

**Jesus is Glorified**  
**John 17:1-5, Luke 24:45-53, Phil 2:5-11**

Brothers and sisters, there's an old saying that I know we're all familiar with: *"What goes up... must come down."* However, as we celebrate Jesus' ascension this morning, biblically speaking we should switch that proverb around so it says: *"What goes down... must come up!"*

Now as we have celebrated Jesus' Ascension in previous years, I have typically preached about why the ascension is such an important element in God's overall plan to save us. In fact, all of the work Jesus accomplished for us on the cross and in His resurrection from the dead would be rendered useless if Jesus did not ascend to heaven. We would not even be here this morning worshipping Jesus without the Ascension... because there would be no sending of the Holy Spirit who works in our hearts to bring us to faith in Christ.

Furthermore, Jesus' ascension into the presence of God Almighty brings our very human nature with Him and demonstrates to us that it is now possible for us to one day

follow that same path and spend eternity in the presence of God – having been made fit for heaven through our eventual resurrection at the return of Christ.

Now if any of this tweaks your interest, and you're wanting to learn more about how Jesus' Ascension benefits us, you can go to the church website and read those messages, or send me an email and I'll forward them to you. There is important teaching for us to be reminded about in those messages.

But this year brothers and sisters, as we have been focusing on learning all about God and His attributes and just growing in our appreciation and comprehension of how mind-blowing and amazing and awesome and wondrous He truly is...

We are in a much better position to grasp the magnitude of what Jesus left behind as He descended from heaven and to then celebrate along with Jesus, what was being restored to Him at His ascension when He is glorified. Because when we are dealing with God – what goes down... must come up! Or to

use Jesus' words in Luke 14:11 "*whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.*"

And there is no better description of what it means to be humbled and exalted - than our scripture reading from Phil 2:5-11. In fact – this down and then up dynamic was such a significant part of the how the early Christians viewed Jesus and celebrated Him, that they sang about it! We know this because what Paul writes in vs. 5-11 are the lyrics from a hymn of praise in the early church.

So, let's take a closer look at this early hymn that Paul is referencing here.

Its starts off confessing that in His very nature, or form, Jesus Christ was... God. Now, typically when we read this, we move right on past it don't we? Yep, Jesus is God – basic stuff, we know that – all good. However, as I said earlier - we are in a much better position to understand what this is actually saying, right?

What have we learned about the nature of God so far this year? God is self existent; He is the basis for His own existence. God is uncreated, infinite and eternal – He has no limits and He is the basis for everything else that exists - existing! Mind blowing...

And God is all-knowing, He is the source of all-knowledge. He is all-present because He is not bound by time and space as we are – He created them. And He is all-powerful and He Himself is the source of His own power – He doesn't need all 5 Infinity stones or a one ring.

Now... say – Jesus Christ in His very nature was... GOD.

Now you can better understand what Jesus himself was referring to in John 17:5 when He is praying to God the Father and says "*glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.*"

Now you can better understand why the Jews wanted to stone Jesus in John 8:58 when he proclaimed the very name of God

as his identity to them *“before your father Abraham was made – I AM”*

Here is someone who for all intents and purposes would appear to be just a regular human being – claiming all the incredible divine qualities of being God for Himself. Now it’s mind-blowing enough for us to try to comprehend what God is like, but its even more incredulous to state that truly Jesus Christ is in His very nature – God. How could that even be possible??

Well, Phil 5:7 states that *“He made Himself nothing.”* So clearly this is a voluntary action on the part of Jesus Christ, or rather we should say a voluntary action that the second person of the Trinity – the Word of God - did to himself in order to become incarnate as Jesus Christ.

The gospel of John 1:1-4 describes it in these words *“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that*

*has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind.”*

And then the part about making Himself nothing in vs. 14 *“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”*

So, here’s where understanding the nature of God is helpful because we can see the contrast in the divine becoming flesh – taking on our created, finite, limited, changing and developing AND sin riddled human nature and physicality, and its quite clear to us that comparatively this is *“making himself nothing”*

But we can get an even greater understanding by realizing that the original Greek words in Phil 2:7 literally translate as *“he emptied himself.”* Now many people have misunderstood this to mean that He emptied Himself of being God in becoming human – but that’s not what it means.

