

The Humility Of Jesus

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[0 : 00] The following sermon is made available by Lakeside Bible Church in Cornelius, North Carolina.

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Philippians chapter 2, as we continue on in our series here of Paul's letter to the Philippian church. This passage, as you know, is one of the most helpful and most concise explanations of the identity of Jesus and the salvation that he has provided to us through his death on the cross.

Paul says, And remember, there's a parenthetical here. If there is consolation in Christ, and there is.

[1 : 18] If any comfort of love, and there is. So on and so forth. He says, Because of that, fulfill my joy that you be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord and of one mind.

Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind. Let each esteem others better than themselves. Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Now, Paul's first and primary intention in writing these verses in this particular set of doctrinal statements wasn't so much to just give a description and really a miniature doctrinal treatise of the person of Christ.

[2 : 57] His first intention, as we see in verse 5, was really to give an example to the Philippian believers of how they were to humbly submit to one another and be unified together as believers.

That's what we talked about last week in the first four verses. It was all about loving one another, submitting to one another, being unified as a church family. And we get to verse 5. Paul isn't just completely changing the subject all of a sudden.

And what he's doing is saying, since this is what it takes for you to live a gospel-worthy life, to be unified together and to love one another, you should pattern this after what we see in the person of Christ.

And so he's connecting Jesus' life to the example of how we're to live out our lives as believers, specifically within the local church. Now, obviously, the supreme example of this humility in verses 3 and 4, and this unity that Paul is referring to, obviously, the supreme example of that is Jesus Christ.

And this text becomes one of the classical, Christological passages of all the Bible. Some people even have suggested that this was a hymn that was sung by the early church, that it was so impactful and concise in the way that Paul presented these truths of Christ that the early church on through the centuries began to sing these words as a song, as a time of worship in their services.

[4 : 24] But there is a balance that we have to take as we look at this passage, just like there's a balance that we have to take when we look at any passage. Now, my tendency is to dig so far into the doctrinal element of a various passage that I leave off sometimes the practical applications of that passage.

That's my personal tendency. Others have the opposite tendency. They want so much to be impacted by the practical application that they never actually spend any time diving into the doctrinal instruction that supports that practice.

So we could spend all of our time today just jumping into the person of Christ for knowledge's sake as far as developing and increasing our knowledge of who he is. But if we miss out on what Paul's intention in writing this is, then we've missed out on the whole purpose.

If we study the Bible only to gain knowledge, and we never apply that knowledge to practical living, then what's the purpose of the knowledge? It's wasted.

But if we come to the scriptures only looking for the top 10 things to make us a better father, or the five ways to be a better parent, or whatever it is, if we're only looking for the practical, then we miss out on the whole reason that our life has to be different anyways.

[5 : 44] So we have to come to this passage with a balance. We have to come with every passage with that particular balance. And that's what I'm going to try to do today. Balance out the doctrine of who Jesus is with the practical intention of why Paul cares to write about it here.

And that is because our lives are supposed to mimic his. As we live our life within the church, we're to be unified together because we exhibit the same humility that Christ has exhibited.

And then at the same time, we certainly want to grow in our knowledge of Christ as well. Now, the truths of these verses between 6 and 11 are really centered on the identity of Jesus and who he is.

And we'll deal with four facets of Christ's identity. Three of them today in verses 6 through 8, and the last one in verses 9 through 11, we will deal with next Sunday.

So let's jump right into it before I take too much time, okay? First thing we see here, verse number 6, Jesus' identity. Jesus is the sovereign God. Jesus is the sovereign God.

[6 : 52] Look with me again at verse number 6. Paul says, or let's start at 5, let this mind be in you, this humble mind, this unifying mind, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.

In verse number 6, we see Paul presenting the truth that Jesus is divine. He has the very nature and essence of God.

He is deity himself. The humility of Jesus, as we study and apply this passage, is only meaningful to us as we come to understand his true identity.

