



“Open Church – Open Bible

Min. Marossa Davis



Sunday Church School

DECEMBER 26, 2021

“A Humble King is Born”
Phil. 2:5-11; John 13:12-17

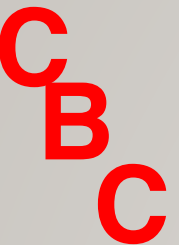
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Phil. 2:5-11; John 13:12-17 (KJV)

- Phil. 2: 5** **“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:**
v. 6 who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
v. 7 **but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant**
v. 8 and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
v. 9 **Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:**
v.10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in and heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;
v.11 **And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.”**



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Phil. 2:5-11; John 13:12-17

- John 13:12** “So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, **Know ye what I have done to you?**
- v. 13 Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am.
- v. 14 **If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.**
- v. 15 For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you.
- v. 16 **Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his Lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him.**
- v. 17 If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them.”

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While the New Testament gives us new details concerning the planting of the early Christian congregations mentioned in the epistles, the book of Acts does furnish us with information concerning some of them . One of those is the church at the city of Macedonia.

Arriving in the city on his second missionary journey, Paul and his three co-workers discovered there was no synagogue- the usual place they would have begun their evangelistic work in a new city. But they learned that some Jewish women met regularly by a nearby river on the Sabbath. This led them to Lydia, a businesswoman who readily received Christ and was baptized (cf. Acts 16:11-15)

At some point during his stay at Philippi, Paul cast a fortune telling demon out of a profitable slave girl leading to his arrest along with his fellow evangelist, Silas (cf. Acts 16: 16- 24). But all was not lost: as the result of an



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“ A Humble King is Born”

earthquake, the jailer was converted to Christ (cf. vs. 25-34). Thus, a church was successfully planted in Philippi, and unlike some other churches in the region, it remained faithful and steadfast in its ministry.

One of the great truths of the Christian faith is the fact that Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully man at the same time. This dual nature of Jesus is mysterious; nonetheless, it is true. It is because He is both God and man. He is not half and half but wholly both simultaneously. Some have disputed this, saying that He can only be one or the other. In this week’s lesson, however, we will see that there is no way to compromise Jesus’ humanity or His deity and be consistent with sound biblical doctrine. Jesus endured the suffering we feel and was tempted as we are, though, He did not commit sin (cf. Heb. 4:15). Most important, since He is also God, He can forgive our sins (cf. Mark 2:5-12).



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TODAY’S AIM

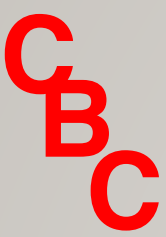
FACTS: to know the humility of Christ in His birth, life, and death.

PRINCIPLE: to recognize Jesus as the ultimate example of humility and service.

APPLICATION: to put others interest above our own by humbly serving them as Jesus gives example.

LESSON OUTLINE

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| I. EMPTIED | PHILIPPIANS 2: 5-8 |
| II. EXALTED | PHILIPPIANS 2: 9-11 |
| III. HUMILITY IN ACTION | JOHN 13:12-17 |



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I. EMPTIED

PHIL. 2: 5-8

It has been suggested that the church at Philippi was a favorite of Paul’s because it did not have the level of controversies that were relatively common in some of the other congregations he founded. Moreover, the Philippians assisted Paul by supporting him financially (cf. 4: 10-20).

Paul was imprisoned in Rome when he wrote this letter. Therefore, this and three other letters written at about the same time (Ephesians, Colossians, and Philemon) are often referred to as the Prison Epistles.

In spite of the fact that no major problems plagued the Philippian church, there were some disagreements. But wherever people come together, there is always the probability of discord and selfishness. Consequently, Paul encouraged them to be of one mind (v. 2). He admonished them that nothing they did should be done out of rivalry or personal pride. Instead of being focused



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“ A Humble King is Born”

on their own individual interests, the interests of others should be paramount among them. What better way to show this than by the example of Christ Himself?

The mindset or attitude of Christ should be our continual model.

