The Servant Love of Jesus

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 21 December 2025

Preacher: Kent Dixon

[0:00] Yet-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da-da. Welcome here for this Sunday, December 21st, 2025. My name is Kent Dixon. It is my joy to be the pastor here.

On each Sunday of the Advent season, we've been lighting candles to recognize the four virtues that Jesus brings us, and they are hope and peace and joy and this morning love we're going to talk about.
This morning, as we continue in this season of Advent, we're lighting our first candle again, which represents... Who's so quick on the answers? I haven't even looked up yet.
Our second candle again, which represents... Thank you. And our third candle, which represents... And why is it pink?
Close enough. Because it wants joy? Pastor's wife, epic fail. All right, and our fourth candle, which represents... And Vern so beautifully started us talking about that topic in his opening comments before worship this morning.
[1:16] Today, like shepherds, we watch for signs of the Messiah's birth. We celebrate the good news that was for all people and is for all people.

Saying glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth. Peace to those on whom his favor rests. We reflect on the wonder of the manger, which represents God's rescue mission to come and save us, his beloved children.
So this morning, we're wrapping up our series, Behold, a Savior is born. And when we considered joy in this series last week, we talked about how there is joy in anticipation.
Maybe you remember that. We saw from Mary's perspective, the shepherd's perspective, and many others, how much joy there is in trusting that God will fulfill his promises, that God will actually show up in our lives.
And we considered also that we can still experience joy in the waiting of our own circumstances, our own lives. This morning, we're going to talk about the servant love of Jesus.
[2:27] We're going to talk about how he came into the world, the way he lived, and finally, the way he died. That sounds like a lot to cover this morning, but we'll get there.

Through it all, Jesus modeled what it meant to be a humble servant. Who in this room likes surprises? Show of hands. Not that many.
Interesting. Or everybody's just shy this morning? Do you like surprises? I like surprises. I don't like being startled. Startling is not the same. Jump scares are not the same as a surprise.
So, do you enjoy it when unexpected things happen? Some people love to receive gifts at Christmas that are completely unexpected. Is that you?
Are you hard to buy for? I'm hard to buy for, apparently. I don't know. I'm a man of simple taste. Get me a great pop, and I'm good.
[3:27] Now there'll be great pop under the tree, see? Other people love to share ideas that they hope for for Christmas, right? People make lists and put them on fridges, or send them by text, or all sorts of things like that.

How many of us here this morning are planners? Man, there's a lot of people. You've got to be one or the other, I think, right? So, some expected things are nice, right?
What I often like to say is, you know what? Spontaneity has its time and its place. But maybe you like surprises. A call from an old friend.
I recently connected with a childhood friend of mine again, and that was wonderful. Except for some of the things he reminded me of. But a promotion at work. Something like that.
A good grade on an assignment, if you're a student, right? Those are nice surprises to have. And I think one thing that everyone, even Christians who profess to be very much against this kind of

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-08 06:16:21

thing, whether people admit it or not, do you fantasize about winning the lottery?
[4:36] Right? Lots of people I hear say that. Boy, when I win the lottery, dot, dot, dot. So, imagine someone going about their daily routine.

This someone could be you, if you're daydreaming this. Working hard to make ends meet. And then suddenly, they purchase a lottery ticket on a whim. They don't think much about it, because the odds of winning are not great.
Right? Not that great. However, against all expectations, their ticket turns out to be the jackpot winner. They become an overnight millionaire, or even multi-millionaire.
And winning the lottery, I think, certainly is an unexpected and life-changing event that can bring immense joy and new challenges.
Edmonton Oilers Foundation has what they claim to be, anyway, the largest 50-50 in professional sports. So, that's any sport across North America.
[5:40] I guess they've done their homework. If you ever at an Oilers game or watch during a broadcast, you can see those numbers climb. And the 50-50 always goes to a charitable organization, but someone's life is changed in those draws.

