BC 18; Phil. 2:1-10; Heb. 2:14-18; Humbled in the Flesh I. The Eternal Person II. The Humbled Person III. The Exalted Person

Congregation of our Lord Jesus Christ, understanding the reason why Jesus came to earth and was born as a baby is the focus of our BC article this morning. As we have heard this past month- Jesus is the reason for the season right? Having just finished celebrating the birth of Jesus, we are mindful of His incarnation this time of year. The word- incarnation- simply means coming in or taking on flesh. A few weeks back we looked at the Mother Promise in Gen. 3 where a seed or child was foretold who would crush the head of the serpent. Today we read of this serpent crushing savior who takes on our flesh. We also keep in mind the Jesus did not come only to be our example- His life is so much more than just a good pattern for us- but it is also true that His life is set before us as a perfect example of how we are called to live. Specifically in His humiliation as we will see today. So this morning we consider this theme: Jesus Christ was humbled in the flesh for the sake of our salvation. So today we will be focusing on humiliation. Now humiliation is different from embarrassment. Most of the time we get embarrassed when we do something wrong- we put our foot in our mouth- and our face turns red as people laugh at us. That is being embarrassed. But humiliation – humbling oneself- is the act of making yourself lowly. It is a decisive choice and action- when someone high chooses to be someone low- to let others go first. Humiliation is a part of godly service.

**I. The Eternal Person**

In our first point we see that one who is humbled is first of all the one who is eternal. In the context of Jesus’ humiliation, our text speaks to the eternal nature of the Son. So we see in v. 6, that the Son was in the form of God. Being in the form of God means that the Son shares in the same nature and essence as the Father- of the same deity. The attributes of God and fullness of deity resides with Him. His status is one that is worthy of praise. Continuing- we see that the Son equal with God. Even though He did not count equality with God something to be grasped, the fact remains that He is equal with God the Father. Jesus is said to be the radiance of the glory of God and the representation of His being as Heb. 1 puts it. When we consider the identity of the one who was humbled, we see that His glory is first brought into focus! In order to understand the wonder of the incarnation, we have to first see the glorious identity of the one who took on flesh. As bright meteor flashes best on a dark night- so the glory of eternal Son is set in contrast to His humiliation. It is in this way that we can appreciate the true marvel of the incarnation! As our BC article puts it, the eternal Son was sent into the world. The second person of the Trinity existed with the Father before the world was created. The Son that was born in time to Mary as a man is the same one who is the Son of God the Father before time began! Stated another when, when we consider the incarnation, we have to remember that this was not the beginning of the Son’s existance. Christmas is not the origin story of Jesus Christ. Rather, the eternal Word who is and remains God took on something that He was not! As we see in our second point, the eternal One enters time- the infinite taking on flesh!

