

Christ's Twofold Estate

Lesson 1: The Great Depth of Christ's Humiliation, Phil 2.8

Introduction

John Flavel bio.

The Fountain of Life: A Display of Christ in His Essential and Mediatorial Glory.

Orientation

Up to this point in the work, Flavel's preached on what we find in our Shorter Catechism in Qs. 20-26, and in the 25 sermons that follow, he preaches on what we find in SC 27-28, with 21 sermons being on Christ's *humiliation* and 4 sermons being on Christ's *exaltation*.

- I. Christ's humiliation is described in three ways in the text:
 - A. Its *nature*: He humbled Himself.
 1. It was a real abasement: He didn't impersonate a humbled man. He was really humbled as a man.
 2. It was a voluntary abasement: He was not so much humbled, as He humbled Himself. He was willing to stoop this low for us. Indeed, the voluntary nature of His humiliation is what made it most acceptable to God and commendable to us.
 - B. Its *degree*: obedient unto death.
 1. Here we see the depth of Christ's humiliation. Not only man; but He died. And not only death; but the death of a criminal on a tree.
 - C. Its *duration*: from the first moment of His incarnation to the very moment of His quickening in the tomb.

Doctrine: *Christ's incarnation was marked by deep abasement and humiliation.*

Christ's incarnation falls under three parts: His incarnation, His life, and His death. In this lesson we look at His incarnation.

- I. Christ was humbled by His incarnation because He who is "over all, God blessed forever," (Rom 9.5) was thereby brought into the rank and order of creatures, 1Tim 3.16; 2.5; Jn 1.14.
 - A. It's truly a great wonder that God should dwell in a body of flesh, that the eternal God should be born in time, that the Ancient of Days should be as an infant of days, that the infinitely glorious Creator of all things should become a creature.
- II. Christ was humbled by His incarnation because He became not only a creature, but an inferior creature, Ps 8.4; Heb 2.16
- III. Christ was humbled by His incarnation because He assumed the human nature after sin had blotted its original glory and withered away its beauty and excellency.
 - A. He didn't come in our nature as it was before the fall, with all its glory, but in the likeness of sinful flesh, Rom 8.3 (flesh that bore the miserable marks and effect of sin.
 - B. Christ didn't assume sinful flesh or flesh defiled by sin, but flesh affected by sin. It was flesh attended with human infirmities such as hunger, thirst, weariness, pain, and mortality. Christ assumed our nature beset with these sinless infirmities because His bearing them was a part of His humiliation and satisfaction for us. Moreover, knowing these infirmities experientially qualified Him as our High Priest so He could have compassion on us, Heb 2.14.18; 4.14-16
 - C. Thus, though He was not a sinner, yet He looked like one and all who conversed with Him took Him for one, because He shared in our common infirmities. –In this way, He came as near to sin as His holiness could admit. O what a stoop this was!

- IV. Christ was humbled by His incarnation because it so clouded His glory that He looked like a poor, sorry, and contemptible sinner in the eyes of the world, Mt 26.61; Phil 2.7; Mt 13.55.
 - A. He looked like a poor man, traveling up and down the country in hunger, thirst, weariness, and homelessness. Who would ever have thought that He was the Creator of the world, the Prince of the kings of the earth? Is not this astonishing self-denial!? Isa 53.3
 - B. His glory was hid behind a black cloud so that it could not shine on the world. Only some weak rays of the Godhead shone forth through the chinks of His humanity to a few eyes on but a few occasions. Otherwise, His disguise made Him contemptible and an object of scorn.
- V. Christ was humbled by His incarnation because it distanced Him from His Father and the ineffable joy and pleasure that He enjoyed eternally with Him.
 - A. To live by faith in communion with the Father on earth as Christ did was nothing compared to being in the bosom of the Father in unceasing and unhindered fellowship as He was before the incarnation.
 - B. He was reduced to such a low ebb of spiritual comforts that He was forced at last to cry out, My God, My God, why have you forsaken me? Ps 22.1
- VI. Christ was humbled by His incarnation because He took His nature from such obscure parents and in such a low manner.
 - A. He was born, not of the blood of nobles, but of a poor woman in Israel, betrothed to a carpenter, and not in His mother's house, but in an inn; and not even in a room, but in a stable.
 - B. Every circumstance of His incarnation was suited to all the abasement He was designed for.

Inferences

- I. See the fullness and completeness of Christ's satisfaction as the sweet firstfruits of His incarnation.
 - A. The greater Christ was, the greater was His humiliation. And the greater His humiliation, the more full and complete was His satisfaction. And the more complete His satisfaction, the more certain is the believer's consolation.
 - B. If He had not stooped so low, our joy and comfort would not be exalted so high. The depth of the foundation is the strength of the superstructure.
 - C. The highest honor that ever the law of God received was to have such a person as the man Christ Jesus to stand before its bar and satisfy it.
- II. We have a tremendous pattern of self-denial in Christ's example.
 - A. Do the least slights and neglects rankle our hearts and poison them with discontent, malice, and revenge? How unlike Christ we are! Hear, and blush in hearing, what your Lord says in Jn 13.14. We should be ready to perform the lowest and most base offices of love and service to one another.
 - B. It is intolerable impudence for a worm to swell itself with pride, after it's seen Majesty emptying itself. Does it become us to be proud and selfish when we have a Saviour who knew nothing of it in His service of us?
- III. Those who perish under the gospel perish without excuse.
 - A. What more would you have Christ to do for you to save you?
 - B. The vilest sinners among the Gentiles and the devils themselves will have more to say for themselves than those who perish under gospel light.
- IV. No one can love like Christ, for His love to us is matchless. Must it not be the strongest love of all, if it made Him lay aside His glory, to be found in fashion as a man, for our salvation?
- V. We should exalt and honor the One who was so abused and humbled for our sakes.