

Session 10 The Humility of God

Please refer to the teaching notes for this message.

INTRODUCTION

Not just God the Son, but God the Father and the Spirit. It's a most remarkable reality that the Most High God who has all power is also the most humble. I want to look at the magnificence of Jesus related to His humility. Now all the religions of the world have different views of God, but none of them have a god that's humble. This is a surprising revelation in terms of the religious history of the nations: that our God isn't only powerful and loving but is profound in His humility.

Now as we understand His humility, it has a tremendous impact upon our heart. It's not just an interesting topic, but it moves us deeply, and what I want to focus on in this message is the humility of God and how it moves us to love and admire Him. *Admire* is a sort word; it's bigger than admiring, but filled with admiration. "Jesus, I trust You! I feel gratitude towards You and towards Your leadership. I trust Your leadership."

And not only that, but it produces confidence in our heart to relate to Him because He's so relatable. He isn't grouchy and quick to anger; quite the opposite. He loves us, but more than that, or in addition to that, He's so humble in His approach toward us.

And then thirdly, we find inspiration. It's not my focus in this message of imitating humility and walking it out, but that's an inevitable impact. When we see this, when I see it, I say, "Lord I want to be like that! I admire You so much, I have confidence to draw near to You, but I want to be like You."

THE ONLY CHARACTER TRAIT JESUS EVER ASCRIBED TO HIMSELF

Now love and humility are like twin virtues. There can be some distinctions between them if you want to get really specific. However, they're really expressed together, as they're two sides of the same coin. In Matthew 11, Jesus said, "Take My yoke and learn from Me, because I am humble" (Mt. 11:29, paraphrased). One translation says, "Lowly in heart" (NKJV), but the others say *humble* or *meek*.

Now this is the only character trait that Jesus ever identified about Himself. He's wise, but He never said, "I'm wise." He's holy, but He never said, "I'm holy." The only character trait that He proclaimed about Himself is this: "I'm humble." And then He gave us an exhortation with a promise: "Learn from Me." Now in this exhortation He's promising to teach us if we desire to learn. He's saying, "I will teach you."

It's not only that we would imitate Him, though of course that's in focus here in this verse, but that we would admire Him; that we would see Him and say, "Wow! Who are You? Who is this Man who loves us so much?"

THE ONE WITH NO PRIDE HAS EVERY REASON TO BE PROUD

Now Jesus has every reason to be proud; that's the remarkable thing. The most humble man has the most reasons to be proud. I mean, think about His accomplishments. We start with Genesis 1. He created the heavens and the earth (Jn. 1:1-3). I mean, imagine having Genesis 1 on Your resume! My goodness, the accomplishments! In one of the other sessions we looked at His destiny in Revelation 5. He's going to govern the earth. World dominion is His, for sure. It will be openly seen by all the nations. That's His destiny, to rule every sphere of the earth. His relationship with the Father: no man has ever been so close to the Father as Jesus. In His accomplishments, His destiny, and His intimacy with the Father, He had every reason to be proud, yet

He's the most humble. I mean, when we accomplish something small, like building a billion-dollar business or a worldwide ministry, we as humans are tempted with pride. Jesus' accomplishments are so much greater and He's unmoved in terms of pride. No pride has ever touched His soul.

Now the good thing about humility is that everyone can have it. It's the ultimate definition of greatness from God's point of view. It's the ultimate; it's the premier standard for greatness and everyone can have it. You could have no gifts, no abilities, no education, no money and everything going badly and still grow in humility and walk in greatness before God. It's remarkable!

Paragraph C. Now Jesus didn't just put on humility to accomplish a task. It's not like He was at the Father's right hand and the Father said, "Son, You must go down to the earth and become a man."

He takes a deep breath, comes to the earth, walks out His task for thirty-three years, then goes back to heaven and says, "Wow, that was intense! What an intense season of humility." Then he takes off the garment of humility, lays it aside, and says, "Never again do I want to go through something that intense." That's not what He did. Humility isn't a task or an assignment that He accomplished; it's His eternal nature. It's who He is in His heart from eternity past. It's what He enjoys. He actually enjoys humility. He has existed eternally in the form of God as a servant with humility.

