

Palm Sunday
March 24, 2024

Psalm 118:19–29 (ESV) ¹⁹ Open to me the gates of righteousness, that I may enter through them and give thanks to the LORD. ²⁰ This is the gate of the LORD; the righteous shall enter through it. ²¹ I thank you that you have answered me and have become my salvation. ²² The stone that the builders rejected has become the cornerstone. ²³ This is the LORD's doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. ²⁴ This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it. ²⁵ Save us, we pray, O LORD! O LORD, we pray, give us success! ²⁶ Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD! We bless you from the house of the LORD. ²⁷ The LORD is God, and he has made his light to shine upon us. Bind the festal sacrifice with cords, up to the horns of the altar! ²⁸ You are my God, and I will give thanks to you; you are my God; I will extol you. ²⁹ Oh give thanks to the LORD, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!

Zechariah 9:9–12 (ESV) ⁹ Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey. ¹⁰ I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the war horse from Jerusalem; and the battle bow shall be cut off, and he shall speak peace to the nations; his rule shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth. ¹¹ As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you, I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit. ¹² Return to your stronghold, O prisoners of hope; today I declare that I will restore to you double.

Mark 11:1–10 (ESV) ¹ Now when they drew near to Jerusalem, to Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two of his disciples ² and said to them, “Go into the village in front of you, and

immediately as you enter it you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. ³ If anyone says to you, ‘Why are you doing this?’ say, ‘The Lord has need of it and will send it back here immediately.’” ⁴ And they went away and found a colt tied at a door outside in the street, and they untied it. ⁵ And some of those standing there said to them, “What are you doing, untying the colt?” ⁶ And they told them what Jesus had said, and they let them go. ⁷ And they brought the colt to Jesus and threw their cloaks on it, and he sat on it. ⁸ And many spread their cloaks on the road, and others spread leafy branches that they had cut from the fields. ⁹ And those who went before and those who followed were shouting, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰ Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”

Philippians 2:5–11 (ESV) ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, 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, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

**Lead Me in Your Truth
Through Humility to Exaltation**

Philippians 2:5–11

Outline

Introduction: The Triumph of Humility
Psalm 118:19-21, 25a; Zechariah 9:9;
Philippians 2:3–4

- ❑ **Humility of a servant**
(verses 5-7; 2 Corinthians 8:9; John 13:13–14;
Mark 10:45)

- ❑ **Humility of the Cross**
(verse 8; Acts 2:23; John 10:17–18; Mark 10:43–44)

- ❑ **Exaltation to glory**
(verses 9-11; John 17:5; Hebrews 5:5a; Acts 5:31;
Isaiah 30:18; Matthew 23:12)

**Lead Me in Your Truth
Through Humility to Exaltation**

Philippians 2:5–11

The entrance into Jerusalem for Jewish pilgrims attending Passover was always a joyous event.

Our Psalm for today was traditionally sung for that occasion. As they approached Jerusalem they would sing, ¹⁹ *Open for me the gates of the righteous; I will enter and give thanks to the Lord.* ²⁰ *This is the gate of the Lord through which the righteous may enter.* ²¹ *I will give you thanks, for you answered me; you have become my salvation.*

Verse 25 is a plea for God’s deliverance, ²⁵ *Save us, we pray, O LORD!*

The Hebrew word for *save us!* is *hosanna!* According to Mark’s Gospel the people witnessing Jesus’ entrance into Jerusalem cried out: *“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! ¹⁰ Blessed is the coming kingdom of our father David! Hosanna in the highest!”*, *Hosanna* is Hebrew meaning *save now!*

The feast of Passover celebrated God’s rescue of Israel from slavery in Egypt. It is no wonder that hopes of deliverance from the Roman occupation ran high during this festival. A popular expectation was that the Messiah would appear during the Passover.

They were crying out for salvation, for a savior. They were looking for one to conquer their enemies, to overthrow their oppressors. They were looking to Jesus to bring *the coming kingdom of our father David!* Jesus was hailed as nothing less than the Messiah!

But the way Jesus chose to enter Jerusalem signaled something else. Our lesson from Zechariah 9:9 proclaimed:

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to

you; righteous and having salvation is he, humble and mounted on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

The donkey was a humble creature, and the Bible teaches that Jesus came humbly. The way of salvation was not to be accomplished with greatness but with humility.

The salvation Jesus would bring was not in a show of awesome power, but in weakness. Salvation wasn't won by a coronation but by a crucifixion.

In this final message in our Lenten journey to the cross, we pray,

***Lead Me in Your Truth
Through Humility to Exaltation***

Our sermon text is Philippians 2:5–11.

The context of this passage is a call for humility among the Philippian believers:

Philippians 2:3–4 teach, ³ *Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.* ⁴ *Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.* (ESV)

Humility is the opposite of being selfish and self-serving. Instead, it is being considerate of *the interests of others*, counting their needs *more significant* than our own.

