

The Christ of Christmas

Sermon Delivered on December 17th, 2017
AM Service

By: Pastor Greg Hocson

Text:

Philippians 2:1 If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, 2: Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3: Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. 4: Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. 5: Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: 6: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. 9: Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11: And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Introduction

This world is filled with people who want to be God. We have countless people who want to exalt themselves. Men want power, control, dominance, honor and glory. King Nebuchadnezzar, King Herod, Hitler, Mussolini, Stalin, Pol Pot, Saddam Hussein. The father of this sin is Satan, who sought to dethrone God.

Isaiah 14:13 For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: 14: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High.

“Man is hopelessly committed to his own glory. We are driven by the lust of the eye, the lust of the flesh and the boastful pride of life. It is a lifelong battle. We want people to look at us. We want people to applaud us. We want people to, at some level, worship us.

This is the force behind things like Facebook. Please look at me. Please notice me. This is the force behind some of the strange attires that you will see and hairstyles and what not especially with young people. And as we get a little bit older we realize that that stuff isn't really all that important and we, as adults, pursue it in different ways. But the point is, man loves to glorify himself through self-aggrandizement. And he naturally will worship anyone who portrays some likeness of what he wants to be.” - Anonymous.

This is the mystery of sin. It is people seeking to be God and to dethrone God. But the mystery of godliness is, God manifest in the flesh.

We have a Saviour who is God and deserves to be God, deserves all the power and honor and glory, yet humbled Himself and became a man.

Philippians 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: 7: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: 8: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

This is the real Christmas story. It is a story of how the Son of God humbled Himself. **The incarnation among many things teaches us humility.** This morning consider with me the Christ of Christmas - His Equality with the Father, His Emptying, and His Exaltation.

I - The Equality of Christ with the Father

Who is the Christ of Christmas? Who is this who came to save us? Who is this child who was born in a lowly manger in Bethlehem?

*What Child is this, who, laid to rest,
On Mary's lap is sleeping?
Whom angels greet with anthems sweet,
While shepherds watch are keeping?*

Philippians 2:6 Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:

Who, referring to Jesus Christ, being in the form or in the very nature of God, did not think it robbery to be equal with God. This is a clear statement of the deity of Christ.

Micah prophesying of the coming Messiah, wrote the following:

Micah 5:2 But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity.

John wrote ...

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2: The same was in the beginning with God. 3: All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.

Before time began, Christ was already in existence with God.

Paul affirms His divinity in ...

Colossians 1:15 Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: 16: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible,

whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: 17: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

This is the Christ of Christmas. This is the One who came to save us. The One who is in the very nature of God, co-equal with God, who existed before time began. As God, He had every right to have all that God had and treated the way God should be treated. And yet Jesus was willing to lay aside His right and privileges as the Son of God.

This is the dignity of the One who came as a baby and grew up as an adult to give His life a ransom for many! **This is where we have to begin if we are to understand and appreciate the incarnation of Jesus Christ.** We have to begin by knowing and appreciating the true dignity of the One who came to save us from our sins.

II - The Emptying of Christ of His Glory

Secondly, let us look at the emptying of the Son. In coming to earth Christ chose not to arrive in a way that is so marked with dignity and glory but in humility and obscurity.

Philippians 2:7 **But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:**

This does not mean that when He came to earth as a baby, that He ceased to be God. **“Emptied” does not mean that Jesus gave up His divine attributes.** Jesus did not surrender His deity, but He did veil His glory. He did not strip Himself of His divinity but **laid aside all His privileges and rightful dignity.**

“When Christ became incarnate, He was one person with two natures, divine and human, each in its completeness and integrity, and that these two natures are organically and indissolubly united, yet so that no third nature is formed thereby. In brief, to use the antiquated dictum, orthodox doctrine forbids us either to divide the person or to confound the natures” (A. H. Strong, Systematic Theology, p. 673).

The emptying of Christ consists of three important areas where He humbled Himself:

1. He took upon Him a form of a servant

Philippians 2:7 **But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:**

Here is a great paradox. **The Son of God emptied Himself by taking unto Himself.** It was what the Lord Jesus took to Himself that humbled Him. He laid aside the glories of heaven, and took upon Him the nature of a servant. **When He came He did not simply take the title “servant” but He really became a servant.**

Remember in the Upper Room at the Last Supper Jesus had with His disciples? It’s found in ...