If we are to accept his life as the supreme example of humility, then we must first acknowledge the fact of his deity, that he is God.

And think about it. If Jesus were merely a man, why would we characterize his life as particularly humble? It would actually be incorrect to do that.

[7 : 58] Why in the world would we think that a seemingly insignificant person born to an insignificant family, in an insignificant place, with a relatively insignificant career, and a following of people that are mostly insignificant people, why in the world would we think that that life is particularly humble?

If anything, we would look at the life of Jesus and we would say he's actually probably exalted a little higher than what most people born into that dynamic with that particular story of life would be.

I mean, at least for a portion of his life, he had a following of people that wanted to be around him, people that wanted to see him, and people that wanted to listen to him. But if Jesus was only a man, if that's all that he was, why would we regard him as particularly humble?

The fact of Jesus' deity is what makes him infinitely spectacular. It's what makes him infinitely significant. The fact that Jesus first and foremost is God is what actually makes him the supreme example of humility in which we should pattern our own life.

The greatest satanic attack against Christianity is the plethora of religions and philosophies that try to rob Jesus of his divine nature.

[9 : 18] The denial of his deity renders his life utterly purposeless. If he's not God, then why do we care to study what the Bible says about him?

The Bible then actually becomes useless. If Jesus is not God, then the Bible is a lie, and we're wasting our time giving it any credibility at all.

The truth is we must stand firm as believers on the truth of Jesus' identity and defend it against the doctrinal errors that have even begun to infiltrate the evangelical church in America.

John gives us the same instruction in his first epistle in 1 John chapter 4. He says, Beloved, believe not every spirit. By spirit, he means teacher or person that is proclaiming truth in some way or at least claiming to proclaim truth.

Believe not every spirit, but try those spirits, whether they are of God. because many false prophets are gone out into the world. And then he says, here's how you know the spirit of God.

[10 : 25] Every person that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God. Not just that Jesus is man, but that Jesus has come to be man, that he is the divine that has taken on human flesh is of God.

And every spirit that confesses not that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not God. And this is that spirit of Antichrist. Where have you ever heard that it should come?

And even now already is in the world. And we must be committed to understand the doctrine of the Bibles so that we can defend this truth because our faith rests on this truth.

If we waver in this way or we begin to accommodate friends and family and other philosophies and even maybe perhaps go along with other philosophies that would rob Jesus of his divine nature then we actually unsettle our entire faith and make it pointless.

I wanna encourage us to be like the Bereans in Acts chapter 17. Paul and Silas were effectively run out of Thessalonica and they go to Berea and they find the synagogue of the Jews.

[11 : 38] In Acts chapter 17, it says that these Bereans were more noble than those in Thessalonica and that they received the word with all readiness of mind and here's what they did. They searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so.

Therefore, many of them believed. Church, we have a responsibility to do this. Our responsibility as believers goes much further than just our weekly gathering for worship.

There's a whole dynamic of life within church and we're gonna get around to teaching a lot of that but even beyond that, we have a responsibility as Christians, as believers, to study out the scriptures to see if these things are so in order that we know the scripture and stand firm on sound doctrine and can preach the truth even when those around us are polluted with error.

What does this passage actually say about his deity? Two phrases actually. The first one is this, being in the form of God. Look at verse six. Jesus who being in the form of God.

This word form means or is a reference to the very essence of a person's nature. It's their continuous state or condition. When Paul says that Jesus existed in the form of God, he meant that the very essence of who Jesus was is completely God.

[13 : 08] He possesses the nature of deity to the fullest extent. In other words, if you want to see God, look at Jesus. If you want to know God, study Jesus.

If you want to hear from God, listen to the words of Jesus. He is God. The scriptures affirm this over and over again.

John chapter one, in the beginning was the word and the word was with God as Kyle just read it a minute ago. And then it says, and the word, another name for Jesus, was God. The same person was in the beginning with God long before his birth in Bethlehem.

