

What has Jesus done for me?

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Date: 04 October 2015

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[0 : 00] Would you turn with me this morning to Paul's letter to the Philippians in chapter 2. Paul's letter to the Philippians in chapter 2.

Philippians chapter 2 and if we read at verse 5 down to the verse marked 11.

Philippians 2 from verse 5. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, 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.

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things in earth and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

And so on. If I was to ask you this morning, what is the role of the church? I wonder what you would say.

[1 : 48] I wonder what answer you would give. If I was to ask you, what is the purpose of this church in this community? I wonder what answer you would give.

What is the purpose of this church in this rural community on the west coast of the Isle of Lewis? What's the point to it?

Why is the church here? Why does the church exist? And why has there been a church in this parish for over 500 years? What is the church for?

What purpose does the church serve in this community? What is the role of the church? And it's a valid question. A valid question to ask because there are many people in our community who don't see the point of church.

They don't see the validity of church. And they don't see the need of even bothering coming to church because maybe in their mind the church is only for marriages, it's only for baptisms, and it's only for funerals.

[2 : 55] As someone once said, the church is only for matches, hatches, and dispatches. That's the sole purpose of the church. But what is the church for?

Is that the primary role of the church? Is that why the church exists in our community? Marriages, baptisms, and funerals. Is that why we come to church?

Is that why you come to church? What is it that brings you to church? Why do you come to church at all?

Is the church only here for certain times of the year? Does it only serve a purpose as we draw closer to Christmas and consider the birth of Jesus? And does it only exist to draw our attention to the death and resurrection of Jesus at Easter time?

Does it only exist to draw our attention to these events in our calendar? What is the purpose of this church? Why is it here? And you know, many people ask the question, What does the church do for me?

[4 : 01] What did the church ever do for me? But you and I both know that marriages, baptisms, funerals, Christmas and Easter, you know that that's not the primary role of the church.

Because this church, and every church in our island, and throughout our nation that preaches the gospel, every church is the church of Jesus Christ.

And its purpose is to proclaim the message of Jesus Christ. A message of salvation, a message which explains how sinners like us can enjoy a relationship with a holy God and experience forgiveness and eternal life through Jesus Christ.

That's the purpose of the church. And that's the purpose of this church, in this community. That's why it's here. That's the purpose of the church, to present to you the only way of salvation, through Jesus Christ.

But the question which we should be asking is not, what has the church done for me? The question we should be asking is, what has Jesus done for me?

[5 : 17] What has Jesus done for me? And that's the question I want us to ask this morning and again this evening. What has Jesus done for me?

Because what Jesus has done for us, it's twofold. There are two parts to it. And we'll see that the first part is in his humiliation.

And the second part is his exaltation. We'll learn what is meant by these terms as we look at this question, both this morning and this evening. And I'd encourage you to come and listen to the second part of this question this evening.

Not only because it would be good to see you in church tonight, as it would be and as it is every time you're here, but because this question is a personal question.

And it's a question I'm sure many of you are asking. What has Jesus done for me? What has Jesus done for me? And I want you to apply this passage to yourself.

[6 : 26] I want you to see that the message of Jesus Christ is relevant to you. And I want you to see that it's for you. It's all for you.

Because the question we're asking today is about you as an individual before God. So I want you to be asking today, what has Jesus done for me in order that I can be saved?

What has Jesus done for me in order that I can become a Christian and follow him throughout my life? And the simple answer to that question is that Jesus has done everything for us.

He has done everything possible in order that we can be saved. He has done everything. But as we consider what Jesus has done for us, I want us to see that Jesus takes us on a journey.

He takes us on a journey. And it's a journey of humiliation and exaltation. Humiliation and exaltation. But first of all, this morning, we see that it was a journey of humiliation.

[7 : 34] It was a journey of humiliation from the crown to the cross. From the crown to the cross. So we begin our journey with Jesus this morning asking, what has Jesus done for me?

And we begin at the crown. We begin at the crown. Because Paul says in verse 5, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.

He begins at the crown. And when the apostle Paul wrote this letter to the Philippians, he was imprisoned in Rome.

He was in chains because he was a preacher of the gospel. He was in prison because he proclaimed the message of Jesus Christ. And yet Paul considered it a privilege to suffer for the name of Christ.

He considered it a joy to be a servant of Jesus Christ. Because Paul knew, he knew what lengths Jesus had gone for him. Paul knew what Jesus had done for him.

[8 : 41] Therefore, he considered it a joy to serve Jesus as his Lord. And in this letter, Paul calls the Philippians, the people of Philippi, he calls them to count it all joy to be a Christian.

