

December 29, 2013 by Steve Brandon



Christmas Should Humble You

Philippians 2:5-8

1. Exhortation (verse 5)
2. Humiliation (verses 6-8)
 - a. **A Humble Heart (verse 6)**
 - b. **A Humble Life (verse 7)**
 - c. **A Humble Death (verse 8)**

There are many attitudes and emotions and experiences that surround the Christmas season.

One of the first that comes to my mind is "Merry" -- "Merriment", "Happiness." Isn't this what everyone says? Merry Christmas! Happy Holidays! We have songs about this, "We wish you a merry Christmas." "Have yourself a merry little Christmas." "'Tis this season to be jolly! Fa la la la la la la la la!" And this is right. Indeed, Christmas is a time of happiness. It's a time of parties. It's a time of vacation. It's a time for family. It's a time for friends. And for Christians especially, it is a time for happiness. It's a time to celebrate the coming of our Savior!

Another attitude that comes to my mind is "giving." If there is anything that Christmas is known for, it is gifts. People say, "Are you ready for Christmas?" And what they are really asking is this, "Have you purchased all of your gifts?" Children, of course, know this attitude, because they are often on the receiving end. I know that my children counted down the days until Christmas, and they full well knew what Christmas day would bring -- gifts.

And with the giving, there often comes "busyness" and "stress." Christmas is an incredibly busy time. There are parties to attend. There are events to prepare for. And certainly, the purchasing of gifts can lead to craziness. Just try going shopping over during the Christmas season! And stress comes with the busyness. People are stressed to get their Christmas cards out on time. People are stressed as they think about their upcoming family gatherings. People are stressed because they don't know which gifts to purchase for whom.

Another attitude that comes to my mind is what I would call "memories." Christmas is a time of reflection upon past Christmases. Perhaps we look back upon a favorite Christmas. Perhaps we look back upon a final Christmas with a loved one. Perhaps we look back upon a Christmas spent in the hospital or on a beachside someplace. Many times, Christmas will stir certain sentimental emotions. We hear the familiar song, ...

"Chestnuts roasting on an open fire,
Jack Frost nipping on your nose,
Yuletide carols being sung by a choir,
And folks dressed up like Eskimos."

But, how many of us have ever tasted chestnuts that have been roasted on an open fire. What are "yuletide carols" anyway? Have you ever actually seen someone dressed up like an Eskimo? But that's not the point. The point is that Christmas will bring certain emotions, whether or not they have actually been grounded in our own personal experiences.

Another attitude that comes to my mind is "joy." One of the most famous Christmas hymns begins with this line: "Joy to the world, the Lord is come, Let earth receive her King!" Joy was the message that the angels brought to the shepherds, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people. For today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11).

All of these attitudes and emotions and feelings come to us at Christmastime. But one attitude that is often lost in the Christian season is the attitude of humility. There are parties. There is joy. There is gift giving. There are all sorts of emotions. But, in all of this, there should be humility. My message this morning is entitled, "Christmas Should Humble You."

Open in your Bibles to Philippians, chapter 2. Our text this morning will cover verses 5-8. These verses cover the great reality of what took place some 2,000 years ago when Jesus was born of a virgin. God came into the flesh! The divine took on human form. Jesus was Immanuel, "God with us" (Matthew 1:23). He came to "save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). This is what we celebrate this Christmas season -- God coming into the flesh to save us from our sins.

And this text has one application. It calls us to humility. Let's read our text:

Philippians 2:5-8

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

Our outline this morning contains two points: Exhortation (this comes in verse 5) and Humiliation (this comes in verses 6-8). The exhortation is a call to humility. Look there in verse 5, ...

Philippians 2:5

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

This verse is certainly a transition verse from verses 1-4 to verses 6-8. It goes with both sections. It concludes the thought in verses 1-4 and begins the thought contained in verses 6-8. Here's what I mean: when Paul says, "this attitude," he was referring to the attitude given in verses 1-4 of this chapter, an attitude of humility.

Philippians 2:1-4

Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

We looked at these verses two weeks ago and saw that humility would lead to unity in the body. We find this week that Jesus had such an attitude.

