

(Radical Jesus) 12 Radical Humility

by Glenn Meldrum

Jesus' radical humility is the ultimate example of selfless love, and we are called to imitate him by giving ourselves away to others.

Duration: 22:45

Scripture: Matthew 26:52-53, Ephesians 5:25-29

Topics: "Humility"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes that Jesus came into the world with a specific purpose: to rescue humanity by sacrificing himself as the Lamb of God. The preacher highlights the contrast between the desire to never be born and the knowledge of being born into nobility and wealth. The sermon emphasizes the importance of loving Jesus with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength, as there is no other savior or path to heaven except through him. The preacher also emphasizes that true salvation is evidenced by a transformed life, as Jesus gave himself for us to redeem us from wickedness and purify us to do good.

Transcript

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This is now the twelfth week in our continuing study on the Radical Jesus. Last week we began looking at the radical humility that defined Jesus when he walked this planet. For the Christian, there is no greater example that we should strive to follow than Jesus himself.

When we honestly look at the humility that defined him, we are sure to be confronted with our own pride. Unless, of course, we like to believe lies about ourselves. Some of the points that we touched on last week were the origin of pride, how Jesus is not like us and that he lived in perfect humility, and his great self-emptying which addressed what it took for God to become human.

We then began studying more specifically the humility that characterized his miraculous conception, birth, and the in-between years before his ministry began. Today we will look at the humility that defined the ministry years of Jesus. One phenomenal phrase that Paul the Apostle used to convey the radical nature of Christ's humility is that Jesus gave himself or gave himself away.

This phrase speaks of the voluntary servanthood that Jesus lived out so we could be forgiven and enter into fellowship with the Holy God. When Jesus walked this earth, he should have been lovingly served by all of humanity. Yet the Creator God came into our world to serve us in such a profound and sacrificial way that our very salvation hangs upon it.

The first thing I want to do today is highlight a half dozen sections of Scripture so we can learn what it means that Jesus gave himself for us. Let's begin with Galatians 1.4, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age according to the will of God our Father. There's only one person that has ever been born that did so out of his own desire and power, and that is Jesus.

Not just that, he is the only person that picked who his mother would be before conception. He is also the only person that chose where in this world he would be born, right down to the location, date, and time that it happened. Our coming into this world rested upon the decisions of others, not of ourselves.

Jesus came into this world for a specific purpose so that he could rescue us by giving himself away as the Lamb of God, as a sin offering for us. A large number of people have at one time or another wished they had never been born, but nobody can undo what was done. Imagine if a person had the ability to know before they were conceived that they would be a child born of noble birth and of great wealth.

Do you think that he or she would greatly desire to be born? What if that person knew he or she would be born into a world that was filled with poverty, sorrow, and would finally die a violent death? Do you think that person would want to be born at all? This is exactly what Jesus did for us. For Jesus to become fully human, he had to empty himself of his right to operate in his divine rights as God. He came into this world to rescue us from ourselves and from this wicked world that has enslaved us in the passions and pursuit of sin.

Jesus performed the most selfless, humble, and heroic act ever done or ever will be done. Notice that Paul said that Jesus did this according to the will of our God and Father. This tells us that he did not come into the world because we were worthy of such a heroic, selfless act, but he came into this world and died for us out of loving obedience to the Father.

Now, that can really disturb us since we like thinking that everything in this world revolves around us. Now, let's turn to Galatians 2.20. There's a tremendous amount of truth that Paul shares with us in this verse, but the principal point I want to look at has to do with the greatest reason why we should be followers of Jesus. The fact that Jesus loves us and gave himself for us so we would not have to face the agonies of hell should be more than enough motivation for us to be wholehearted followers of Jesus.

Paul is talking about the life of Christ living in and through us, but the reason we should yield to the rule of God over our lives is because he loves us. Take careful notice that Christ's love for us is something far more than mere words, but it's proved by the life he lived. Jesus loved us enough to give himself away so we could be saved.

