

He Emptied Himself
Philippians 2:7
Sunday evening, December 20, 2009.

This passage calls our attention to the mindset, the inner disposition, of the Lord Jesus Christ as He came into the world to undertake the work of our redemption. The apostle makes this consideration immensely practical for us as he reminds us that we are called to walk in union with this Savior and this mindset. Hence his exhortation, “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” Phil. 2:5. Ultimately there is no other way to walk with Him for “Can two walk together except they be agreed?” Amos 3:3.

I. Who being in the form of God...

A. Two words appear in this passage, which are of importance to note:

1. Form. “Morphe.”

This word refers to the inner, essential and abiding nature of a person or thing. In vs. 6 “Who, being in the form of God...” The Lord Jesus is described here as God in His essential being.

In vs. 7 “...taking the form of a bondservant.” Here He is described as a bondservant in His essential being. His heart was a servant’s heart.

The Lord Jesus is fully God and fully man in His essential being as He undertakes the work of our redemption.

2. Fashion or Appearance. “Schema.”

This word refers to the outward and temporal appearance of a person or thing. In vs. 8 the Lord Jesus is said to have appeared “in the fashion or appearance” of a man. That was His outward appearance. A mere man

B. The Lord’s mindset while being in the form of God.

1. Vs. 6 states His mindset in terms of what it was not.

2. He did not consider His existence-in-a-manner-equal-to-God something to cling to; something He must not allow to slip from His grasp.

Note here that the Lord Jesus did not give up His equality with God, but rather “the existing in a manner equal to;” that He gave up. It was the fashion, the outward appearance, the privilege and the glory; not His divine character.

Application:

If the Lord Jesus Christ did not regard His divine privileges a thing to hold on to, but freely gave them up for our redemption, how much less should we regard the relics of this world and the remnants of old Adam as things worthy to hold on to.

If the Lord gave up heaven’s privileges so that He might have us, how much more should we give up our old selves and this world that we might have Him!

If the Lord Jesus gave up His riches, making Himself poor, how much more should we give up our poverty to become the partakers of His riches!

With the apostle Paul we should learn to say: “But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.” Phil. 3:7,8.

II. He emptied Himself

“He made Himself of no reputation.” NKJV.

But what did He empty Himself of? Not His essential divine nature, for He could never be anything other than what He was. “He can not deny Himself.” 2 Tim 2:13. Indeed it was not His essential divinity, for the Lord Jesus was fully God in the days of His earthly ministry. “Immanuel,” God with us.

Rather it was His existence-in-a-manner-equal-to-God.

Specifically what did that mean; what did He give up?

A. He gave up His favorable relation to the divine law.

1. As God He had been the Law-giver.
2. Now He came to live under the curse of the law.
3. That meant all the hardships of a fallen world.

The Lord Jesus hungered and thirsted; He grew tired and weary; He knew sorrow and grief; He suffered and died.

4. He also took upon Himself the curse of the law due to our guilt and sins.

“He who knew no sin was made sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.” 2 Cor. 5:21.

B. He gave up His riches.

“Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you, through His poverty, might become rich.” 2 Cor. 8:9.

1. He gave up everything, even His very life! So poor was He that we see Him constantly borrowing. He borrows a place for His birth; a house to sleep in; a boat to preach from; a donkey to ride on; a room to institute the Lord’s supper, and a grave to be buried in.
2. Apart from a life of borrowing He takes on the massive debt of human guilt and sin. Surely such a person is poor!

C. He gave up His glory.

How keenly He must have felt the absence of this glory when He prayed in His high priestly prayer: “And now O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was.” John 17:5.

Seraphim covered their faces before Him, and yet He chose to leave all of that to go to realms where He was “despised and rejected; a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.” Isaiah 53:3

D. He gave up His independent exercise of authority.

He became a servant. He said: “I do not seek My own will, but the will of the Father who sent Me.” 5:19,30.

Application:

Discerning the inner disposition of the Lord; seeing His willingness to empty Himself, should be helpful to us humbling and emptying ourselves in behalf of others, and so to have fellowship with the heart of our Savior

Remember that true fellowship with Christ comes always along the lines of humbly submitting ourselves into the hands of the Holy Spirit as He forms in us “the mind which was also in Christ Jesus.” Vs. 5.