"THE SON OF MAN DID NOT COME TO BE SERVED, BUT TO SERVE"

Now we know that when He took upon Himself the form of man He walked in humility, but what might be new to some people is that even in the form of God He had the same level of humility. It wasn't expressed for the people in the earth to see it, but it existed, for the very fountain of humility is in His being. In Matthew 20 He tells us, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve" (Mt. 20:28).

Now this is interesting because this phrase "the Son of Man" is a very important phrase. It points back to the famous prophecy in Daniel 7:13-14. It's the Son of Man prophecy. There's only one Son of Man prophecy in the Old Testament, in Daniel 7, and it's the prophecy Jesus referred to more than any other prophecy in the whole Bible. It's the one where the Messiah as a man is promised the dominion of the world. And again, this is the title Jesus referred to the most; therefore it's the prophecy He referred to the most. He called Himself the Son of Man, saying, "I'm the Guy from Daniel 7. I'm the Man talked about in Daniel 7." That's the only time that phrase was ever used in the Old Testament about God. In other words, when Jesus was talking about His promise of world dominion as a man, He said, "You have to understand, as the One who will lead all the nations of the earth, I'll do it with the attitude of service. I came to serve, and even as the Son of Man I'll be a servant forever."

Now He tied world dominion together with humility. He said that the meek, the humble, would inherit the earth (Mt. 5:5). Jesus the most humble will have the greatest leadership of the earth, but He said, "Anyone who will be humble like Me, you can share the government of the earth with Me in the age to come."

He pronounced it and gave us insight into His value system and into the economy of the kingdom. He said, "The greatest will always be those who were the most humble." Now Jesus, we know, is and will ever be the greatest Man. That means He'll always be the most humble Man, even in the age to come. There will be none who can surpass Him in humility.

THE GOD WHO KNEELS IN SERVANTHOOD TO WASH OUR DIRTY FEET

John 13 is the well-known account in the upper room where Jesus took off His robe, girded Himself with the towel, and washed the feet of His disciples. This is a most remarkable revelation of His heart. He takes His robe off, girds Himself with a towel, kneels down, and washes the dirty feet of the broken men who are His disciples. Now He did it as an example, but more than an example. It was more than just an example for men to follow; it was an expression of His core identity. It's who He is in time and in eternity.

Jesus has the robe of dignity. He's King of kings, and on that robe it says His title, "King of kings" (Rev. 19:16). He has the title of royalty. But beloved, beneath that robe forever is that same Man with the towel girded around His waist. He revealed this to the disciples, though they couldn't understand it in that moment. He revealed the kneeling God, the God who kneels in servanthood to wash the dirty feet of broken people and delights in doing it. He was fully at home washing the disciples' feet. He wasn't in any way untrue to who He is forever as God when He did that.

WE WILL NEVER SERVE HIM MORE THAN HE SERVES US

Now the world religions all seek a god with power, but Jesus revealed the God who kneels to serve and delights in it. He's the God of power, but that's not the whole story. We will never understand the truth about His glory unless we see the kneeling God with the servant heart. We need that facet of His character to understand His power in the right way, for no one has power and humility combined together like this Man does, fully God, fully Man.

Well, lest you think it was a one-time example at His first coming, in Luke 12, He describes Himself at His second coming. He gives a parable talking about Himself, calling Himself the Master. He says, "Blessed are those servants whom the master, when he comes, will find watching" (Lk. 12:37). But here's the remarkable declaration. This is Jesus describing Himself at the second coming. He says, "He will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them" (ibid). What!?! Jesus serve His people? Surely His people serve Him! Both of them are true. However, beloved, as we serve Him now and forever, be sure of this we will never serve Him more than He serves us, never. We will never have more humility. We will never give more to Him than He gives to us, never. He will outgive us; He will outserve us. He'll have more humility forever than any other man. This is the One that we love so much.

Again, *admiration* seems like such a weak word, but I admire Him. I trust Him. I'm so grateful for who He is. "I want to be near You. I want to be like You." That's the cry of what I feel in my heart when I see these truths. I only see dimly, but with the little that I see I just want more of it. "Holy Spirit, let me see what You see and feel what You feel when You gaze on the humility of Jesus."

