

# The Humility of Christ

## Sermon Transcript

Key Text: " 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, and 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." Philippians 2:5-8.

I'd like to share a few thoughts with you this morning about the humility of Christ. I didn't realize the Sabbath School lesson was on the subject, I hadn't actually looked at the adult lesson for a long time. But I hope it will follow on through some of the thoughts that you have shared this morning.

Our key text found in Philippians Chapter 2 from verses 5 through to 8, show that there are three stages or states of the Son of God. A state of glory that it describes before he came to earth. When He was, as Paul writes here, in the "form of God". Then there was this state of humiliation as He took on the "form of a servant". And after that we see that He was exalted, when He was given a name above every other name.

But I will only focus on two of these states this morning - the first two.

Here Paul admonishes us to "let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus". What was this mind? It was essentially, humility. The measure of humility is not in being a man because we already are human beings. It is no humility to be a man or to be born a human being. But, for God to become a human being is infinite humility and something we can't really express in words, we can't really understand, we can't fathom this concept. We will never be able to.

I'd like to invite you to turn your Bible to 1 Timothy Chapter 3 verse 16. Here we read, again Paul's description of this amazing theme, "without controversy great is the mystery of godliness..." And what was this mystery? He says, "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." And this is the mystery, and this is what I want you to notice, just take careful notice - that it is what? A mystery. It is a mystery that God was manifest in the flesh.

The humanity of the Son of God is fundamental to the plan of redemption. Why is it fundamental? Why is it fundamental that our Saviour must be human? I can think of three main reasons. We needed an example of obedience from a human being. Christ's example of obedience made of none-effect the accusations of Satan that he had been making that no human being could be obedient to the law of God, especially a sinful one. But Christ proved, that a weak human being in such a fallen nature that He had could be obedient. That is one reason. Number two - a human

substitute for the penalty of sins. We needed a human substitute. The law claimed, the law required that in order for us to be forgiven, we needed a sacrifice - a human sacrifice. A human substitute for our sins. And thirdly, our reconciliation with God required a human mediator. And so for these reason it is absolutely fundamental that Jesus Christ was a human being.

But it is just as fundamental, and without this, the humanity of the Son of God would be nothing - that He had in Him a divine nature. It is just as fundamental that He was both human and divine at the same time. Paul said He was "God manifest in the flesh". So if you try and prove that Christ was not a real man it defeats the purpose of the Christian's faith just as much as if you tried to prove that He was not a real God. That He was not truly God. Both of these natures were essential to His work of salvation.

Now, the Bible says in Galatians Chapter 3 verse 20 that a mediator is not a "mediator of one". I understand this to mean that two natures had to be essential because He was interceding, He was bringing together God and man. And therefore it was essential that He didn't have one nature but two. Christ was one with God and He is one with humanity. And Jesus prayed that "they all might be one" in John 17, "as thou Father art in me and I in thee, that they also might be one in us...that they may be one, even as we are one." And so in Hebrews chapter 2 verse 11 Paul writes this, "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one..." Jesus Christ a human being, a brother with us in His humanity "...for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren."

And so we find this verse in 1 Timothy chapter 2 verse 5 that there is "one God, and one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus." Those two names of our Lord - Christ Jesus - the titles "Christ Jesus" describe His divinity and humanity combined. This was an essential aspect of the Saviour. It was fundamental. The plan of redemption required this - it could not be achieved otherwise.

Its a comforting thought, I think brother Luke, a while back preached about the kinsman. if you were here you probably might remember the story of Ruth and Boaz. It is a comforting thought that our Saviour was our "near kinsman". The Bible shows forth or describes the plan of redemption and Christ's coming as a human being in types and symbols. And one of those symbols was the redemption of the kinsman. It is a comforting thought - our Saviour was indeed a real man. He was just a real man as I am and as you are. Now if you're a woman - you are included, because the woman "was taken out of man". And Adam represents the human race. In fact there is a very interesting verse in Genesis chapter 5 verses 1 and 2. Notice how it describes the creation of Adam and Eve, "This is the book of the generations of Adam. In the day that God created man, in the likeness of God made he him; Male and female created he them; and blessed them, and called their name Adam, in the day when they were created." So men and women - all of humanity is represented by Adam as the man. The original man.

In the Bible Adam is called the first Adam. Who is the second? (Audience - "Christ"). That's right.