Whether we suffer, he's saying, whether we're serving the Lord, whether we experience opposition, whether we endure heartache, Paul says, we are to count it all joy.

In fact, at the end of this letter, Paul urges all the people of Philippi, and that includes you and me too, he urges us, and he says, rejoice in the Lord always. Again, I say rejoice.

And the reason Paul calls us to be joyful and to count it joy to be a Christian is that Paul teaches us that there is, there's no room for pride in the church.

There's no room for selfish ambition because, he says, we need to have a humble attitude and a heart of service that joyfully serves the Lord out of a love for Jesus and a love for others.

[9 : 49] And in order for us to understand what Paul is actually talking about, Paul presents to us here the greatest example of humility. He presents to us the greatest example of love, the greatest example of service.

And Paul points us to Jesus. Where else but to Jesus. And in effect, what Paul is saying is that whatever we're going to face as a church and as a community, our focus needs to be upon Jesus Christ.

Whatever trials, whatever experiences of suffering that we must encounter in this life, we need to look to Jesus. In order to count it all joy to be a Christian, we must look to Jesus.

Because he is our example. He is the one we ought to model our lives on. He is the one we ought to imitate. Not the celebrities, not the stars, not the popular figures, not our parents, or anybody in this world.

But Jesus Christ, the Son of God. And that's why Paul begins with this wonderful illustration of the humiliation and the exaltation of Jesus Christ.

[11 : 06] And he begins with this word of counsel. He says, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.

And what Paul is saying is that we are to have the mind of Christ. We are to think like Jesus. But how did Jesus think? What kind of mind did Jesus have?

It was one of humility. Humility. And in this passage, which we read, Paul directs our attention to the wonder of what Jesus has done for us.

And when we are to consider what Jesus has done on our behalf, the first place that Paul points us to is the crown. He points us to the crown and Paul points us to where Jesus was before he humbled himself, before he experienced humiliation.

Paul points us to the starting point of Jesus' humiliation before he became man. And he points us to the crown of Jesus and to the glory of Jesus, the majesty of Jesus and the honour of Jesus.

[12 : 22] Which is why Paul says, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.

And that's what he's saying. Paul is saying, look where Jesus was. Look where Jesus was. He was in the form of God. It's not that he was something like God, but when he says this, he's talking about something that was visible.

That when you looked at Jesus in his glory, you saw God. You saw God. Because Jesus Christ, before he became man, before he was born, he possessed the image of God and the likeness of God and the glory of God and the splendour of God.

Everything that made God, Jesus possessed. He owned it for himself. It was attributed to him. What God did, he did. What God was, he was.

He was in the form of God. Which means that Jesus was infinite, eternal, and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

[13 : 35] His existence was before the beginning. Before the creation itself. Before God said, let there be light. He was without beginning.

He's without end. He's from everlasting to everlasting. He is the creator. As Paul says in Colossians, by him were all things created that are in heaven and in the earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, dominions, principalities, or powers.

All things were created by him and for him. And he is before all things. And by him, all things consist. And my friend, because of who Jesus is, the angels adored him, crying, holy, holy, holy. Because of who he is, the creation praises him. The creation declares his glory and proclaims his handiwork day after day.

Because of who he is, the Trinity loves him. Because of who he is, said the psalmist in Psalm 93 that we were singing, The Lord doth reign and clothed is he with majesty most bright.

[14 : 52] His works do show him clothed to be and girt about with might. The world is also established that it cannot depart. Thy throne is fixed of old and thou from everlasting art.

And Paul says, he gave it all up for you and me. Look where Jesus was.

Look what Jesus had. And yet he was willing to lay it aside. He was willing to lay aside the glory of heaven for the purpose of saving you and me.

And this was the mind of Jesus. This was what was on Jesus' mind. Paul says, he thought it not robbery to be equal with God. Means, his mind wasn't upon himself.

His thoughts weren't taken up with his own glory and with his own honour and with his own splendour. No, no. The wonder of what we're seeing here is that the mind of Jesus was focused upon you and me.

[15 : 59] That's, that's what he's talking about. And, at this point, we're able to ask our question. What has Jesus done for me? What has Jesus done for me?

Jesus thought of me. Jesus considered me. I was on the mind of Jesus. Why did Jesus leave the throne of glory?

Why did he lay aside all he had for me? For me. And, you know, I love what Paul says on another occasion where he sets the contrast between Jesus in the glory of heaven and what he gave up for us.

Though he was rich, he says, yet, for our sakes, he became poor. That, through his poverty, we might become rich.

And, my friend, this is something we should never forget. That he did it and he did it for us. He did it so that we could enjoy the riches of his grace.

