

The God-Exalted Christ

by Ian Paisley

The sermon emphasizes the significance of Christ's lowliness, loneliness, and loveliness, highlighting His willingness to descend from divine heights, demonstrate patient endurance, and offer redemption to sinners.

Scripture: Psalm 85:4, Matthew 1:20, Luke 1:30, Philippians 2:5, Philippians 2:10, Hebrews 11:22, Revelation 1:18

Topics: "Christ Exalted", "Salvation Through Faith"

Description

Ian Paisley preaches on the God-exalted Christ, focusing on the lowliness, loneliness, loftiness, and loveliness of Christ. He emphasizes Christ's descent from divine heights to achieve salvation for sinners, highlighting His loneliness and rejection throughout His life. Paisley delves into Christ's exaltation by God, emphasizing His resurrection, ascension, and the power given to Him in heaven and earth. He concludes by urging sinners to turn to Christ, emphasizing the urgency of accepting salvation and the beauty of Christ's love and sacrifice.

Transcript

Reading: Philippians 2:5-13.

5. 'Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:
6. who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God;
7. but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:
8. and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.
9. wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name:
10. that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth;
11. and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.
12. Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

13. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.'

i. The lowliness of Christ

ii. The loneliness of Christ

iii. The loftiness of Christ

iv. The loveliness of Christ

My theme is the God-exalted Christ. In the Godhead the second person, the everlasting Son of the first person, the everlasting Father, along with the third person, the Holy Spirit, indivisibly the one God, the eternal Son was always characterised by loftiness and loveliness.

His loftiness, before His coming into this world, was the loftiness of God. No less

God than the Father, no less God than the Holy Spirit - co-equal, co-eternal in the Godhead.

His loveliness, before His coming into this world was the loveliness of the beauty of the holiness of God.

Oh, the beauty from all eternity! Oh the beauty, the loveliness of the Triune Jehovah God, the loveliness of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, in the beauty of the eternal, immutable holiness of the sovereign and supreme deity.

The loftiness and the loveliness of Christ in my text is not what I want to preach today, is not that which is Christ as eternally God, but Christ as the mediator of His people, the one mediator between a thrice-holy God and sinful man.

This loftiness and loveliness came about in the Godman through lowliness and loneliness. It was a loftiness that was attained, it was a lowliness that was moulded, attained by indefinable lowliness and inexpressible loneliness.

Through the lowliness He achieved the loftiness, and by the loneliness He attained the loveliness.

I feel most inadequate to speak upon this sublime theme, but with God's help I must, for it is the message that God has burnt into my soul to deliver.

We can never view with the eye of blessed contemplation the heights of Christ's loftiness until we have viewed and viewed and viewed again, the depths of His lowliness.

We can never be transported with the miraculous loveliness of Christ until we have been transfixed with the mystery of His loneliness.

'Turn us, o God of our salvation, and cause

Thine anger towards us to cease.' - Psalm 85:4.

'Turn us again, o God, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.' - Psalm 80:3.

'Turn us again, o God of hosts, and cause thy face to shine; and we shall be saved.' - Psalm 80:7.

'O turn us again, o Lord God of hosts, cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.' - Psalm 80:19.

May the light from the Saviour, the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ, lighten and enlighten us this afternoon to behold Him whom our soul loveth.

O Holy Spirit, reveal to us all, the lowliness, the loneliness, the loftiness and the loveliness of Christ.

Let me seek to sketch for you from the canvas of the Holy Scripture -

First, the lowliness of Christ.

We learn of His lowliness by considering the heights from which he descended, heights which angels' feet have not even trod. The only footprint thereon is the footprint of God!

Heights of unexplained love;

Heights of inconceivable power;

Heights of unexplored majesty;

Heights where the mystery of God remains untouched by mortals;

Heights of the greatest of the el-shaddai, the God who is enough;

Heights which rest on a foundation of omnipotence;

Heights which are the environment of omnipresence;

Heights which are the sole domain of omniscience.

From the divine heights of the mount of God, Christ descended. He descended from the bosom of God, the throne of God, the mount of God, the palace of God, the house of God, the home of God, and the sanctuary of God.

No wonder Charles Wesley sang;

'He left His Father's throne above -

So free, so infinite His grace.'

The seven descending steps, which he took, each one a quantum leap, are set forth here.

'Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.' He was no usurper. He was eternally God.

But, though in the form of God, He -

i. 'Made Himself of no reputation', willingly and voluntarily,

ii. 'Took upon Him the form of a servant', the suffering servant of Jehovah. Was

iii. 'Made in the likeness of men', yet without sin,

iv. 'Being found in fashion as a man', if he would fashion us to be the sons of God, he must be fashioned as the Son of man.

v. 'He humbled Himself' to the lowest of all depths, and

vi. 'Became obedient unto death' - He must die if we would live.

'Even the death of the cross.' The shameful death, the slow death, the suffering death of the cross.

Here is the true via dolorosa, not the one of the church of Rome's invention. If I would see Jesus and walk with Him, I must meet Him in His lowliness.

Second, the loneliness of Christ

The brand-mark of loneliness is the brand-mark of the Son of God.