**II. The Humbled Person**

So the eternal Word is also the one who becomes the humbled one. V. 7 in our text brings us into the realm of humiliation. Keeping this in mind- the Son of God did not lose anything concerning his nature- Jesus does not cease to be God when He takes on our nature. So v. 7 states- Jesus made himself nothing- this is sometimes translated as “emptying” himself. But we see that Jesus did not give up His deity or lose anything that made Him one with the Father in His nature. Rather, when Jesus made himself nothing, He was concealing His glory for a time. Nothing was taken away from him- but rather His glory was eclipsed or veiled for a time. He left His Father’s side in glory to become a man and be born of a woman. He hid his majesty from the eyes of man in order to be received as one of us- like us in every way. So He gave up His divine privileges not His divine nature. In becoming one of us, His glory was veiled or shielded from our eyes. His glory did break through on the Mountain of Transfiguration, but as a rule He looked like a normal, unimposing man. Nothing about His physical stature would draw men to himself. Phil. 2:7 continues by saying that Jesus took on the form of a servant. He became something that He was not- born in the likeness of man. To illustrate this, consider John 13 where Jesus got up from the table and washes his disciples’ feet. Although Jesus was the Lord of creation, he takes up the form and work of a servant- choosing to wash the feet of his followers for their good! Now this really is the heart of the incarnation. Jesus taking on the flesh of humanity- to be born in a lowly state- laid in a lowly manger- born to a lowly couple in Bethlehem. Jesus takes on our flesh- because it is the descendants of Abraham that He came to save! He had to be like us- a child of flesh and blood as we read in Heb. 2. Or as we read in our Art.- He assumed a real human nature. An ordinary body with a real human body and soul. As v. 8 continues, He humbled himself and became obedient. He who is the fountain of all knowledge and wisdom had to be taught. He who holds all things together had to grow in stature and develop in ability. Obedient not only to his earthly parents- but submissive to the will of His Father in heaven. He was obedient all the way through His life- all the way to His death as v. 8 closes. Obedient to the point of death- even death on the cross. Jesus was willing to obey as He prayed to the Father- not my will but your will be done. He was willing to suffer- to drink the cup of God’s wrath- because He knew what needed to be done! So why would Jesus be willing to come if He know that His life would be one of suffering? A man of sorrows as Isaiah would call Him. Well, He was willing to come because His coming was necessary for our salvation! But it is also true that the humiliation of Jesus is given to us as an example- or a pattern for us to follow. As Paul stated in 2:5- have the same mind in you which is in Christ Jesus. Let your motivations and desires be guided by this same rule- let His life be the pattern upon which you base your life! Here is a clear application for us all- and particularly for our office bearers today. Those who are called to serve in leadership positions are called to serve in the same manner that Christ served! Jesus did not come to seek the praise of man- He came to serve and not to be served! He came to give His life for the sake of others- looking to the interests of others! He sought the good of others- seeing others more important than himself as v. 3 says! Jesus found joy and purpose in serving! Being called to serve within the church of Christ means that we are called to look to the good of others! This goal guided the entire life of Jesus- seeking the good of others- seeking to save the lost- to heal the broken- to preach the good news to the poor! Let this mind be in you fellow office bearers as well! If you are humble in your service- seeking the good of those whom God has placed you over- you will be a faithful leader in the church of Jesus Christ! It is for this purpose that you are called today!

**III. The Exalted Person**

But there is one more aspect to the ministry of Jesus that see in our text today. We have seen His eternal nature, His humbled nature and now we find His exaltation! Coming to v. 9- He has been highly exalted! We note that the reason Jesus was exalted is that He was obedient- His humiliation paved the way for His exaltation! In His submission to the will of the Father and His service to the church the exaltation is secured! The glorification of the Son was a reward bestowed upon Him! Not just exalted- highly exalted! Jesus was given a name above every name- a glorious new name that reflects His exalted status. He is praised and adored by all because of His glorious work! Crowned with even greater glory and honor than before He came to earth- after He ascended He was exalted on high! Higher than all- greater than all- magnified by all! Every knee will bow before Him and every tongue confess His greatness! But what about His flesh? Was He still a man? Now keep this in mind- the one who will be highly exalted is and remain one of us – our elder brother! The one sitting on the great white throne ruling over all- exalted over all- magnified by all- is a man who shares our flesh! The hope of the gospel is in this fact- the humbled servant is humiliated no more! He has been vindicated- raised and exalted on high! The glory of the incarnation applies not only to His humiliation- but also in His exaltation! Our humanity shares in the glory that Jesus has now received! And it is a privilege that we have to share in this exalting of Jesus Christ! As we apply v. 11- every tongue confesses that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. This is our calling! We have the opportunity, privilege and calling to confess this truth! Jesus Christ is Lord! One day, every tongue will confess it! But today, the church has a head start if you will! In confessing the truth about Jesus and His glory, we are participating and His exaltation! We encourage others to join with us in the exaltation of the great King of Kings and Lord of Lords! What we will be doing for all eternity we begin to day- praise the Savior now and ever!

As we close, the words of the Apostle’s Creed state- Jesus was born of the virgin Mary, suffered, was crucified, died, and was buried. We confess that the incarnation leads to Jesus’ humiliation. But we also state- He was raised, ascended and is seated at the right hand of the Father! The incarnation now means that our shared flesh is exalted! Jesus Christ was humbled in the flesh for the sake of our salvation. Praise God for the sending of His Son- praise the Son for His willingness to take on our flesh! By way of this blessed act, God is with us and we are with our God!