What the Word of God emptied himself of is what the phrase immediately preceding it in vs 6 describes. It says there the Word was equal to God, He was God, but He emptied himself

of any notion of using that position for His own benefits - *“He did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage.”*

In other words, when God as God, Word and Spirit decided in eternity past, that upon the creation of the world, it would be necessary for the Word to become flesh and offer His life to pay for the sins of those human beings whom God determined He would save – the Word did not say *“forget it! I’m just as much God as the both of you are, why do I have to do this? Why don’t you do it Spirit??*

Obviously, this is because God is perfect, and there is no contradiction or disunity in His Triunity and He is 100% faithful to Himself and Who He always has been and will be. I think we have better appreciation of that now – having studied God’s righteousness and holiness, right?? But it still should make us amazed because where would we ever find such perfect cooperation among human beings?? Just another example of why God is so glorious and deserves to be glorified.

But, its also worth noting that the Word of God is the right person of the Trinity to accomplish this task. It wasn’t just an arbitrary assignment or that the Word lost out in rock-paper-scissors.

As we just read in John 1:3 *“Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”* And this truth is repeated many times elsewhere throughout the scriptures. But perhaps most revealing as to why the Word is best suited for the task of becoming incarnate is Isaiah 55:11 where God says *“my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.”*

So the scriptures give us this image of the Word of God being the facilitating means by which God brings the creation into existence and accomplishes His purposes in the creation. There exists a mediatorial aspect to the Word by which God is able to simultaneous be awesome and amazing and far beyond us in His magnificent transcendence, and yet – be close to us, so close to us as to bring us into existence and

create us and speak to us and bless us with His immanent presence to have a relationship with us and be so concerned about the minor details of our lives that Jesus can tell us in Luke 12:7 that *“the very hairs on our heads are numbered.”*

The Word of God mediates between God as Creator and His Creation.

So it makes sense that the task of becoming nothing, becoming flesh, of *“being made in human likeness and being found in appearance as a man”* as vs. 7-8 in our passage states, was a task specifically suited to the Mediating Word of God.

And that is why it is significant that the Word did not consider His equality with God something to be used to avoid this task. There was not a moment’s hesitancy to protect his own status – he emptied himself of any notion of this, specifically through taking on the *nature* of a servant. (vs. 7)

Now don’t let this statement rush by you either. Think about this for a moment.

God, as the Word of God, the one for whom all things exist... the one whom all things are created to serve and give Glory to... is now the one who is doing the serving. Submitting himself to the divine plan for salvation, taking on our human nature and flesh and sin, being the Mediator to reconcile a holy God and sinful humans – so that they might know the one true God and Jesus Christ as His Son.

It's not natural for us to view this from the Word’s perspective, to consider the state of humiliation He entered into in becoming a servant and leaving behind His glory and the other aspects of being divine that we now have a better appreciation of.

We naturally view it from our vantage point seeing it as beneficial to us and so we are thankful and grateful for it – and rightly so – but I think that can often keep us from fully grasping how much of a demotion, a humbling, a downward

trajectory of humiliation that it was for the Word of God - to become flesh for our sake.

Considering this truth not only helps to balance out our perspective but is also a means by which the Holy Spirit will let the air out of our overinflated sense of prideful estimation about who humans being are. It's no privilege or picnic for God to become one of us.

So, let's consider what else the Word gave up in His incarnation.

Firstly, He surrendered His status before His own Divine Law. The pre-incarnate Word was fully righteous and Holy, yet the incarnate Word assumed the state of guilt of humanity before the Law as He become flesh. As we considered on Good Friday from 2 Cor 5:21 *"He who had no sin, became sin"* Secondly, as a servant, He gave up His independent exercise of divine authority. As Hebrews 5:8 says *"Son though he was, He learned obedience through what He suffered."* And Jesus confirms this saying *"For I have come down from heaven not*

*to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me."* (John 6:38)

Thirdly, although Ps 24:1 says *"the earth is the Lord's and everything in it"* The Word incarnate was anything but rich. In fact 2 Cor 8:9 tells us that *"though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor"* So poor in fact that Jesus was always borrowing; a borrowed stable to be born in, a borrowed house to stay in, a borrowed boat, a borrowed donkey, a borrowed upper room for the last supper, even a borrowed tomb. He depended on the charity of women and friends who supported his ministry. As our Lord said *"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head."* (Matt 8:20)

And, fourthly as mentioned – He left behind His divine glory. As Isaiah 53:1 says *"He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him."* Brothers and sisters, this is the Word of God, fully God... of whom it is said *"no one can see my face and live,"* and yet now incarnate as Jesus, God's own people do not recognize Him,

welcome Him, or honor Him – instead they conspire to kill him.