There is no greater expression of love than this. Paul establishes that the only right response to Christ's act of giving himself away is that we fully give ourselves away to him in total surrender and loving devotion. True love always has a substantive manifestation, which means that if we truly love Jesus, then there must be the firm evidence of that love by the life we live out.

We must prove our love for God by giving ourselves away to him and for him. The evidence of love is selfless sacrifice, and when we genuinely love God, we will sacrifice ourselves for him. Such love will always entail the humbling of ourselves before God and others.

Pride is hostile to love. It has always been hostile to love. It is a destroyer of love, not a builder of love.

Pride is contrary to love because pride keeps us from giving ourselves away like Jesus did for us. The love pride produces is a selfish, twisted, taking, grasping love that is rooted in self-love and self-preservation. Pride is always hostile to God because it keeps us from giving ourselves to him and keeps us from giving ourselves away for the well-being of others.

Now let's look at Ephesians 5, verses 1 and 2. Be imitators of God, therefore, as dearly loved children, and live a life of love just as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us as a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Paul is now giving us a very strong and direct command to be like Jesus, to be Christ-like. Paul is also telling us that the only way we can be like Jesus is to live as an adoring child that would imitate a loving, compassionate father.

Jesus proved his love for us in that he gave himself up for us. But have we proved our love for him? Or is it just mere words? If Jesus asked you if you really loved him, what would you say in response? If you said yes, then what evidence can you give to prove you genuinely love him? God is looking for more than sentimental notions. All kinds of people practice religious rituals and perform religious duties while never loving God.

So to say that you go to church and give your money is not enough. Paul is teaching us that the proof that we love God is seen in that we imitate him as adoring children. A Christ-like character speaks loudly of the love a person has for Christ.

Paul is teaching us that the proof that we love God is seen in that we imitate him as adoring children. And if we are to imitate him, it must be that we give ourselves away to him like he gave himself away for us. God can be pleased.

But the only way we can please the Father is to be like Jesus. When we are imitating Jesus, then our lives will be pleasing to the Father, just like his was a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God. Remember that it was through great humiliation that Christ gave himself up for us by suffering the horrors of the cross.

We cannot be imitators of Christ and be proud. That's an impossibility. It was the meek and lowly Jesus that sacrificed himself for us, and we are commanded to imitate him.

In Ephesians chapter 5, Paul makes a powerful comparison between how a husband loves his wife and how Jesus loves his church. How is a husband supposed to love his wife? Like Jesus loves us, sacrificially giving himself away for the benefit of our wife. How is that love proved? That Jesus gave himself up for mankind, so husbands should give themselves up for their wife.

This is all about loving sacrifice. Jesus gives himself up for the church so she can be without blemish, holy and blameless, and as a result, will be able to be with him forever. The man that loves his wife like Jesus loves the church will be a phenomenal catalyst for a good marriage.

He will do everything possible to help his wife be pure, holy and blameless so she is pleasing to God. Marriages break down because people become selfish, proud and self-willed. It is a fact that sin always

destroys marriages.

Now I put the majority of the blame for the breakdown of marriages on the shoulders of the husband because he fails to be like Jesus to his wife. It must begin with the husband. Love, sacrifice and humility are inseparable components in a good marriage.

Remove these from marriage or one's relationship with God and all that will come out of it is ruined. In 1 Timothy 2, verses 5 and 6 we read, For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men, the testimony given in its proper time. Plain and simple, we have all sold ourselves out for sin and suffered the consequences for it.

Jesus gave himself a way to purchase us back to himself, a purchase price beyond reckoning. We were of such value to God that he paid the ultimate price by giving himself as our atoning sacrifice. This is love in its purest, most selfless form and such love deserves the total surrender of our lives to the lover of our souls.

It deserves, it demands that we love him with all of our heart, mind, soul and strength. There is no other Savior but Jesus, no other path to heaven but through him and no other life that can be pleasing to the Father except the life of Christ living in and through a person. Then in Titus 2, verse 14, Paul states that Jesus gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good.

When salvation is in the soul, the evidence is clearly seen in the life. Jesus did not give himself away so we could continue in the practice of sin and rebellion. Grace may be free, but it has never been cheap.