But, verse 5 also points forward to the example of Jesus Christ. Paul writes, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus." Verses 6-8 describe the attitude of humility that Jesus possessed. He came from heaven to earth. He came to earth as a servant. He died on the cross for our sins. The praise chorus by Donnie McClurkin says it well.

You came from heaven to earth, to show the way
From the earth to the cross, my debt to pay
From the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky
Lord I lift your name on high.

That's what verses 6-8 describe. They describe the "humiliation" of Jesus.

Philippians 2:6-8

who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Now, this morning, as we work through our text, I want to interweave my points. In other words, the way that we are going to look at the first point (the exhortation to humility) is by looking at the second point (the humiliation of Jesus). And, as we work through the second point (the humiliation of Jesus), I'm going to constantly bring us back to the first point (the exhortation to humility). So, let us look at our second point first. And after each verse, I'm going to bring us back to our first point.

2. Humiliation (verses 6-8)

Now, when I say "humiliation," I don't mean that Jesus was humiliated. Verses 6-8 aren't speaking about how others made fun of Jesus, though they did as Jesus hung on the cross. "He saved others; let Him save Himself" (Luke 23:35). "Let this Christ ... now come down from the cross, so that we may see and believe!" (Mark 15:32). But, I'm not referring to this "humiliation." Rather, when I say "humiliation," I'm describing what took place when Jesus came to earth. It was a "humbling" experience. In other words, when Jesus came to earth, He was "made low."

He was not forced into this humiliation in any way. Rather, He was a willing subject. In fact, this is precisely the point of verse 6. Jesus willingly humbled Himself. He was a willing subject because He had ...

a. A Humble Heart (verse 6)

Look at verse 6 again, ...

Philippians 2:6

who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

These words take us into heaven before Jesus came into the flesh. This verse speaks to the heart of Jesus, to his attitude.

First of all, verse 6 affirms the full deity of Jesus. "He existed in the form of God." That is, He was God. This is what the Scripture affirms elsewhere. Jesus was God. John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." Further, John 1:14 says, "And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us." "In Him all the fullness of deity dwells" (Col 1:15). This is Christmas. God coming into the flesh.

This is what Immanuel means. Matthew 1:23, (quoting Isaiah 7:14) prophesies, "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, 'God with us.'" The Hebrew word *im* means, "with." The Hebrew word *anu* means "us." The Hebrew word *El* means "God." You put them all together and you get "Immanuel," which means "God with us."

And yet, here in Philippians 2, verse 6, we see Jesus. Although He was God, He ...

Philippians 2:6
... did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

That is, Jesus didn't see His full equality with God something as necessary to hold onto. Rather, Jesus was willing to let it go in order to become a man.

Before the incarnation, Jesus was with God, reigning with Him in all His glory. In the High Priestly Prayer of Jesus, He mentioned this glory. He said, "Now, Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with you before the world was" (John 17:5). But, Jesus did not think that this glory was anything to be tenaciously held to. He was willing to set His glory aside.

The best that I can compare this to would be a physician or a professor, one who has earned a terminal degree (an M. D. or a Ph. D.); one who deserves the name, "doctor." And yet, they are willing to be called, "Bill" or "John" or "Pete" or "Mary", not requiring those around them to address them with their titles of "Dr. Johnson" or "Dr. Franklin" or "Dr. Jones." In other words, they don't regard their status as something to be grasped and held onto. They are willing to let it go.

Now, when a physician or a Ph. D. is called, "Bill" or "John" or "Pete" or "Mary," in no way do they give up their doctor status. They are still doctors. Instead, they willingly give up the honor due them, which their degree has earned.

Similarly, when Jesus came into the flesh, in no way did He give up being God. He was still God in the flesh. Instead, He willingly gave up the honor that came with His status in heaven. He willingly gave up the glory that was His in heaven. This is the reality of verse 6.

Philippians 2:6
who, although He existed in the form of God, [Jesus] did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

And thereby, Jesus shows the sort of God we worship. We worship a God with A Humble Heart (verse 6). Jesus wasn't above us in the sense that He wouldn't come to us. Rather, Jesus was willing to come and be with us.