All things were made by him, that is creation. And without him was not anything made that was made. Clearly, John is attesting to the fact that Jesus was not merely a man, that he existed long before his birth in Bethlehem, that Jesus is in fact God and creator.

The writer of Hebrews at the very beginning of his book in chapter one says that God has spoken to us by his son, Jesus, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

[14 : 26] that it was Jesus who was active in creation. He says, he is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of God's nature.

He upholds the universe by the word of his power. And after making purification for our sins, dying on the cross, he ascended back into heaven where he sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high, where he sat back down at the right hand of the majesty on high.

The scriptures clearly affirm over and over, Jesus was not just a man. He is God himself. Jesus explicitly made this claim. In John chapter 17, he prayed to his father and said, glorify me in your presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

In John chapter 10, Jesus said, my sheep hear my voice and I know them and they follow me. And then he says, and I give them eternal life.

No man has power to give another human being eternal life. That power rests solely in God's power. And here in John chapter 10, Jesus is saying, in his divinity claim, I am that God and I am the one that gives believers eternal life.

[15 : 56] And he goes on and he says, they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. My father which gave them me is greater than all and no man is able to pluck them out of his hand.

And then he says, I and my father are one. The same person by his own claim. And then here's what happened in John chapter 10, very next verse.

Then the Jews took up stones to stone him. They hated him, not because of his messianic claim. The Jews then and even the Jews today don't mind that Jesus claimed to be a Messiah.

They will tell you, we've had lots of Messiahs through the year. We've had lots of saviors through the year in one way or another. Their problem with Jesus is his divinity claim. They didn't start to pick up the rocks until Jesus said, I and the father are one.

I give eternal life. I forgive sins. It wasn't his messianic claim. It was the fact that he said that he was God. And it's the same reason that people hate him now.

[17 : 04] It's not because he was a great teacher. It's not because of some prophetic element that they think that he had. It's because he claimed to be God. And if Jesus is God, then as man, we are accountable to him and we are accountable to his teaching.

But it's for this very reason that we cannot come casually to the person of Jesus. It is improper to come to Jesus and say that Jesus was just a good teacher or that he was a moral man or that he was a prophet in some way.

Jesus himself made a claim of being deity. Either he's a liar and a fanatic or he truly is God. There's no in between. And we must all make that decision of whether we're going to trust him as God and Savior or whether, like the Jews would say, he is an imposter.

And a liar and a perverter of the faith. That's the first mention in verse six that he's in the form of God. The second one is a little bit different.

Thought it not robbery to be equal with God, it says. This is Paul's statement and introduction to Paul's description of Jesus' humility.

[18 : 18] But his humility doesn't matter if we don't understand his divinity. Now, Paul says, in that divinity, Christ willingly humbled himself and set aside the benefits of that divine nature in order that he might provide salvation for us.

That's the humility of Christ. The phrasing is a little bit odd. If you've got one of those scripture journals, it probably says something to the effect of he did not count equality with God as something to be grasped.

That robbery, that grasped, is a reference to holding tightly to something. It's clinging to something. And Paul's point is that though Jesus is God, he did not consider the glory that comes along with being God, his place on the throne in heaven, amidst the praises of the angels and the Old Testament saints that were already there and all the benefits of the riches and the wealth and all of those things.

He didn't cling to that stuff desperately in an unwillingness to help us, but rather in his humility as God, though he deserved all of those things, in his humility, he set those things to the side, not his deity, but the glory of being divine.

He set that to the side and he condescended to man in order to provide salvation for us. And Paul says this is the humility that we're to show with one another.

[19 : 54] In fact, it's exactly what Paul says in verse number three, or excuse me, four. He says, look, not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

When Paul says at the end of chapter one that we are to live a life that is worthy of the gospel and the way that we're going to live that life is by endurance and persecution and then in living unified together, he says the only way that that's going to happen is when you humble yourself and stop looking at your own things, be willing to set aside the glory of whatever it is that you have been blessed with in your life in order to serve others because that's exactly what Jesus did.

