

# Christ's Twofold Estate

## Lesson 2: A Humble Life, Phil 2.8

Christ's humiliation falls under three parts: His incarnation, His life, and His death. Last time we saw how Christ was humbled in His incarnation, and now we're to look at how He was humbled in His life.

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

- I. Christ was humbled in His very infancy by submitting Himself to be circumcised according to the law, Lk 2.21. This was necessary if Christ was going to put an end to the ceremonial law and fulfill all that righteousness expected of God's people. This greatly humbled Him in two respects:
  - A. He was thereby obligated to keep the whole law, even though He was the *Law-Maker*, Gal 5.3; Rom 2.25.
    1. To yield to one part of the law out of a sense of duty to God is to be bound to yield to all of it. And he who becomes a debtor to the *duty* of the whole law quickly becomes a debtor to the *penalty* of the whole law because he finds himself incapable of keeping any part of it.
    2. Coming as our Surety, with the commitment to pay both our debts, the debt of duty and of penalty, Christ eagerly submits Himself to the very first ordinance of the law put upon Him, and that, as soon as He can (on the 8th day), and thereby agrees to pay every debt we have to it, by fulfilling *all* the righteousness now demanded of us: our duty *and* our penalty.
    3. It was no small matter for Christ to bind Himself to the Law and be made subject to it, because He was the Law-Giver, standing above all law. He veiled His sovereignty by subjection.
  - B. He thereby appeared to the world as a sinner.
    1. The ordinance of circumcision testified to our innate corruption. It testified to our uncleanness and our need for that corruption to be cut off by God—and now by baptism, to be washed away by God, Jer 4.4; Rom 2.28-29
    2. By submitting to circumcision, Christ veiled His holiness and purity by appearing to the world as a sinner.
- II. Christ was humbled by persecution, and that in the very morning of His life, Mt 2.13; Ps 22.16
  - A. He who was born under the protection of the laws of the land, and though He hadn't broken the least of the those laws, yet He was hunted down and driven out of His own land as a vagabond.
- III. Christ was humbled by poverty.
  - A. He lived poor and low all His days, 2Cor 8.9. He never owned a house but lived all His days in the homes of others or sleeping in the open air. Foxes and birds were better provided for by His Father's providence than He was, Mt 8.20; Mk 11.12. When the tribute money was required, He worked a miracle to come up with it, Mt 17.24-27
  - B. He came, not to be ministered to, but to minister; not to amass earthly treasures, but to bestow heavenly ones. He came to teach the vanity of this world and poor contempt upon all the ensnaring glory of it. It was a voluntary poverty for our instruction.
- IV. Christ was humbled by horrid temptations, Lk 4.1-14
  - A. Can you imagine anything more burdensome to Him who was brought up from eternity with God, delighting in the holy Father through the pure fellowship of the Holy Spirit, to be shut up in a wilderness with the devil, to be baited for many days and have His ears filled with horrid blasphemy? Was there very a greater alteration than from the holy bosom of the Father to the unholy company of the devil?

- B. How great a humiliation this was for the great God, to have a slave of His own house risen up against Him as His Tempter, to have the jailor of the wicked come to take the Judge prisoner, if he can, to have a base apostate spirit daring to defile and dethrone its Almighty Creator and God.
- V. Christ was humbled by all the burdens that made Him groan, all the sorrows that made Him grieve, so that He could sympathize with His people, Isa 53.3
  - A. He lived all His life as it were in a hospital among the sick and wounded. And so tender was His heart, that every groan for sin, or under the effects of sin, pierced Him, Mt 8.16-17; Jn 11.33
  - B. His heart flowed with pity for those who didn't have one drop of pity for themselves, Lk 19.41-42. He mourned for those who wouldn't mourn for themselves, Mk 3.5
  - C. The commendation of a good physician is that he dies with every patient. There was no Physician like Christ, who's afflicted in all our afflictions, Isa 63.9, and who's full of tender mercy toward all our misery, Ps 103.13-14
- VI. Christ was humbled by the most base and unworthy reception He received from the world.
  - A. He came as Saviour and was treated as a criminal, Lk 23.32. He came to give His life as a ransom for the sins of others, and (for all appearances sake) had His life taken as a payment for His own sins, Mt 26.65-66. He came to save the world, but the world saved itself by ridding itself of Him, Mt 21.38. He came to break the chains that bind men, and they arrested Him and bound Him with chains, Jn 18.12
  - B. When He came, the world should've bowed before Him with praises and kissed the ground He walked upon, but instead, He was hated, despised, reproached, mocked, stripped, beat, spit upon, crowned with thorns, and crucified as a criminal.
  - C. This was the reception the Son of God received by the world He came to save. Not for a day, not in one place, but for all His days and in every place, He was rejected and despised of men. They esteemed Him not.