So, it should come as no surprise that as Jesus spends time in prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane, preparing for the lowest point of His humiliation... as Phil 2:8 says *“humbling himself by becoming obedient to death— even death on a cross!”* it is no surprise that He prays for the restoration of His glory; *“Father... glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”*

Because Jesus knows, what goes down – must come up. This is what is helping Him to endure what He knows is coming on the cross. Hebrews 12:2 says exactly that *“for the joy set before him, he endured the cross”*

And indeed, three days later the upward trajectory and exaltation begins, with Christ’s resurrection! And then forty days later, as we read about this morning, Christ literally ascends upwards into heaven!

Now, I’m praying that all the attention we’ve given to the descent and humiliation of the Word becoming incarnate as Jesus Christ amplifies our appreciation of what is taking place here.

Indeed, if we do not have this background understanding, then what we read in scripture about Jesus’ return to heaven seems rather anticlimactic. He’s out with His disciples, they are talking, he’s teaching and giving instructions like every other day, and then He’s ascending and gone...

But yet what we read this morning says that the disciples returned to Jerusalem *“with great joy!”* and *“stayed continually at the temple praising God!”* (Luke 24:52-53) Why??

Because... as it says in vs. 45 *“He opened their minds so they could understand the Old Testament scriptures”* and thus when He ascended, they now knew all about his state of humiliation and understood how He was now being glorified and restored and rewarded for what He had endured.

They grasped how far down Christ had gone and thus how high it meant He would be exalted - and it gave them great joy and resulted in their continual praising and worshipping of God.

And who knows... perhaps this time spent praising God at the Temple after Jesus' Ascension was instrumental in the composition of this early hymn which we have been looking at this morning? It certainly reflects what the disciples now knew had happened and what they anticipated.

So, let's look at some of the specifics in Christ's ascension, in how He was exalted. Phil 2:9 mentions two things, first "*God exalted him to the highest place*" and second "*gave him the name that is above every name...*"

Now this doesn't simply mean that Jesus went back into the presence of God in Heaven, but that He is in the highest place in Heaven, He is seated at the right hand of God. The Apostle Peter proclaims this to the Pentecost crowds, and backs it up from the scriptures as He had been taught by Jesus, and

quotes Psalm 110:1 "*Yaweh says to my lord "Sit at my right hand.."*

Brothers and sisters, to be seated at the right hand of God is to be considered equal with God. God is acknowledging who Jesus Christ is as the Word of God incarnate, and exalting Him as He deserves to be exalted. Jesus Christ is God.

And in doing this God gives Jesus THE name that is above every other name. Now before we find out what that name is... consider a couple of other scripture references in relation to being seated at the right Hand of God.

Matt 28:18 Jesus says "*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.*" Anticipating that seat at God's right hand.

And in Ephesians 1:20-21 Paul proclaims that Christ is seated "*at [God's] right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every name that is invoked...*"



So, the name God gives to Jesus is one that reflects His status at the right hand of God in being exalted over all rulers, powers, authorities and so on.

And as Phil 2:10 states it is a name that will one day compel... leave no other option... force... every knee in heaven and on earth and under the earth to bow before it, and it will cause every tongue to admit, to confess, to proclaim, whether they like it or not, the status this name confers upon Jesus Christ.

So, what is this name of Jesus?

It is revealed to us in Revelation 19:16 where it says *“On his robe and on his thigh, he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.”* So His name is now LORD, and that is what every tongue will confess according to our ancient hymn, that Jesus Christ is LORD.

And this is His *name* now, its not just a title, because it reflects the essence of who He really is and why He is exalted – He is

God... and what goes down – must come up. Jesus Christ has ascended!

And so brothers and sisters, my prayer for this message this morning is that through His Holy Spirit, our LORD Jesus Christ will have also opened our minds to understand the scriptures to comprehend the humiliation that He, the Word of God, endured for our sake in becoming human.

So as we acknowledge and celebrate the ascension, of the Word made Flesh in Jesus Christ – we will be filled with such joy because He has been rightfully returned to all His divine glory and splendor! And glorified even further... if that can be possible – because of the humiliations He was willing to suffer and endure in order to fulfill God’s plan for the Creation.

May we be filled with so much joy - for the LORD’s sake! And let us praise God just as the disciples did. Because its all about God’s glory.

So, Brothers and sisters, let us humble ourselves before the Lord – let's make this all about Him, not about us. Let us be willing to give up status, wealth, power, position, privilege - even our lives, for the sake of our Lord.

Let us not fear enduring hardship for the sake of our Lord because we have seen what happens... what goes down – must come back up. Whoever humbles themselves, shall be exalted. So come Lord Jesus - come soon.

Amen.