

Title: The Triumph of Lowliness

Text: Lu 2:1-20

Date: December 22,2019

Place: SGBC, NJ

**Luke 2: 1: And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. 2: (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 3: And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4: And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) 5: To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. 6: And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 7: And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn.**

**8: And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9: And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10: And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11: For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. 12: And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 13: And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. 15: And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. 16: And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. 17: And when they had seen *it*, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. 18: And all they that heard *it* wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. 19: But Mary kept all these things, and pondered *them* in her heart. 20: And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told unto them.**

I read an article by Brother Henry Mahan. Within it he made this statement, “[The] spirit of anger and division...can only be traced to two things and these are the greatest evils that can be charged to a believer – pride and self-righteousness!! My pride tells me that I am right and others are wrong. My self-righteousness tells me that I have a right to be offended.” I think those are the clearest and simplest definitions of pride and self-righteousness. How does the Spirit of God make a believer overcome these two great evils? It is by making us behold the condescension and humility of the Son of God.

**Proposition:** God the Son condescended to the lowest humility in order to save proud, self-righteous sinners like me and you.

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**Divisions:** 1) Let’s remember from where Christ came down 2) Let’s see his condescension 3) A few effects produced in a believer by the Holy Spirit when this truth is applied to our inward man

## THE GLORIOUS HIGH THRONE

Before we can see how low Christ condescended we have to see who Christ is and from where he stooped so low. Who was that baby born in Bethlehem? Who is this one whose birthday the world will recognize Wednesday? Jesus is God! That newborn *infant* wrapped in swaddling bands is the *infinite God*, the second person in the trinity, God the Son.

Matthew 1: 23: Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

1 Timothy 3: 16: And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh...

That infant was God our Creator

John 1: 1: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2: The same was in the beginning with God. 3: All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made...14: And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

He is the only begotten Son of God, the Son given. God gave his only begotten Son to declare God’s righteousness in the salvation of sinners who God chose to save.

Isaiah 9: 6: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.

Now, believer, think how high, how glorious, how omnipotent God is. God said, “As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Is 55: 9). Yet, God left his majestic throne where he reigns over the whole universe and omnipotence took the weakest thing there is, human flesh, like those he came to save. A pure Spirit willingly became partaker of flesh and blood that he might be made in the likeness of those men he came to save. What a step down!

Brethren, if holy God came down from so high to save a wretch like you and me, shouldn't we come down from our throne of pride and self-righteousness and submit ourselves to him and to one another as he commands? He says, "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls" (Mt 11: 29).

## THE CONDESCENSION

Now, let us try to get some idea of far down Holy God condescended. One, his human body was conceived of the Holy Ghost in the womb of a virgin—"*And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn*" (Lu 2:7).

God created Adam full grown in a sinless world and gave him one law. But Adam sinned and made all his people sin. The last Adam was conceived in the womb and grew into an infant. Then Christ increased in wisdom and stature into a man. He was in a sinful world under more than six hundred laws. Yet, Christ remained holy and righteous and made all his people holy and righteous.

He is the KING of kings and LORD of lords; yet he chose to come into the earth, not through royalty, but through a poor virgin whose husband was a carpenter. Christ is the King; yet he chose, not to be born in a palace, but in a barn. He came to robe his children in his righteousness; yet he chose to be wrapped in swaddling clothes. Christ said, "*I go to prepare a place for you, that where I am, there ye may be also*"; yet there was no room for him in the inn. He who is Light was born into this world in the dark of night.

Zechariah 9: 9: Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass.

How many presidents, kings, and princes would do that? They ride in luxury surrounded by dignitaries. Yet, the KING of kings came to his people lowly, riding upon a colt the foal of an ass, surrounded by publicans and sinners. How unlike us proud, self-righteous boasters! We want everyone to recognize us as powerful, perfect, accomplished, a reputation to make others envious. That is why of all the imposters who pretended to be the Messiah none have imitated Christ in taking such lowly place, not one. Yet, Christ who is "equal with God...made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:" (Php 2:6-7)

This is the triumph of lowliness: the infinite of ages, became an infant of days. He grew up and lived our youth. He labored and sweat and lived our adulthood. He served unto death to free us from being slaves and give us his life free of charge.

This is the triumph of lowliness: God, to whom every knee shall bow, made himself a servant. When it was time to speak to a fallen woman, he was there sitting on the well. When it was time to convert a tax collector, he went to the house of Zacchaeus. When needed the Master and Lord of his disciples humbled himself and washed their feet. All of those acts of service show us that great act on the cross by which Christ justified every elect child of God.