JESUS WILL CONQUER THE WORLD TO PRODUCE HUMILITY IN THE NATIONS

Well, we find another description of the second coming in Psalm 45:4. In context, this is describing Jesus and His victory over all the powers of darkness when He returns to the earth in majesty and in a display of power never seen before in history. He utterly defeats all the enemies that have risen up against Him throughout history. It's an absolute defeat: no enemy survives this victorious, conquering time when Jesus returns. However, look at this: when He comes forth in His majesty and His great display of power, when He comes forth in victory, He triumphs over every enemy, and everyone loses. He wins everything. I mean, everyone who opposed Him loses.

Look at what it says, though. “He did this for the sake of humility” (Ps. 45:4, paraphrased). In other words, He acted from humility. Everything He did in His power, He did in perfect humility. There wasn’t a trace of pride in His being when He won the ultimate victory before all the nations. There was no trace of pride. He did it from humility, but not only that: He did it *for* humility, to produce humility in the nations.

And as the nations observe this, continuing on into the millennial kingdom, those nations that continue in the natural will be overwhelmed at His power and the way He carried His power and administrated it with perfect humility. It will actually be used to produce humility in the nations.

MEEKNESS IS POWER UNDER RESTRAINT

Now here’s a really simple definition of meekness: meekness is power under control. Meekness isn’t weakness. Meekness is when power is perfectly restrained so that it serves its rightful purpose. The word *meekness* is often used in relation to a horse. When a horse is being trained, when a horse is broken of its wildness and all of its strength is harnessed and brought under perfect control so that its strength can be maximized, the horse is called *meek*. It’s not weak, but meek. All the strength of that horse is brought under focus and control.

Jesus uses His power in perfect meekness. He only uses it to produce humility, love, and righteousness to fill the earth with truth; never, ever to show forth pride in any way.

Paragraph H. God is so attracted to humility. I want to add a verse here, 1 Peter 3:4, where Peter describes God’s view of humility and how attractive it is to God. Here Peter calls humility “a gentle and quiet spirit” (1 Pet. 3:4). Humility clearly has an incorruptible beauty in God’s eyes. It’s very precious. The reason it’s so beautiful and so precious to Him is because it’s the very description of the heart of God as seen in the face of Jesus.

JESUS WAS GIVEN TWO NATURES IN THE INCARNATION

Let’s look at Page 2. Look at Philippians 2. This is, I believe, the premier passage in the New Testament on the humility of God. Philippians 2:6-9 lays it out so clearly. There are other very important passages on God’s humility, but none that surpasses these few verses right here. It’s the humility of God seen in the Incarnation. Now when I say “the humility of God,” I don’t just mean the humility of Jesus. Jesus is fully God and will be God forever. However, when Jesus became Man, not only was He expressing His own humility; He was telling the Father’s story as well. He was telling us what the Father is like as well as displaying His own humility.

Well, it’s in the context of the Incarnation. The Incarnation, as most of you know, is when Jesus became a human. When Jesus became a man, when He was incarnate at that time, He had two natures. God the Father only has one nature, the nature of God. Jesus is the only One in existence with two natures, fully God and fully Man. And He’ll be fully God and fully Man forever. It’s so remarkable that He’ll still be a Jewish man a billion years from now. He’ll never, ever take off the garments of humanity and lay them aside. He’ll always be human; that was part of how it worked.

“WITHOUT CONTROVERSY, GREAT IS THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS”

Now the Incarnation is a great mystery: how it is that Jesus could be fully God and fully Man at the same time with no contradiction. No one can fully grasp this mystery. Paul tells us, “Without controversy”—there’s no debate about it—“great is the mystery of godliness” (1 Tim. 3:16). “It’s a great mystery. We can’t contain it in

our understanding in this age.” We can see hints of it; we can see some of the broad-stroke principles, but we can’t resolve all of the tensions that are involved in this great mystery: the great mystery of godliness.

And Paul goes on and says, “Here it is: God in the flesh!” Now God in the flesh is a difficult concept. As God, Jesus has infinite abilities; as Man in the flesh He has finite abilities. And so which is it? Does He have finite or infinite abilities? How does it work? Well as God, He knows everything.

As a man, as a child, He’s learning and growing in wisdom. How can One who is God grow in wisdom? Well as God, He knows everything, and as a man He grows in wisdom. As God He has all power; as a man He became tired and hungry and had to sleep and eat. As God by the Spirit He can be everywhere at the same time; His presence is everywhere. As a man He’s contained and restricted to be in one place with a physical body at one time. Which is it? Is He here or is He not here? Does He know or does He not know? Jesus on the earth—what a mystery!