Adam - the first Adam at the head, as the representative of the human race. The second Adam also now stands at the head, as the representative of the human race. No other two beings have stood as representatives of the human race. Now the first Adam's sin, his transgression plunged the human race into an abyss of sin and death. As the second Adam, Christ came to redeem Adam's failure. By standing Himself, again as Adam did - at the head, as a representative of the human race.

Have a look at Romans chapter 5 verse 18. It tell us this, "Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of..." how many? "...one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life." As the second Adam, the righteousness of Christ - the life, the righteous perfect life that He lived is alone acceptable for our justification. So he totally redeems Adam's failure for the whole of the human race.

Now while we believe and are comforted by the truth that Jesus was a real man and that He passed through life's experiences as a real man. As an actual man, not as a God only, but as a real man. Let's remember just one important thing. That the Scriptures show Him forth as the "Lamb of God, that takes away the sin of the world."

If you recall, in the nation of Israel, when they came out of Egypt, God instituted the sacrifice or the feast of the Passover. And God gave very specific instructions to Israel as to what they were to look for in the sacrificial Passover lamb. Exodus chapter 12 verse 5 tells us something that we should ever bear in mind when we study this subject. Exodus 12 verse 5, the very first sentence says, "your lamb shall be without blemish...", "your lamb shall be without blemish."

Now, Peter, the apostle Peter commented on this in 1 Peter chapter 1 verses 18 and 19. Let's have a look at what he said, reflecting on this spotless, unblemished lamb of God. He says, "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

Now if you were an Israelite and you had to choose a Passover lamb for the Passover feast. You were required to make sure there was not a blemish or a spot upon that lamb. And if you found a blemish or a spot upon that lamb, you had to find another one. Now Christ, as the Lamb of God, as the spot-less Lamb of God - He comes under the scrutiny of the law of God and He stands forth perfect, unblemished, spotless. Perfectly pure. We're not referring here to His divinity - we're referring to His humanity.

I'd like to read a couple of quotes from Ellen White. She perceived something about this subject. Volume 5 of Bible Commentary page 1129. She says, "I perceive that there is danger in approaching subjects which dwell upon the humanity of the Son of the infinite God." She also gave the following counsel in volume 7 of Adventist Bible Commentary page 448. "Avoid every question in relation to the humanity of Christ which is liable to be misunderstood." Now think carefully about

these cautions, "Avoid every question in relation to the humanity of Christ which is liable to be misunderstood...truth lies close to the track of presumption. In treating upon the humanity of Christ you need to guard strenuously every assertion, lest your words be taken to mean more than they imply and thus..." notice this, "thus you lose or dim the clear perceptions of His humanity as combined with divinity."

So let us take heed to this warning, this counsel. Ellen White perceived danger in approaching these subjects because truth lies close to the track of presumption. We are to be very careful as we approach, and be careful as to the words that we use in our description of the humanity of Christ.

So, with this in mind - let us see what the Apostle Paul, and let us ask God to help us under what the Apostle Paul is saying here in Philippians. While we believe that Jesus was a real man, let's not forget that He clothed....Now this is an expression that Ellen White uses over and over again in her writings. He "clothed His divinity with humanity". He didn't just become human, like one of us. But he clothed His divinity with humanity. Now, we believe, or at least I believe that the nature that Christ took was the fallen nature of humanity and not just the fallen nature of humanity but that same fallen nature that was degraded and deteriorated after 4000 years of degeneracy. These things are clear in the writings of the Bible and also in the writings of Ellen White. but at the same time, just because I believe that, I have not come to the conclusion that He at the same time inherited sinful propensities. Let's just remember that when He became man He did not cease to be God and there important implications to that.

In the writings of Ellen White there are things hard to be understood. Have you noticed that? If you've ever read Ellen White's writings you would have noticed things that, you know, she seems to be saying one thing here and then you read something else and think how can that think, "how can that fit in to that, it seems to be saying the opposite." Have you come across that? Well Peter said actually of the Apostle Paul that there were some things in his writings "hard to be understood." In 2 Peter 3:16 says, "which they that are unlearned and unstable.." twist, or wrest or twist, "...as they do also the other Scriptures unto their own destruction." But you know often, I've found where apparent contradiction exists is where the Lord hides the beauty of His truth. And if would just be patient, if we would just be patient and bear with us, with ourselves and with the Lord, the Lord will hide us into and will see the harmony of truth as we investigate a little deeper.

