

CHRISTMAS

"GRACE"

(How Christ Emptied Himself of all Reputation)

Philippians 2:5-11



How Christ's Humble Birth Reveals:

- ◆ The Grace of God in the Past (V.5-7)
- ◆ The Gift of God in the Present (V. 8)
- ◆ The Glory of God in the Future (V. 9-11)

**"But made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."
(Philippians 2:7)**

"CHRISTMAS GRACE"

(How Christ Emptied Himself of all Reputation)

Philippians 2:5-11

"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, and the death of the cross." (V.6-8)

Introduction

1. Philippians was written by Paul from a Roman prison about 62 A.D.
2. Paul had founded the Philippian church on his second missionary journey.
3. The church's first convert was Lydia, a business woman (seller of purple).
4. Soon to follow was the Philippian jailor and his family.
5. Ten years after the church's beginning, Paul writes back to his friends.
6. He writes back to thank the church for their gift that Epaphroditus had delivered. (2:25-29)
7. Epaphroditus then delivers Paul's letter back to the Philippians.

The Theme

Fact: The theme of Philippians is "Rejoice and be Glad".

Fact: Eighteen times "joy" is referred to in Philippians.

Fact: Paul reveals how to maintain God's joy in the midst of adversity and testing.

Fact: The key verse in the book is in 4:4 "Rejoice in the Lord always and again, I say rejoice."

Four Chapters of Truth

In Chapter 1 – Paul is confident and joyful in prison.

In Chapter 2 – Paul details Christ's humiliation and exaltation.

In Chapter 3 – Paul reveals the prize of our high calling.

In Chapter 4 – Paul declares how God supplies all our needs.

Questions Answered This Christmas

Question: How does Jesus' birth reveal the grace of God?

Question: How does Christmas melt the heart of all who believe?

Question: How does Christmas remind us that the best is yet ahead?

Three Revelations of Divine Compassion

I. Christmas Reveals the Grace of God. (V. 5-7)

"Who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God." (V. 6)

Question: What does it mean, that Jesus was "in the form of God"?

Answer: It means that Jesus was...

- ◆ Equal with God the Father
- ◆ Truly divine in nature

- ◆ Crowned with glory and splendor
- ◆ All sufficient and in need of nothing
- ◆ Totally sufficient within Himself.

Question: What does it mean, that “Jesus thought it not robbery to be equal with God”?

Answer: It means that Jesus...

- ◆ Did not seize upon, rob or pursue His position as equal with God.
- ◆ Jesus did not eagerly seek to retain His eternal, heavenly place and position.
- ◆ Jesus wasn’t “hung up” on status, He cared less of titles.
- ◆ Jesus was not arrogant, conceited or bent on retaining His honor in glory.

Discover God’s Awesome Grace in V.7

1. **“Jesus made Himself of no reputation”** (Which means)

- ◆ Jesus was willing to be born and despised and rejected.
- ◆ Jesus was willing to become “as nothing” on our behalf.

Fact: The word “reputation” means: “to make empty”

- ◆ Jesus was willing to give up His rights and rank in heaven for us, who did not deserve it.
- ◆ Jesus emptied Himself, not of His deity, but of His glorious privileges.

2. **Jesus “took upon Himself the form of a servant”** (Which means)

- ◆ Jesus was willing to condescend to a servant’s role.
- ◆ Jesus was willing to perform the duties of a servant.
- ◆ Jesus was willing to be born in a manger, to serve the needs of all (savior, redeemer, and comforter).

3. **Jesus “was made in the likeness of men”** (Which means)

- ◆ Jesus assumed upon Himself a body like ours.
- ◆ Jesus was willing to be born of a woman. (Why?)
 - To be touched with what touches me.
 - To feel what we feel.
 - To identify with human need.
 - To minister as our faithful high priest.
 - Because we deserve it? (Never)
 - But because of the Grace of God revealed at Christmas!

II. Christmas Reveals the Gift of God. (V.8)

“And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.”

Question: How does Christmas reveal the love of God?

Question: What is God’s gift to us all at Christmas?

Three Gifts Made Real

1. **Christ’s Humility:** “He humbled Himself.”

- ◆ Christ refused to aspire to high honors.

- ◆ Christ refused to yield to pomp and parade.
- ◆ Christ refused to demand others to wash His feet.
- ◆ Christ refused to claim what He deserved.

2. Christ's Obedience: "And became obedient."

- ◆ Christ yielded to the perfect will of God.
- ◆ Christ submitted to the Father's plan.
- ◆ Christ presented Himself as the sacrifice offering.
- ◆ Christ obeyed the Father's design for our redemption.

3. Christ's Death: "Even the death of the cross."

(Why serve communion on Christmas Eve?)

- ◆ Because Jesus was born to make a straight path to Calvary.
- ◆ Because Jesus was born to face suffering and shame.
- ◆ Because Jesus was born to satisfy God's just demands.
- ◆ Because Jesus was born to carry your sin and mine.
- ◆ Because Jesus was born to deliver us from the tyranny of sin.

Ask: Why the incarnation?

Ask: Why the birth in Bethlehem?

Ask: Why the humility, obedience and death?

- ◆ Because there was no other way under heaven whereby we could be saved, forgiven, justified, sanctified, delivered, changed, empowered and at peace with God!

The Gift of God is...

Jesus giving Himself to take our place!

Jesus giving eternal life to all who repent!

Jesus giving new meaning to life to all who will say "yes" to God and serve Him wholeheartedly.

III. Christmas Reveals The Glory Of God (V. 9-11)

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name." (v. 9)

Question: What's the reward for Christ's humiliating birth?

Question: What's the reward for Christ's humiliating death?

Question: What's the reward for a life well spent?

1. A Glorious "Exaltation" (V.9)

"Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him."

2. A Glorious "Expectation" (V.10)

"That at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow."

3. A Glorious "Exclamation" (V. 11)

"And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Question: Is it worth it to serve God?

Question: Will Jesus really prevail in the end?

Question: Will the church be vindicated from the mockers, scoffers and rejecters of the cross?

Answer: The day is coming when every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord of all!

In the past: Christ was the Suffering Servant.

In the future: Christ will be seen on the Throne of Glory.

Conclusion

(Christmas Grace Reveals)

1. The Grace of God in the past when none of us deserved it).
2. The Gift of God in the present (so that all can be saved, forgiven and made new).
3. The Glory of God in the future (awaiting every child of God who chooses to live with eternity in mind).

Never Forget

"Thanks be unto God for his unspeakable gift." (II Corinthians 9:15)

- ◆ Those tiny little feet were formed – to walk up Calvary's hill.
- ◆ Those soft little hands were formed – so nails could hang them on a cross.
- ◆ That tiny little frame was wrapped in swaddling clothes – to one day be pierced by a soldier's spear.
- ◆ That tiny little head was made – to bear the crown of thorns that I deserved!

"Oh, the love that drew salvation's plan,
Oh, the grace that brought it down to man,
Oh, the mighty gulf that God did span,
At Calvary."

AMEN!
Bill Kirk