JESUS, VINDICATED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

But the mystery takes on a whole new dimension with the next phrase: He was “justified in the Spirit” (1 Tim. 3:16b), or “vindicated” in the Spirit, some translations say. In other words, God in the flesh is one mystery when He walks on the earth for thirty-three years. Now God in the flesh is in heaven with a resurrected body in the resurrection; that’s a whole different set of mysteries. How does it work? Is He really a man or sort of a man? Is He everywhere or is He in just one place? Does He still have a physical body? Yes. Well, how does a physical body work?

As a mature apostle, Paul said, “I’m still baffled by it. It’s a great mystery.”

I’ve read on this topic over the years; it’s a very engaging and challenging topic. Some theologians have what I call an inappropriate confidence in their intellectual ability to grasp this. It’s called *pride*. I’ve read some and they land all of the issues. They get it; there are no tensions. I doubt that. Paul said, “Great is the mystery.” When you encounter a burning bush, it’s better to bow before it and worship and not pretend to comprehend all the properties of that bush. It’s better to bow and say, “You’re God!” Let’s leave things alone. Let’s let the tensions remain unresolved.

That’s just a short, little exhortation for those who presume to land all of the details and argue and fight and debate about how much they know. We’re talking about the Great Mystery of the God-Man. There is no greater mystery before the human mind. Combine that together with the Three-in-One, Triune God in the Trinity. Three persons in one Godhead, perfect unity, yet with distinctions: the great mystery of God.

HE MADE HIMSELF OF NO REPUTATION

Paragraph B. Philippians 2:5-8:

“Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Phil. 2:5-8)

There are so many key phrases, you could write a book on each one of them. There are so many key phrases in this one, short passage. Let’s go through it again and just highlight one or two points. This is a mountain that

you could climb your entire life without ever attaining the summit. Even in the age to come we will be plumbing the depths of these truths.

YOU HAVE TO BE A HUMAN IN ORDER TO SAVE HUMANS

Let's start with verse 6. He was in the form of God, which includes the idea that all the power and the privilege of being God belong to Jesus. Jesus is as much God as the Father is. He's the uncreated God, like His Father and like the Spirit. And so in the form of God all the honor, all the privilege, all the power of deity is rightfully His.

However, there's one problem: if He's going to redeem humans, He has to become human. Because God can't save humans; a human has to save humans. I'm talking about saving in the sense of becoming the offering, the sacrifice, the payment for their sins.

And so God looked at His Son and said, "You have to be human to save humans. To be the human High Priest You have to be a human, and You have to be a human forever. That means, when I send You there to the earth"—God so loved the world that He gave His only Son—He said, "You can't walk in all of the privileges and power that You've enjoyed forever."

And so Jesus didn't consider it robbery to be equal with God. Now the word *robbery* is a difficult word to work through. The King James and the New King James use that word. Almost all the other translations say essentially, "He didn't consider those privileges something to cling to." I don't really know why the King James uses the word *robbery*; most commentators agree that that's not the best translation. So I'm going to use the more common translation, that though Jesus dwelt in the form of God with all the privileges of deity, He didn't clutch, grasp, forcibly cling to these privileges, because He couldn't retain them and become a man and become the offering for our sin. He laid them aside. He didn't cease to be God, but He said, "Here's what I'll do: I will live within the confinement of humanity to save humans." What an amazing decision that He made; it's remarkable. He said, "I won't hang on to my rightful privileges as God. I will go to the earth. I will bear being tired and hungry. I will be misunderstood. I will have limitations that I've never known before, but I'll do this."

Paragraph C. Number 1: He didn't insist on His rights to live free from rejection and pain and humiliation. Can you imagine the uncreated God of Genesis 1 feeling pain and being rejected? The One who's worshiped by angels is going to be written off by puny men on the earth. He's going to bear humiliation—remarkable! How could One who created the heavens and the earth ever be hungry or tired? But He said, "Yes, I'll do that. That's the price that I'll pay that I could win them and that they would be Mine in relationship forever. I'll do it."

However, the point I'm making isn't just how extreme it is, but that this is the quality of His humility from eternity past. This is the nature of what His heart is like. This wasn't a decision that He had to psych Himself up for; He actually walked out the reality of being a servant with a humility, which He has always been.