Now just for an example, let me give you an example of this. Ellen White writes 4 statements which I'll quote to you very briefly here about Christ's humanity. Which, to...if you read on the surface, they are absolutely contradictory. And they are as follows. Number 1 found in Heavenly Places, p. 155, the second one is found in ST April 9, 1896 paragraph 6. Third one is found in ST August 7, 1879 paragraph 18. And the fourth one is found in RH august 17, 1886 paragraph 7.

Ok, let me read the first one from Heavenly places, p. 155, "Though He had all the strength of passion of humanity..." I'm just going to read the very sentence, just the very sentence that is applicable to example that I'm sharing with you here. "Though He had all the strength of passion of

humanity..." Now let me read you the second one from ST April 9, 1896, "He.." Christ, "...blessed children that were possessed of passions like his own." I'm going to read now the third one from ST August 7, now these two don't really contradict do they? I mean one says here, "the strength of passion of humanity", the second one says that "he blessed children with passions like His own."

But now listen to these last two. "He is a brother in our infirmities but not in possessing like passions." The fourth one, "He was a mighty petitioner, not possessing the passion of our human fallen natures, but compassed with like infirmities." Do you see how seemingly contradictory these things are? Now some people read these apparent contradictions and they give up on Ellen White. They begin not to trust her writings. Others choose only statements that apply, sort of fit in with their idea of what she is saying. But let's not do that. Let us dig a little deeper and ask God for guidance. And we'll soon see the harmony of truth. Now with this mind, I'd like to read a couple more quotes from Ellen White here regarding what she wrote about human nature. Not Christ's human nature but our human nature.

She wrote this in Education, p. 29, "The result of the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is manifest in every man's experience..." Now she writes of the result here, what is it? "There is..." she writes, "There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist." Have you found this in your own experience? Have found that in your own human nature, in your own human, fallen sinful nature that there is a bent to evil you cannot resist without the help of God - you cannot resist it? Have you found this? I have too.

But now, notice what she writes about Jesus Christ's humanity. This is found in Manuscript Releases volume 16 page 182. She says, "here we must not become in our ideas common and earthly, and in our perverted ideas we must not think that the liability of Christ to yield to Satan's temptations degraded His humanity and He possessed the same sinful, corrupt propensities as man."

What is a propensity? I'm going to read you the Webster's definition of a propensity from 1828, which the dictionary that Ellen White would have used. The dictionary says that a propensity is a bent of the mind, natural or acquired, an inclination and in a moral sense, a disposition to anything good or evil. Particularly to evil, as a propensity to sin.

Now in one statement she is writing about humanity - all of humanity inherit this propensity to evil, or a bent to evil. In the other statement she clearly writes that we're not to think that Christ possessed the same sinful, corrupt propensities as man. See, Jesus Christ was like us in all points except sin. He lived on earth like us, except in sin. He was tempted in all points like us, except without sin. While He assumed humanity identical to my own humanity and identical to yours, He did so in every way except its sinfulness. And that is why we find in the writings of Paul, very unusual expression about the humanity of Christ, as we'll soon find out.

But why was it necessary for Christ to taken on Himself this perfect, or should I say, a human

nature without its sinfulness. Why was it necessary for Christ Himself that human nature without any taint of sin. Why was that so important. If you think about this carefully for a minute. Why do we need Christ today? He is a mediator. And what is He mediating? What is He interceding for? "If any man sin, we have an Advocate, Jesus Christ the righteous." If there was any trace of sinfulness in His humanity, could He minister His righteousness to us? Why do we need Him? Because, every good thing that we do, every good thing that we do is made imperfect by our corrupt natures. Every good thing that we do by faith is made imperfect by our fallen natures. That is why we needed Saviour who took humanity without its sinfulness. Because if there was a trace left in His humanity, or if He inherited a trace of sin, or a taint of sin through Mary in His humanity - He could not be our perfect Saviour. He could not atone for our transgressions. So we are to be extremely careful in our descriptions about the humanity of Christ

Now, coming back to our key text. It becomes apparent what Paul's talking about. Notice his careful use of language as he describes the humanity of Christ. Notice three expressions in Philippians chapter 2. Notice three expressions that Paul uses to describe Christ's humanity. And we'll look at a fourth one in Romans. But first, these three in Philippians chapter 2 verse 7. Notice the expression referring to His humanity that Paul chose to use. He took upon Him what? The "form of a servant." Ok, in the same verse, another expression he chose to use to describe His humanity. What did he write? He was made, "in the likeness of men". Verse 8, "being found in fashion as a man." These are very unusual descriptions of human nature. Would you agree? In Romans chapter 8 verse 3, "God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh." Again, Paul is very careful with regards to his expressions about the humanity of Christ.