And often, they'll go back and talk to people about what they won in a given draw and what they did with it. Lots of people go on trips. Lots of people pay off mortgages, things like that. But it can really turn your circumstances upside down in a moment.
And it really would require you to adapt suddenly and surprisingly to an altered reality that you weren't expecting. So, we're beginning this morning in the Gospel of Luke, where a single event, Jesus' birth, dramatically altered reality.
So, let's hear the words of Luke 2, verses 1-7. If you want to turn there in your Bible. Luke 2, 1-7. Someone found their Bible.
And you know this story as well. Linus has told it to you over the years. In those days, Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.
[6:59] This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was the governor of Syria. And everyone went to their own town to register. So, Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem, the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.
She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger because there was no guest room available for them. So, before we even get to this part of the story, let's start with the woman that God chose to bring Jesus into the world.
He did not choose a queen. He didn't even choose the daughter of a rich man or from a prestigious house of some kind. God chose a young girl from a small town.
He didn't even choose flashy. He chose humble and valued humble. Becoming pregnant with the Savior of the world was, to say the least, a very unexpected thing to happen to Mary.
[8:21] It's probably the understatement of all human history. And it was especially surprising, though, that she was a virgin. She was committed to marrying a man named Joseph.

Picking up where this passage starts, Joseph, Mary, and their unborn baby must leave home and travel to the big city for this census count that we just heard about.
And this was mandatory for the entire Roman world. Today, we can simply mail our census in, fill it out online. But in this time in history, you had to show your face in person.
Not necessarily convenient. We're talking about the events of 2,000 years ago. So there were no ultrasounds. There were no due dates.
Even with all of today's technology and advancements in healthcare, you never really know when the baby is coming, right? Has anybody who has children snickered when someone has said, oh, yeah, we're expecting the baby on?
[9:28] And we just go, first timers. Due dates. Due dates. Am I right? So we can assume that Mary didn't plan to have her baby anywhere other than her home, right?

That would have been the best place. Certainly not in a stable. But God had a different plan. So let's have some new context on this familiar situation.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-08 06:16:21

Imagine being far from home, traveled mostly on foot, being extremely pregnant, and then not having a place to stay for the night.
The city was filled with all kinds of travelers that had come to report for the census. There was literally nowhere for them to stay, even in this inn.
There was no vacancy for this young family to occupy. They were out of options. So Joseph and Mary were given a manger, which is essentially a kinder, gentler word for barn.
[10:37] Mary gives birth to Jesus. And as scripture says, she wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger because there was no guest room available for them.

Friends, Jesus came into the world in a lowly and humble way. But this was intentional. God didn't say, oh, if only I had booked ahead.
There was no trivago, right? But this was all intentional, as I said. Jesus wasn't born to wealthy parents in a palace like many kings would have been, like many regal heirs of this kind would have been, from a human perspective.
Through this familiar account, we witnessed the most unexpected arrival of the Savior of the world. But my friends, God planned this.
Through these events, God connects with humanity in a very vulnerable way. By being born the way that he was, where he was, Jesus immediately identifies with the marginalized and the ordinary of this world.
[11:54] It's at Christmas when we're reminded that God's love is not reserved for the elite. It's accessible to all people. Those weren't just nice words.

They are absolute truth. Jesus arrived in an unexpected way, and that set the precedent for his entire life.
So next, let's look at who Jesus became, who he was during his time on earth. This humble nature with which he came into the world is actually a defining piece of who he was through his entire life on earth.
So Paul writes about this to the early church in Philippi, in Philippians 2, 5-11. If you want to turn there, Philippians 2, 5-11, and I'll read it for us.
In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus, who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage.
[13:04] Rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow.
What a day that will be. In heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.
Paul gives his listeners an expectation there, that we ought to live in relationship with one another, and that Jesus is the example we should follow.
Paul is very clear that we're to share the mindset of Christ in his humility and his service. Through his humanity, Jesus created a masterful example of redemption.
[14:23] And the passage begins with the call for us to have the same mind that was in Christ Jesus. So what mind is that? It's a mind of humility.