HE EMPTIED HIMSELF OF HIS REPUTATION IN THE EYES OF MEN

Number two. In denying Himself these privileges He wasn't denying His true identity as God. He didn't lay aside His deity; He laid aside His privileges and the power to operate as God. He says, "I'm still God, but I'm still true to My nature as God," because God is humble forever. God is most humble.

Paragraph D: He didn't insist on being honored. He didn't insist on being understood, but rather emptied Himself of His reputation in the eyes of men. And the point I'm making is that this wasn't a challenge for Him, not this part. He said, "I can do humility; it's who I am at the core of My being. This is not a garment that's foreign to Me."

He embraced a lifestyle where everyone underestimated Him, all the time—not just once or twice! Here He is at twenty years old in the carpenter's shop. He makes a beautiful table. The lady says, "Young man, what a beautiful table!"

He created the trees that produced the wood for the table. She has no idea who He is. She appreciated the table; she has no idea that He created the earth. He's underestimated all the time; even by Mary, who knows the most about Him. And John, His beloved apostle—when He shows John His glory in the book of Revelation, John falls like a dead man and says, "I never really understood who You are."

No one knew how superior His abilities were. He concealed them; when they saw Him they saw nothing that was unusual or distinct. He was just the delightful young Man who worked in the carpenter's shop who was kind to other people. He had a lot of potential. I mean, if He really stayed with it he might have three or four carpenter shops one day in Nazareth on each corner of town. He could really make a name for Himself, but He was content to be seen as an ordinary man. I mean, He has Genesis 1 accomplishments in His past! He has world dominion as His destiny in the future, but no one even knows a hint of that. I mean, His mother knew, and the apostles began to catch on, but they didn't understand the fullness.

The problem is that He wasn't troubled by that. He wasn't enduring this humiliation. If they only knew that He was as comfortable concealing as He was with revealing, because humility is where His heart is forever. This is the Man who's going to rule the earth before all the nations. "He has no form or comeliness" (Isa. 53:2). He had no form no particular status in society. He had no comeliness, no unusual attractiveness where He stuck out as head of the class; He wasn't unanimously voted "most likely to succeed." No, He didn't win that.

WE FLAUNT OUR BLESSINGS FOR THE SAKE OF RESPECT

Paragraph E. Imagine if you were the wealthiest person on earth, and you never used your wealth on yourself. What's more, you never let anyone know you had the wealth. I mean, if you had power, whether financial or social or whatever position you had, if you have power, even the most humble want to whisper it a little. "You know, I could buy that for you! Oops, I'm not supposed to say that, but I probably could... ha, ha, ha, ha, hint, hint, hint!"

"You could? How could you afford that?"

"Well, oops, I shouldn't have said that..."

The reason we like people to know is because it changes the way people relate to us. If people know you have wealth, power, or influence, they relate to you differently.

Jesus said, "I don't need them to relate to Me on that basis. I'm content to walk as a servant, content to live in humility instead of being known as the powerful, influential One in Nazareth."

AS A LIMITED HUMAN, HE EXPRESSES THE GLORY OF HIS FATHER

Paragraph G. As a weak, limited human being—in the same way we’re all weak in comparison with God—as a weak man with limitations, He’s expressing the glory of His Father’s personality. His display of the Father’s glory wasn’t put on hold because of His limitations as a man, but in His meekness He was telling the nations what God the Father was like at the heart level.

Now the nations didn’t catch the message, but Jesus was displaying it. He didn’t lose His identity as God by becoming a person, but rather He was expressing the truth about what the nature of God is. He was expressing the truth about God, not concealing God, by showing His meekness and His restraint.

OF ALL THE THINGS GOD COULD ASK, HE ASKS THAT WE LOVE HIM

John 17:24 is one of my favorite prayers of Jesus. He’s praying to the Father. He says, “Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am” (Jn. 17:24). He said, “I want them with Me forever. I want them with Me: that’s why I’m offering Myself for them.”

My question is, “Why?” Honestly, I’ve thought of this many times. I say, “Lord, You said the first commandment is to love You with all of our hearts. *That’s* what You want most? You’re God. You have all power. What do You want most? That humans would love You with all of our hearts. Why? You’re so powerful. You’re so interesting. We’re so broken. We’re so boring! Why do You care if we love You? I don’t get it. What do we give You by loving You? How are You stronger? How are You enriched because weak and broken people love You? Why is this so big on Your agenda? Why is it number one?”