John 13:3 Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; 4: He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and

took a towel, and girded himself. 5: After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded.

Our Lord Jesus is having His last supper with His disciples, and He shocked His disciples, when He got up, poured water in a basin, and began to wash and dry the disciples feet.

He came to serve not to be served ...

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Our Lord took upon Him the form of a servant. He became a servant. What is a servant? **A servant is one who has surrendered their rights to the will of another.** Jesus surrendered His rights to the will of His Father.

2. He was made in the likeness of men

Philippians 2:7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

He became what He had never been before.

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

The eternal Word took on human flesh. He has assumed human flesh forever, while still remaining fully God. He is not part man and part God, or sometimes man and sometimes God but is now and eternally the God-Man.

When He came He looked like just any other man. As far as appearance, He is no different from His disciples. As far as appearance, if you would come across Him in a crowd, out in the streets of Jerusalem you won't be able to tell if He is the Son of God. There is no halo on His head. He ate, drank, slept, wept, laughed, just like any ordinary normal human being.

3. He became obedient unto death

Philippians 2:8 And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

“Our Lord died as no other person died or ever will die. Other men had died on crosses, but this Man, the eternal Son of God, voluntarily and willingly died the kind of death meted out to criminals, even the death upon a cross. His own countrymen considered crucifixion the worst kind of disgrace. In their law it was written, “For he that is hanged is accursed of God” (Deuteronomy 21:23; cf. Galatians 3:13). Not only did our Lord die, but He died bearing the burden of the worst of criminals and the guiltiest of sinners. Down He came from heaven's glory to earth's sin and shame through His Incarnation.” - (Why God Became Man? bible.org)

Jesus emptied Himself. **He was not, in other words, some kind of victim.** No one made Him a servant or humbled Him; He took the form of a servant and humbled Himself. **It was entirely of Jesus Christ's choosing to pour Himself out, even to the point of crucifixion.**

He did this for you and for me beloved. Shall not the such love constrain us out of love to live a life of surrender?

III - The Exaltation of Christ

Philippians 2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11: And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Because Christ was willing to empty Himself and did not cling to all His rights and privileges as the Son of God, God the Father has highly exalted Him. This is the path to greatness. This is the path to glory.

Mark 9:35 And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all.

Mark 10:44 And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

"Jesus humbled Himself, God exalted Him. Jesus sought not a Name for Himself, God gave Him the Name above all others. Jesus bent His knee to serve others, God decrees every knee shall bow to Him." - C. H. Spurgeon

If you want to be great in God's Kingdom you must learn to serve others.

Applications

1. A Call to Humility

Philippians 2:5 Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

Our attitude must be the Christmas attitude. Jesus came to earth not asking *"what in it for me, or what do I get out of it?"*

Dwight Edwards explains that *"Out of love for us and the joy set before Him (Hebrews 12:2), He released His grip on equality with the Father and began sliding down the rope of humiliation. Christ had a perfect right to hold on to what was His. But He did not cling to His rights, but rather He let go of them."*

When Augustin was asked, *"what are the central principles of a Christian life?"* He answered, *"No one is humility, number two is humility and number three is humility."*

"The highest lesson a believer has to learn is humility. Brethren, here is the path to the higher life. Down, lower, down!" - Andrew Murray

2 Corinthians 8:9 For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.

Christ emptied Himself in order that He might fill us. He who was somebody became a nobody so that we who are nobodies might in Christ become somebody.

How to obtain the mind of Christ?

“As certain silk worms have their silk coloured by the leaves on which they feed, so, if we were to feed on Christ, and nothing else but Christ, we should become pure, holy, lowly, meek, gentle, humble; in a word, we should be perfect even as He is. What wonderful food this must be! O my brethren, if you have ever tried the flesh and blood of Jesus as your soul's diet, you will know that I am not speaking vain words! There is no such sustenance for faith, love, patience, joy, as living daily upon Jesus, our Saviour. You who have never tasted of this heavenly bread, had better listen to the word, "O taste and see that the Lord is good!" - C. H. Spurgeon

This is the path of Jesus. And while you empty yourself of pride and rights, He will fill you with joy and peace.

2. A Call to Honor Christ

Philippians 2:9 Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name: 10: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; 11: And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

*O Come All Ye Faithful
Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem.
Come and behold Him,
Born the King of Angels;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.*

Wishing you all worshipful Christmas!

AMEN!