Loneliness was His environment. He made the strait gate and trod the narrow way, and He calls His people to walk the way of His making.

From His rejection at His birth - 'there was no room for Him at the inn' - to His forsaking during His life - 'He came unto His own and His own received Him not - to His disciples fleeing away from Him in the garden, to His giving of His mother to a new son, John the apostle, to the mystery of His forsakenness on the cross by His God - He was the lonely Christ. 'He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief'.

Many years ago, when I was about ten years of age, my revered Father, now in the glory

land, gave me a little pamphlet :

'It is human to stand with the crowd, it is divine to stand alone.' It is manlike to follow the people, to drift with the tide; it is Godlike to follow a principle, to stem the tide.

It is natural to compromise conscience and follow the social and religious fashion for the sake of gain or pleasure; it is divine to sacrifice both on the altar of truth and duty.

'No man stood with me, but all men forsook me', wrote the battle-scarred apostle in describing His first appearance before Nero to answer for His life for believing and teaching contrary to the Roman world.

Truth has been out of fashion since man changed His robe of fadeless light for a garment of faded leaves.

Noah built and voyaged alone. His neighbours laughed at his strangeness and perished in style.

Abraham wandered and worshipped alone. Sodomites smiled at the simple shepherd, followed the fashion, and fed the flames.

Daniel dined and prayed alone.

Elijah sacrificed and witnessed alone.

Jeremiah prophesied and wept alone.

Jesus lived and died alone.

And of the lonely way His disciples should walk, He said, 'Strait is the gate and narrow is the way which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it.'

Of their treatment by the many who walk in the broad way, He said: 'If ye were of the world, the world would love His own; but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you.'

The church in the wilderness praised Abraham and persecuted Moses. The church of the kings praised Moses and persecuted the prophets.

The church of Caiphaz praised the prophets and persecuted Jesus. The church of the Popes praised the Saviour and persecuted the saints. And multitudes now, both in the church and the world, applaud the courage and fortitude of the patriarchs and prophets, the apostles and martyrs, but condemn as stubbornness or foolishness like faithfulness to truth today.

Wanted today, men and women, young and old, who will obey their convictions of truth and duty at the cost of fortune and friends and life itself.'

How lonely was Christ in the sweat of blood in dark Gethsemane.

How lonely was Christ in the scourging of blood in the devilry of Gabbatha.

How lonely was Christ in the death of blood at Golgotha.

Where is he today? He is still the forsaken and lonely Christ, as far as the world - ecclesiastically, politically and socially, is concerned.

Christ is the lonely Christ - in prayer, in watchfulness, in compassion, in love, in tenderness, and in grace. He suffered, bled and died alone.

Where is he? He is not with those who reject His person, His gospel, His cross, His salvation, His redemption.

Christ suffered without the camp. Let us therefore go unto Him without the camp, bearing His reproach.

Outside the camp unto thy great name,

Draw me, o Lamb of God!

Far from the world with its sin and its shame,

Hallowed is every sod.

Outside the camp, 'tis a lonely place,

Outside the city wall,

There on thy breast let my soul ever rest,

Outside the camp with thee.

Three, the loftiness of Christ

'God has highly exalted Him',

'God has given Him a name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow.'

As far as Christ's human body is concerned, God raised it from the tomb - the same body that was blood-stained with the blood shed, the body which lay in the tomb for three days and three nights, was suddenly exalted from the grip of death. It never saw corruption. Up from the grave He arose. Hallelujah! Christ arose!

God exalted Christ's human soul and spirit from the place of death, and brought them back into His body. There in that body God the Son, having taken into union with His deity His risen humanity, cries out 'I am He that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore. Amen, and have the keys of hell and of death', - Rev.1:18.

God highly exalted the one Christ, the Godman, to God's right hand.

God has highly exalted Christ by sending forth the Holy Spirit upon His people.

God has highly exalted Christ by giving Him all power in heaven and in earth.

God has highly exalted Him to the highest place in the heaven of heavens.

Paul, in Hebrews 11:22-24 tells us:

(Note the 'and's' to get the divine order and number).

1. 'And unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem.'
2. 'And to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly.'
3. 'And church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven.'
4. 'And to God the judge of all.'
5. 'And to the spirits of just men made perfect.'
6. 'And to Jesus, the mediator of the new covenant.'
7. 'And to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than that of Abel.'

Notice the two-fold description in each case, climaxing in the sprinkled, speaking blood of the lamb.

Notice that the precious life-blood of the Godman on earth is the apex of Emmanuel's land. The blood is the life. The life of the Godman's flesh is in the blood, exalted forever to the topmost summit of the heaven of heavens.

God has highly exalted Him.

A name above every name

'And given Him a name that is above every name.' what name is that? The name of Jesus, Joshua in the Hebrew, Jesus in the Greek, meaning Saviour.

'Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people from their sin.' So said the angel to Joseph in a dream.

'...The angel of the Lord appeared unto Him (Joseph) in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus: for He shall save His people from their sins.' - Matthew 1:20,21.

And so said the angel at the annunciation to Mary.