Beloved, beauty is in the eye of the Beholder. It’s a revelation of His humility, the value that He esteems in our lives.

GOD CONDESCENDS TO SHARE HIS GOVERNMENT WITH US FOREVER

I mean, it’s remarkable. He doesn’t just want us to be with Him; He wants to share the government of the nations with us, the undeserving ones (Rev. 3:21)! None of us deserve salvation; how much less do we deserve sharing the government of the earth in the age to come? Why would He want to share it with us?

In Revelation 3:21, He promises to share His government, His inheritance with us, which is what “sitting on His throne” means. The Father has a plan from ages past. His plan is most remarkable; no religion of the world could ever think of such a plan. The Father conceives of this plan in His heart; He determines it. He decided to create a natural realm, because in ages past there was only a heavenly realm. The angels might have said, “What is a natural realm? What is an earth?”

“You’ll see. Then I will govern the earth with humans.”

“What is a *human*?” the angels might have asked.

“You’ll see. And for billions of years humans who voluntarily choose humility and love will be connected to My Son. I’ll join the heavenly realm and the earthly realm together on the earth and then I’ll tabernacle with man upon the earth. I’ll put My throne on the earth in the midst of multitudes of humans who are dwelling in love and humility in a voluntary way and love will never be diminished on the planet ever again, never. That’s My plan.”

“Wow!”

So the Father is going to have the heavenly realm and the earthly realm brought together. He’s going to put His throne on the earth. And the earth will be governed and love will be sustained and maintained as multitudes of weak and broken people are saved and redeemed. And they voluntarily choose love and humility in a way that never diminishes.

Did you know that in the age to come we won’t be robotic? We won’t be automated to love! “I... have... resurrection body! I love You! Anything You want, Master!” That’s not what it will be like. We won’t be automated. Yes, with a resurrected body there will be no sin, but remember this: the angels didn’t have sin before they rebelled. What will keep humans from rebelling? The angels weren’t created with sin. Yet they rebelled against God. The humility and the love of God openly revealed will produce such gratitude and the people of God will so trust and admire Jesus that they’ll respond in voluntary humility forever. Yes, they have a resurrected body, but they’re saying yes to a humility and gratitude that will never diminish.

The Father has devised a master plan whereby His humility is made known to the nations. However, that’s not the end of the plan. The revelation of His love and humility will have an impact, and people will actually choose humility as a voluntary choice that will be sustained forever with the power of the resurrection in their resurrected body. It’s remarkable.

POWER DOESN’T PRODUCE HUMILITY; HUMILITY PRODUCES HUMILITY

The power of God doesn’t produce humility. People think, “Well, if God revealed His power everyone would be humble.” Well, God showed His power to the nation of Israel when He delivered them from Egypt. He sent ten plagues, divided the Red Sea, and brought them to a mountain that was set on fire by the glory of God. I mean, the nations were shaken, but in a short period of time they rebelled against God. Power doesn’t produce humility; humility produces humility. However, the master plan is an eternal earth that never diminishes in love, and the people have a voluntary choice throughout eternity. (I was going to say “to the end,” but there is no end!)

How could God produce this; so much so that His throne would be on the earth in the midst of them? Well, again, He doesn’t automate His people in the resurrection. He wins them entirely. Then again, power is not enough to win a heart to humility; history has proven that. The angels failed and they saw the power of God. Adam was in the garden with the power of God and he sinned. And the nation of Israel was led out of Egypt with power, and they all said no to God. Power is not enough.

ONE WHO IS SO HIGH WENT SO LOW TO BRING NEAR THOSE WHO ARE DEAR TO HIM

Paragraph J. The revelation of His glory includes seeing One who is so high, who went so low, to bring us so near because we’re so dear to Him. There are many facets of His glory, not just His power. His power is not enough. His transcendence, His infinite superiority isn’t the whole story. His infinite humility is another facet with His infinite power, but that’s not even the whole story; there’s more: He brings us so near! He cares so much. He doesn’t want to reign separately from us, but in deep, interactive partnership with us forever over the government of the earth.

“Why do You want this?”

