and he belonged there as the King of heaven, sharing in the very essence of the Triune God. That's who he is by nature. That is what he has always been and there has never been a time where Christ was not like that.

So as God in heaven, dwelling, reigning, properly being worshiped, all the prerogatives of deity were at his disposal. They were all his. Everything that God is entitled to, Christ was entitled to. All that God is, Christ is and has always been. We talk about it in the past tense simply to look back to his pre-Incarnate days before he came to earth. We recognize that he was in the splendor of majestic glory in a way that is far beyond anything that our eyes have ever seen or our minds have ever understood. High, lofty, glorious, that was the nature of Christ and that deity of Christ, that essence of Christ, beloved, is the foundation for everything that follows in this passage. We are meant to think upon in this passage, we are meant to remember and to understand the infinite glory that was Christ's before he came to earth. The existence of Christ did not begin when he was born, it did not begin when he was conceived in the womb of his mother Mary as a virgin by the power of the Holy Spirit. He had always existed beforehand. He was doing something in his Incarnation when he came. So he has this fullness of deity and that is the foundation for everything that follows in this passage, and the question is this as we contemplate the Incarnation and we contemplate his preexistent glory, we ask this question, we ask this question: what did he do? What did God do? What did the Son of God do with his deity? What did he do with that high, exalted, unchallenged supremacy in the throne room of the universe? What did he do with that? How did he live out the essence of God?

Well, look at verse 6 there as we see the service of humility. It says, "who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped." Notice that the passage is saying that he had full equality with God. He was fully equal with God. Only God is equal with God and therefore Jesus Christ is God. In one sense, it's not all that complicated even though the heretics will continually make attacks at this point, but what does it mean that he did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped? Well, this phrase refers to something – and stay with me here because the details of what we're talking about here and the greatness of the theology of which we're discussing here is designed to captivate your mind and change the way that you look at the entire purpose of your existence. When you see what Christ did with his existence, it

defines for you what you are to do with your existence, in other words, is the argument of this passage, and this phrase that he did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped means that there was something that was present and at his disposal. He had something that was his prerogative to do with what he wanted. Jesus Christ had full equality with God at his disposal before his Incarnation. All the attributes of God were his. All the infinite power. All the infinite knowledge of God was his. Everything about God resided in the pre-Incarnate Christ.

And this word "grasped" that you see here, he did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, what this is indicating is that it has the idea of taking something and using it to your own advantage. I grasp after wealth, somebody might do, and they spend their wealth on themselves and they grasp after it that way. They hold onto it. They keep it to themselves and they use it for their own benefit, alright? Here's Christ with the infinite wealth of deity and what does he do with it? Did he keep it for himself? If we could just kind of build a little bit of a mental picture here, stepping back into his pre-Incarnate days and picture a question, what will Christ do with his deity, and there's this pulsating tension, what will he do with it? Now I'm speaking as a fool here because Christ is always acting in accordance with the eternal purpose of God. I'm just trying to help our feeble minds to understand the significance of what's being said here. Picture the question. Here he is existing in the full deity of God and what will he do with it? Will he take everything to himself? Will he keep all of the glory for himself? He certainly had the right to. God can do whatever he wants. You see, the question that Paul is raising here in verse 6 is this: will Christ exploit his deity to his own advantage? Will he use everything that is his for his own betterment, for his own purposes, and so that he would receive all of the glory in it? Well, what would he do? Would he keep it to himself? Would he grasp it and keep it to himself, all that glory? And the point of this passage is that he did not. Jesus did not use his status to take what was his, instead he laid aside his privileges for the sake of his people, for the sake, you could say, of others. All of the authority, all of the glory that was his, all of the power, he exercised that in order to benefit his people who were unworthy of that, and yet that is what he did. The King of the universe became a servant in order to secure good for someone else.

Jesus said specifically in Matthew 20:28 in words in this context which just boggle the mind, he said, "the Son of Man did not come to be served," in other words, he's referring to himself in the third person there, this is Matthew 20:28. He's speaking about himself in the third person and he says, "the Son of Man," which he is, "the Son of Man did not come to be served," he did not come in order to have people gather around his feet and serve him during his first coming. "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." I don't know what to say about that, in one sense. Once again I just find the limits of language and my ability with my tongue to be utterly exhausted in light of the glory that this expresses and the height and the majesty of what it means. God the Son came to earth. He did not come in order to have people serve him, he came so that he could serve them. He didn't regard his equality with God as something to grasp and keep to himself. He exercised it for the benefit of others. He came in the service of humility.

