

# Topical Message –20 April 2025

## “The Paradox Of True Greatness”

### Opening Scriptures & Background

\*The resurrection of Jesus is the celebration of victory over death itself!

\*But this is the end of the story of death’s defeat

\*How did the drive toward death’s defeat begin?

\*The way of Christ’s ascension to heaven began when He first descended & conformed to God’s plan

\*But what does this descending & conforming involve? How did Christ do it, how do we do it?

\*Spiritually speaking, the way up is the way down; it’s “The Paradox Of True Greatness”

**\*Today, we’ll look at 3 keys to this spiritual descending, but first let’s look at these principles applied to individuals (Turn awhile to Gen 3)**

# #1 – Let's look at the Example of Satan

## Evolution teaches the lie of human-effort ascension

1. R. Dawkins, “Evolution is a climb up a mountain of complexity, not b/c there is some inevitable striving towards progress, but b/c natural selection favors incremental improvements in survival & reproduction”
2. Herbert Spencer coined ‘Survival of the fittest’ saying, “Evolution is a process of continual adaptation & refinement, leading to higher complexity & intelligence.”
3. Yet the Bible says, we're sinful from birth & getting worse (Psm 51:5)
  - a. We improved tech, but usually for selfish gain
  - b. 50% of scientists now are devoted to weapons
4. Even 2<sup>nd</sup> Law of Thermodynamics (Entropy) tells us all things are moving toward disorder
  - a. Evolution lies teaching a “monkeys to man” growth process, yet it's not witnessed in nature
5. Now, Darwinian Evolution isn't the murderer of western society, it's simply the murder weapon

- a. This ungodly idea of getting better & better comes from the murderer himself
- b. Read John 8:44 – This was even happening in the Garden of Eden...let's take a look

Turn to Gen 3:1-7 – Satan's taught this lie in Garden

Read Gen 3:1-3

- 1. Satan's craft is to look like he's telling truth
  - a. II Cor 11:14 – he looks as an angel of light
  - b. He wants us to doubt God's Word
- 2. Satan wants to push us into harmful areas
  - a. Pride & lust will do that

Read Gen 3:4-5

- 1. Satan wants them to deny God's Word & work their own path toward improvement
- 2. He wants them to 'know what God knows'
  - a. This is a claim that you can be God! Wrong
  - b. Challenged Adam & Eve 'you shall ascend'
- 3. He wants them unsatisfied & lusting for more
  - a. We will believe that God is satisfying or not

Read Gen 3:6-7

1. What I notice here is that the tempter is nowhere to be found
2. Next time we see him is 2,000 yrs later with Job

Turn to Isa 14:12-15 – Why would Satan do this?

Read Isa 14:12-15

1. He's motivated by the desire to ascend
2. He's not satisfied w/ role God created for him
3. He wants to spread this discontentment & pride
4. Yet he'll be brought down to mourn in hell

## **#2 – Let's look at the Example of Jesus**

Turn to Phil 2:3-8 – Our King Jesus descended

Read Phil 2:3-4

1. So, we're told to be like Christ in humility

Read Phil 2:5-6

1. II Cor 4:4 & Col 1:15 says that He's the very image (or icon) of God - & everyone knew it

## Read Phil 2:7-8

1. 'No reputation' to be made neutral or emptied
  - a. Isa 53:2 says 'no beauty to win our hearts'
  - b. Jesus didn't just descend to earth to be the king of men, but to be the lowest of man
2. He took on the form (shape) & fashion (external condition) of a man
  - a. Humility brings submission to higher power
  - b. This is perfect submission (willing to die)
3. Jesus is epitome of descending from highest possible position to the lowest possible position

Turn to Luke 4:1-13 – Our King Jesus was tempted by Satan to ascend the wrong way

## Read Luke 4:1-3

1. Jesus had a habit of disciplining his fleshly will
2. We need to train ourselves to value the spiritual

## Read Luke 4:4-13

1. Jesus had the choice to gain everything in submission to Satan or to God

- a. He chose obedience to God's Word
- b. He chose humility & acceptance of His position
- c. He chose submission to God's will & delayed gratification

Turn to Matt 22:15-33 – Our King Jesus was tempted by the world to ascend all thru His earthly ministry

Read Matt 22:15-22

- 1. Vs 18 - Why tempt Me
- 2. Jesus accepted & taught to submit humble to our positions in life

Read Matt 22:23-33

- 1. Notice the continual reliance on God's Word to defeat the temptations of the world
- 2. He could have destroyed them w/ His very breath but didn't

Turn to Matt 26:36-44 – Our King Jesus was tempted by His own flesh to ascend the wrong way

Read Matt 26:36-41

1. Disciples flesh was really struggling, but so was Jesus with His flesh
2. He never failed, but the struggle is real

Read Matt 26:42-44

1. This is the final & hardest submission to the Father's will
2. Even the recognition that He's facing the wrath of God is a demonstration of belief in God's prophesied Word

Turn back to Phil 2:8-11 – Our King Jesus that 1<sup>st</sup> descended has now earned the right to ascend

1. Read Phil 2:8b-11 – Obedience unto death, gained Him life
2. Read Eph 4:8-10 – Obedience to the 'descending' enabled Him to snatch us from death and bring us into life with Him

### **#3 – Let’s look at the Example of the Believer**

Humble ourselves & God will lift us up (Jam 4:10)

1. Let’s read Matt 23:11-12
  - a. Greatest will be the servant of all
2. Our value isn’t in our work advancing us, but in that we’re created in God’s image to be born again becoming His kids for eternity

We’re challenged to live by this new hope (I Pet 1:3)

1. Read Rom 6:8-11 – The humility of believing ourselves dead, gains us the reward of new birth
2. As John the Baptist said, “He must increase, I must decrease” (John 3:30)

Jesus has given us a promise of life in Revelation

1. Read Rev 2:10
2. Be faithful unto death to receive the crown of life



## In Closing - Recap

Let's review the keys to spiritually descending in order to ascend that we've seen in these examples

1. Belief in God's Word, can violate our sight
  - a. Your choice – live by the limited knowledge of our sight or by the unlimited Word of God
2. Humility of Identity, b/c we're the king's kids & His servants
  - a. Jesus said, "Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist: notwithstanding he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than John"
  - b. What a valuable position to be His servants
3. Disposing of self will/desire, for delayed gratification
  - a. Read Rev 2:17a- Don't eat the Garden's apple & God will give us everlasting manna

Be clear, this spiritual descending is NOT the way to eternal life, but simply the pattern of those that HAVE eternal life

Only Jesus perfectly obeyed God's Word & standard

Only Jesus lived and died as perfect

Only Jesus offered His innocent blood for the payment of sin

Only Jesus would offer His reward to us sinners

Have you been rescued from despair & death?

Have you accepted Jesus' work on the cross for your entrance into a life of liberty?

Do it today!