

—{1}. **Philippians 2:5–8** **The Emptying of the Son**

A. Introduction

1. today we are looking at 'The Emptying of the Son'
 - a. from Paul's letter to the church at Philippi
 - b. and we will restrict ourselves to verses 5 to 8 of chapter 2
 - c. in this chapter, Paul has been encouraging the Christians in the Philippian church to live
 - (A) in humbleness of mind
 - (B) considering others as more important than themselves
 - (C) giving priority to the interests of others
 - d. and as Paul often does
 - (A) he stops to give an example
 - (B) sometimes he takes his example from the O. T.
 - (C) often from Jesus Christ as our example
 - (D) and just goes on with his point
 - (E) such as when he is talking to the Christians in the church at Corinth about liberality in giving
 - (F) he drops in the example of Jesus Christ as an incentive
 - (G) "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich." (2 Corinthians 8:9 NAS)
 - e. so, here he stops to give an example of the humility, indeed the humiliation, of Jesus Christ
 - (A) maybe in writing he intended only a word or two about the incarnation as an example of Jesus Christ, such as "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45 NAS)
 - (B) but the Holy Spirit had more for Paul to say
 - (C) so that Paul gives to us one of the most profound statements to be found in the Scriptures
2. this passage is one that is difficult to comprehend
 - a. a friend of mine

- (A) described a discussion he had had with a mutual friend
- (B) one known for his rather obscure way of expressing himself
- (C) my friend's comment was
- (D) 'I knew the meaning of every single word he said ... but I haven't the slightest idea what he was talking about'

b. and in this passage

- (A) there are no difficult words
- (B) yet what is described is so mind-boggling
- (C) that it has raised difficulties in how to express its truth
- (D) to translators, to theologians, to pastors ever since

c. so let us first read this passage in three versions

B. The Passage

1. from the Authorized version,

- a. ⁵ Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
- b. ⁶ Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God:
- c. ⁷ But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:
- d. ⁸ And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

2. from the New American Standard version,

- a. ⁵ Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,
- b. ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,
- c. ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, *and* being made in the likeness of men.
- d. ⁸ And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

3. and finally, a rather literal translation (IGNT, with the word order changed to one more in keeping with English)

- a. ⁵ For let this mind be in you which also in Christ Jesus *was*;
 - b. ⁶ who, in *the* form of God subsisting, esteemed it not rapine to be equal with God;
 - c. ⁷ but emptied himself, having taken a bondman's form, in *the* likeness of men having become;
 - d. ⁸ and in figure having been found as a man, he humbled himself, having become obedient unto death, even death of *the* cross.
4. Paul, uses this as an example of humility
- a. but we will not look at it from that standpoint today
 - b. since we have already looked at humility this morning in our Sunday Bible School with the passage from 1 Peter 5:6–7, “⁶ **Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,** ⁷ **casting all your anxiety upon Him, because He cares for you.**” (NAS)
 - c. and because this emptying of God the Son in Philipians goes so far beyond any humbling of ourselves that we might undertake
5. but given this day, and this season
- a. let us consider it in the light of the celebration of the Lord's table which we have just observed
 - (A) that what we have done may take on deeper meaning
 - (B) and that we might, indeed, “... **proclaim the Lord's death until He comes**” (1 Corinthians 11:26b)
 - b. and then let us consider it in this advent season in order to begin to appreciate what it meant when we read
 - (A) John 3:16, “**For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.**” (NAS)
 - (B) so that we can affirm with the apostle, “**Thanks be to God for His indescribable gift!**” (2 Corinthians 9:15 NAS)
 - c. so I shall some simple observations from this so profound passage of Scripture under the following statements
 - (A) Jesus Christ was Truly God
 - (B) Jesus Christ was Truly Man
 - (C) Jesus Christ was Born to Die

C. Jesus Christ was Truly God

1. first,

- a. before, during and after He becoming a Babe in Bethlehem and living thirty-three years on this earth
- b. He is said to subsist as God the Son
 - (A) this means that He exists as an eternally distinct Person within the Godhead, the Trinity along with the Persons of God the Father and God the Holy Spirit
 - (B) and, Lord willing, we will look at this distinction in two weeks as we examine "The Personality of God"
- c. so during His time on earth He never ceased being God
- d. hence, Jesus Christ could say
 - (A) "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I am." (John 8:58, NAS)
 - (B) and "I and the Father are one." (John 10:30 NAS)

