

Why Jesus Came

In asking the question ‘Why did Jesus come at Christmastime?’

we looked first at “*Redemption*” from Paul’s letter to the Galatians.

“But when the fullness of time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, in order that He might **redeem** those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Gal. 4:4-5).

Redemption refers to the purchase price, specifically, buying a slave out of slavery. Here the emphasis is for the purpose of adoption.

Jesus’ sacrifice was to purchase mankind out of slavery to the Law, in order to bring us into the family of God as sons and heirs of heaven. In other words God saved us to be in relationship with Him for all eternity. Jesus came at Christmastime to *redeem* us so we could become sons and daughters in relationship with God as our Father.

TODAY WE WILL EXAMINE ANOTHER REASON CHRIST CAME AT CHRISTMASTIME:

- To show us how to live.

In the epistle to the Philippians, Paul writes,

“Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus” (Phil. 2:3-5).

I. EXHORTATION

The way we live is connected with the life of Christ: How did He live?

The first thing mention is selfishness.

The root of all sin is ‘self.’

Sin came into the world by Adam and Eve placing their will above God’s will.

FIRST, DO NOTHING BY WAY OF SELFISHNESS!

Rendered selfish ambition in 1:17, it came to be used of a person who persistently seeks personal advantage and gain, regardless of the effect on others. Idea of building oneself up by tearing someone else down, as in gambling, where one person's gain is derived from others' losses.

SECOND, FORSAKE EMPTY CONCEIT.

Kenodoxia – kenos: “empty” and doxa – “Glory”

- speaks of a highly exaggerated self-view, which is nothing but empty conceit. Whereas selfish ambition pursues personal goal, empty conceit seeks personal glory and acclaim.
- Personal accomplishments – overinflated self-image

Gal. 6:3 – “For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself...”

THIRD, PAUL INSTRUCTS BELIEVERS TO TREAT OTHERS WITH HUMILITY.

Humility in mind – “lowliness of mind”

Opposite of pride. “When pride comes, then comes dishonor, but with the humble is wisdom.”(Pr. 16:19)

C. S. Lewis, “Humility is not thinking less of yourself, but thinking of yourself less.”

Peter writes, “All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time” (1 Peter 5:5-6).

STEPS TO HUMILITY:

1. Regard one another as more important.

Come to this conclusion: “Others are more important than me.”

2. Look out for the interests of others.

do not merely look out for your own personal interests,
but also for the interests of others. (v. 4)

A humble person isn't thinking less of himself (putting himself down), but is thinking of himself less, by making room for others' needs.

“When the supreme virtue is self-love and supreme purpose in life is self-fulfillment, mutual respect is replaced by disrespect, mutual service by apathy and indifference, and mutual love by enmity and hatred.”¹

I. EXHORTATION – HOW WE LIVE.

II. ILLUSTRATION – WHO WE FOLLOW.

This behavior and attitude is based on the attitude of Christ when he became a man. VERSE FIVE CONNECTS THESE TRUTHS,

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus...

(who) ...emptied Himself...”

(Phil. 2:5, 6)

Christ is the supreme example of humility.

“*Have this mind-* (Phroneo) has the meaning of intellect, perspective, point of view, a way of looking at life.

Some translated it, *attitude*.

“TWO MEN LOOKED THROUGH PRISON BARS: ONE SAW MUD, THE OTHER STARS.”

¹ John MacArthur, The MacArthur New Testament Commentary: Philippians, (Chicago: Moody Press, 2001), p. 114.

The most profound and central miracle of Christianity is the incarnation of Jesus Christ, where the second Person of the Trinity becomes a man.

Christmas miracle: What began in a stable went beyond the stars.

“...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” (Phil. 2:5-7).

Though profoundly theological, yet it is profoundly ethical.

MacArthur writes,

“Paul was not merely describing the Incarnation to reveal its theological truths, magnificent as those are. He presents the supreme, unparalleled example of humility to serve as the most powerful motive to believers’ humility. The Incarnation calls believers to follow Jesus’ incomparable example of humble self-denial, self-giving, self-sacrifice, and selfless love as He lived out the Incarnation in obedient submission to His Father’s will.”²

Existed – huparcho – ‘under’ ‘beginning’ – ESSENCE OF A PERSON’S NATURE

It stresses the essence of a person’s nature, that which is absolutely unalterable, inalienable, and unchangeable.

