

## Sunday Morning Message

December 16, 2018

### Christmas Message

#### *A Christmas Mindset*

Text – Philippians 2:1 - 11

Congregational Reading – Philippians 2:5 - 7

## Introduction

Read verses 1 - 11

This portion of Scripture is often referred to as the “**Kenosis**” passage, taken from the Greek word κενόω (ke-no'-ō) found in v. 7, which means “to empty oneself” or to make of no reputation.

The only man that ever lived who had the right to be “full of Himself” lived a life where He was “empty of Himself.”

Verses six and seven actually tell the Christmas story “in a nutshell”:

*"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:" (Philippians 2:6-7)*

We don't read here about the specifics of His birth – there is no mention of Mary and Joseph, nothing recorded here about the manger or Bethlehem, not even a hint here regarding the Magi or the shepherds. Nevertheless, the essence of the Christmas story is found in these two verses.

Jesus, the God of the Universe, emptied Himself or made himself of no reputation, and became a man. God became man. That's a pretty big step down.

Jesus who owns all of the silver and the gold and the cattle on a thousand hills came down to this earth to be born in a stable to a very poor family, who were from Nazareth, a very humble place:

*"And Nathanael said unto him, **Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?** Philip saith unto him, **Come and see.**" (John 1:46)*

Jesus who is the Creator and Sustainer of all things, was for a time “subject unto his parents”, and was taught by His earthly guardian Joseph to be a carpenter. The God who made the worlds was now making furniture. A step down for sure!

Why would the King of Glory do such a thing? He became a man so that He could save men and women. He came to the earth to die on the Cross:

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

### **Supporting verses:**

*"And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)*

*"This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief." (1 Timothy 1:15)*

*"For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." (Luke 19:10)*

The focus of this message is not on why He came, but on what was His mindset when He came.

Then we need to make the parallel between His Mindset and ours. What should our mindset be as we serve the Lord today.

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

Christ left glory to come to this earth. He emptied Himself – became of no reputation. Note – that does not mean that He became less than God, but He did give up or surrender some of the attributes of deity while here on the earth. He still had all of the power on earth that He had in Heaven. He just chose not to use them. He still had all of the glory that He had in Heaven, He just veiled it while He was on the earth.

The analogy is not to us being born into this world as we had no choice regarding that decision. However, we did choose to be born-again into the family of God. Should not we have His mindset – should not we empty ourselves – make ourselves of no reputation as we serve Him here on earth.

What Is the Christmas Mindset that we should have while we serve here on the earth? What was Jesus mindset as He came down here at Christmas?

### **I He Had a Mindset of Submissiveness (Humility - v. 7 - "*made himself of no reputation*")**

He emptied Himself of the glory that He had in Heaven. He veiled it in human flesh.

He did not come to earth and demand exaltation and glory – He emptied Himself of it. He made Himself of no reputation. He submitted to His parents. He submitted to the will of His Heavenly Father. He submitted Himself to the limitations of living in human flesh – he hungered, he thirsted. He ultimately submitted Himself to death.

He Humbled Himself.

One of the biggest problems that we have is humility. We are always trying to make ourselves look good – to improve our reputation in the eyes of our peers. Our job today as born-again

believers in Christ is to make Him look good, and to place others before ourselves. If we are going to exalt the Lord, we are going to have to learn to humble ourselves and be submissive:

Why is it that people who truly are small are always trying to exalt themselves, and yet Christ who was truly great, emptied Himself.

"None are as empty as those who are full of themselves." - Benjamin Whichcote

"What kills a skunk is the publicity it gives itself." - Abraham Lincoln

*"Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall." (Proverbs 16:18)*

Satan learned this principle. He tried to exalt Himself and it caused His fall:

*"How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! 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: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." (Isaiah 14:12-15)*

Eve learned this principle. She wanted to be like God, so she believed the devil rather than her husband and God, and ultimately plunged the whole human race into sin.

God hates pride:

*"A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." (Proverbs 6:17-19)*

*"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up." (James 4:10)*

*"Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:"*  
(1 Peter 5:6 )

*"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble." (1 Peter 5:5)*

Illustration - Muhammad Ali was in his prime, and as he was about to take off on an airplane flight, the stewardess reminded him to fasten his seat belt. He came back brashly, "Superman don't need no seat belt." The stewardess quickly came back, "Superman don't need no airplane, either." Ali, now humbled, fastened his belt.

## II He Had a Mindset of Servility (v. 7) *"and took upon him the form of a servant"*

Jesus did not come to be served. He came to serve. Jesus did not come to be ministered to, but to minister:

*"But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."* (Matthew 20:25-28)

Tozer said:

"I am Thy servant to do Thy will, and that will is sweeter to me than position or riches or fame, and I choose it above all things on Earth or in Heaven."

