

Palm Sunday / April 12, 2025

Philippians 2:8

*“And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”*

He Humbled Himself and became obedient to death on a cross

Holy Week is the final stage of the mission Jesus came to accomplish. The atonement of human sin. The reconciliation of God and humanity. Jesus came for our salvation, which God now offers all to receive through faith in Him. God gives forgiveness and salvation freely and fully to all who believe in Jesus as their God and Saviour. His Spirit calls us to put our faith in Him now! Jesus began His mission thirty-three years earlier, when He was conceived in the womb of the blessed virgin Mary, by the overshadowing of God and mysterious working of the Holy Spirit. He was named ‘Jesus’. He is the Lord who saves us from our sins. He was called ‘Emmanuel’. He is God with us in human form.

He was conceived and born a human being into this world in bondage to sin, cursed by the devil and under the condemnation of death. He was fully human as we are, yet without sin. He was fully God so that through the power of His divinity, He would release those who believe in Him from the chains of sin, the devil’s curse and lift from our heads the condemnation of eternal death. The ultimate purpose of Jesus’ mission is to bring us into His presence with the Spirit and the Father in His resurrection to everlasting life. Jesus accomplished His mission by humbling Himself and becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Jesus humbled Himself by taking on human form, not just in appearance as often happened in the legends of the pagan gods, but in actuality. God is the creator of all things. All things were created through Christ Jesus. Of all the creatures created through Christ Jesus, God chose to share the life experience of humans. Of all creatures, God chose to become one in form and substance with humans. One of the traditions regarding the fall of Satan and the rebellion of his angels is that they were jealous when they perceived that God had determined to exalt human beings above them, by sending His eternal Son to share in our humanity. They were offended that God should chose humans instead of them. This is just speculation, but it underscores the great love God has for His human creation. It highlights the great lengths to which He went to redeem us, after the first humans turned from Him in disobedience and rebellion. St. John said, *“Behold what love the Father has lavished on us that we should be called children of God!”* God lavished His love upon

us through His Son, who humbled Himself, emptied Himself of His divine glory, took on human form and substance and lived with us as one of us.

Jesus humbled Himself by taking on human form and by setting aside the display and use of His divine glory for three decades of life. He went through all the stages of growth and development as we do. He was an infant who needed total physical care. He was a toddler who learned to walk. He learned to talk, read, reason and think. I'm sure God could have found a cleaner and quicker way of accomplishing His purposes. He did it this way so we would know how deep His love is for us. He did it this way so we would see the lengths He would go to gather each one of us into His family through the gift of His Son, who humbled Himself and was obedient even to death on the cross. Jesus humbled Himself so that when people saw Him, they saw the carpenter's son, not the Son of God. Jesus humbled Himself in appearance and in the suppression of His divine power. He revealed His divine nature in His obedience and in His words. He calls us to Himself through His word. Through His words the Spirit opens our hearts to receive Him as our Lord and King. We receive Him Now!

Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient. We associate obedience with doing what we are told. Obedience is forced upon us. We learn obedience as children through reward and punishment. We are punished for doing wrong and rewarded for doing right. Jesus was a good child. He was conceived and born without sin. He had no sinful nature that needed to be forced into line. We know little about His childhood, but what we know underscores His character as a sinless human being. When He was twelve, at the age adolescents begin to assert themselves, He was left in Jerusalem when His parents returned from the feast. His parents travelled a day before they noticed He was missing. For three days they scoured the city searching for Him. Most twelve-year-olds would have expressed anger at being abandoned and probably would have used their situation to gain power over their parents through guilt, asking accusingly, "How could you do this to me?" His mother tried to lay guilt on Him saying, "*Son why have you treated us like this,*" Instead of pointing out they were the ones at fault, He simply said, "*Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?*" Then Luke says He went with them and was submissive to them. Jesus' humility was His obedience to His parents, even when they were wrong and He was right. He submitted Himself to them and to His heavenly Father in love.

Jesus' obedience was not simply doing what He was told. Jesus' obedience was wanting to do what He was supposed to do. Jesus was obedient to the law which

He, as the eternal Son of God, had written on the human heart at creation. His obedience was not motivated by threat of punishment or promise of reward. His obedience was motivated by His love for His heavenly Father and for us. Jesus was obedient for the sake of our redemption from sin and for our salvation from eternal death. In our place Jesus, as a human being, submitted Himself to the law written on the human heart and to the laws God gave Israel through Moses on Mount Sinai. When Jesus was about thirty years old, He came to John to be baptized. John protested that he needed to be baptized by Him. Jesus said they must do this to fulfill all righteousness. Jesus came to fulfill all righteousness through His obedience to the law. Jesus fulfilled all righteousness, so that He could humble Himself to the point of death for the forgiveness of our sin, for the sake of our salvation. He gives His salvation to us now!

Jesus humbled Himself for our salvation, sharing our humanity in a world of sin and death. Jesus was obedient to the law in every way, even paying the debt of our sin in His death. Jesus was obedient even to death on a cross. Death was bad enough. Death on a cross was death to the tenth power of awfulness. Death on a cross was meant to totally humiliate a human being in the sense of total degradation. It was meant to dehumanize. It was one thing to express humility by setting aside His position as the Son of God and the divine prerogatives that came with that. It was one thing to have His divine attributes hidden, so that instead of the Son of God people saw the son of a humble carpenter. It was one thing to have shared in our experience of being human even to the point of sharing our experience of death. Death on the cross was beyond humbling; it was absolutely degrading. In His death Jesus experienced the depth of human depravity that we do such awful things to each other. Jesus in His death experienced the depth of human degradation. The awful things we suffer, because of the sin of the world, the devil and our own actions. Jesus suffered these things, that we would be set free from the chains of sin within us and around us. Jesus did this that would receive forgiveness in time and the fulness of life in His Father's presence in eternity.

Jesus did this in free obedience out of love for His Father and for us. He did this so that in Him and through faith in Him, we would be reconciled to God as our Father and be called by Him, children of God. Behold the love of God for us and for every human soul. Behold the love God lavishes on those who receive His love through faith in Jesus. His obedience for our disobedience as children of wrath. His humiliation for our exaltation as children of God. His cross for our sins, so we would receive the crown of His victory in the forgiveness of sin and a share in His

resurrection to everlasting life. Paul writes, *“Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”* Glory be to Jesus. Bless His Holy Name in time and for eternity. In His Name. Amen