Now, why did Paul use such expressions, if he wished to convey the idea that Christ was human? That Christ was a man? Why couldn't he just say, "He became a servant", or "he was made a man." Why didn't he just say that? Let's pay attention to what he wrote. Let's pay attention to, you know, try to understand why he used these expressions. Could he have easily said, "Jesus became a servant and He became a man."? Why did he use these unusual expression to describe Christ's humanity?

Now, his descriptions of Christ's humanity could not have been intended to bring into question the reality of His humanity. Why do I say that? Because it says, he took the "form of a servant", but he uses also the same expression in verse 6 to refer to His divinity - He was in the "form of God". What is Paul meaning then? Well I think, I think you'll find that its very interesting as we begin to try and understand and follow through with his line of reasoning about Jesus Christ.

We know Paul the Apostle was very, you know, he was, he had a concept of Christ's mission. A very unique...he was a prophet of God. Just like when you read through the writings of Ellen White. How she described Christ's mission. Its amazing, just the, her understanding of it. Its amazing as you read through her writings, her insight into these things. Paul was very much the same.

In Hebrews chapter 2, Paul very clearly writes, describes that Jesus was in fact a real man.

Hebrews 2:14 and verse 17, he writes, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same..." verse 17 says, "Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren." You see?

What then was Paul trying to convey in Philippians chapter 2? Next go back to Philippians chapter 2 there. Let's read verse 6 carefully. Paul writes here, "Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation..." That term there, when it says, "he made himself of no reputation", that literally means, its actually one word in Greek - which means He emptied Himself, and took upon Him the form of a servant. This is why you'll find in the writings of Ellen White, this phrase, "He emptied Himself. If you do a search in the Sprit of Prophecy, this is where she gets it from, she got it from the original Greek of Paul's writings here. He emptied Himself. Paul is saying here that Christ emptied Himself and then took upon Him the form of a servant. What did He empty Himself of? What was it that He emptied Himself of? Well if you read carefully in verse 6 there again, it becomes very apparent. It says, "Who being in the form of God", He emptied Himself and took the "form of a servant". What was it that He emptied Himself of? It was the "form of God". He emptied Himself of the "form of God. That doesn't say, notice it doesn't say He emptied Himself of God. It says He emptied Himself of the "form of God" and took upon Him the "form of a servant". Why did Christ do this? Why do you think Christ emptied Himself of the "form of God"? What do you think would have happened if Christ came in the form of God to this earth. The Bible says "our God is a consuming fire". He emptied Himself of that form of God as He came to earth. Yet He was still God. He didn't empty Himself of His divinity, it would have been impossible. It was His divine nature that took humanity.

So what Paul is saying, I believe is that Christ in heaven, was once clothed with majesty and glory and absolute power. Splendor. If He came like that to this earth, we'd all be dead. But He emptied Himself, He laid aside His glory, He laid aside His splendor, His majesty and He took upon Him another form, the "form of a servant." Isaiah 53 verse 2 says, "He has no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see Him, there is no beauty, that we should desire Him." See it was the form of God that He emptied Himself of, not God. He was "God manifest in the flesh". Divinity and humanity combined. It was in the "form of a servant", that Christ the Son of God walked the earth. The Bible says He was despised and rejected of men.

Second Corinthians chapter 8 verse 9 says this, "For ye know that grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, though He was rich yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich."

Now I think its for this reason that Paul uses these interesting expressions. "In the likeness of men", or the "form of a servant". Notice this, that in Philippians chapter 2, the Apostle Paul was not saying that Christ was just a man. He was saying in fact that He was more than a man. Do you see that? He was not just a man, He was more than a man, He was, "God manifest in the flesh". And this is what we must remember when we look at the humanity of Jesus Christ. We mustn't just look at His humanity, because if we do that, and avoid look at the connection, the unity of the two natures - we'll end up in trouble. It is on the fact that "God was manifest in the flesh", that our

hopes, the hopes of the human race where hung. The only reason we can be saved is because "God was manifest in the flesh".

