

The Ultimate Demonstration of the Gospel

Philippians 2:6-8

Big Idea: In Phil. 2:6-8 we see the ultimate demonstration of the Gospel in Christ's incarnation and humiliation. As Jesus emptied himself of his form, position, and dignity he secures for us the reward of his perfect obedience which is eternal life. This becomes the basis upon which we can build a life of self-denial and self-sacrifice.

Three ways that Christ emptied himself:

1. He emptied himself of his _____.

Philippians 2:6–7 (ESV) — 6 who, though he was in **the form of God**, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself...

“The idea, then, is that Christ Jesus began, shall we say, in the *mode of existence* of God himself but took on the *mode of existence* of a servant.” D.A Carson

John 17:5 (ESV) — 5 And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.

*God the Son, who was equal with God in every way, became a man.
The Creator became the creation!*

2. He emptied himself of his _____.

7 but emptied himself, *by* taking the **form of a servant**, being born in the likeness of men.

Philippians 2:7 (KJV 1900) — 7 But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:

In fact, the expression “he emptied himself,” far from meaning he emptied himself of something, is idiomatic for “he gave up all his rights” or similar expressions. He emptied *himself*, hence the NIV’s “[he] made himself nothing” (2:7)... He abandoned his rights; he became a nobody... the eternal Son has always had all the rights of deity. He was one with God. Yet precisely because of this, he did not perceive his equality with God something to be exploited, but became a nobody. He “made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant...”¹

John 13:1-5

3. He emptied himself of his _____.

8 And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, **even death on a cross.**

“For by dying in this way He was not only covered with disgrace in the sight of men, but also accursed in the sight of God. It is assuredly such an example of humility as ought to absorb the attention of all men; it is impossible to explain it in words suitable to its greatness.” John Calvin

Hebrews 12:2 (ESV) — 2 looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

¹ Carson, D. A. (1996). *Basics for believers: an exposition of Philippians* (p. 45). Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books.

Questions to Consider

Spend some time meditating on the idea of Christ completely altering his mode of existence before the incarnation. How would the way he related to God the Father change? How would the way he related to creation change? Does this amaze you? Why or Why not?

How would you feel about giving up fortune and fame so that you can become nothing? (Put yourself in Jeff Bezos shoes) Is this natural for us to do? What does this mean about what this passage is calling us to do?

Is it hard to give up your seat in a crowded restaurant? Would you willingly give up your place on the waiting list for someone else? Even your enemy? How hard is it to give up your place in line outside the store? Why is this?

How does Christ' obedience to the incarnation and crucifixion become the basis for our self-denial and self-sacrifice? How do we take advantage of his obedience? (Hebrews 12:1-2)

What would this kind of submission to the Spirit of Christ look like tangibly in your day to day life? What are some practical situations where you might count others more significant than yourself and be there servant?

What might this look like in this current pandemic? How does Jesus want to work through to meet the needs of those around you?