I'm just lost at the majesty of that. Who is like that? Who can you look at in the candidates clamoring for political prominence in our day? Who can you look at in anything in the media that's like that? There's nothing like this. Utter perfection, utter glory saying, "Yeah, you know what I'll do? I'll use it for someone else." And to realize that you and I who are in Christ are on the receiving end of that, I'm just, you know, we're just overwhelmed with the glory and the wonder of it all. It's humbling to realize that a King stooped to serve you. That's the point and it's humbling to realize and it's designed to take and captivate our minds to realize that that's who Christ is and that that's what he did. But the point that Paul is making, remember, is he's making an illustration here. He's saying that example of Christ is what should prevail in the local church.

So he's making application of the glory of Christ and saying this is to be reflected in the way that you think about yourself and your involvement in a local church so that it goes something like this: God has blessed you, every one of you, God has blessed you, every one of you with some measure of time, some measure of giftedness, some measure of resources, some measure of authority in your life, in your family, in your workplace, in the church, and the whole point of this passage is for you to understand something very very basic; to the extent that God has done that with whatever God has given to you, he has given it to you not so that it would be for your self-promotion but that you would exercise it in service to others. God blesses you with a level of prominence, God blesses you with a level of understanding, God blesses you with a level of resource and your whole disposition about what is at your disposal is meant to be what Christ was at the infinite glory that was at his disposal. Christ says, "I'll use this for the service of My people." Paul looks at that, lays it out and says, "That's how you're to think within the body of Christ. Have that attitude that was in Christ be that which motivates you." Christ served us, now we go and do likewise. It's not complicated. It's just hard because we're proud, selfish, sinful people who don't want it that way. You see, it's not complex but it takes humility to act upon it.

So what does that look like? Well, it may be a simple act of love for someone in need. For some it might be letting go of an argument and a grudge and a bitterness that you've been holding for years within your family or whatever. For you young people in particular, I say this and just trust that God would impress it upon your heart, you're on the front end of life thinking about your education decisions, your career decisions and what you're going to do with your life. Do you know what this sacrifice, this service of humility, what the implications of this could be for you? It could change your entire life ambition. It could change your entire life ambition. "God has gifted me with certain abilities," you say to yourself. "God has gifted me with certain talents that I have. Do you know what I'm going to do? Instead of setting my whole life to the pursuit of what I want, I'm going to think about these in terms of how can I use these in the service of Christ." That's how a young person thinks about these things and applies them, is it starts to affect the entire motivation that you have in setting the course of your life. God has given you something and the point of it as a Christian is, "I need to use this in the service of His people. I need to be humble about this and not seek my own glory." You say to yourself, "How could I seek my own glory if Christ having infinite resources and infinite deity, if Christ didn't seek His own glory, how could I do anything less with what God has given

to me?" And as you contemplate these things and these attitudes take root in your heart, all of a sudden this attitude starts to change the way that you think about it all, and by contrast it just shows how empty and how selfish an unbelievers approach to life is, clamoring for all the glory and money he can get, a sinful creature grasping for himself what he wants when the word of God testifies to a sinless Creator who did the exact opposite. I'm crushed by it in a good way, crushed by the glory of Christ and that is what we are to consider, the attitude that we are to have, the way that we think about what God has given to us. "This is what I'll do with it, with all of my time, I've got an abundance of time now, maybe I won't just use it for myself. Maybe there's something I can do significantly for others as a result of it." You get the idea. There's no need to belabor the point anymore. Paul has set forth the service of humility.

The second point for this morning if you're taking notes, we see the sacrifice of humility. The sacrifice of humility. And everything about this passage just makes Christ so great in our mind, so elevates him and so reduces us by comparison. The sacrifice of humility. Paul goes on in verse 7 to show how Christ acted upon his humility. He acted upon his humility. What did he do? He'd kind of given the negative side of it in verse 6, he did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, verse 7, contrast, strong contrast, "but," but instead he did something different. What did he do, Paul? Tell us. We need to know what this great Christ did in his pre-Incarnate glory. What did he do with deity? Verse 7, he "emptied Himself." What does that mean? Paul goes on and immediately explains what he means, he "emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant," in other words, he emptied himself by taking the form of a bond-servant. Notice it's the same word form, the form of God by very nature, essential nature. He was deity. In verse 7 in the Incarnation, he takes on the essential nature of a slave, of one who is under commands for obedience that the Father had given to him. Jesus Christ was existing as God but he emptied himself. He who was and is the very nature of God took the very nature of a slave. He took on humanity. The invisible God takes on humanity in the Incarnation. He didn't give up his deity, that would be impossible. God cannot stop being God. God is always God. What happened in the Incarnation with Christ is that he added humanity to his preexisting deity. He took on human flesh.