As we turn back to Philippians chapter 2 there, we see another concept that the Apostle Paul brings out and that is the concept of Christ's humility. There is three phases to this humility that I've noticed there in the book of Philippians chapter 2. The first phase is found in verse 6. "Who being in the form of God, though it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant." This was the first phase of humility. The second person of the Godhead, the Son of God, in all His glory and majesty in heaven, humbled Himself from up there to come down here. As we mentioned before, it is not humility to be a man. But it is humility for God to become man. That is infinite humility, and something that we could not understand. If we could, we could probably reach, if we could try and reach God and somehow enter into the thoughts of the Godhead, then we'd understand but we can't do that. Its an impossibility for us to actually do that. But we can appreciate somehow this humility.

The second phase of His humility is found in verse 8, notice it says, "and being found in fashion as a man," He then what? "humbled himself" again.

The third phase, it says "He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death". The third phase, it says, "even the death of the cross."

I'd like to read a statement here from Desire of Ages page 48 paragraph 6. "It would have been an almost infinite humiliation for the Son of God to take man's nature, even when Adam took in his innocence in Eden." Can you imagine that? Infinite humiliation even when Adam stood in his innocence in Eden, but Jesus "accepted humanity when the race had been weakened but 4000 years of degeneracy", of sin. "Like every child of Adam he accepted the results of the great law of heredity. What these results where is shown in the history of His early ancestors." You see, when you look at the history of His earthly ancestors, what do you see? Degeneracy. You see, from Adam who stood like, I don't know, 20 feet tall or something? And you see them live 900 years with a mental capacity so that they didn't need books. And you see, you follow through the history of His earthly ancestors and what begins to become apparent? Decrease in size, mental capacity, weakness, moral worth. These are the things that Ellen White commented on here. And Jesus Christ accepted those results when He took human nature. He accepted those results when He took humanity. And notice this, He didn't take the nature of angels, nor the nature of Adam before he fell, but a nature weakened and degraded by 4000 years of sin. So when Jesus came to earth and He was born a baby, He only reached, 7 foot? I don't know. That was it. He came with "such a heredity" she writes, "to share our sorrows and temptations."

Now, while we understand and believe this. Perhaps not fully understand it. Let's remember what I read before. Again from Manuscript Releases, volume 16, page 182, "we must not think that the liability of Christ to yield to temptation degraded His humanity and He possessed the same sinful corrupt propensities as man." It is one thing to assume a human nature affected by sin, it is



another, entirely another to assume a humanity infected by it. Do you see the difference? It is one thing to assume a humanity degraded and defiled by sin, affected by sin. And you see those effects, visible effects. It is one thing to assume that humanity, affected by sin - it is another entirely to assume it, infected by sin. See Jesus experienced, real weakness, real hunger, real pain, real sorrow. These are the infirmities of sinful flesh.

(Congregation question: "is this a Spirit of Prophecy statement you're referring to?")

I quoted, when I say, I'll quote Ellen White, I'll quote Ellen White.

(Congregation question: "where did the quote from Manuscript Releases volume 16, page 182 stop?")

Corrupt propensities as man. That's where it stopped.

(Congregation question: "you said that humanity was affected and not infected part, was that Spirit of Prophecy?")

I'm just commenting.

So, we read here of His humility, when He humbled Himself from being Almighty God. You see how much how much He humbled Himself when He became in the "form of a servant"? It wasn't just, you know it wasn't the glory of manhood in his Eden home. He took upon Him that degraded humanity after 4000 years of sin. That is humility. And we cannot understand that, but the verse says beyond that, "being found in fashion as a man" He stilled "humbled Himself and became obedient unto death." It was humbling at all for Him to die! But even the death of the cross! He humbled Himself further still, and endured the shame of the cross.

Now for us, natural death is a consequence of Adam's transgression. You know, for us it is not a humbling thing to die is it? It is not humility for us to die. Because that is just the natural consequence of Adam's transgression. And all of us, you know the Bible says that "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." As we near the close of our life's history on this earth, we don't feel that this is humiliating. But it was humility for Christ to die! Because He had not sinned, and there was not a trace of sin in His humanity.

Further to this, it was humility for Him to die, because He could have refused it. You and I can't refuse it. He said Himself, "I lay down my life. No man takes it from Me, I lay it down of myself".

So as we look at these verses in Philippians chapter 2, we see a humility we can't really understand. This, Ellen White writes is the science that the angels desire to look into. The plan of redemption. Something that we'll be forever studying. I pray the Lord will help us to continue looking this wonderful plan of redemption. Ever bearing in mind though, at the same time that we

are to be cautious with our expressions.

May the Lord help us to understand more about the wonderful plan of redemption as we seek investigating it - Amen.