Since He was ever and always concerned about others, so it should be for us. Putting others ahead of our own needs and desires is not easy, since we are by nature fallen, selfish creatures.

Because of the structure of the words that follow, they are often seen as an ancient hymn, either authored by Paul himself or cited by him. Either way the cadence is suggestive of a poem or a portion of one.

Throughout church history there have been debates concerning the nature of Christ. In A.D. 325, at the Council of Nicea, two church leaders, Athanasius and Arius, debated the issue of Jesus’ deity. While Athanasius maintained Christ’ full divinity, Arius claimed that He was merely a superior

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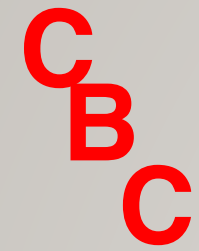
created being. This controversy has resurfaced at various times with one major cult today still promoting a modern form of Arianism.

Obviously, the Apostle Paul believed and taught that Christ was not only the Son of God but “ equal with God” (vs. 6). The word translated “ robbery “ means “ to grasp “ or “to cling. ” While scholars debate the precise meaning, it is clear that the Son of God was willing to divest Himself of certain privileges to become human. He did not cling to His equality with the Father but gave up some divine prerogatives for a time.

That Christ “ made himself of no reputation ” literally means that He *emptied* Himself. Of course, there are discussions concerning precisely how and in what ways Christ *emptied* Himself by becoming human. As seen in the Gospels, both the deity and the humanity of Christ are affirmed and manifested in various ways and in various contexts.

“ Christ indeed “ says Calvin, could not divest Himself of Godhead; but

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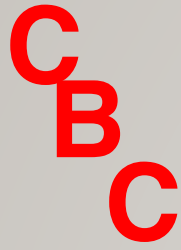


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he kept it concealed for a time. ...he laid aside his glory in the view of men, not by lessening it, but by concealing it “ (Motyer, *The Message of Philipians*, IVP)

In spite of the fact that Christ was “ in the form of God” and “equal with God” (v. 6), He voluntarily took upon Himself “ the form of a servant “ (v. 7). While there are several words that can be translated “ servant ” in the New Testament, this is the Greek word *doulos*, regularly used of a slave, which Paul frequently applies to himself.

As the Son of God, Christ could have come to earth in a glorious form, revealing instantly that He was the Lord of glory. Instead, He came “ in the likeness of men.” This was “ a voluntary deprivation of the exercise of Lordship ” (Motyer). Though conceived by the Holy Spirit, Jesus’ birth was like any other human birth. Like all humans, He felt pain, became hungry and thirsty, felt disappointment and discouragement, and was tempted to sin- although He



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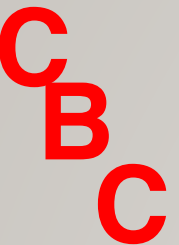
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never was guilty of any sin. (cf. Heb. 4:15)

While many examples of Christ’ humility could be cited, the greatest was His willingness to obey His Father’s will and go to the cross. “ Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered ” and “ became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him ” (Heb. 5:8-9).

When Paul added the words “ even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:8), he was emphasizing the horrendous nature of the suffering experienced by those who were crucified. Intense pain experienced in several different ways was the lot of the crucified. Added to this in Jesus’ case was the humiliation and burden of bearing the sins of the world (cf. I Pet. 2: 21-25).

“ **‘This most cruel and hideous form of punishment’** is the way it is described by Cicero, who expresses his feelings about crucifixion as follows: ‘ Far be the very name of a cross, not only from the body, but even from the thought, the eyes, the ears of Roman citizens’ ” (Martin, *Philippians*, IVP).



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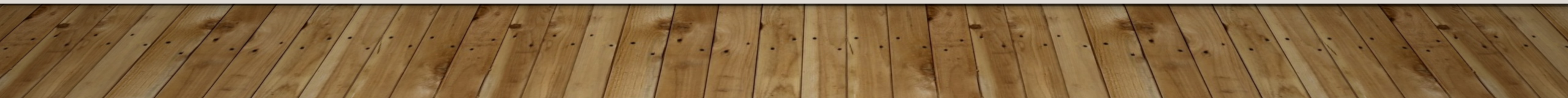
This would be particularly relevant in Philippi , as it was a Roman colony. One benefit of Roman citizenship was that a condemned citizen could not be executed by crucifixion.