The apostle John speaks about seeing Jesus with his eyes and touching Jesus with his hands, and hearing Jesus with his ears (1 John 1:1). Jesus came to be with us.

Our God isn't a god like Allah, who rules and reigns from heaven with an iron fist; who would never stoop to the indignity of humanity; who would never condescend to anything that would dishonor him in any way. This is why Islam is often called, "an honor religion." Dishonoring Allah is one of the worst sins that you could ever commit. And those who dishonor Allah will stir the greatest of emotions in his followers. That's why Muslims burn church buildings. That's why Muslims will kill infidels. Because Christians dishonor Allah.

But, our God is not like this. Our God was willing to let go of His glory and come and be with us and dwell with us. And we are called to walk in His paths. Our leader lived a life of suffering and hardship for the sake of righteousness. So also are we. That's why Christians should endure the scoffing of others. That's why Christians should rejoice when suffering for Christ.

Jesus said, ...

Matthew 5:10-12
Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when people insult you and persecute you, and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of Me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great; for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

That's why the apostles, after being flogged for preaching in the name of Christ, "went on their way from the presence of the Council, rejoicing that they had been considered worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5:41).

That's what verse 6 is talking about, ...

Philippians 2:6
who, although He existed in the form of God, [Jesus] did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

And when Jesus walked among us, few understood Him. The Pharisees accused Jesus of being born of fornication (John 8:41). The Pharisees called Jesus a Samaritan and one who had a demon (John 8:48). The Pharisees tried to stone Jesus when He claimed divinity (John 8:57-59). But such came with His humiliation. Church family, ...

Philippians 2:5

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

And now, I ask you by way of application (verse 5). Is this your attitude? Do you have A Humble Heart? (verse 6)

Are you willing to spend time with the lowly? Are you willing to be misunderstood? Are you willing to set aside your honor for the sake of others? That's what Jesus did. And we are called to follow His example. We are called to have the same attitude (verse 5).

And let me go beyond this. On the one hand, it's easy to say, "Yes, Lord. I am willing." But now, let me ask you for specifics. "How have you set aside your honor for the sake of others?" "In what ways have you been misunderstood?" "Who are the lowly people that you have spent time with?"

Jesus said ...

Luke 14:12-14

... When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and that will be your repayment. But when you give a reception, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed, since they do not have the means to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.

This is what Jesus did. He came to those who could never repay Him. He invited us to His wedding feast! Paul calls us to do the same.

See, we aren't merely called to imitate Jesus in attitude. We are called to demonstrate this attitude with action. Do you have A Humble Heart (verse 6)? In what ways is this heart being demonstrated in your life today?

This is the message of the incarnation. This is the message of Christmas. "Jesus was willing to lay aside His glory to come and dwell with us." We are called to do the same. "Christmas Should Humble You."

Let's move on to verse 7. Not only did Jesus have A Humble Heart (verse 6), He also had ...

b. A Humble Life (verse 7)

We find this in verse 7, ...

Philippians 2:7

but[Jesus] emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

When Jesus came to earth, He came as a servant. Again, this demonstrates the humility of Jesus.

His coming this way was not expected. Matthew Henry said it well: "One would think that the Lord Jesus, if he would be a man, should have been a prince, and appeared in splendor. But quite the contrary: He took upon him the form of a servant."

Jesus, Himself, affirmed this when He said, "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). That's what Jesus did. The king became a servant. The king of heaven became a servant of men.

This isn't how it is with kings. They rule and reign in the palace. They have servants to tend to their every need. They throw the parties, like King Ahasuerus did in Esther's day (Esther 1). Their word becomes the law of the land, like King Nebuchadnezzar or King Darius or Cyrus, King of Persia did in their days (Daniel 4, 6; Ezra 1).

But, Jesus didn't rule and reign in any of these ways. Instead, Jesus came and humbly served His people. Jesus didn't sit in the palace. He roamed the countryside instead, saying "The foxes have holes and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (Matthew 8:20).

He had no servants. He owned little by way of possessions. His words did not become the law of the land.

When Jesus stood before Pilate, Pilate couldn't believe that Jesus was a king. He didn't look like a king. And so, Pilate asked Him, "Are You the King of the Jews?" (John 18:33). Mocking the Jews, Pilate presented Him to the Jews and said, "Behold, Your King" (John 19:14).

