

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

The devotions this week are written by Lisa Liou. Lisa is the founder and executive director of All Gen Movement, a Christian ministry dedicated to healing the generations and renewing the Church. She previously served over 20 years with InterVarsity, most recently as Regional Director in the Western US. She is married to Jeff, an ordained CRC minister, and together they live in Monrovia, CA with their two teenagers.

Philippians 2:5-11

*5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, 6 who, though he existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, 7 but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, assuming human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human, 8 he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death— even death on a cross. 9 Therefore God exalted him even more highly and gave him the name that is above every other name, 10 so that at the name given to Jesus every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

Today we continue our reflection on Philippians 2 with an emphasis on verse 8. Here we learn that Jesus Christ, “eternally begotten of the Father,” according to the Nicene Creed, has humbled himself. His trajectory continues in a downward path. First emptying himself, then assuming human likeness, he now humbles himself to death on a cross!

This poem has some of the richest Christology in all the scripture, giving us a behind-the-curtain understanding of Jesus’ life before he incarnated as a baby. The Trinity, God’s three-in-one nature, is a complex concept that defies our human understanding.

The incarnation is a very personal concept because it brings Christ so close to us. As The Message translation says, “God put on flesh and moved into the neighborhood.” (John 1:14) At the same time, it is a mysterious and paradoxical concept. How can Jesus be both God and human? How can he willingly empty himself out of his equality with the Godhead and submit to a path of obedience unto death?

In seminary I sometimes heard arguments that called this “cosmic child abuse.” It was seen by some folks as creating a glorified ethic of a parent (God the Father) inflicting pain and suffering on his son (Christ) for a greater good. While some Christians may misconstrue such an ethic out of the story, this can be avoided by holding together the truth that Jesus was always one with the Godhead, even in his incarnation. He was never without agency. Since God is three-in-one, in one essence, God sends Godself in human form to be the ultimate loving sacrifice.

God doesn’t die on the cross though. Because God can’t die. But the Son temporarily dies in the flesh until he is raised by his other essence, the resurrection power of God. (We’ll get to that part tomorrow).

But first, what can we say about a member of the Trinity humbling himself unto death? We can say that we have the only religion where God Godself sacrifices out of love for God’s people. We can say that humility is the way of Christ and the way of our faith.

In fact, there is no true expression of Christianity that is not humble. According to James 4:6, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

Time and again we see our culture and history come up with distortions of the gospel. They are often clothed in strength, power, and human authority. Jesus' birth as a fragile infant, born to a poor family in exposed conditions made him as vulnerable as any other human born on planet earth.

In a sense, God protects his enormous supernatural power by presenting in a form that cannot be misused: humility. Humility is the container that allows the power to emulate God's character.

Every true follower of Christ is expected to represent Christ in the same way. Not by human strength, but by God's power made perfect in our weakness.

It's unfortunate that our society is propelled away from such weakness. We confuse human might for God's strength and favor, when, in fact, God chooses vulnerable vessels to portray his power and love. He does not make it seductive to human appetite. He makes it visible for those longing to see and willing to take up their own cross.

Who is a role model to you of quiet, gentle strength in God? Are you willing to have the container of humility to handle the supernatural power of God? These last two days we have turned our palms open to release what we have been grasping, receiving God's good invitations instead.

Right now, take a moment to sit with your palms in that open and upright receiving position, let God know what feels seductive to you. Ask God to help you maintain the humble posture of release and openness instead.