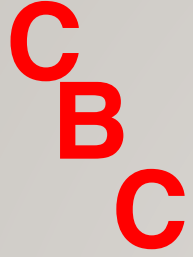
II. EXALTED

PHILIPPIANS 2: 9-11

Because the Lord Jesus was willing to obey His Father and go to the cross for the sins of fallen humanity, “ God also hath highly exalted him.” This exaltation included not only His resurrection but also His ascension and His installation at the Father’s right hand in heaven. “ This pattern of exaltation following humiliation is thoroughly biblical, and especially evident in the teaching of Jesus” (Martin).

Although He was humiliated at the cross, Jesus has been exalted and given a name that is above every other name in the universe. This in no





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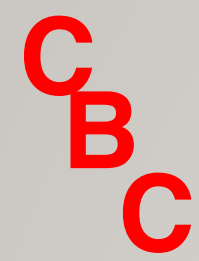
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way implies that the Son of God gained any additional status within the Godhead that He did not have previous to the incarnation. Rather, as the unique person of the God-Man, He was exalted to the highest position in authority because of His perfect obedience and sacrifice.

In the hierarchy of God’s entire universe, there is no other name that is exalted above all other powers and authorities. Jesus alone has accomplished divine salvation, and He is salvation personified. To confess Jesus as Lord is integral to our personal redemption (cf. Rom 10:9-10).

It is the will of God that everyone should come to repentance and confess Jesus as Lord (cf. II Pet. 3:9), but not everyone will actually do so. Those who reject Jesus are actually despising God’s free offer of eternal life (cf. Acts 13:46) , as well as scorning His grace and Christ’ sacrifice (cf. Rom. 3: 22-24; 5:1-2).

A time is coming , however, when every human being will humbly



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bow before Christ and confess Him alone as Lord of all (cf. Isa. 45:23). This will occur at the final judgment. Those who refuse to confess Christ before His coming in judgment shall nevertheless be forced to confess Him at that time.

But that latter confession will by no means lead to their salvation. Rather, it will merely confirm their eternal damnation. This “ will not be a saving confession, but a grudging acknowledgment wrested by overmastering divine power from lips still as unbelieving as they were through their whole earthly experience. All will submit, all will confess, but not all will be saved” (Motyer). Even those who did not believe in the existence of God or the divinity of Jesus will bow before Him on that final day. Then they will hear the words, “ Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels” (Matt. 25:31).

The ultimate goal of confessing Christ is to bring glory to God. Keep in mind that this passage was to remind the Philippian believers that they were to be like Christ, humbly obeying the Father’s will and making the welfare of others



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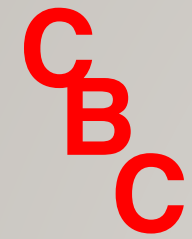
their priority.

III. HUMILITY IN ACTION

JOHN 13:12-17

As this chapter opens, Jesus knew that His hour had come, that is, the time of His sacrificial death had arrived. His last meal would be the Passover. As the other Gospels record, it was during this feast that He instituted the Lord’s Supper. John omits that detail, but he does relate that Jesus arose, took a basin of water, and began to wash the disciples feet. Peter resisted this humble service, since it was the task of the lowliest of servants. But after Jesus explained the necessity of the action, Peter wholeheartedly submitted to it.

Once Jesus had completed this task, He asked His disciples, “ Know ye what I have done unto you? He wanted to know if they understood the significance of what He had done for them. He had set them an example of how a Christian should humbly serve all fellow believers. As He had taught



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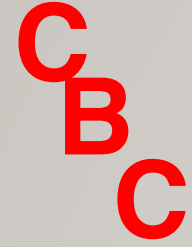
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them previously, the greatest Christian is the one who makes him or herself the servant of all their brethren (cf. Mark 10:42- 45).