He did not cling to the things that were pleasant. He did not cling to the things that were the blessings and did not cling to the glory of his deity. He set it aside in order to serve others and we need not cling to the things that God has blessed us with and cling to the power that maybe we want to enjoy in a group dynamic or cling to one thing or another.

We ought to be willing to set aside whatever glory we have in order to serve one another and it's only in that humility that as a church we will be able to be unified and live a life that is worthy of the gospel.

So we see in verse 6 then that Jesus is the sovereign God. Secondly, in verse 7 we see that Jesus is the humble servant. He is the humble servant.

[21 : 27] Look with me at verse 7. But he made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men.

In verse 6 we see the deity of Jesus. In verse 7 we see the humanity of Jesus. And it's here where we can begin to see more clearly the example of his humility.

It says that he took upon him the form of a servant. Now you'll notice that Paul uses the same word for Jesus' deity in verse 6 as he does for his humanity in verse 7.

It's that same word form. And here's what he means in doing that. That Jesus in verse 6 in his very essence and his nature is God.

Jesus in verse 7 in his very essence and in his very nature is man. It's rigid and inflexible in his being and we get this mysteriously glorious truth of the identity of Jesus and that is that in his very nature he is simultaneously God and man to the fullest extent.

[22 : 42] The God of heaven in verse 6 condescended in humility in verse 7 to become a man like you and me with the purpose of providing redemption and salvation and forgiveness for our sins.

the phrase made himself of no reputation it means to make empty and in your scripture journals it will actually say that he emptied himself but what did he empty himself of?

Not his deity. That's who he is by his very nature. That can't be changed. He emptied himself as we mentioned of his glory. But think about that.

MacArthur said in light of the profound reality of Jesus' full and uncompromised deity! His incarnation the fact that he became a man was the most profound possible humiliation.

For him to change in any way or to any degree required dissent. It gets no higher than being God. For him to change in any way required dissent humiliation humbleness.

[23 : 55] And Jesus took that to the extreme in becoming a man and subjecting himself the holy God to pain. He subjected himself to poverty to grief to being a sinless being in the midst of a sinful and perverse culture.

He subjected himself to that the holy God in his humility. humility. And it was this example of Christ that led Paul to encourage the Philippians in verse 3 when he said that they ought not do anything with selfish ambition or conceit but in humility count others as more significant than themselves.

Ashlyn and I have had this conversation a lot this week haven't we Ashlyn? We're trying to get in the habit of throughout the week as we're studying the Bible on Sundays trying to make application to that study throughout the week in various forms and Ashlyn and I are a lot alike we both have a tendency to be a little bit selfish right?

And so we've been calling each other out on that throughout the week. Remember what Paul said to the Philippians that we're to consider others as more significant than ourselves.

Paul's not saying that you've got to think poorly about yourself he's just saying don't think about yourself. Let others have this significance. In biblical days there was a cultural dynamic that Jesus confronted in the Pharisees where whenever they would go to a big dinner there were particular seats at the feast that were meant for the most prominent people in the room.

[25 : 32] And the Pharisees had this habit of when they would get to the feast they would immediately take their seat at the most prominent place at the table believing themselves to be significant and letting everyone else fall into their own place as less significant than them.

And Jesus says rather than do that you ought to sit at the worst seat at the table and if somebody's going to exalt you let them do it don't exalt yourself. Paul explains that even further here and he says look he says consider everybody else as more significant don't look on your own things look on the things of others and that's exactly what Jesus did.

The God of glory put us first in condescending to us but there are some profound examples of Jesus living this out even in his life and ministry and there's one of them that I want to point out to you before we move on.

In fact I want you to turn in your Bibles over to Matthew chapter 20. Would you do that quickly? Matthew chapter 20. This passage tells us about a prideful initiative between a couple of Jesus' disciples was James and John the sons of Zebedee the sons of thunder.