Jesus didn't look like a king. Nor did Jesus act like a king. He was a servant.

On Christmas Eve, I made the point that the birth of Jesus set the trajectory for the life of Jesus. He came in a lowly manger to lowly parents in a lowly city. And what began at the birth of Jesus continued on through the life of Jesus.

Jesus wasn't one to bring great fanfare to Himself. For the first thirty years of His life, He lived a life of obscurity. We know very little about His upbringing. When it came time to call His disciples, He called lowly fishermen, like Peter, Andrew, James and John. He called a tax-collector, like Matthew. When Jesus trained these disciples, He trained by example. He showed them how to preach. He demonstrated compassion. He modeled service.

I trust that you remember the night in which Jesus was betrayed. "[Jesus] got up from supper, and laid aside His garments; and taking a towel, He girded Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel with which He was girded." (John 13:4-5). What Jesus did that night was a microcosm of His entire life. When Jesus came to earth, He came in humility. He lived a humble life.

In some way, that's the key to the first phrase in verse 7, which has mystified theologians for years. Verse 7 says that Jesus "emptied Himself." The NIV is very literal at this point. It reads, "[He] made himself nothing." That's what this verb means -- "to empty, to make empty, to make vain, to make of no effect."

Now, some theologians have tried to describe what took place here as the giving up His divine attributes to live on this earth. In other words, to become a man, they say, Jesus had to give up being God. Such a belief has come to be known as "the kenosis theory." This theory comes from the verb, *kenoo* (kenoo).

Such a view should be rejected. It is taught nowhere else in Scripture. Jesus never gave up His deity. It was as impossible for Jesus to give up His deity. John Owen said it well, "He who is God can no more be not God than he who is not God can be God". [\[1\]](#)

While walking upon the earth, Jesus was fully God, capable of miracles, knowing that only God could know, and doing what only God could do.

When Jesus was upon the earth, He was fully God and fully man. And thus, the mystery. But, such is the mystery of Christmas.

So, what does it mean that Jesus "emptied Himself." I think that the best way to understand this term in verse 7 is to let the rest of verse 7 tell us what it means.

Philippians 2:7

but[Jesus] emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

You could easily read this, ...

Philippians 2:7

but[Jesus] emptied Himself, **by** taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

The very fact that Jesus came as a bond-servant is what it means that Jesus emptied Himself. It means that Jesus gave up His status of glory in heaven to live as a servant on the earth. It means that Jesus gave up His privileges of reigning in heaven to be a servant on the earth. It means that Jesus gave up His position in heaven to live as a man upon the earth. And the distance between the throne-room of God and the manger in Bethlehem was breathtaking.

In recent days in our home, a discussion has arisen regarding the definition of a googol, which is a 1 followed by a hundred 0's. That's a large number. Now a googolplex is a 1 followed by a googol zeros. That's an extremely large number, far beyond our comprehension. But such is the distance between God and man. It is an infinite distance.

We read in Isaiah 40:17 that "all the nations are as nothing before Him. They are regarded by Him as less than nothing and meaningless." Such is the gap between deity and humanity. It is hard to be anything less than "less than nothing."

Any interaction that the Lord has with us is stooping. Psalm 113 reads, "Who is like the LORD our God, Who is enthroned on high, Who humbles Himself to behold the things in heaven and in the earth?" (Psalm 113:5-6). The LORD is so high above us that the mere act of looking upon the earth is an act of humility.

Such was the humility of the Lord Jesus in His incarnation. He went from highest glory to lowest humanity. The English Puritan, John Flavel, said it this way, ...

"For an angel to be turned out of heaven, and be converted into a silly fly or worm, had be no such great abasement; for they were but creatures before, and so they would abide still though in an inferior order or species of creatures. The distance betwixt the highest and lowest species of creatures is but a finite distance. The angel and the worm dwell not so far apart. But for the infinite glorious Creator of all things, to become a creature, is a mystery exceeding all human understanding. The distance between God and the highest order of creatures, is an infinite distance. [\[2\]](#)

And when the apostle Paul, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, sought to describe this distance, he could only say that Jesus "emptied Himself." Compared with His glorified state, His human state was as if He was empty. The humility needed for Him to do this was great.