[17 : 06] He did it so that we would know the greatness of his mercy. He did it so that we would know forgiveness of sins. He did it so that we would know peace with God. He did it so that we could be saved.

So that we could be saved. He did it all, my friend, because God so loved the world that he gave. He gave his only begotten son, his one and only, his precious son, the one who was in the bosom of the father, he gave him.

Why? But whosoever, whosoever believeth in him would not perish but have everlasting life. What did Jesus do for me?

he left his crown. He left his crown. So that's the first thing we see here in Jesus' journey of humiliation.

He left his crown. So the crown. But secondly, I want us to see that the journey of Jesus in humiliation took him to the cradle. From the crown to the cradle.

[18 : 19] And he says, Paul, Paul says, let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men.

The descent downwards in the humiliation of Jesus Christ, it took its first step when Jesus was born because the birth of Jesus Christ was the defining moment when God became man where the Son of God, God the Son, he voluntarily assumed a human body and a human nature in which he was conceived of the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary and that's as many people say the Christmas story and that many people want to remember on the 25th of December.

But the birth of Jesus, it's not relevant just to that day, relevant to every day, it's a key feature, it's a key feature to our understanding of what Jesus has done for you and me because Paul says in this voluntary act of the incarnation, God becoming man, Paul says that he made himself nothing.

The one who possessed the image of God, the likeness of God, the glory of God, the splendor of God, he made himself nothing. Nothing. He made himself of no reputation.

That's what the word humiliation means. It means coming down from the highest rank to a lowest state. And in the glory of heaven, Jesus possessed the highest rank.

[20 : 07] He was king. He was king over all the earth. He was the king of glory. He was the sovereign ruler. And yet, he made himself of no reputation.

He did it. It didn't happen to him. He wasn't passive in the act of the incarnation. He was active. He made himself nothing.

He made himself of no reputation. And literally what Paul is saying is that Jesus emptied himself. He emptied himself. Completely emptied himself.

And what Paul says here, it seems like a strange thing to say about Jesus. That he emptied himself. And, as you would expect, people argued over it, about the emptying of Jesus.

They've argued for many years. And the question which many theologians have discussed is the question, if Jesus emptied himself, what did he empty himself of?

[21 : 13] And many argued that when Jesus became man, he emptied himself of all his divine power, all his divine glory. He emptied himself of, in a sense, being God itself, just to become a man.

And many argued that when he became man, it was like putting off this outer coat that he put down and he laid it aside, put it to the one side, this coat of glory and power.

And he left it there while he was on the earth. And it was only when he ascended that he put this cloak back on of divinity and power. But that view of the incarnation, it completely misses the glory of who Jesus is.

He is both God and man. He's not less God and more man. He's not more man and less God. He's not 50% God and 50% man.

He's 100% God and 100% man. And he's still that today. And Paul affirms this in his letter to the Colossians that Jesus was not this lesser form of God.

[22 : 22] He says that he is the fullness, the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And that's what Paul is trying to portray to us here. he's presenting to us this great paradox that in the emptying of Christ, there was a fullness.

And it's hard for us to get our minds around that because when we empty a bucket of water, we lose the water. The water flows away.

And so when we empty something, it results in loss. We're losing. But what Paul is saying is that when God became man, he didn't lose. He gained.

He didn't cease to be God in any way by adding to himself a human nature. As one commentator put it, the incarnation was subtraction by addition.

Subtraction by addition. The wonder of the incarnation is that Jesus emptied himself by taking. He took, he took to himself because it's what he took to himself that humbled him, not what he laid aside.

[23 : 38] His act of emptying was taking to himself our nature and our likeness, where he became bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh. He was made in the likeness of men.

He was in our likeness. He became one of us. He looked like us. He experienced the same things as us. If you'd seen him for yourself, says Paul, he wouldn't have turned heads.

He didn't have a halo. His face wasn't shining. Isaiah said he had no form nor comeliness, no beauty in him that we should even desire him.

Nothing that would attract us to him on the outside, which means that there was nothing that stood out in the way that he looked to make us think that he was any different.

As a baby boy, he just looked like every other baby boy. To look at him, he was just a man. But in reality, he was the God-man. He was the God-man who was not only born into this world, but born into a low estate.

[24 : 46] The depth of his humiliation was such that the King of Glory was born in a stable and laid in a feeding trough.

And we all know what they look like. We've all seen them before, but we'd never imagine laying a newborn baby in one, let alone the Son of God. And yet, that's the position he chose.