What they wanted was for the Lord to give them a place of authority and a position in his kingdom. When Jesus' kingdom would finally be set up they wanted to be one on Jesus' right side and one on Jesus' left side.

[27 : 03] They wanted the most prominent place among all the disciples. disciples and so they did like most really brave and courageous and bold men would do.

They recruited their mother to go and talk to Jesus on their behalf and their mother went to Jesus and said listen we've been thinking about this and you know Jesus I love you and if you love me I'd love for you to put my sons one on one side and one on the other side in your kingdom.

And the other disciples obviously didn't like that very much and there became a contention between the disciples in this moment that lasted for days a contention where they were just fighting over who was more important and who was going to be more significant in Christ's kingdom.

Here's how Jesus responded in Matthew 20. Look at verse 24. When the ten heard it they were moved with indignation against the two brothers but Jesus called them unto him and here's what he said you know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them and they are great exercise authority upon them but it shall not be so among you Jesus said but whosoever will be great among you let him be your minister and whosoever will be chief among you let him be your servant and then he says this that he's the example of it.

Verse 28 even as the son of man came not not to be ministered to but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many.

[28 : 38] Jesus says listen you ought to treat one another like I've treated you. I am the son of God I'm the savior and I didn't come to this earth for you to serve me I came to serve you and the way that I'm going to do that is by giving my life for you.

Well I want you to flip over to John chapter 13 just a few pages to the right John chapter 13 you would think after that instruction that it was abundantly clear how they needed to change and when we think highly of ourselves we assume that we would have known better than the disciples and we probably would have taken that lesson well and continued on in humility and serving one another but that's not what happened.

Just a few days later in John chapter 13 we see that Jesus had to demonstrate this further for his disciples. This is the last supper he's about to go to the cross and in the Passover he has sent Peter and John ahead to prepare the Passover feast that they're going to observe.

Part of that meant that they should have prepared a method and a way for washing each other's feet but they failed to do that. So they go around the table and they're having their dinner and here's what John says happened in John chapter 13 look at verse 4 Jesus rose up from supper he laid aside his outer garments and taking a towel tied it around his waist then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples feet and to wipe them with the towel that he had wrapped around him.

It's a monumental demonstration restoration of humility on the part of Jesus. The washing of feet was a necessary custom of the day because of the sandals that they wore their feet would get incredibly dirty and it was customary of a host when hosting guests to make provisions!

[30 : 40] for their guests to have their feet washed. It was a sign of respect and it was a sign of honor and if a host were not to do that it was actually a sign of unfriendliness or even contempt for the person that has come over to their home in that particular moment.

It was an incredibly lowly task. It was reserved for the lowest of society. In fact there were even some Jewish writings that you can even see still today called the Midrash that stated not even a Hebrew slave could be commanded to wash someone else's feet.

It was just degrading. It was degrading. It would be degrading for us now. It was certainly degrading for them then. So you can imagine perhaps a silent tension as the men became aware of the fact that the one who was seated at the prominent place at the table the one who by their own confession was not just a man but was the very son of God that had come to establish his kingdom on this earth.

They had just made that confession. Remember Jesus had asked Peter who do you say that I am and he said you're the son of God and I'm going to follow you. Imagine how they felt as they sat around that table that night all of them bickering about who's going to be greatest in the kingdom and then all of a sudden they look up and Jesus has gotten up the one that is the greatest in the kingdom and he's gotten up from the table and he's taken his jacket off and he's taken the slave's towel and he's wrapped it around his waist and he's put some water in a bowl and now he's going around one by one to these men and he's getting down on his hands and his knees the God of heaven is on his hands and his knees and he's washing their nasty stinking feet and they're silent except for one of them you can read about that on your own but he goes by one by one and he gets down and he cleans their nasty feet and then when he's done with it he puts the towel away and he puts the bowl away and he puts his jacket back on and he goes right back to the place of prominence at the table it's an exact picture of what he's done in coming to this earth and condescending to us he left his place of prominence to condescend to man to accomplish a specific task providing redemption and once the task was completed as we'll study next week he ascended back into heaven and went right back to his seat of prominence when Jesus left the seat of prominence at the table that night he wasn't leaving off the fact that he was the most important person there that didn't change what he did was in his humility he got up from his place and he served the people that did not deserve to be served and Paul says this is exactly how we're to serve one another

