

More Than a Job

“Have this mind among yourselves, which is your in Christ Jesus” Philippians 2:5.

A little over sixteen years ago, CBS aired a new T.V. show called, *Undercover Boss*. This T.V. show pulled back the curtain on major businesses and the workers they employed. In a novel way, the show brought its viewers into the inner workings of a familiar organization. Taking a high-ranking worker of a company, typically the boss, each episode would show the boss going “undercover” to experience the business from a different perspective. The undercover boss would get a weeklong experience that would end with a big reveal of the boss to the workers interacted with and often heartwarming moments of caring.

Whether you are familiar with this show or not; whether you were a fan of this show or not; whether you believed the sincerity and authenticity of this show or not; this show did make this point clear, it’s more than a job. Top down and bottom up one of the messages this show shared was that there was more to the work than a paycheck or a ladder to greater success. From the boss seeing the fuller picture of employees’ struggles to the employees seeing their boss’ struggles to carry out the daily work of the company a unique bond was formed in the mutual humiliation and the common desire that both parties were in it for more than the job.

Truth be told, God had this concept down long before CBS’ show. For God, His undercover moment wasn’t days long but years long. From the moment Jesus was conceived by the Holy Spirit, our Lord went “undercover” among His creation. Now this weekend, if there ever was a week of our Lord’s “undercover boss” life to film, it is this week. Holy week. This triumphal entry into Jerusalem to the triumphal exit from the tomb. The most intense week of Jesus’ earthly life. The week that most clearly shows that for Jesus, being the Messiah, the Christ, the blessed one who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel, was way more than a job.

Now to be clear, this phrase, “more than a job” carries a lot more with it than four simple words. Many of us have heard this expression and some of us have likely used it. What is meant by this expression and how we should consider it in this moment, is that whatever calling someone may have they treat it as an opportunity to care and serve not simply as a check list to earn a personal reward, financial or otherwise. This motto is noticeable in daily life when people take the time to listen, when they treat others with respect and time and not as an inconvenience, when it’s clear that sacrifices are being made on behalf of another. It’s things like these that lead us to say this is more than a job for them. And this weekend, this is certainly true of the Messiah, of the Savior, Jesus Christ.

Our reading from Philippians helps us see this reality, that Jesus’ role as the Messianic King, is far more than a job in three ways. It’s more than a job for Jesus because of what He sets aside, what He endures and what He shares. Jesus doesn’t take on this role out of resignation and frustration. He’s not forced into something He’s not willing to do. Rather, as we just confessed in the creed – who for us and for our salvation came down from heaven – Jesus chose this role out of care for His fallen creation.

In Philippians 2:6-7, we read that Jesus, **“did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.”** This passage helps us understand what Jesus set aside. He laid aside the perks and privileges of being God to instead experience life with His creation as a true human being. It’s not that He stopped being God, but that He actively chose not to display and use all His power and authority as God, ruler of the universe. Jesus set aside His divine and royal throne to walk among His creation clothed in His creation. He who formed mankind out of dust, draped Himself in the dust of His creation.

Despite being deserving of constant praise, honor and glory, He demands none of it as He moves about His creation. Instead, He who spoke creation into existence, whose words demand attention, He listens and only speaks what is given to Him. Jesus, whose physical presence among His people should command great celebration, pomp and circumstance, settles for a donkey ride and the praise of insignificant sinners who don’t fully realize what they’re crying, **“Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!”** (*John 12:13*) It’s hardly sufficient praise for Jesus and, yet He accepts and receives this praise because it’s more than a job for Him.

Along with what Jesus set aside, as we continue to Philippians 2:8, we hear what He endured. **“And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”** Jesus endured obedience that no other human being could accomplish. Instead of riding the wave of the Palm Sunday crowd’s praise and trying to solely please them, He was determined to carry out His mission. He set His face like flint toward the cross. Even though it meant looking like the most incompetent leader ever, losing the momentum and backing of this crowd in a matter of days. And this upcoming shift troubled Jesus and yet He knew this was why He came. As the hour of His death fast approached, He continued to seek His Father’s glory not His own.

Eventually cries of “Hosanna!” give way to chants of “Crucify!” As those chants encouraged further abuse and pain, Jesus gave His back and face willingly to the undeserved suffering. When everyone else was rebelling, Jesus did not join. He didn’t go backward but continue forward to the cross. He pressed on enduring the shame even the shameful curse of hanging on a tree. Jesus, who set aside His divine power and might, received and endured the curse, shame and sentence of all the sinners of this world. Truly this role was more than a job for Him!

In Philippians 2:9, we hear a change, **“Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name”**. Jesus’ humbled state is reversed, but that shift doesn’t change how He sees His role. Elevated and exalted, Jesus who drew all people to Himself by His death, continues to seek to unite His people in His life-giving name. His name that is above all names is the name He chooses to put onto His people’s lips. It’s the name that He places upon the hearts and minds of His people. It’s the name He’s deserved and earned but chooses to share with all so that many might be saved in His name. Instead of being protective and stingy with His exalted and elevated state, Jesus continues to come and place Himself into His fallen creation’s hands delivering to them the spoils of His victory. Even now, Jesus’ role as Savior remains more than a job to Him. Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

As Philippians 2:6-9, helps us understand that Jesus’ role as Messiah, as the Christ, as the Savior who comes in the name of the Lord is more than a job to Him, this is what it means for you. Saving you was more than a job to Him! You aren’t a faceless number among His fallen creation. Your undercover boss, your undercover Lord, your Savior, intimately knows your struggles. He set aside everything to endure the same struggles as you. You share a unique bond of humiliation and suffering. Humiliation and suffering that by His life, death and resurrection have far more purpose, meaning and hope than they ever did before. The Lord God helps you. He gives you, His name. The name that is above all other names. You are His child – a child living in His marvelous light!

Because saving you was more than a job to Jesus, following Jesus is more than a job for us. Being a Christian, isn’t a check list that only gains us heaven or some other reward. This role is our identity and life. Jesus leads us to serve and follow Him so that we might be with Him and receive the Father’s honor. Our role as a follower of Jesus reprioritizes our life to recognize that all that we could gain this side of heaven isn’t worth clinging to at the expense of what we have promised for us in heaven. The Christian life isn’t measured by the glory that comes from man but by the glory that comes from God – it’s truly more than a job for us!

As believers in Jesus, every role we have becomes more than a job. Within our families, being a grandparent, parent, spouse or sibling is more than a job, it’s a place to serve and care for those whom Jesus died. At work and school, being an employer or employee, a teacher or student, it’s more than a job, it’s an opportunity to demonstrate the Savior’s love. In our society, being a friend, citizen and community member is more than a job it’s a chance to endure and suffer for Jesus’ sake because He has died and risen for all people, yes, even those we’d view as our enemies. Whatever calling God has given you, because of Jesus’ life, suffering, death and resurrection, it is far more than a job. May our Savior always grant us this mindset, Amen.

In Christ,

Pastor Dan