Jesus died to redeem us from all sin and all wickedness, not from some sin and some wickedness. Jesus gave himself a way to redeem us, but what did he redeem us from? Or may I say it like this? If we are saved, then what are we saved from and what are we saved to? Has Jesus saved you from the practice of sin? If not, then you're not saved at all. Has he saved you from the love of sin? Has he saved you from selfishness and self-will? Has he saved you from self-absorption and the love of pleasure? Has he saved you from a corrupt character that hurts other people? Are we really saved from hell if we continue in the practice of sin? No, absolutely not.

If we are not saved from these things, then we cannot blame God, for the fault lies solely with us. And if we are not saved from something, what are we then saved to? God does not save people so they can continue to live selfish, self-absorbed lives. He did not redeem us so we could live comfortable lives while the mass of humanity is rushing to a real and literal hell.

We are redeemed to be God's very own people, the people he will shower his love and affection upon for time and eternity. Fellowship with the living God is the ultimate benefit from being saved or redeemed. Anything else is the icing on the cake.

But we were also saved to fulfill the divine purpose that caused Christ to give himself away in the first place. And what is that purpose? It is to seek and to save what was lost. We are saved to do God's will on this earth, and that is to bring as many people to Jesus as possible.

We are not to spend our life in selfish pursuits. Christ's ministry years reveal the humble character of a true servant that gave himself away to rescue mankind. This is the most selfless, loving act that has ever taken place or ever will take place.

Everything Jesus did was to please the Father and to save humanity from the just judgment for sin that they deserved. He did not do anything out of selfish motivation, personal fulfillment, fame, wealth, or position. Jesus came into the world to serve mankind, not himself.

Church ministry would be revolutionized if the heart and character of Jesus defined it in the same way. What would happen to ministry if we did it for him and not for ourselves? Look at Jesus, and you cannot find even one expression of selfishness, self-will, greed, or pride. In Christ, we see the purest expression of selfless love untainted by pride and rebellion.

The divine glory of the meek and lowly Jesus radiates out of the Gospels. The Creator God came in perfect humility to redeem proud, rebellious mankind. Look at how Jesus lived, and we will see how we are to live.

Look at how he did ministry, then we will know how we are to do ministry today. The miracles performed and the message he preached caused Jesus to be the most controversial person in all of Israel. He was either loved or hated.

Are we to be in a different situation? Multitudes followed him for what they could get out of him. How easy it is for us to be selfishly pursuing God. Many attended his meetings to see a good show of miracles, experience the power of the Holy Spirit, or to get some free food.

Even when the crowds tried to make him king, they did it out of selfish ambition. They would rather have as their king a crazy prophet than to suffer under the tyranny of Rome and the repressive reign of Herod. Yet through all of this, Jesus maintained his meek and humble character.

All the fame and attention he received did not corrupt him in the least. He never forsook the reason he came into this world, which was to redeem mankind. Even hell itself was powerless to taint Jesus with its insidious pride and rebellion.

Yes, when we look at the Gospels, we see that Jesus stood out unique from all of mankind. Look at the humiliation Jesus underwent. Such betrayals by friends would be degrading to anyone.

If we experienced even a portion of such betrayals, we would be crying out for vindication and retribution. One day Jesus taught that he was the bread of life and that if anyone wanted salvation, they had to consume him and be consumed by him. That's very radical.

This teaching disturbed his disciples to such a degree that most all of them forsook him. That kind of teaching was way too radical for them, so they thought it better to forsake Christ than to suffer the consequences of consuming him and being consumed by him. After Jesus transformed the Passover into a memorial of his death, he went with his disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane.

The prayers Jesus offered to his Father were expressions of deep humility and total submission to the Father's will. Look at Jesus as he was being betrayed by Judas for 30 pieces of silver. This was one of Christ's inner circle of leadership.