Christ has two natures. He is fully God. He is fully man. Theologians use the term hypostatic union to refer to that, meaning that the nature of deity and the nature of humanity dwell in the one person of Jesus Christ. That's where they are united. And so during his earthly life, what Paul is saying here is and it's wonderful, really, in the providence of God that we're reading through the Gospel of Matthew as we come to this text because Matthew shows Christ, right, walking on the face of the earth. It describes his virgin birth in chapter 1. It shows snapshots of his childhood in chapter 2, and then introduces us to his public ministry in the things that follow, and we see Christ walking on earth.

We see him interacting with men. We see all manner of his actions and his words, God being alive in human flesh on our earth and sod, and what Paul is saying here, that he emptied himself. Go back to verse 7 with me, he took the form of a bond-servant, he was made in the likeness of man. Jesus Christ temporarily laid aside the independent use of

his privileges of being God. He took on the limitations of humanity during his life on earth and he was still God but – watch this, watch this – as he was living on the earth 2,000 years ago, he was not asserting his rights as God, he was not exercising the privileges of deity for his own benefit. What does that tell us about what Christ did? What does it tell us about the nature of his sacrifice? Beloved, think with me here. What Christ did, it just helps me to think about these things spatially, to think about them in terms of space just because I lack the language to describe the reality of it fully, Christ existing in heaven comes to earth. Do you know what that is? That is a great step down. That is an infinite step down to step out of the realm of glory and into the realm of sinful man and walking about in a human body on earth, and to go in such a humble form that he was born to a virgin in a place of poverty as we saw over Christmas a few months ago. He took a great step down. He left heaven to dwell in human flesh and, beloved, he wasn't living as a king. He says in Luke 9, he says, "The Son of Man has no place to lay His head." He lived in poverty. He lived with people that by essence were beneath him and he did it gladly.

So he took a great step down from heaven to earth, he took a great step down in taking on the limitations of humanity, but not just any humanity, he walked on earth as a slave. He was in full obedience to his heavenly Father. He said, "I always do the things that are pleasing in His sight." He submitted to the will of his Father. He had no rights of his own to assert to his own benefit and follow him from the manger to the cross and see him enduring all manner of sinful, demonic opposition through the Pharisees and sometimes through Peter himself as he says, "Get behind Me, Satan." He endures this opposition. He lives without resources of his own, knowing the full while that he is headed to the cross of Calvary; knowing that as God in human flesh, his destination was crucifixion. He spent most of his life, the first 30 years or so, in obscurity, working with his hands. His father was a carpenter, presumably he learned the trade of a carpenter before his public ministry began. Can you imagine, those of you with workshops and just the simplicity and the obscurity of that as you work in silence to do something with your hands with the wood that's at your disposal, and to realize there's Christ doing that, pushing the plane or whatever they did for tools back then. What is God doing that for? Why is God in human flesh not in a palace someplace? Why does he not even have his own bed? Why is God who made the universe making things with his hands in wood? Why is God who had the fullness of worship of angels enduring the hostility of sinners against himself? Why enduring their threats? Why as he got closer and closer to the cross, why would God let men spit in his face and pluck his beard? Thrust a crown of thorns into his head as they mocked him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" Did they not know that he had the power to incinerate them with a word of his mouth? Why such restraint? What a sacrifice, beloved. You know, we get off track when we have a bad day and we're prone to grumble because things aren't going our way today. Christ voluntarily entered into all of that for 33 years and did so gladly. You want to think rightly about Christ in light of this passage? Understand this: Jesus Christ sacrificed heaven in order to sacrifice himself on the cross. He gave up what was rightfully his in order to give that which no one could have required from him.

Look at the Gospel of John 10. It's important for us to think about these things rightly and to realize in the things that we are about to read, that Christ is not boasting, he is simply telling the truth. He is telling us who he is. He says in verse 11 of John 10, "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd lays down His life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, sees the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them." He says, "I'm not like that." He says in verse 14, "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me." He's a shepherd. He lays down his life for the sheep. He laid down the privileges of glory in order to go to the cross and he says in verse 17, "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again." Notice this is something that he's doing to himself. "I lay down My life so that I may take it again." He says in verse 18, "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father." He says, "I have authority to do with My life what I wish and what I wish to do is to lay it down for the sheep."