That's the reputation he chose and took to himself. That's the low estate that he went to. He became nothing.

nothing. He lowered himself to nothing. He humbled himself to nothing. Why? So he could take the form of a servant.

He took the form of a slave. At his birth he was named. The slave was named. You shall call his name Jesus. Why?

[25 : 45] He shall save his people. He shall serve his people. Save them from their sins. And from his very beginning in this world his role was to be a servant.

And that's the position that he took to himself. He made himself nothing. He made himself a slave. All for us. All for us.

And is that not the message which Jesus proclaimed throughout his ministry that the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Jesus came not to be waited upon like a king but he was humiliated to the lowest position of a slave. That's why he washed the disciples' feet. To show the position that he had taken to himself. To show that he had not come to be served but to serve. That his service was obedience to his master. His service was to remain obedient to the will of his father.

[26 : 52] His entire life was an act of obedience. That from his childhood through those early years of his youth which we know so little about and throughout his earthly ministry it was all an act of obedience to his father.

It was all an act of the servant's perfect obedience in which he upheld the laws of God perfectly. he walked blamelessly. He spoke righteously.

He lived uprightly. He cared incessantly. He loved relentlessly and unconditionally. And on top of that he was in all points tempted as we are yet without sin.

And my friend it was because of his perfect obedience. It was because he was the perfect son of God who came not to be served but to serve. that's why he could give his life as a ransom for many.

And today we're asking the question what has Jesus done for me? And Paul is saying this is what Jesus has done for you. This is what Jesus has done.

[28 : 03] This is what he has done for sinners like you and me. He left the crown of glory. He made himself of no reputation. He made himself nothing. And in making himself nothing he became a servant.

And as a servant he remained obedient and he remained obedient for us. All for us. My dear friend are you listening to this?

Jesus remained obedient so that he could offer his life as a ransom for many. And where did he pay his ransom?

Well Paul tells us here he humbled himself obedient unto death even the death of the cross.

Which brings us to consider our last stop in the humiliation of Jesus. The humiliation of Jesus a journey from the crown to the cross.

[29 : 07] the crown to the cross. And we've considered the crown the glory which he had. We've considered the cradle the place he was born in a low estate but now we reach the lowest point the furthest point from the crown which was the cross.

The cross of Calvary. Paul says let me read it again. let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus who being in the form of God thought it not robbery to be equal with God but made himself of no reputation took upon him the form of a servant was made in the likeness of men been found in fashion as a man he humbled himself became obedient unto death even the death of the cross. and when reading these words does it not astonish you the length that Jesus would go in order to save you?

When we read these words does it not amaze you the extent that Jesus would go in order for your sins to be forgiven and for you to experience eternal life?

My friend it should astonish you. It should amaze you. It should cause you to love Jesus and see what he has done for you and me. But what Paul wants to point out to us here is that in the humiliation of Jesus Christ he not only made himself of no reputation he not only emptied himself and made himself nothing and that even after he took to himself the form of a servant and made in the likeness of men he went lower still.

[30 : 53] Lower still. As if being born in a stable and laid in a feeding trough wasn't low enough yet Paul tells us Jesus went further.

He went further. Further and further and you know when we think about it this great act of humiliation it must have amazed the angels in heaven.

It must have astonished them. It must have baffled them to think that the Lord of glory the creator who spoke it all into being that he became part of the creation.

It must have caused them to wonder when he was born of a woman and laid in a manger in Bethlehem. The angels must have found this whole spectacle completely incomprehensible.

The Bible tells us that they desire to look into these things. They were trying to understand what Jesus was doing and why he was there and what purpose he had in becoming man and you know as the days and the years rolled on in his life and the angels saw Jesus growing up in his father's carpentry workshop in Nazareth.

[32 : 07] They must have wondered what was it all about? What's happening? As they're watching the drama of God's redemptive work slowly unfolding before their eyes and even when Jesus began his public ministry and we encounter some of those key moments in the life of Christ where he was baptized.

The father speaking this is my beloved son in whom I'm well pleased. The Holy Spirit coming down like a dove. And the angels maybe ask what is this about?

That defining moment in his ministry where he was set apart for his specific role. Of course he was set apart before then but his baptism was a public moment and you can hear the angels asking what is this for?

Why is it happening? What's our king doing? He was being baptized in order to associate himself with us. But as we go through the ministry and the life of Jesus there was constant humiliation. Everyone was telling him go away. He came to his own. They would not receive him. The scribes and the Pharisees constantly plotting to deceive him and to kill him.

[33 : 27] And all the time Jesus was telling the disciples my time it's not yet come. It's not yet come. And not even they understood fully what Jesus was doing.