A servant does much of his work without recognition.

*"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them: otherwise ye have no reward of your Father which is in heaven. Therefore when thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward. But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth: That thine alms may be in secret: and thy Father which seeth in secret himself shall reward thee openly."* (Matthew 6:1-4)

Illustration Joe Reyes – always willing to serve behind the scenes.

Illustration

D.L. Moody was the most famous evangelist in the world in the late 1800s. People came from around the world to attend his Bible Conferences in Northfield, Massachusetts. One year a large group of pastors from Europe were among the attendees. They were given rooms in the dormitory of the Bible school. As was the custom in Europe, the men put their shoes outside the door of their room, expecting them to be cleaned and polished by servants during the night.

Of course there were no servants in the American dorm, but as Moody was walking through the halls and praying for his guests, he saw the shoes and realized what had happened. He mentioned the problem to a few of his students, but none of them offered to help. Without another word, the great evangelist gathered up the shoes and took them back to his own room where he began to clean and polish each pair. Moody told no one what he had done, but a friend who interrupted him in the middle of shining the shoes and helped him finish the task later told the story of what had happened. Despite the praise and fame he received because of God's blessing on his life and ministry, Moody remained a humble man.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God and King of Heaven, had the right to honor, praise, and worship. Yet to be our Saviour, He laid all of His privileges aside and became a lowly

servant. We often hear people talk of living as Jesus lived, and while He truly is the model for us to follow, many who speak of following Him are unwilling to give up their rights and reflect His humility. We will never be like Jesus unless we are humble and lowly.

### III He Had a Mindset of Sacrifice (v. 8) *“and became obedient unto death”*

Christ lived His life as a servant. He had nothing of earthly value. He gave everything.

*“I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.”*

(Acts 20:35)

And then, He gave His life to die on the Cross for our sins. He was willing to sacrifice for others.

Christmas is a time of giving, and we often sacrifice for others at Christmas, but the message of Christmas is that we should be living sacrificial lives every day of the year. We should be more than willing to give to God and to others.

Since the Son of God has died for me, then the least I can do is live for Him. "If Jesus Christ be God and died for me," said the great British athlete C. T. Studd, "then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for him."<sup>1</sup>

#### Illustration

In January of 1956, Jim Elliot and four other missionaries gave their lives in Ecuador in their effort to reach the Waodani (Auca) Indians. This fierce group was known to attack any outsiders, but the vision for reaching them with the gospel compelled these young men to take the risk. Not long after they set up camp near the Waodani village they were attacked by warriors. Refusing to defend their lives with force, the missionaries were killed. The news flashed around the world, and the story of courage and sacrifice challenged many to take up the missionary cause. Even today Elliot's words live on: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain what he cannot lose."

In a very real sense, Jim Elliot and his missionary friends were living the spirit of Christmas. They were willing to give up the comforts of home and promising careers and to ultimately lay down their lives to take the gospel to those who had never heard. They could have fought back to defend themselves, but they chose not to.

This is what Jesus did for us in coming to Earth. Paul wrote, *“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”* (2 Corinthians 8:9).

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermon-illustrations/74499/disciplines-general-by-sermoncentral?ref=TextIllustrationSerps>

Nothing of lasting significance and importance for God is ever accomplished without great sacrifice. Whether it is our time, our talent, our treasure, or even our lives, we must be willing to give up what is temporary for the sake of what is eternal. When we do, we are following the example and pattern of Christ and walking in His steps.<sup>2</sup>

## Conclusion

### **Jesus was submissive, a servant, and willing to sacrifice.**

While Jesus was here on the earth, He had no reputation and no possessions. Those are the two things you and I guard and protect the most. We are scared to death that we are going to lose our possessions, and we are so worried about our reputations.

He served fully and sacrificed everything, ultimately giving His life so that you and I could be saved. We serve grudgingly and sacrifice little. Yet, we expect and even demand that other people serve us and sacrifice for us. And, that's OK for lost people, but not for born-again children of God.

Our "reasonable service" is to have the same mindset that Jesus had:

He was humbly submissive

He was a willing servant

He was more than willing to sacrifice.

Jesus didn't demand His rights as God when he came to earth. He surrendered them. Why don't we stop trying to demand our rights as humans and, instead, be like Jesus? Let's humble ourselves, let's serve others, and let's sacrifice for the cause of Christ.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://ministry127.com/resources/illustration/a-saviour-who-made-us-rich>