2. second,

- a. that He was equally God was not rapine or robbery, not something to be grasped, has a two-fold meaning
 - (A) when Jesus held Himself as God, He was not usurping what belonged to someone else; so He could naturally and truthfully say, "he who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14:9b, NAS)
 - (B) but also since nothing could destroy His eternal Being, His subsisting as God, He had no need to hold onto His prerogatives as God
- b. hence he could

3. thirdly,

- a. empty Himself
 - (A) now there has been a great deal of discussion about just what it means that 'he emptied himself'
 - (B) but as just discussed, we can certainly take it that in no way did He cease to be God
 - (C) just what prerogatives did he lay aside?
 - (D) some would say it was His omniscience, yet we find
 - (1) that "He knew what was in man" (John 2:25b)
 - (2) and He knew the future, what would happen to Him at Jerusalem, His death, His resurrection,

and His coming again

- b. but we do know that He laid aside His glory, His majesty
 - (A) for a moment it shone through upon the mountain of transfiguration
 - (B) and in His High-priestly prayer he prayed, "And now, glorify Thou Me together with Thyself, Father, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was." (John 17:5 NAS)
- c. and by thus veiling His glory, He was born as a baby

D. Jesus Christ was Truly Man

- 1. the artists like to portray this wondrous Babe
 - a. as physically different, with a visible aura, with lines of light proceeding from Him and also from His mother, Mary
 - b. and the carol says, 'radiant beams from Thy holy face'
 - c. or we sing, 'but little Lord Jesus, no crying He makes'
- 2. well, I hate to dispel such fond illusions
 - a. because we have heard these since childhood
 - b. but there is no basis for such statements
 - c. when God the Son was born in that Bethlehem stable
 - d. in every aspect of His physical being He was human
 - e. to emphasize his humanity, 3 different words are use here
 - (A) 'morphe' or form: He was human in form or shape, sharing with us limitations of time, space, fatigue, etc.
 - (B) 'homoioma' or likeness: He was made like or fashioned as human in nature
 - (C) 'schema' or figure and condition: suffering the human state as we do, except without sin
 - f. for this reason, talking about Jesus Christ, the writer to the Hebrews says, "For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin." (4:15 NAS)

E. Jesus Christ was Born to Die

- 1. Jesus Christ entered this world with a mission

- a. it was embedded in His name: "And she will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for it is He who will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21 NAS)
 - b. to this He was obedient as a servant, "Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to accomplish His work.'" (John 4:34 NAS)
 - c. wherefore He cried in Gethsemane, "saying, 'Father, if Thou art willing, remove this cup from Me; yet not My will, but Thine be done.'" (Luke 22:42 NAS)
 - d. all this to accomplish the work of salvation in accordance with the will of God, "this *Man*, delivered up by the predetermined plan and foreknowledge of God, you nailed to a cross by the hands of godless men and put *Him* to death." (Acts 2:23 NAS)
2. he was faithful unto death, even the cursed, ignominious death on the cross, there punished for my sins and yours

F. Conclusion

1. now this passage goes on
 - a. and describes what happens after the cross
 - b. the exaltation of Christ which includes His resurrection, His ascension, His sitting on the right hand of the Majesty on high, and His coming glorious reign
 - c. but that we will leave these for another time
2. but let us remember the great substance of these verses:
 - a. that the Babe born in a stable in Bethlehem
 - b. came from the glory of heaven
 - c. in an act of God's supreme condescension
 - d. that He might be lifted up upon the cross at Calvary
 - e. to bear the punishment for my sin and yours
3. think on these things as we sing our closing hymn, 'Down from His Glory'

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Various English versions of the Holy Bible are used in this sermon. Some (for example, the AV, ASV, and NAS) seek to be strictly translations, while others (and especially PHIL) contain paraphrasing which involves a certain amount of subjective interpretation. Nevertheless, there is little material difference in meaning among these. Some prove slightly clearer on some verses than others. Looking at more than one version sometimes sheds additional light on any particular verse. Explanatory additions to the Bible text are shown in [square brackets]. The versions are identified as:

ASV	American Standard Version of 1901
AV	Authorized (King James) Version
NAS	New American Standard version © 1975 The Lockman Foundation
NIV	New International Version © 1984 by the International Bible Society
NKJV	New King James Version © 1979 Thomas Nelson Inc., Publishers
NLT	1996 New Living Translation © 1996 by Tyndale Charitable Trust
PHIL	New Testament Translation © 1972 by J. B. Phillips
RSV	Revised Standard Version © 1946, 1952 by the National Council of the Churches of Christ in the U. S. A.
WEY	The New Testament in Modern Speech © 1902, 1912 R. F. Weymouth

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