This is great. Christ sacrificed heaven to sacrifice himself on the cross. That's the sacrifice of humility. He who had infinity, laid it down voluntarily for the sake of his people, for the sake of sinners just like you. And I just want to say a word of warning to those of you that are not in Christ today. For you to hear these things and to continue to despise him, to continue to reject him, even simply to ignore him and be indifferent to him is a gross sin of highest magnitude. When we see the glory of Christ displayed in his word like this, it should drive us to humility. It should drive us to cry out for mercy from him. It should drive us to cry out and praise his great name. "You are so great to have done something like that! I honor You! I realize I need the sacrifice of the cross to cleanse me from sin. I realize I am so selfish and small by comparison. Save me from who I am!" That's the right response to this. I admonish you all not to trifle with this. We are standing on more holy ground than Moses was when he took off his sandals at the burning bush.

Well, let's look at point 3 briefly, the submission of humility. The submission of humility. It says in verse 8, "Being found in appearance as a man," in other words, Paul's going to go on and say what happened during the course of his earthly life. He gathers up pre-Incarnate glory, pre-eternal glory and gathers it all up into this short compact phrase which is the genius of the Holy Spirit who inspired his words. He says in verse 8, "Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Follow what's happening here. This is like a staircase, okay? This is like stepping down and Christ takes all of these steps down. He steps down from heaven to earth. He comes to earth and he steps down to take the very form of a servant. He not only became a man, he not only stepped down to humanity, he stepped down to die, and he not only stepped down to die, he stepped down to die, look at verse 8 with me, he became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Crucifixion, the most vile, tortuous death that the world has ever invented. Utter disgrace. Utter agony. Christ stepped down to die and not only to die but stepped down to a degrading death on the cross. Down. Down. Down. Down. That's what his humility did. That's where his humility took him.

Jesus Christ submitted to his Father to the uttermost. When he became a man, when he left heaven, he knew what was ahead. He wasn't surprised by it. You read the Gospel of Luke and he says repeatedly, "This must happen. This must happen. This must happen." He knew what he was doing. He didn't have to, in a sense, and by what I mean by that is no one could have made him do this but in fulfillment of the divine covenant of redemption and in fulfillment of his love for his people, our good shepherd humbled himself like that. Down from heaven to earth, down to humanity, down to death, down to the cross, this is his humiliation. This is our humble Christ.

Question 27 of the Westminster Shorter Catechism asks this question, "In what did Christ's humiliation consist?" And the answer is this, listen to the collective wisdom of the divines from centuries ago and it's still true today, "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." Christ humbled himself to bear the wrath of God at the cross. He humbled himself by giving up his spirit and entering into the realm of death for a time. He continued under the power of death for three days. He had already undergone the miseries of this life. Even on the cross, you remember, "I thirst. My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" All of this, God in human flesh, God suffering humiliation like that. That's how humble he is. That's what he was willing to do in obedience to his Father, out of love for us to redeem us from our sins.

So what Paul has shown us in this passage that I've treated so briefly, we see in the humility of Christ that he served, that he sacrificed, that he submitted. At Gethsemane he said and don't lose sight of this submission, he said in Gethsemane, "Father, let this cup pass from Me, but not as I will but Thy will be done." He placed himself under submission to the will of the Father.

The whole point of this passage, my friends, is this, is that you and I are supposed to meditate on this. We are to think about this. You're not to forget this when you walk out the door and just move on to another chapter of your life and say, "Well, that was another sermon." No. Paul says, "Have this attitude in yourselves. Think on this. Contemplate it. Think deeply. Drink deeply at this fountain of who Christ is and what He has done so that it would shape the way that you think about everything else."

Charles Spurgeon put it this way when he said, and I quote, he said, "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."

Let's pray together.

O God, we exalt this Christ who humbled Himself for us. We ask that Your Holy Spirit might produce a similar fruit in us, similar fruit in us in our individual lives, in our

families and in this local body, and in all those who come under the sound of these words in days to come. Father, we honor Christ. We honor Him for His glory. Today we especially honor Him for His humiliation, such a manifestation of the humble spirit that animates Him. We have such a wonderful Lord in You, dear Jesus. We gladly submit ourselves to You. We gladly give You free reign over all of our lives and pray that You would shape us into Your blessed image. For the sake of Jesus Christ our Lord, we pray. Amen.

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