Judas made the sign of betrayal the kiss of friendship. How despicable! Yet throughout his arrest, trial, torture, and crucifixion, Jesus never responded with anger, bitterness, or pride. Panic engulfed the apostles and disciples when the soldiers seized Jesus and they fled to save their lives.

While the temple authorities held Christ in the high priest's courtyard, Jesus watched with his own eyes the sad climax of Peter's denial. At that point in his life, Peter was afraid and ashamed to be known as one of Christ's followers. That was a great betrayal.

All of the men forsook him. It was not just Peter that forsook Jesus. All of his disciples forsook him.

And it was only the female followers that remained true. As Jesus stood before his accusers in a sham, illegal trial, he did not strive to defend himself even though he was innocent of any crime or sin. People that were healed by Jesus, moved by his teaching, fed by his miracles, turned against him, demanding that Pilate crucify Jesus and have an insurrectionist released instead.

All these expressions of betrayal, and more besides, were extremely humiliating, yet the meek and lowly Jesus remained as the lamb silent before the slaughter. Try to imagine how degrading it must have been when the Jewish and Roman authorities treated Jesus in such a brutal and malicious way. They tried him illegally, mocked him cruelly, beat him viciously, and killed him mercilessly.

Did he not fully give himself up for us? Did he hold anything back at all? The agony and disgrace of Roman crucifixion is legendary. They were skilled at torture and knew how to produce the greatest suffering upon their victims. Before they crucified Jesus, the Roman soldiers stripped him naked, shamefully exposing him before men and angels.

The glorious God that archangels adore was despoiled in the most reprehensible manner possible. He allowed all this to happen so that he could be the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. If Jesus would have had in him the least expression of pride, he would not have endured the horrors and humiliation of the betrayals, trial, torture, and crucifixion.

We are told the account of Jesus' betrayal by Judas in the Gospel of Matthew. When the temple soldiers came to take Jesus, Peter drew his sword, cut off the ear of the high priest's servant. Jesus responded to Peter, saying, Put your sword back in its place, for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.

Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and He will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen this way? Then what did Jesus do? Fight against His attackers? Begin to ridicule them and condemn them? No, He reached down and grabbed the severed ear off the ground, tenderly placed it back on the man's head, and then healed him like it had never even happened. This is humility, love, and compassion beyond what we can comprehend. Jesus fully gave Himself up for us so that we could grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses human knowledge.

What a phenomenal Savior that He is! He did this so we may be filled to the measure of the fullness of God. Charles Tarr made a powerful point about the divine power that is made available to us to be more like Jesus. He wrote, the secret is, as we lose ourselves, we find ourselves.

The more we attempt to give Christ away, the more we have of Him. The Christian or the church that is concerned only about self-preservation will die. Those who give themselves away receive and live.

The American version of Christianity we have today is the total opposite of the biblical faith. It is a self-centered, selfish faith that is all about personal fulfillment. In contrast stands Jesus, who gave Himself away so we could be saved, and He demands that we give ourselves away so others might be saved.

In our pride, we think life is all about personal happiness, wealth, comfort, and ease. But as we seek to save our lives, to persevere in our selfishness, we lose all that is of real and eternal value. Our pride, which breeds self-will, is hostile to God.

It causes us to do church without God because God will not bless our anoint pride. Homer Duncan said it this way, spiritual pride and self-will are particularly grievous to the Holy Spirit. These are sins which have crippled the effectiveness of the Christian church.

We can hardly become the light of the world when sin has prevented us from being reflectors of the One who is the light. When Christ's radical humility begins to grace our lives, then we will start to see the power that is available to the church. The Lord is not waiting for the rich and famous to come to the Christian fold to turn the world upside down.

He is not waiting for the educated and brilliant to come to faith so revival could grace this land once again. Nor is He waiting for the politicians to repent of their sin and their love of power before He awakens the church and rescues a perishing world. The Lord is waiting for the church to repent.

He is waiting for them to live out what He created her for. When simple, Bible-believing, Spirit-filled followers of Jesus will crucify their pride and their sinful nature so they can give themselves away like Jesus did for us, then the world will know that there is a God and that His name is Jesus.

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