

O Come Let Us Adore Him

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[0 : 00] Well, Merry Christmas. For those who don't know me, my name is Andrew. I'm one of the pastors here as well. And can I add my welcome to VJs to both you in the room and also those online.

And I also just want to say well done to these three people at the front here. They are visitors. I'm sorry to call you. I've got chocolates. They came in and sat in the very front row. I think. I'm so impressed. So impressed. Well, there are all sorts of things we adore in life. That is things that we think are adorable, you know, cute and cuddly.

And we all go, oh. So, for example, some people adore dogs like this one. Oh. If you're not a dog person, then there's a cat.

Oh. Yeah, that's right. And, of course, all people adore babies. Yeah. Yeah. But here's the question. Is this how we're to adore Jesus at Christmas?

[1 : 11] And later on, we'll sing that well-known carol, O Come, All Ye Faithful. And the chorus says, O come, let us adore him. And so does that mean when we look at the nativity scenes on Christmas cards and maybe in shops if you can find one, does that mean we just see Jesus as a cute baby in a sterile stable with a manger full of fluffy straw and go, oh, well, no, actually.

You see, the word adore can also mean to give adoration and to give respect, to worship, to bow down. And that's what the carol is talking about when it says, O come, let us adore him.

But why? Why are we to adore Jesus like that? Well, our second reading tells us, but to help you follow along, I need to first teach you some mathematics.

Now, don't stress. It's the easy part of maths. It's shapes. Okay. And so, look, well, I've got some more chocolates here. Here's the first. We'll have a practice go. What's this shape called?

A triangle. No. A square. I can't remember. I don't know who said square. You can see me afterwards and maybe fight over it.

[2 : 36] All right, this one. What about this one? Circle. Okay, now this one, next one is a little bit trickier, but I believe we at least got one math teacher in the room who can help us out. What's this one called?

Starts with a P. Parabola. Oh, you're all over it. Well, I don't think I have enough chocolates, actually. I guess I'll keep them. But, yeah, it's a parabola. And part of our passage follows the shape of a parabola.

As one preacher has called it, it's like a divine parabola in our passage. But the passage begins with a reminder about how to treat one another.

So in verses 3 and 4, it talks about not doing anything out of selfish ambition, but in humility, valuing others above yourselves.

In other words, we're to be selfless, not selfish. And then it goes on to say in our passage that we have the mindset or attitude of Jesus.

[3 : 37] Verse 5, in your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. But how do we know he had that attitude of selfless humility? Well, because of what he did.

And here's where our divine parabola begins. With Jesus as God in heaven who comes down to earth. So point one on your outlines, which are on the other side of your readings.

And then you can follow the readings on the screen if you like. So it goes on to say in verse 6, Jesus, who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage.

Rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant and being made in human likeness. You see, Jesus had the attitude of selfless humility.

And we can see it by the way he became a servant who put others first. Even though he is God himself. We said that in our creed a moment ago, didn't we?

[4 : 44] And we're going to sing it in that carol, O Come Only Faithful. True God from true God. God begotten, not created. In other words, he's always been God the Son.

And yet he did not consider being God something to be used to his own advantage, selfishly. No, no. He sought to serve selflessly.

So he humbly left his throne above to come to earth below. To be born as a baby at Christmas. And so on the divine parabola, we see Jesus is God in heaven.

But then he's born as man on earth. And I think we sometimes forget how extraordinary that is. That God the Son would come down to earth to be born as a baby.

To then live in this world as one of us. I mean, can you imagine leaving your nice, clean house to be born as one of these?

[5 : 54] And to live in the mud? Now, there's nothing against, I've got nothing against pigs. I really like pigs, especially cooked with eggs. And I'm not calling us pigs.

But what I'm trying to point out is there's this massive gap. Just like there's a massive gap between us and pigs, there's an even greater gap between God and us. And yet, God the Son came down to be born as one of us.

And then to live in this world amongst the mud and dirt we see. Don't get me wrong, there's lots of great things we can enjoy in this world. But has not humanity messed so much of it up?

You know, pollution, violence, selfishness, corruption. And it's not just out there. That selfishness is sometimes in here, if we're honest with ourselves.

Have we not all muddied our own lives from time to time with selfishness and sin? Now, lost our temper, thought badly of others, being selfish rather than selfless?

[7 : 04] Have we not all at times ignored God in our lives? Have we all not got moral mud on us? And mud that will be held accountable for on the last day.

And yet, Jesus didn't just come down from heaven to earth to become one of us at Christmas time. He then went to the cross to die for all of us at Easter time.

To wash us clean, forgive us. And shield us from that judgment. And that's what our passage goes on to say in verse 8 there. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

You see, Jesus' selfless humility went even further down the parabola. Right to the bottom. To die on a cross.

His selfless humility saw him take our sins penalty. To shield us from the judgment we deserve.

[8 : 08] I don't know if you remember, but there was a few years ago, there was the worst shooting, a church shooting in American history. It was 2017. A gunman burst into a small Baptist church in Texas, opened fire, killing 26 people.

But Peggy Warden used her body to shield her grandson, Zach, taking the bullets in her back. Is that not a great act of selfless humility and love?

Now, of course, Zach didn't deserve to die. But imagine the police stormed in and fired at the shooter who had shot all these people. But this time, Peggy shielded the shooter from the bullets he deserved.

Would that not be an even greater act of selfless humility and love? But you see, that's precisely what Jesus has done for us.

He humbled himself, was obedient to death, even death on the cross. And there he shielded us from the penalty we deserve. So we can have peace with God, as we just sung in our previous carol.