Until one day we find Jesus the Lord of glory the King of kings and we find him on his knees in the garden of Gethsemane and he's there praying to his father saying if it be possible let this cup pass from me.

Nevertheless not as I will but as thou wilt. And we're told that in the garden of Gethsemane one of the angels were sent to strengthen him.

He must have thought the angel must have thought what am I going to do? I believe the angel just did what he always did. He praised him. He sang to him.

He worshipped him. But his humiliation was to go lower still. Because in a short space of time from the garden of Gethsemane the angels would look at their holy creator and they would see him flogged, beaten, scourged, mocked, spat upon, hated, vilified, forsaken.

[34 : 50] And all the time the humility of Jesus was going lower and lower and lower. Where Paul says that he humbled himself and became obedient, even.

Even he says to the death of the cross. And when reading what Paul has written in this verse it's as if he found it hard to believe that that's the extent that Jesus would go in order to save us.

That's the experience that he would go through. He would experience the death of the cross for us where the act of crucifixion was the most agonizing form of capital punishment ever inflicted upon a human being because the death of the cross was no ordinary death.

You were said to die a thousand deaths and experienced death by suffocation. And the marvel of the cross is that this servant Jesus he came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.

And he served obediently. Death never overcame him. He submitted his life to death. my father loves me says Jesus because I lay down my life and I take it up again.

[36 : 19] No man takes it from me but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down and I have power to take it again. Which means that at any moment at Calvary Jesus could have come down from the cross.

At any moment he could have stopped the crucifixion. At any moment he could have ended everything there and then. But he was obedient.

He was obedient to the will of his father. He was obedient unto death. Even the death of the cross. My friend he came not to be served but to serve and give us life as a ransom for many.

He came to set us free. He came to redeem us. He came to be our substitute. He came to die our death. He came to take away our sin. He came to endure the wrath that we deserve.

For our sake the father made him to be sin who knew no sin that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

[37 : 26] The humiliation of Christ my friend was down, down, down. Right down. Even the death of the cross.

And having considered what the extent that Jesus went to doesn't seem right to ask, what did Jesus do for me?

It doesn't seem right because we already know what he's done for us. And yet if we were to ask our question, what did Jesus do for me?

All we would hear are the words of Isaiah pointing us to Calvary. Despised and rejected of men. Man of sorrows acquainted with grief.

He bore our griefs. He carried our sorrows. We esteemed him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted, wounded for our transgressions, bruised for our iniquities.

[38 : 28] The chastisement of our peace was upon him. With his stripes we are healed. The Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and he was afflicted.

He was brought as a lamb to the slaughter. He was cut out of the land of the living. He poured out his soul unto death. What has Jesus done for me?

He left the crown for the cross. He left glory for Golgotha. he left the delight of heaven for death at Calvary.

What has Jesus done for me in order that I can be saved? What has Jesus done for me in order that I can become a Christian? He's done everything.

He's done everything possible in order that we can be saved. He's done everything so that you can say today he has done everything for me.

[39 : 36] It's all for me. And all he asks us to do now because it's all done is to come. To come to him and ask him to save you.

And will you not ask him to save you because he's done it all. He's done it all. But more than that, the crown to the cross is only part of the story.

And God willing tonight we'll look at the second half of this great question. What has Jesus done for me? May the Lord bless these thoughts to us. Let us pray.

O Lord, our gracious God, we give thanks unto thee this day for the great reminder of what Jesus has done for us. That he is the king of kings who became the servant, the servant of servants, to die in our room instead.

And O Lord, help us to be thankful. Help us, O Lord, to praise thee as we ought. But help us to respond to the open invitation or to come.

[40 : 52] To come because he has done it for us. To come because he calls us to come. And he urges us and pleads with us to come and find in him life and have it more abundantly.

Bless us, Lord, we pray. Undertake for us throughout this day and go before us for Jesus' sake. Amen. Amen. We shall conclude by singing in Psalm 25.

Psalm 25, the Scottish Psalter, page 231. Psalm 25 from verse 8 down to the verse marked 11. 25 from verse 8. God good and upright is, the way he'll sinners show, the meek and judgment he will guide and make his path to know. The whole paths of the Lord are truth and mercy sure to those that do his covenant keep and testimonies pure.

Down to the verse Mark 11, Psalm 25, to God's praise. God good and upright is, the way his sinners show, the meek and judgment he will guide, that make it come to know.

[42 : 32] The whole paths of the Lord are truth and mercy sure to those that do his covenant keep and rest to know with you.

Now for thy own name say, O Lord, I thee entreat, good heart of my iniquity, for it is many grace.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God the Father, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forever more. Amen.