

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”

One thing we need to understand about Jesus Christ is that He is both fully human and fully divine. As a true human He experienced all the things we as humans experience: He grew up. He got hungry and thirsty. If you cut Him, He would bleed. He was bound to one place at one time. He was human and is still human.

Yet as true God, He does miracles. On the Transfiguration Mount “...**the appearance of His face was altered, and His clothing became dazzling white.**” As true God He is all-powerful, all-knowing, and can be everywhere at once. As true God He is deserving of our worship. He can command a legion of angels at the snap of a finger.

Jesus is both fully God and fully human. However, how this can be is a great mystery. As we celebrate Palm Sunday and anticipate the week ahead wherein Jesus will go into Jerusalem to be arrested, tortured, crucified, and killed, it perplexes us even more that Jesus hardly looks like God in these dark hours. Yet Paul explains it for us in our Palm Sunday Epistle. **CHRIST SET ASIDE HIS DIVINITY FOR HUMANS WHO WANTED TO BE GODS.**

First, I. We follow the first Man who grasped at divinity. Genesis 3:1–7—In a paragraph, it all comes undone. The Lord created everything to be perfect. **“And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good.”** However, Adam and Eve ruined that good and perfect creation.

To be human is to be limited. All of us know this. There’s only so many hours in a day and there’s only one of you. There are also limits given to us: don’t steal, don’t murder, honor your father and mother, you know the drill.

The Garden of Eden was a place of freedom and bliss, yet God set one limit. It was a way of showing who is God and who isn’t—who’s the creator and who’s the created. The limit was not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

Adam and Eve crossed this one boundary: they ate from the fruit of the tree. **“The serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made.”** He tempted Eve saying, **“You will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.”** The first temptation was for man to become God and kick Him off His throne. The first temptation has another name: pride.

In the book of Proverbs the Lord speaks to us saying, **“The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.”** God hates pride. He hates it because it tempts us to

believe that we're okay on our own—that we're our own gods in need of no savior. Pride causes us to cut ourselves off from the very source of life itself.

Adam and Eve in their pride grasped at divinity. They wanted to become gods. Did they get it? By no means! When they ate of the fruit, they became naked and afraid, cowering from the Lord hiding behind fig leaves.

We too find that when we grasp for divinity. When we act as though we are worthy of worship, all-knowing, all-powerful, and able to be everywhere at once, we find ourselves humiliated: stupid, powerless, and limited. Like Adam and Eve, our pride eventually drives us to cower in the corner.

What is God's solution to humanity's pride? Is it to outclass and outgun us? Oftentimes God will use a bigger fish to swallow us, in other words, God will send another fallen human to put us in our place. However, that is just a first step. God's ultimate solution to humanity's pride is Jesus' humility.

II. Jesus, true God, chose not to use His divinity fully. The Bible tells us Jesus “...**though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.**” Jesus, the Son of God, the Second Person of the Trinity, the Eternal Word of God, He always was divine, even during His earthly ministry. However, He chose not to make full use of His rights and privileges as God in His time here on Earth.

In a program I listen to, a man talked about how he quit smoking. He quit cold turkey and the odd thing was that he would keep packs of cigarettes above door frames around his house. His logic was, you know you've beaten an addiction if you can keep the temptation within arm's reach and choose not to indulge in it.

What would Adam and Eve have done if the full powers of becoming God were within their grasp? We know what they did! They took the fruit and ate of it! But what if that fruit actually gave them the full powers that God has? They certainly would have used it for all sorts of odd, perverse, and evil things. If you're honest, wouldn't you do the same?

Jesus did at times chose to reveal His divinity in His earthly ministry. He calmed the storms. He healed the sick and demon oppressed. He shone with divine light on the Transfiguration Mount. Through the same powerful words that created the Heavens and the Earth, He makes His true body and blood present in everyday bread and wine.

Nonetheless, you know you've beaten an addiction if you can keep the temptation within arm's reach, and you choose not to indulge in it. There were many opportunities for Jesus to flex His God muscle for His own gain. There was never a time that was impossible for Him. He could have turned stones into bread. He could have jumped from the temple and call angels to catch Him. He could have destroyed His enemies with a legion of angels or miraculously climbed down from the cross.

He could have had endless riches and lived eternally here on this earth. He could have any country He wanted. Any woman who tickled His fancy. Any food or house or luxury. All of this was within reach as the only human who was both God and man.

All of that was within reach, yet He never grasped for it. Instead, He **“...emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”** The cross is the antidote to Adam and Eve’s tree of the knowledge of good and evil. The cross shows us the depths to which Jesus sunk for us. By not making use of powers available, Jesus redeems the pride of Adam and Eve. He redeems your pride.

III. In emptying Himself, Jesus redeems our pride. God faced humanity’s pride head on through His Son Jesus. He let the selfish pride of humanity run its course. The result of humanity’s pride is a crucified savior. Your selfish ambition drove the nails into Jesus’ hands and feet. Your indifference towards God and spiritual matters borne out of a sense that you have all you need and your life is quite fine without acknowledging your creator, was the same attitude of the inhabitants of Jerusalem who could have stopped the sham trial and the framing of the Lord of Glory. Your insistence that nobody should tell you how to live was the headstrong attitude of the chief priests and other Jewish leaders who sentenced Jesus to death, regardless of what the truth was.

Yet in suffering these humiliating things, Jesus has taken on your pride and your attempts to be like God. He has endured even when your indifference helped contribute to His suffering. He has forgiven your sins of pride and selfishness through His march into Jerusalem and through His sacrifice on the cross. “When I survey the wondrous cross, on which the Prince of Glory died. My richest gain I count but loss and pour contempt on all my pride.”

Because of Jesus’ act of emptying Himself and not choosing to make use of the godly powers that are rightfully his, Paul continues, **“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”** Jesus rose, and that’s what we’re waiting for this Easter. Jesus’ humiliation doesn’t last forever. He will be exalted.

And so we can gladly and joyfully worship the one who took on our pride, and who is deserving of our respect, honor, and admiration. Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection show us who true God is and what it truly means to be human. By the power of the Spirit of God who dwells in us, we can **“...do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than [ourselves].”** Let us follow in Jesus’ footsteps this week.