Jesus said this is exactly how we're to serve one another if you're still in John 13 look with me down at verse number 12 when he had washed the feet and put on his outer garment he resumed his place and then he said do you understand what I have done to you you call me teacher and Lord and you're right for that's who I am if I then your Lord and teacher have washed your feet you ought also to wash one another's feet and he says for I have given you an example that you also should do just as I have done to you truly truly I say to you a servant is not greater than his master nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him if you know these things blessed are you if you do them so in verse 6 we see the sovereign God that's who Jesus is in verse 7 we see that sovereign

[34 : 42] God condescending to man in humility and becoming the humble servant and even in his life and ministry demonstrating that in a way that we should follow and then thirdly and finally in verse 8 we see that Jesus is the sufficient savior he's the sufficient savior look with me at verse number 8 Philippians 2 being found in fashion as a man he humbled himself and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross this is the extent of Christ humility how far was he willing to go to demonstrate this all the way to death he humbled himself and became obedient unto death he didn't become obedient to death death was not his lord he became obedient to the father and in his obedience to the father he was obedient to him unto death on our behalf what's amazing here is that it was all his initiative no one humbled

Jesus he humbled himself no one forced him to condescend and die he chose to do it himself and it wasn't just any death he didn't die a king's death he didn't die a ritualistic death he didn't die with honor he died a criminal's death a cruel death he died our death and this is what makes him our savior 1 John chapter 3 and verse 16 says hereby we perceive we the love of God because he laid down his life for us he laid down his life for us this wasn't just death this was our death he took our place he made a substitution for us that was the extent of his humility in 2 Corinthians chapter 5 we read that in his deity he was made to be sin who knew no sin sin is the antithesis of his being and he took on our sin in order to pay the price for us he never committed it and he didn't deserve that death but he took it in our place and it's here that all of that time in verses 6 and 7 becomes important to our doctrine of the gospel because acknowledging

Jesus' true identity as being God and man is absolutely necessary for him to be our savior his sacrifice is only sufficient for our sin because of his true identity his deity made it possible for him to live a sinless life that would provide sufficient payment for sin but his humanity made it possible for him to actually die the death that was necessary to satisfy God's wrath because of his identity in his humble condescension he was made sufficient for our salvation 1 John chapter 4 explains this to us it says in this was manifested or shown or demonstrated the love of God to us because God sent his only begotten son into the world not his only created son his only begotten son that we might live through him and here in his love not that we loved

God but that he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins that word propitiation is vastly important to our theology it means to satisfy or to appease fully the means for God's wrath to be satisfied because of our sin is only our death that's why Romans says that the payment for sin is death the way that God's wrath is appeased on us is through the death that's as a result of our sin Jesus in this propitiation!

fully satisfied God's wrath on our behalf because of his sinless life we can be saved God God is the God who is responsible to appease the wrath of the offended deity but in reality man is incapable of satisfying God's justice apart from Christ except by spending eternity in hell Jesus was not just the Savior he's the sufficient Savior he's the one that brings satisfaction to the wrath of God and this humility that he has demonstrated in his death on the cross in providing salvation is the same humility that Paul says we're to show to one another even so far as to give our lives for one another for the sake of the gospel what a

[40 : 04] Savior what a Savior thank you for listening to this sermon made available by Lakeside Bible Church feel free to share it wherever you'd like please do not charge for it or alter it in any way without express written consent from Lakeside Bible Church don't forget to visit us online at lakeside Bible church or find us on Facebook and Instagram by searching for Lakeside Bible NC if you live in the Charlotte or Lake Norman area we'd love for you to attend one of ourNING