It's a mind of selflessness. And perhaps above all, it's a mind of service. It's the mind that led Jesus to willingly set aside his divine glory and take on the form of a human being.
So we talked a bit about Jesus, the creator of the universe, stepping down from heaven and entering the world as a vulnerable baby. He didn't choose a regal entrance.
He didn't choose to be born in the splendor of a palace. He certainly deserved that. But instead, the first cries of Jesus filled the air in the humblest of settings.
A stable. He experienced the limitations and fragility of humanity from the moment he was born until his death.
[15:31] He felt the warmth of a mother's love and the comfort of a father's protection. Jesus experienced hunger and thirst, fatigue, and the full spectrum of human emotions.

We can see it on display in the Gospels. Jesus wasn't just partly human. He was completely human. He wasn't spared from discomfort or even pain during his time on earth.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-08 06:16:21

You've heard this before used in reference to Jesus. He's often referred to as a humble servant. But that's both for his leadership style, which we can see as he tried to model the way to live for the disciples and the apostles.
But it was also in the way that he loved people. He met people where they were. He lived among them and he lived with them.
This is where the humanity of Jesus demonstrates his sacrificial love. It was through his humanity that Jesus accomplished the most profound act of love and redemption by dying on the cross for us.
[16:53] By taking our human nature on, Jesus bridged the gap between humanity and divinity, reconciling us to God and bringing us closer to him in the only way that was possible.

Friends, the humanity of Jesus isn't just an historical fact, but a living reality that continues to shape our faith and our relationship with God.
God knows us, knows what it is to be human in the way that we can't even grasp ourselves. And the good news in all of this is that it means we have a Savior who intimately understands our struggles and our temptations.
He knows what it's like, firsthand experience, to face adversity or rejection or suffering.
Even though he never sinned, he lived a perfect life, Jesus was still subjected to trials and temptations. Jesus became human, friends, to relate to us, to his people, with an intimacy that couldn't have been accomplished any other way.
[18:13] This means, guess what, that we can approach him with confidence because we know that we have a compassionate and empathetic Savior who sympathizes with our weaknesses.

In our moments of doubt or pain or despair, we can turn to Jesus, knowing that not only does he hear our prayers, he understands the depths of our hearts.
As we navigate the complexities of our own human existence, we can have peace in the fact that we truly are not alone. We have a Savior who walked this very path before us and he continues to walk it with us every day.
And when we share in his humble nature, we can also become God's representatives in the ways that we love and serve those around us.
So as we reflect on the humanity of Jesus in Philippians 2, 5-11, let's remember that our Savior stepped into a world to fully understand and embrace our humanity.
[19:30] And he did that not out of obligation but out of profound love. He created a masterpiece of redemption that touches our hearts, should touch our hearts, in the most unexpected and beautiful ways.

So we've talked about the unexpected arrival of Jesus to his humble parents. We've also considered his humanity and unpacked what that means to and for us.
What it truly meant for God to take on human flesh. So now we're going to look at the end of Jesus' life. Maybe you're thinking, oh, this is the worst Christmas sermon ever.
They're connected. We're going to notice some parallels between the cross and the manger. Have you ever thought about this before?
There are deep connections between Jesus' birth and the way that he died. Have you ever thought generally about the comparisons between the beginning of life and the end?
[20:39] The way that God writes these stories, the way that God is writing all of our stories, is clear and specific. He intentionally and planned, designed for life to be this way, for it to play out this way.