The liturgical day set aside to commemorate Jesus’ washing” of His disciples’ feet is known as “**Maundy Thursday**”. That is the Thursday before Easter Sunday. It gets its name from the Latin word “ *mandatum*, meaning “ commandment ” . This was the initial word of the hymn sung at the beginning of the traditional ceremony, which was a setting of John 13:34: “ A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you. That ye also love one another.”

“ **Verily, verily in verse 16 represents the Greek *Amen. amen*** and was used by Jesus to emphasize a teaching that was very important and of surpassing value. He prefaced many statements of His throughout John’s Gospel with this expression to alert his hearers that what was about to be said was of crucial spiritual importance (3:3; 5:25; 6:53; 10:7).

Starting with a timeless principle, Jesus instructed His disciples



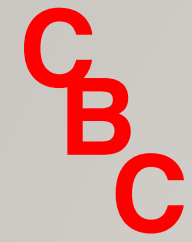
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in the significance of His washing of their their feet. No servant is greater than their Master, and no messenger is greater than than the one who sent him. Since Jesus, their Master, has set this example for them. Humbling Himself in service to His disciples. Jesus’ true disciples should never consider themselves above likewise humbling themselves to serve one another. Even the lowliest task is no excuse to decline serving fellow believers.

Since their Master and Teacher had been willing to thus humble Himself, doing the most demeaning task of washing the feet of His disciples , then they themselves should follow His lead. Jesus was demonstrating to them that there was no service too undignified to perform on behalf of one another. Whatever is needed in the service of believing brothers and sisters- no matter how debasing it may appear- should never be regarded as beneath even the most highly respected individuals among them.

For the present, the disciples might understand these things only in terms of service to one another. Eventually, they would understand that in



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Christ both masters and servants were also alike in the area of personal suffering. Once Jesus ascended and the disciples began preaching the Gospel on their own, they would realize that they were likewise meant to suffer just as He Himself had suffered at the hands of the world. As He would tell them “ If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you....Remember the word that I said unto you. The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you (15:18-20).

Those who realize these truths and put them into regular practice would be happy and blessed in their service to the Lord. The word rendered “ happy “ is the same one translated “ blessed “ in the Beatitudes (cf. Matt. 5:3-11).

We should not be misled into thinking what most people today mean when they use the word “ happy”. True happiness is found in following, serving, and obeying Christ. The one who is truly happy is so because he or she



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knows the Lord is with them. ; their hearts are in tune with the priorities of the Lord Himself. Thus they know in their hearts that no matter how much one suffers in this life, they will one day surely reap the rewards of a faithful servant of Jesus Christ .

In conclusion, it must be clearly stated that Jesus’ existence did not begin when He was born as a baby in Bethlehem. He had always existed as the Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity. He added humanity to His deity and came into the world by being born of a woman like everyone else. The difference is that Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, so He has no biological father.

The addition of humanity is only the beginning of our Lord’s humility. He further humbled Himself by being obedient to the will of the Father to die on the cross. Jesus’ true service is not simply living among us as a human, but the sacrifice of His life on the cross- a sacrifice which secured our redemption. That sacrifice is the pinnacle of humility we are called to imitate.

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Practical Points

1. Christ humbled Himself. We should do the same (Phil. 2: 5-8).
2. Our greatest joy should be knowing that our Savior will be elevated to the place of supreme authority (vs. 9-11).
3. It is important for us to realize that if we are truly serving the Lord, no task is beneath us (John 13:12).
4. Christians should follow Jesus’ example in leading by serving (vs. 13-15).
5. We are not greater than our Lord who willingly served (v. 16).
6. Joy comes from doing the Lord’s will for us (v. 17).

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“ A Humble King is Born” Questions For Reflection

1. What is the ultimate goal of confessing Christ? How do we confess Christ?
2. What principle did Christ draw from the foot washing?
3. Serving one another may mean washing someone’s feet. But it can also mean doing someone’s grocery shopping, raking leaves, or emptying a bed pan. As believers we are to be serving others. What specific way can you put this principle into practice this year?
4. What is meant by true happiness in Christ?

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