We live in a day when you have to be extra careful not to infringe upon the rights and dignity of most people. Yet, he who was superior to us all, never acted superior to anyone. He ate with publicans and sinners. He commended a harlot for doing a good work. The poor, the lame, the inferior outcasts of society were those to whom he made himself a faithful companion. Believer, aren't you thankful he did the same for you and for me?

Scripture says our incarnate Lord was "*seen of angels.*" Angels must have watched in amazement. They saw he who made and rules the heavens made lower than the angels. They must have marveled to see him eat, drink, sleep, sigh, and suffer like the creatures he made.

Still, Christ condescended even lower. Think of how he humbled himself to even undertake the salvation of his sinful people. If a high and lofty angel were to come down to die for a bunch of dirty flies, it would be nothing in comparison to the Son of God coming to redeem his sinful people.

We have no room to boast we are right in anything. We have no right to be regarded by God at all, except as obnoxious sinners. Yet, God, who in no way was to blame for any of our problems, stooped down to take our sin and our curse to make us the righteousness of God in him so that we would not have to suffer the wrath of God, so that we have acceptance and communion with holy God.

Oh, what a curse he bore for his people! Believer, the curse he bore was for you. He did this for you! "As many were astonished at thee; his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men" (Is 52:14). The agonies of being forsaken of God was worse than that. Then it ended in a dusty, dark, borrowed tomb. The Son of God went from a glorious high throne to an inglorious grave! But make no mistake, our Lord was never more glorious than in his humiliation. *Remember*, he taught us that to be the very least is to be the very greatest in the kingdom of God. Therefore, "he shall be exalted, and extolled, and shall be very high" (Is 52: 13). Our Lord's condescending love is as glorious as the person of him who exhibited it.

Now, our triumphant Lord and Christ sits upon his throne in glory and each one for whom he died is seated triumphant there in him. So now he exhorts his saints to conquer sinners by the same lowliness. He has proved that gentleness and meekness will prevail. Yet, brethren, when we are overcome by the pride and self-righteousness of our old man, the bondage of our flesh will not let us do anything but put all the blame on a brother for whom Christ died, while claiming no fault of our own.

When we are accused, lambs roar like lions. How opposite our Redeemer! They said he was a glutton and a winebibber but he did not become angry and threaten his accusers. When his enemies charged him falsely before Pilate's judgment seat—"like a lamb before her shearers is dumb, so he opened not his mouth" (Is 53: 7).

Believer, the Son of God could have justly put all the blame on you. But rather than justify himself, he justified you. Knowing that, can we not find it in our hearts to lay down our lives for one another? If not, what does that say about me? It says, "I'll take all the benefits from Christ bearing the cross for me but I'm too proud and self-righteous to bear a far lighter cross for him!"

### **THE EFFECT OF CHRIST'S CONDESCENSION**

What effect does Christ's condescension have on a believer when applied to us inwardly by the Holy Spirit?

First, the Spirit of God will bring his child to mourn and confess our sin to God and to those we have offended. He does it by making us see Christ whom we have pierced. We see what our sin deserves; we see how he gave us the grace we have been withholding from a brother. Then we mourn for him as one mourns for his firstborn.

Secondly, once the Holy Spirit has created in us a broken and contrite heart then he makes us willing to lay down our lives to Christ and submit to our brethren.

Believer, if a brother or sister is overtaken in pride and self-righteousness so that they cannot and will not give you any grace and mercy and love but rather they only lay all the blame on you. Then follow Christ by taking all the blame. As painful as it may be, bear their whole burden. Lay down your life for that brother. Freely give them whatever they need to be reconciled to God and to you. While doing so pray for them without ceasing. If they are Christ's then in God's time the Spirit of God will break their heart and bring them to be reconciled to God and to you whom they have been so proud and self-righteous. But if they end up proving they are not Christ's by never being reconciled to God, at least you have peace knowing you did what your Substitute commanded you to do. That is what the Spirit of God will produce when he purges our conscience with the blood of Christ.

There was no room for Christ in the inn. That is the problem when we are overcome by pride and self-righteousness—our inn is booked to capacity. But when the Holy Spirit graciously makes room in our heart then we mourn at how we ever thought and acted as we did! Then *we* become the ones asking God and our brethren to forgive *us*. And right away we find forgiveness and rest for our souls! May God bless these words to our hearts.

**Amen!**