And how did He become empty? By taking on the form of a man. By taking on the limitations of humanity. And such is my point from verse 7. Jesus lived A Humble Life (verse 7).

So, now, let's go back to our application.

Philippians 2:5

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

And so, I ask you, "Is this your attitude?" Jesus took the giant step from God to man. Jesus took the giant step from God to servant. Are you willing to take the same step? Are you willing to display humility in your life? Jesus set the bar for humility, dwelling among us as one of us -- no, dwelling among us as a lowly servant. Are you willing to do the same?

Again, let's get beyond the attitude. Let's get to the action. How have you humbled yourself recently? In what ways have you willingly placed yourself under others. This is the heart of application for all of us.

Philippians 2:3-4

Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

This is a hard road. Remember, I preached on these words a few weeks ago. I came home that Sunday, and was exhausted. Shortly after our meal, I told Yvonne how I was greatly looking forward to a nap. She kindly reminded me of what her afternoon looked like. Cleaning the kitchen. Preparing the house for our small group that night. Picking up a bit of the mess in our house. Vacuuming. Re-arranging some furniture. Setting out some eating utensils. Cooking a bit of food.

And I thought about the text I had just preached in the morning about setting the interests of others above my own. And I took no nap on Sunday afternoon. Instead, I helped Yvonne and the kids prepare for our small group.

Humility isn't easy. It's a hard road.

The next day (Monday) found me grumpy. I was irritable toward Yvonne. I was impatient with my son. And Yvonne merely pointed out my sin to me. And I didn't like it. I don't like having my sin pointed out to me. And it struck me -- that's because I'm not humble. The humble one will readily admit his sin. Not his sin in general, as in, "I'm a sinner", but his sin in specific, as in, "I responded sinfully in this circumstance."

And it's hard. Because we are all proud of heart. That's why we need the Lord's strength to be humble. That's why Andrew Murray said, ...

"The life of God, which in the incarnation entered human nature, is the root in which we are to stand and grow. It is the same almighty power that worked there, and from then on the resurrection, which works daily in us. Our one need is to study and know and trust the life that has been revealed in Christ as the life that is now ours. It waits for our consent to gain possession and mastery of our whole being." [\[3\]](#)

This is one thing that has really struck me this week. In order to teach us humility, the apostle Paul delved into some deep theology. He didn't give us some how-to's. He didn't provide some steps to humility. He didn't say "do these things, and you will be humble." No. The apostle Paul simply pointed us to the reality of Christmas. He pointed to Jesus becoming a man.

And if Jesus, God almighty, condescended to become a man, then how can we be proud?

Our text today is all about the humility of Christ. Again, I quote from Andrew Murray: "What is the incarnation, but heavenly humility, His emptying Himself and becoming a man? What is His life on earth but humility, His taking the form of a servant? And what is His atonement but humility? He humbled himself and became obedient unto death."

Andrew Murray is simply walking through this passage. Verse 6 speaks about how Jesus had A Humble Heart (verse 6). Verse 7 speaks about how Jesus lived A Humble Life (verse 7). Verse 8 speaks about how Jesus died ...

c. A Humble Death (verse 8)

In verse 8 we read, ...

Philippians 2:8

Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

When Jesus came to earth, He came to die. That was His one over-arching purpose of His life. Over and over again throughout the ministry of Jesus, you can hear Him speak of "His hour." At the wedding of Cana, Jesus said, "My hour has not yet come" (John 2:4). In Jerusalem, when Jesus was claiming to be the Christ, John tells us, "no man laid his hand on Him, because His hour had not yet come" (John 7:30). When teaching in the temple and stirring the crowds, we read, "No one seized Him, because His hour had not yet come" (John 8:20).

But, during the Passion Week, the tone changed. We read in John 13:1 that, "Before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus [knew] that His hour had come that He would depart out of this world to the Father." And in His high priestly prayer, Jesus said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son" (John 17:1).