Barclay comments that the verb refers to “THAT PART OF A [PERSON] WHICH, IN ANY CIRCUMSTANCES, REMAINS THE SAME”³

Form – morphe – OUTWARD MANIFESTATION OF AN INNER REALITY

Summary statement:

“Before the incarnation, from all eternity past, Jesus preexisted in the divine form of God, equal with God the Father in every way. By His

² Ibid. p. 119.

³ Wm. Barclay, *The letters to the Philippians, Colossians, and Thessalonians*. Rev. ed. (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster, 1975), p. 35.

very nature and innate being, Jesus Christ is, always has been, and will forever be fully divine.”⁴

STEPS OF HUMILITY FOR CHRIST:

1. JESUS DIDN'T HOLD ON TO HIS RIGHTS AND PREROGATIVES.

...although He existed in the form of God,

did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

Equality with God is synonymous with the preceding phrase “*form of God.*” Jesus yielded His divine rights

Lit. *Equalities* – EXACT EQUIVALENCE

Jesus attitude of selfless giving of everything that was His as God is the attitude God wants from every follower of Christ.

Corrie Ten Boom said to ‘Hold everything loosely, otherwise it will really hurt when God takes it away.’

2. JESUS EMPTIED HIMSELF

Emptied Himself: kenosis – to empty completely, “nullified” “made void”

“JESUS EMPTIED HIMSELF COMPLETELY OF EVERY VESTIGE OF ADVANTAGE AND PRIVILEGE, REFUSING TO ASSERT ANY DIVINE RIGHT ON HIS OWN BEHALF. HE WHO CREATED AND OWNED EVERYTHING FORSOOK EVERYTHING.”

3. JESUS BECAME A SERVANT

...taking the form of a bond servant... -- slave

- owned nothing
- carried other people's burdens

4. JESUS BECAME A MAN

And being made in the likeness of men. (2:7)

⁴ MacArthur. P. 122.

Likeness – homoioima – THAT WHICH IS MADE TO BE LIKE SOMETHING ELSE, NOT JUST IN APPEARANCE, BUT IN REALITY.

Jesus was born as a tiny baby to the virgin Mary.

5. JESUS HAD THE APPEARANCE OF A MAN

Being found in appearance as a man, (2:8)

Likeness – ESSENCE AND BASIC NATURE

Appearance – schema – REFERS TO OUTWARD SHAPE AND FORM

Jesus absolutely looked human because He was.

Col. 2:9 “For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form...”

6. JESUS HUMBLING HIMSELF

...He humbled Himself (2:8)

The emphasis moves from nature and form to personal attitude.

Humbled himself – tapeinoo – lying low

Described Himself “I am meek and lowly in heart” (Matt. 28:11)

Jesus was a willing sacrifice. He voluntarily went to the cross.

Lit. “HE HUMBLING HIMSELF, BECOMING OBEDIENT.”

7. Jesus was obedient to the Father to the point of death

He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:8).

Jesus' humility went so far – to the point of death. Jesus died as a curse on the cross of shame as He bore the penalty of our sins. He conquered all our enemies, and won the victory over sin and death and the dreadful power of evil.

As Augustine said,

“Proud man would have died had not a lowly God found him.”

Jesus truly looked out for the interests of others and regarded others as more important than Himself. Jesus was our example of humility.

Our behavior towards others is based on Christ's behavior towards us.

I. EXHORTATION – HOW WE LIVE.

II. ILLUSTRATION – WHO WE FOLLOW.

III. EXALTATION – CHRIST IS GLORIFIED

“Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11).

Highly exalted – Paul added the prefix ‘hyper’ to the already powerful word ‘exalt’ – *HYPER EXALTED!*

All will one day agree and bow down to the one whose name is above all names: The Lord Jesus Christ!

The Living Lesson:

Paul cautioned against conceit in verse 3– keno-doxa

Lit. “empty glory

Jesus ‘emptied Himself’ (v. 5-11) – keno

By doing so He was exalted to the glory (doxa) of God.

“If we try to establish and prove our own glory, our own superiority, it will turn out to be empty and worthless. It is in the emptying of ourselves of any false claim to glory and praise from people... that God’s power can work... and in the seeking of God’s glory it is Jesus Christ who will be exalted.” (Earl Palmer)

Jesus came at Christmastime to give us life, and show us how to live.

A baby’s hands in Bethlehem
Were small and softly curled,
But held within their dimpled grasp
The hope of all the world

LESLIE SAVAGE