And this is the same for the story of Jesus. Because the beginning of his story is just as important as the end and even just as important as the in-between parts.
So let's take a moment to look at some of the ways that the birth and death of Jesus intersect. Well, first, Jesus' life is bracketed by a sense of being rejected and marginalized.
You ever thought of that? He was born in a stable, not a palace that would have been fit for a king or even a family home. At the cross, Christ was rejected and hung between criminals outside the city.
No one wanted anything to do with him. And then maybe you've considered for yourself that Mary was present for both these critical events.
[21:55] Mary was the bookend to Jesus' life. Second, Jesus' death and birth were both full of humility and vulnerability.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-08 06:16:21

His birth was surrounded by animals in a lowly barn, surrounded by shepherds, We talked last week about shepherds being certainly the least of these, right?
And even worse to many people. At his death, we witnessed Jesus hanging on a cross. He was crucified and punished alongside common criminals.
Neither of these experiences are mighty or grand. this parallel, I believe, teaches us that Jesus' mission was not one and still isn't one of earthly glory and power, but of sacrificial love and redemption.
So as Christians, when we seek attention and authority and power, does that model what our Lord did? Jesus' birth and death bookend a life characterized by humility and selflessness.
[23:09] Third, we can look at the manger in Bethlehem and see that it was ultimately the perfect foreshadowing of Jesus' death.

Huh? Well, Jesus' birth signaled the very beginning of his journey towards selflessness and sacrifice for humanity's sake. Jesus was, hear this, Jesus was born to die.
Have you ever put those pieces together? Jesus came to ultimately offer himself as the perfect lamb of God who took away, who still takes away the sins of anyone who turns to him.
On the cross, Jesus fulfilled this purpose with unparalleled love and devotion. He endured excruciating physical and spiritual pain while surrendering his life to atone for our sins.
Not my will, he said, but yours be done. Just as the birth of Jesus was a gift of hope and promise to the world, his death was the ultimate gift of redemption and restoration.
[24:28] Friends, Jesus was a servant always. He was born in the humblest of ways. He was the king of kings and yet he chose to come down to earth to live the perfect life so that we, his people, could be close to the father.

Without the death and resurrection of Jesus, we would still be dead in our sin and have no hope of an eternity with God. As we wrap up our time together this morning, I want us to remember that when we reflect on the birth and death of Jesus, we see the amazing ways that his life was completely divine and how it's all connected.
From the unexpected arrival in the humble manger to the ultimate sacrifice on the cross, Jesus' journey on earth illustrates his life as a humble servant.
The birth of Jesus in a lowly stable was a deliberate act, an intentional act of humility that set the tone for his entire mission.
He identified with the marginalized and the ordinary, teaching us that God's love truly is accessible and for all people, regardless of perceived station or status in this life.
[26:04] Jesus' humanity is articulated in Philippians 2, verses 5 to 11, shows his humility and his selflessness. He willingly set aside his divine glory to take the form of a servant.

He experienced our joys, our struggles, our sorrows firsthand. His complete understanding of our brokenness allows us to approach him with confidence, knowing that not only does he hear our prayers, he empathizes with our weaknesses.
The parallels between Jesus' birth and death really are striking, and I hope you've recognized some of those this morning. Both these events were clearly and dramatically marked by both humility and vulnerability.
Jesus' birth in a manger and his crucifixion on a cross were profound demonstrations of God's intentional choice to connect with us, with humanity in our most vulnerable state.
Jesus' mission was not about power and pageantry. It was about sacrificial love and redemption. As we contemplate these parallels, may we be reminded of the depths of God's love and also of his divine plan, not just for the world, but for you and me as his beloved children.
[27:37] Jesus' birth and his death were not isolated events. They were integral parts of the same redemption story.

Let's seek to always be aware of the profound connection between the manger and the cross, embracing the humility and vulnerability and sacrificial love of our Savior.
Just as the world was forever changed by the birth of Jesus, his death on the cross still transforms lives. It offers hope day after day for anyone who comes to him of eternal salvation.
Here's my challenge for each of us this week. Look for ways to humble ourselves. Look for ways to share the love of Christ with others. Seeking to set aside our pride or our position to serve others as Christ served because this is the true meaning of Christmas.
Amen.

Downloaded from https://yetanothersermon.host - 2026-09-08 06:16:21