

Midweek 4 Sermon: The Lowly Lamb of God

Grace mercy and peace by yours from God our Heavenly Father, Jesus our Suffering Savior, and strength and hope from His Holy Spirit. Our text is in Philippians 2:5–11:

“Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore, God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name, 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.” Here ends our text.

I preached at chapel today and I asked the girls B-ball team to stand up, and then I asked them what would they cheer if they just won the state tournament. With very little help they said and I quote: “**We’re number one!**” “**We’re number one!**” “**We’re number one!**”

Then I asked the boys B-ball team to stand, and what they would say if they won the state tournament. Without hesitation and with more enthusiasm: “**We’re number one!**” “**We’re number one!**” “**We’re number one!**” Great cheer isn’t it. “**We’re number one!**”

What if I told you that Emmanuel Lutheran Church, the congregation that you are members of, was voted not only the best church in Ft. Wayne, but also the best church in the Indiana District, as well as the numero uno of Synod? Come on I know you want to scream it! You just like the kids:

“**We’re number one!**” “**We’re number one!**” “**We’re number one!**”

Several generations have grown up believing that pride is not a sin. We can tolerate all kinds of problems in our kids, but heaven forbid that they should ever suffer any lack of self-esteem.

When you coddle children to the point that they actually come to believe they are the center of the universe, it should come as no surprise that they grow up to be self-fixated adults. And that is what has happened: our world is populated by many people who pay no attention to the needs of others, much less to the will of God. They worship at the shrine of the unholy trinity: **Me, Myself, and I.**

Don’t be mistaken—this is not just a problem ungodly people have. We all fall into this trap ourselves. You and I daily are bombarded with a steady stream of messages that tell us:

1. I have an inherent right to be in control - it’s my life
2. Things should be just the way I want them to be
3. My opinion is the only one that counts.

Christians don’t walk away from such strong and unrelenting temptation unscathed, especially when we consider that this message is extremely popular with our old Adam, the sinful flesh within. In league with the devil and the fallen world, our sinful flesh simply does not want to hallow God’s name nor let His kingdom come.

When Eve is tempted, she is promised to “be like God.” A simpler way to say it is she was her own god! She was the center of the garden. She was number one!

The Bible lists humility, along with kindness and meekness, among the Christian virtues (Colossians 3:12). Yet in many circles today any one of the three would be considered the **weakest link.**

Not so in the kingdom of God. To put yourself ahead of God and other is not a mark of independence and initiative; instead, it is the sure sign of an idolatrous heart. Christ tells us: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. . . Love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:30–31). And that still holds true today

St. Paul writes in the verses immediately preceding our text: “Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, **but in humility count others more significant than yourselves**” (Philippians 2:3 ESV).

Unfortunately, all too often that is not the way it is among us. When it comes to humility, we are sadly lacking. Instead of counting others more significant than ourselves, it is just the other way around: we consider ourselves most important of all.

When the apostle writes, “Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5), we are struck immediately by the sad fact that our natural attitude is not very Christlike when it comes to humility.

Think about our Lord’s actions when He worked a miracle:

1. When He changed water into wine – when He was told it was the best, He doesn’t dance around saying **I did it! I’m the Messiah. I’m the Messiah.**
2. When He healed Jairus’s daughter - He didn’t dance around yelling; **I did it! I’m the Messiah I’m the Messiah.** - He told them to tell no one
3. Casting out the demon, the transfiguration and many other miracles; that glory belonged to God and Jesus wanted God to receive it not Himself. So, He lived a humble life in submission to His (our) heavenly Father.

The apostle continues: “And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!”

Every faithful Jew who knew his Bible knew that there was a unique horror to the cross—and it probably isn’t what you think. Our thoughts likely turn to the macabre—the gruesome horror and physical agony of nails being driven through human flesh. Although that was bad enough—and struck terror in the hearts of the bravest of men, even in the morbid world of the first century—there was a special horror to death by crucifixion among the Jewish people.

All victims of the cross were automatically under the wrath of God.

In the Book of Deuteronomy, the Lord had explicitly warned Israel: “Anyone who is hung on a tree is under God’s curse” (Deuteronomy 21:23).

The lowest point in the humiliation of Jesus was exactly this: that He willingly placed Himself under the judgment of God in His death. Yet again note how Jesus was in complete control even in this degradation. The Son of God deliberately and freely chose to relinquish His divine glory, to empty Himself and come among us as a man, then to lower Himself still further all the way to death in obedience to the Father’s will. And He suffered no ordinary death, but the superordinary death of the cross, there to be cursed for us in His death, thus bursting the bonds of the curse that held all mankind captive.

The message of the lowly Lamb of God comes as healing medicine for our soul. For our Lord Jesus walked the lowly, lonely road that led to the cross precisely to remove the injury and hurt that you and I have done in our sinful pride. The death He died on His cross in lowliness and humility **was our death.** The curse He bore in that shameful death **was our curse.**

Now the power of that curse is broken. The warfare between God and mankind is over and done. The miserable record of our sin, all the hurt and shame of it, is blotted out in Jesus’ blood.

In exchange for the misery of our sin, we receive the very life of Christ, the lowly Lamb of God. Baptized into Him, we receive His lowliness and humility as a gift, to live by faith no longer in ourselves but in Him who died for us and was raised in joyful glory.

In Jesus name Amen