'And the angel said unto her, fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

and behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call His name Jesus.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of His Father David:

And He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end.

Then said Mary unto the angel, how shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

And the angel answered and said unto her, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.' - Luke 1:30-35.

Let's spell it out.

J. He is Jesus the just one. He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. He is just, yet the Justifier of sinners.

E. He is Jesus, the expiating one. He expiated our guilt by dying for us and shedding His life's blood.

S. He is Jesus the sinless one. He is the sinless, spotless, stainless Jesus without sin, who was made sin for us. He had no sins of His own, but He took my sins so that by His stripes I might be healed.

U. He is Jesus the unique one. They're never was anyone like Him before, and there shall never be anyone like Him again. He is the only true lover of your soul.

S. He is Jesus the Saviour. Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.

He saves to the very uttermost all who come to Him.

O my dear unsaved sinner, cry out to God these sweet words -

Jesus, I do now receive Him,

More than all in Him I find;

He has granted me forgiveness.

I am His and He is mine.

'That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the

Father'. - Phil.2:10,11.

All must one day bow the knee to the God-exalted Christ. bow now and you will be saved. refuse to bow, and you will be lost forever, but in God's great judgment day you will be forced to bow and confess Him to be Lord of all.

How foolish you are to dare to postpone to confess Christ, and the salvation of your soul.

Four, Christ's loveliness

It is His loneliness and lowliness which led to His loveliness, as far as we redeemed sinners view Him.

In His loneliness we see the beautiful love of the Saviour in patient endurance, in order to accomplish the salvation of us poor lonely sinners, astray from our God, the playthings of hell and the devil.

In His lowliness we see the beauty of the extent to which he descended into hell in order that we might ascend up to heaven.

Here is a beauty which knows no parallel, and loveliness which knows no challenge.

Prose seems so inadequate to express or describe it.

Poetry also is insufficient to define the sweetness and emotion of the pent-up feeling of our inward souls.

Only our broken heart sobs can convey its amazing demonstration, and only penitential tears can cleanse our eyes to survey its indefinable mystery.

A child can carry little of the great sea in its tiny hand, so with my leaking dish I can bring little away from the ocean of our Saviour's redeeming love.

O love of Christ, o lovely Christ, I can bring only a little away when I cease contemplating thee.

Alas! I do not know the lover of my soul as I should. with the saintly Rutherford I say,

'He is so new, so fresh, in excellency, every day new to those who search more and more in Him, as if heaven could furnish as many new Christ's (if I might speak so) as there are many days betwixt Him and us, and yet he is one and the same.'

I cry with Paul, 'that I might know Him', for in His loveliness He is still to me an unknown lover.

Rutherford says, 'happy are they who are found watching. Our sand-glass is not so long as we need to weary: time will eat away and root out our woes and sorrow: our heaven is in the bud, and growing up to an harvest; why then should we not follow on, seeing our span-length of time will come to an inch? Therefore I commend Christ to you as the staff of your old age; let Him have now the rest of your days; and think not much of a storm upon the ship that Christ saileth in; there shall no passenger fall overboard; but the crazed ship and the sea-sick passenger shall come to land safe. I am in as sweet communion with Christ as a poor sinner can be; and am only pained that He hath much beauty and fairness, and I little love; he great power and mercy, and I little faith; He much light, and I bleared eyes.'

By the glory of His blessed countenance, by the touch of His tender hand, by the tenderness of the eye which is the mirror of His heart, I beseech you, make your eternal tryst with God your Saviour now.

Turn from this world of emptiness and turn to Christ the universe of fullness. Seek Him who is the way, the truth and the life. Never give your mind rest nor your heart peace nor your conscience sleep until you are sure that you can say 'I am His and He is mine.' Never rest until you can sing, 'ten thousand charms around Him shine, but best of all, I know He's mine.'

I have a cause to plead for my master this day. Never again will I have the opportunity to address you as I address you now. Such an opportunity comes but once in a lifetime.

O sinner, I meet you this day on life's highway. You are travelling the wrong way on the wrong road. I would accost you. I would call you to halt and listen to this message from my master. I want you to know that I am in deadly earnest. I am Christ's ambassador. I must clear myself of your soul's blood.

If you heed me not, then I must patiently exhort you. Why must you refuse my Master, whose love to you was to the wounds of the cross.

From exhortation I will turn to entreaty. I will beseech you not to harden your heart. 'He that being often reproved, hardeneth his neck, shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.'

From entreaty I would turn to adjuration. I adjure you by the thorns which pierced Christ's brow, by the whip which ploughed His back, by the nails which pierced His hands and feet, by the spear which stabbed His side, to neglect not so great salvation.

Why, O why will you die?

From adjuration I turn to tears. I weep for you, that you are so foolish to sell your soul for some quickly passing pleasure, some soul-destroying lust, some destructive habit.

Life is too short to gamble with the whereabouts of your soul.

And if my weeping will not move you, I will take me to my room and there I will continue to weep for you.

O come sinner come,

O why do you delay?

The striking invitation is

That you should come today.

Tomorrow has no promise

That it can give to you,

Tomorrow is eternity

Just hidden from your view.

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