### **Inferences**

- I. From the first step of Christ's humbled life, in submitting Himself to be circumcised and thereby under obligation to the whole Law, the justice of God can surely set its hand and seal to the acquittances and discharges of believers.
  - A. For He who made Himself the Law's pay-master, paid it to its utmost demand. He bore the yoke of obedience as never a man did and kept the Law so exactly and precisely in its every detail that the eye of divine justice can find no flaw in it but acknowledges a payment so full that it stands ready to render to the believer a full pardon, Rom 3.15; 5.1
  - B. Had Christ not been thus so fully obliged, we had never been so fully discharged, Isa 53.6; Gal 3.10-13. Had not His obedience been so complete and perfect our justification could not be so, Rom 8.33-34. "He that has a precious treasure will be loath to adventure it in a leaky vessel; woe, then, to the holiest man on earth, if the safety of his precious soul is adventured on the foundation of the best duty he ever performed. But Christ's obedience is firm and sound; a foundation that we may safely adventure our all upon."
- II. From the flight to Christ to Egypt we learn that godliness and piety cannot exempt a man from persecution and injury. Instead, persecution follows piety as the shadow follows the body. So it was with our Saviour, and so it will be with us, Jn 17.14; 2Tim 3.12.
  - A. Whoever resolves to live holily must never expect to live quietly. "Cain's club is still carried up and down crimsoned with the blood of Abel," and thus it must be to conform us to Christ. If we're to share in His glory, we must first be willing to share in His suffering. Bonhoeffer: When Christ bids a man to come and follow Him, He bids him come and die, Mk 8.34. And

so we rejoice, not that we suffer, but that our suffering for His sake is sure to give way our being glorified with Him for His sake, 2Cor 4.16-17; Jn 16.33; 17.15, 24

- III. From Christ's poor condition as the Holy One of God, we learn that those who are full of grace and holiness may be destitute of earthly comforts.
- A. We must remember that the sufferings and hardships of this life which we face as God's people are not marks of His displeasure. He's treating us no worse than He treated His Son, Heb 12.3-6
  - B. We must also remember that we are on our way to the Land of Plenty in which all our wants will be supplied and all our temporal losses more than made up with eternal glory.
- IV. From Christ's sufferings, we learn that those upon whom Satan has no claim may yet have the most trouble from him in this world, Jn 14.30. Where he knows he cannot be a conqueror, he will not cease to be a troubler.
- A. He dared to tempt Christ, how much more will he tempt us. N.B. And it was the wisdom and love of Christ to admit the devil to come as near to Him as possible and to try all his darts on Him he dared, in order that by this experience He might be filled with pity and compassion to sympathize with us in our temptations.
- V. Was Christ sympathetic toward the suffering? Then let us learn that a compassionate spirit is Christlike, Col 3.12; Rom 12.15; 2Cor 11.29
- A. Three things promote sympathy in Christians: 1) Christ's pity for us (Isa 63.9); 2) our relationship to God's afflicted people as members of one body (1Cor 12.25); and 3) our awareness that we might soon need from others what they now need from us (2Cor 8.13-15)
- VI. Did the world reject Christ and heap reproaches upon Him? Then let us learn that the world's judgment of us is not to be regarded at all.
- A. Labor to stand right in the judgment of God and don't trouble yourselves with what the world thinks of you. The world is as fickle as it is blind. Those it loves today it will crucify tomorrow and those it cries against today it will defend tomorrow. Of what real use to a believer is the judgment of a world who's not worthy of the men of God who live upon it? Of what real use is the changing opinion of the world to those who have the final and unchanging justification of God in Christ? "Let wicked men cut the throat of my credit and do as they like with it. When the wind of their slanders have blown my good name clear away from me in the way to heaven, I know Christ will take my name out of the mire, and wash it and restore it to me again."
  - B. Christ passed through life's trials and bore them meekly. When we pass through our trials let us look to Him as our forerunner, for He not only set us an example but left behind a blessing for those who follow in His footsteps.