[9 : 19] Life eternal. And that's what the angels announced in our first reading. And good news of great joy, for a saviour has been born to you, who brings peace on earth and life eternal.

And because of this, then, he has been exalted as Lord. Point three, and then verses nine to 11. Therefore, because of this, 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 in heaven and on earth and under the earth. And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

To the glory of God the Father. And because Jesus willingly went to the cross for us, because he successfully paid for our sins, then God raised him and exalted him to the highest place.

He went up the right side of the parabola, if you like, up to the right hand of God in heaven. And by doing so, God has publicly given Jesus another name.

[10:33] What name? Well, it's actually God's own name of Lord. There's no other higher name than Lord. Lord is the top person, right? That at the name of Jesus, people will bow their knees to him as Lord.

And every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Of course, Jesus was already Lord since he was already God. That's what verse six has already said.

It's why he was Lord even as a baby before the parabola happened, if you like, or before the exalting happened. And we just sang in Silent Night, for example, Jesus, Lord, at your birth.

And we also heard in our first reading that the angels said, a savior has been born to you. He is the Christ, the Lord. You see, because Jesus already shared God's nature, then he already shared God's name.

But by raising and exalting him to the highest place, God has now publicly declared it. He's publicly given it to him. I mean, if someone rises from the dead, it's a pretty public declaration that he's no ordinary person, isn't it?

[11:50] And as I've said to our regulars here a few times before, we even have historical evidence for his resurrection. I've shown this to our regulars before, but there's a Supreme Court, New South Wales Supreme Court justice, who's retired.

And he said that in his analysis as a judge, the resurrection passes the test in terms of burden of proof. There's that much evidence that as a judge, he would have to rule in favor of the resurrection. But the point is, by doing this, God has publicly declared or given Jesus the name of Lord. And so everyone who calls on the name of this Lord will be saved.

Before in the Old Testament, the Jews called on the name of the Lord God to be saved. But now we are all to call on the name of the Lord Jesus to be saved. Before God ruled the world through his son anonymously, but now God rules the world through his son openly.

It's in the Bible for everyone to see. Before only the shepherds were told that first Christmas, that this saviour is also the Lord. Now millions around the world are told every Christmas, that this saviour is the Lord.

[13:10] And if this is who Jesus is, then does he not deserve to be adored? I'm not thought of as adorable, you know, cute baby, sterile stable, manger full of fluffy straw.

But no, no, given adoration, respect, worship. That's what the carol's chorus actually goes on to say, isn't it?

Oh, come let us adore him. Oh, come let us adore him. Oh, come let us adore him. Christ the Lord. And so will you adore Jesus like that this Christmas?

How? Well, by firstly, confessing with your tongue that he is your saviour and Lord. That is by believing in him.

After all, you cannot give adoration to someone you don't believe in, can you? And so do you, do you believe in Jesus? Christmas would be a great time to start, and to confess that, yeah, your life is stained with a bit of mud, but that you will trust in Jesus to wash you clean, forgive you, and shield you from your sins penalty, and seek to follow him as your Lord.

[14:29] It'd be a great time to do that, to confess with your tongue that Jesus is your saviour and Lord. And for us who have done that, then secondly, we're to keep showing it in our lives by bowing, not just our knees, but our whole lives to him, joyful and triumphant, knowing that we have life eternal.

And that means continuing to trust in him, even when you don't know why things are happening in your life, or what will happen in our world.

I mean, we've got no clue what's happening tomorrow, little or next year these days, do we? And yet Jesus is still Lord. He still rules. We see it in the life of Christians, in answered prayers, and one day everyone will see it, and confess he is Lord.

And so we're to continue to trust him as our Lord. And we're also to continue to listen to him, even when our colleagues, or the world, or even some of your family might say something different, because he is our Lord.

And so we're to listen to him above all else. And it means continuing to follow him, even when it's hard. Like having that same mindset we started with, that mindset of selfless humility towards others.

[15 : 46] I mean, that's not always easy, is it? I mean, on the roads at the moment, the traffic is horrendous. It's really not easy to be selfless and humble.

Or just try going to the Boxing Day sales tomorrow, and see how easy it is to practice selfless humility. But, that's what we're to do, because Jesus is our Lord.

And so, remember the divine parabola, that Jesus came to earth as one of us, died on the cross for all of us, and was raised, declared, Lord.

Remember his selfless humility, that we might adore him rightly this Christmas. Let's pray. Our gracious Heavenly Father, we do thank you for Jesus, that he is both our Saviour and Lord.

And so, help us, we pray, to adore him rightly this Christmas. Firstly, by confessing with our tongues, that he is our Saviour and Lord. And secondly, by bowing our lives to him in joyful thanks.

[16 : 57] Help us to do this, we pray, in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Well, no surprises about which carol we're going to sing next. Let's stand and sing. O come, O come, O come, O come, O come, O come, O come, O come, to heaven.

Amen. Come, and behold you, born the King of angels, O come, come, O come, o come, come, o come, O come, and behold you, Christ the Lord.

True God of true God, light of light eternal, Lord, the apostle of the first.

Son of the Father, the art of created, O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Sing, wise of angels, Sing in exultation, Sing, holy citizens of heaven above.

[19 : 24] Glory to God, glory in the highest, O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Yea, Lord, we greet thee, Born this happy morning, Jesus to thee be in glory.

Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing. O come, let us adore him.

O come, let us adore him. O come, let us adore him.

Christ the Lord.