When Jesus came to earth, He came for the hour of His death. The obedience of Jesus brought Him to that place. Jesus said, "My soul has become troubled; and what shall I say, 'Father, save Me from this hour'? But for this purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify Your name" (John 12:27). That's the point of verse 8, ...

Philippians 2:8

Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death of a cross.

The obedient life is a humble life. When people are obedient to the Lord, they don't often attract much attention.

Think about Hollywood. Who gets the attention? It's those who push the boundaries. It's those who say the most outlandish things. It's those who wear the most exotic clothes. It's those who are risqué. Think about the news. Who gets the attention? It's those who do the awful thing. It's those who rob and murder. It's those who protest. It's those who throw stones. Likewise, the disobedient children get all of the attention.

But, Jesus didn't do any of this. No, Jesus lived the life of obedience -- unassuming obedience to the Lord. And where did it take Him? It took Him to the point of death. This was the purpose of the incarnation.

And here in Philippians 2, Paul points out the sort of death that Jesus would die. It wasn't a normal death. Jesus didn't die of old age. Jesus didn't die quickly. No, Jesus died slowly. Jesus died painfully. Jesus died shamefully. Jesus died the death "of a cross."

That's what verse 8 says literally, ...

Philippians 2:8

Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death of a cross.

To the Roman world, death by crucifixion was so horrible that it shouldn't even be talked about. A hundred years before Jesus died, Cicero said, "Let the very name of the cross be far removed not only from the body of a Roman citizen, but even from his thoughts, his eyes, his ears." ^[4] Crucifixion was the death of a slave.

To the Jewish world, death by crucifixion was filled with shame. Josephus, the Jewish historian, calls it "the most pitiable of deaths." ^[5] In Deuteronomy 21:23, we read, "He who is hanged [on a tree] is accursed of God." In Hebrews 12:2, we read of how Jesus "endured the cross, despising the shame"

What a fitting death for the Son of God. Not only did Jesus humble Himself to look to earth. Not only did Jesus humble Himself to come to earth. Not only did Jesus humble Himself to become a man. Not only did Jesus humble Himself to die as a man. But Jesus humbled Himself to die the most humble of deaths -- the death on a cross.

In Galatians 4:4-5, Paul said, "But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." And how did Jesus redeem us? Through His death. He would become our ultimate sacrifice.

We ought to rejoice and trust in our savior who came to us. This is what we celebrate during the Christmas season. We celebrate the coming of Jesus. And Jesus came to die for our sins.

And, according to the point of my message this morning, this should humble us. So, we come back to our application.

Philippians 2:5

Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

The cross of Jesus should humble us. So, this Christmas season, which is filled with all sorts of emotions and attitudes -- Happiness, Giving, Busyness, Joy -- let us be humbled. To think that the Lord of the universe would come to us and die the lowest of deaths, gives us no excuse but to give our lives for others.

Milton Vincent put it this way, ...

That Jesus was willing
His life to lay down,
Be scourged and insulted
and wear thorny crown
For one such as I
who had spited God so,
Amazes and blesses
and makes me to know
That greater a lover
is no man than He,
Who laid down His life
for a sinner like me. ^[6]

"Christmas should humble us." The life of Christ should bring us to humble service of others. So how are you doing?

Husbands, this is direct application for you. "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself up for her." (Ephesians 5:25) Jesus died for His church. Husbands love your wives by dying to yourself and serving them.

For all of us, we have the application. "He died for all, so that they who live might no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died and rose again on their behalf" (2 Cor 5:15).

The death of Jesus should drive us to humility and selfless service to others.

This sermon was delivered to Rock Valley Bible Church on December 29, 2013 by Steve Brandon.

For more information see www.rvbc.cc.

[1] The Works of John Owen, Volume 1: The Glory of Christ, p. 326.

[2] John Flavel, The Works of John Flavel, vol. 1, London, 1820; repr., Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 1982, 229, as quoted by William Farley, Gospel Powered Humility, pp. 35-36.

[3] Andrew Murray, Humility, p. 18.

[4] Cicero, Pro Rabirio 5 as quoted in Hendricksen, p. 112.

[5] Josephus, Jewish War 7:203.

[6] Milton Vincent, A Gospel Primer, p. 78.