Paul exhorts the church to be *of one mind* (2:2) by having the mind, or attitude, of Jesus Christ, as the prime example of the

Humility of a servant (verses 5–7)

⁵ *Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,* 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, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.*

We are told Jesus *was in the form of God*. The Greek word does not mean having the outward appearance as

God but “stresses the inner essence and reality” of God (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*).

Just as Jesus was true God, he became truly human *by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men*.

To become a servant for us, Jesus emptied himself. He let go of all his power, privileges and position as God, “divesting of His self-interests, but not of His deity.” (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*)

The *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* points out that “Christ does not selfishly exploit his divine form but . . . take[s] the form of a servant.”

The contrast here is in being in form (in essence) God, Jesus takes the form (essence) of a servant (more literally, a slave).

We are told Jesus was *born in the likeness of men*.

The Greek word for *likeness* “suggests similarity but difference. Though His humanity was genuine, He was different from all other humans in that He was sinless (Heb. 4:15)” (*The Bible Knowledge Commentary*).

As a servant, Jesus relinquished the riches and glory of heaven for utter poverty and ordinariness on earth.

2 Corinthians 8:9 reminds us, *For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.* (ESV)

The creator God lowered himself to take on our likeness, and all that entailed. As I said last week, Jesus experienced exhaustion; He needed sleep; He felt pain; He knew the pangs of hunger; He endured suffering.

Jesus demonstrated the humility of a servant by washing the feet of the disciples and commanded them to follow His example: ¹³*You call me Teacher and Lord, and*

you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. (John 13:13–14 ESV)

I'll never forget the act of servant leadership exemplified by my Patrol leader when I was a Tenderfoot scout. On a cold winter camping trip, when my feet were so cold I couldn't sleep, James Best, took my smelly feet in his hands and rubbed them until they warmed and put dry, clean socks on me, so I could fall asleep.

Jesus took on our form to serve us. But this was servanthood to the extreme.

According to Mark 10:45, Jesus, . . . *the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*" (ESV)

Jesus lived out this attribute in the

Humility of the Cross (verse 8)

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

Here we are told that Christ *humbled himself*. He was no victim of cruel circumstances but was . . . *delivered up according to the definite plan and foreknowledge of God . . .* (Acts 2:23 ESV).

Jesus was not a victim, but the master of his own fate. Jesus said in John 10:17–18,

¹⁷*For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. ¹⁸No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.*" (ESV)

Jesus laid down His life, humbling Himself in obedience to the Father's plan. We heard about Christ's obedience last week. It was complete submission to His Father's will.

R.C. Sproul notes: The phrase, he *humbled himself*, "is parallel to the phrase "made himself nothing" in v. 7. Each act occurs by the free exercise of Christ's own will"

It should be noted that Paul used the word for slave, not servant. It was for slaves and the most vile offenders that crucifixion was reserved. Jesus taught in Mark 10:43b–44 ⁴³ . . . *whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all.* (ESV)

Because Jesus humbly submitted to the degradation and curse of the cross, He received from the Father

Exaltation to glory (verses 9-11)

⁹ *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

The Greek word used here for *highly exalted* is a single word meaning super-exalted—given the very highest position.

This is the answer to Jesus' high prayer in John 17:5, *And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.* (ESV)

To say *Jesus Christ is Lord*, is to acclaim Him to be what He has always been—true God. The name that is above every name is *Lord* (Sproul), which is what the Jews used to designate God's name, *Yahweh*. At the end of time, not everyone will confess Jesus as Savior, but all will confess Him as Lord.

Jesus in his earthly ministry did not exalt Himself. He lived humbly, serving others, living in complete submission to the Heavenly Father.

We heard last week in Hebrews 5:5a *So also Christ did not exalt himself . . .* Jesus looked to the Father to exalt

Him, to restore *the glory that He had before the world existed.*

Scripture teaches that Jesus' exaltation was for our benefit. In Acts 5:31 Peter proclaimed, *God exalted him at his right hand as Leader and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins.* (ESV)

Isaiah 30:18 explains, *Therefore the LORD waits to be gracious to you, and therefore he exalts himself to show mercy to you. For the LORD is a God of justice; blessed are all those who wait for him.* (ESV)

An amazing truth about Christ's exaltation, is that, by faith in Him, we will be exalted in Him. Christ's exaltation becomes ours. We will not be super-exalted to the highest place, but we will be given glory and honor in God's presence.

Jesus said in Matthew 23:12, *Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.* (ESV)

No one enters the Kingdom of God in pride and self-sufficiency. All who would be saved must humble themselves as Jesus humbled Himself. Like Jesus, we do not exalt ourselves, but leave that to our Heavenly Father.

And so, we pray, *Lead me in Your truth through humility to exaltation.*

Humility is the essential attitude and action of the believer in Jesus Christ. It is having *the mind of Christ*. It is following the actions of Christ.

Again, we cannot do this on our own, but only by the grace and mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Let us pray . . .