Well, because He's love; He's humility. Only humility would conceive of such a plan.

Paragraph N. Jesus isn't out just to prove how powerful He is; He's out to win our hearts. He's out to produce humility in His people forever; that's the master plan: to show power, to show love, to show wisdom, to show humility, and end up with an earth that never diminishes in love and righteousness, so much so that the Father's throne dwells on the earth forever: God tabernacles with man on the earth (Rev. 21:3).

He didn't come as the God with jasper-like glory. Diamond is like jasper. God has diamond-like glory in His being. Jesus could have come as the jasper-like God and just wowed and dazzled the nations, but He came in a display of humility. Yes, we need the jasper-like glory; that dimension is critical. However, it's not enough by itself. There is a bigger picture of what God is after; dwelling with His people in deep partnership forever, never diminished. All of it in voluntary responses of love, because love that's automated and robotic isn't love. He doesn't want a programmed workforce; He wants a deeply moved bride that's an eternal partner.

God can dazzle us with power but He can't have relationship with us unless humility is in the expression of His personality. It takes the humility part; power is not enough. Humility isn't enough, either: it takes power; it takes wisdom. The whole thing together is what produces this dynamic, eternal relationship together on the earth.

“IN THE SHADOW OF HIS HAND HAS HE HIDDEN ME”

Isaiah 49 is one of the grand prophecies of Jesus in the Old Testament. Isaiah has this very unique experience. He “eavesdrops,” so to speak, upon a dialogue between the Father and the Son in heaven. By the Holy Spirit he gets to overhear a conversation. I don't know how that works, but the Holy Spirit shows this to Isaiah so that he can record the dialogue. And this record shows us the depths of Jesus' humility.

Now Isaiah lived 700 years before Jesus became a man, so this was a long time before Jesus came as the Messiah.

The chapter begins with four verses about Jesus' first coming, and then the rest of the chapter are the dynamics related to His second coming. And so it begins with Jesus speaking, and He makes what is undoubtedly a very surprising statement for Isaiah. He says, “The Father is going to hide Me under the shadow of His hand” (Isa. 49:2, paraphrased).

Isaiah goes, “Why would the Messiah be hidden? Why would He not appear at stage one in full glory? The Messiah is going to show up on the earth *hidden*?”

And then Jesus says it a second time; He's talking to the Father: “He will hide Me; He won't fully unveil My glory” (Isa. 49:2b, paraphrased).

Actually it's not just thirty-three years on the earth; in addition, for the next 2,000 years of church history Jesus is mostly hidden. And then at the second coming the Father lifts His hands and the nations see the grandeur and the glory of this Man. He's unveiled; He's no longer concealed. And so Jesus in verse 4 makes a statement: first a negative statement, then a positive statement, about what was happening in this time of being hidden. And we

see the depth of His humility and we admire Him so much, because He did this to accomplish our salvation so that we could be with Him forever. However, again, this humility is always what was in His heart.

“I HAVE LABORED IN VAIN; I HAVE SPENT MY STRENGTH FOR NOTHING”

He begins by giving us the esteem, the view, that men had of Him. He says, “I have labored in vain; I have spent my strength for nothing and in vain; yet surely my just reward is with the Lord, and my work with my God” (Isa. 49:4). He says, “I shall be glorious in the eyes of the Lord” (v. 5).

He starts off negative and He ends up positive: which is it? He’s saying from man’s point of view: “I labored for thirty-three years, and I achieved nothing—nothing notable.” For three and a half years of ministry, things seemed to go well. But in the end, He ended up with only 120 people following Him in the prayer room—that’s it! He achieved nothing notable in the eyes of men. He achieved nothing that men would celebrate.

Here He was in His twenties: this young Man had a good future in business. Maybe He’ll be mayor of the town one day! He has such excellent people skills, and people really seem to like Him. Suddenly He quits the family business and goes into preaching. The crowds are enormous, and they think, “Wow!”

Well, He gets a little carried away and suddenly they kill Him. He’s only thirty-three. No one is following Him: everyone left Him, poor Guy. That’s how men saw Jesus. We’re talking about the Most High God dwelling on the earth; that’s how it ended at stage one.

Jesus now gives His view: “I was glorious in the eyes of God!”

“THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, WITH WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED”

Paragraph B. Matthew 3:17. Before Jesus preached one sermon, this is before His ministry started. The Father bends over the balcony of heaven and says, “My Beloved, I’m so pleased with You” (Mt. 3:17).

“Well Father, I haven’t yet preached a sermon; how could You be that pleased with Me?”

“Oh, I’ve seen You walk in love and humility all these years. You’re a perfect expression of who I am.”

He hasn’t done anything yet in ministry, but He’s glorious in the eyes of the Father. And that’s the humility that, as a man, He walked in. That’s not even the whole of His humility, but just a part. That was but one facet of His humility. Of course, He took the privileges of deity and laid them aside for a season. He was locked into loving and serving, being true to His nature. There was no fanfare about Him at all.

THE SERVANT OF NATIONS WAS ABHORRED BY THE NATIONS HE SERVED

Paragraph C. Isaiah 49:7. Now the Father speaks. Now the Father answers. The last three and a half years of this young Man’s life would be pretty dramatic, but the Father said, “I’m pleased with You!” before they even happened. This must have confused Isaiah, because Isaiah knows he’s hearing information, receiving information about the Messiah.

Verse 7. Now the Father says to Jesus, “You know, Jesus, men are going to despise You” (Isa. 49:7, paraphrased).

Isaiah is thinking, “Why would they despise Him? He’s the Messiah. He’s God.” I don’t know that he knew He was God, but I don’t know how much Isaiah fully grasped his own prophecies. “Men will despise Him?” The Father tells the Son and Isaiah says, “Wow!”

He says, “Well it’s worse than that: the nation of Israel will actually abhor You! They’ll hate You not for thirty-three years only; for 2,000 years they’ll hate and abhor You.”

Isaiah doesn’t of course know how long it will go, but he’s a little perplexed. “But don’t worry, this won’t offend You. This won’t throw off My plan.” And the Father names Jesus with one of the great titles that God ever gave Jesus in the Bible: He calls Him, “Servant of all the nations” (Isa. 49:7, paraphrased). “For You’re the Servant of the nations! None of this will derail You; none of this will throw You off. You’ll stay steady and complete the task that I’ve given to You to do the work of salvation.” Why? “So that one day the earth would be filled with godly, humble, loving people under My authority connected to You, that My glory would fill the earth; that My throne could come down and love would never be diminished. I trust You, Jesus. You’re the Servant of the nations. You’re the Servant of the rulers of the earth. Even with all power You’ll maintain Your true identity as a servant.”

Then He goes on to describe the millennial kingdom. “The kings of the earth will come and see; the princes of the earth will worship You. They’ll be awestruck with Your leadership. They’ll want to obey You. They’ll give themselves to You. All the nations will admire You and completely give their hearts to You.”

And the Father says, “Because I’ve chosen You, I’ve trusted You with this whole plan, because I’ve seen Your humility from ages past.”

Paragraph G. Isaiah 66. Isaiah was having quite a time grasping this. Now the Father is speaking: “Heaven is My throne, and earth is My footstool” (Isa. 66:1)—and we know that the heavenly and the earthly realm are going to be brought together on the earth. That’s the Father’s plan. However, here’s the Father’s question of the ages. The Father says, “Well, I’m in the heavenly realm. I’m interacting with the earthly realm right now. I’m administrating My purposes, but here’s the question of the ages: where will My resting place be” (v. 1b, paraphrased)? “Where will My throne rest forever in perfect agreement with the environment, with the people, with the angels? Where is the place where My throne will rest undisturbed? Where I won’t strive with men or angels? Where will that be?”

Now we know that His dwelling place will come down to the earth; we know that from Revelation 21, but here God answers, and this is what He says: “I will dwell on the earth with My throne among a people who are of poor spirit and a contrite heart, who are humble like My Servant, My Son who brought them forth.”

It’s humility that creates the place where the humble God rests forever, meaning perfect agreement with His people. This is the God we serve. We love Him so much; He’s so beautiful to us. He’s the beautiful God, the humble God, Jesus.

MINISTRY TIME

Amen. Let’s stand. Jesus, we trust You! We admire You! We long to be near You. We want to see You for who You are! Show us Your humility.

Let's all close our eyes for just a moment, so that no one is distracting you, and contemplate the Lord's presence. Jesus, You're so humble. Your beauty is so great!