

12.22.24 / Philippians 2.5-8: Jesus our Sacrifice

I love the illustration that David closed with last week: *Father flying across the country to see his estranged son...: I've come all this way to tell you 'I love you' and to show you... What do you think he'll do?*

This scene reminds me of the later half of a story that you've heard before. It's a story that I hope is so rooted within you that you find it deeply familiar. And I hope that it's so deeply familiar that it rolls quickly off your tongue when opportunities arise.

(2) It's the story of **Glory / Rebellion / Justice / Mercy**.

The 3in1 God who existed before the creation of the world chose to share His **glory** by creating the world. The center of His creation – His crowning touch – was the creation of man and woman - created in His image. He **created us** to share in His community, to experience His Love, and to proclaim His **Glory**.

And then... **rebellion** occurred. Rather than proclaim God's glory, man & woman choose to seek self-glory. They chose to **rebel** against their maker. **We** chose to rebel against our maker.

The result was **justice**: Rebels (or sinners) against a Holy God must be **separated** from the Holy God; **that's** justice. This just punishment which is separation from God is both natural consequence and discipline; it is both spiritual death and a trajectory of physical death. **Justice** requires punishment for wrong doing.

While God administers **perfect Justice** (which we both celebrate and fear), He simultaneously works a plan of amazing **mercy**. At the center of that plan is a Savior who will display the most extravagant love that the world has ever encountered. That Savior - who pours out His **mercy** which combines with God's perfect **justice** which responds to our **rebellion** in a way that brings God **Glory** -That Savior is Jesus... *Who, being in very,.. (3) And being found in appearance...*

This morning I want to pause long enough to look and consider and take in anew... What it means that Jesus became **obedient to death, even death on a cross?**

The cross was a (4) humble sacrifice of substitution. (*Explore*)

(5) Humble: Marked by meekness or modesty – not prideful or arrogant. When many of us hear the term humble – we think painfully of a time when we *were humbled* – when our bravado or confidence was stripped from us and we were left (against our will) meek and exposed.

I was humbled **when** I tried my best and... *didn't do well on the test / didn't make the team/ job) / failed to achieve my goal. (relate/avoid)*

But the passage doesn't say that Jesus was *humbled*. It says he *humbled himself*. **He chose this**. A few weeks ago, David described this character of Christ as a self-sacrificial and self-emptying consideration for others. Verse eight focuses in on Christ's humble character playing out... in **obedience** to the cross.

If this was an act of obedience, it was a choice. The cross was not primarily something that evil men **did** to Jesus. While it *was* something that evil men participated in doing to Jesus, it **was primarily** a course that Jesus chose for himself out of obedience.

An obedience that has you humbling yourself – that's tough. *Students, what does this kind of obedience look like with your parents? For all of us, what would this kind of obedience to our Heavenly Father look like?*

He humbled himself by becoming obedient to death on the cross.

No one in the history of the world has ever set themselves on that kind of a trajectory of **humbling obedience**. This is the ultimate example of lowering oneself for others. He was stripped naked, beaten, stretched out, and nailed to a cross, to die slowly in full view of others.

He chose this **humble** act of obedience – obedience to the **just** and **merciful** plan of God the Father.

This **humbling** obedience was one of **sacrifice**.

A **(6) sacrifice** is an offering of sorts (in this case, to God). It's an act of adoration or allegiance – a giving away of something valuable as a tangible sign of your adoration or allegiance. Sacrifice is, by nature, costly. You are giving up something valuable.

Today, we often think about sacrifice in terms of time or money. We sacrifice time or money to show adoration or allegiance to certain people or causes.

Jesus sacrificed his life as an act of allegiance to and adoration for God the Father. In doing this, he was considering **our** plight above His own.

The cross was a **humble sacrifice** of... (lastly)... **(7) substitution**.

A **substitute** steps in or/ takes the place of someone.

Sometimes you **need** a substitute: **teacher**.

Sometimes you **don't want** a substitute: **basketball line up**.

A critical question is this: *Do you need/want a substitute? Test taker, house cleaner, grounded, etc. Do we need/want a substitute?*

The (Glory/Rebellion/Justice/Mercy) story teaches me that I need a **substitute**. As one who has **rebelled** against the Holy God, I deserve His **justice**... but I can't handle it.

I was recently reading through the minor prophets in my personal devotions and I came across this interesting passage in **(8) Joel 2:1-11** describing God's coming justice for those who have rebelled against Him. *Read it. Picture it...*

The coming judgement of God is an awful & devastating force. No person, no group, no army, no nation can stand up to this force: I did some research to help me step even more fully into this metaphor:

(9) Average punch - 150 psi

Trained boxer's punch – 750 psi (competitive guys thinking...)
Fatal blow to the head - 800 psi / Bone breaking - 900 psi
A horse kick – 2000 psi (*think warriors and horses...*)

Fires blazing: At 162 degrees human tissue is destroyed on contact.
Wildfire – burn at 1500 degrees. The force of this army...

(10) This is poetic language to be sure, but, what it is describing is a **very real spiritual reality**. I believe that the Bible is **the inspired** and infallible Word of God which is authoritative on all matters of which it speaks, **so...**

- this coming judgement *should be* for sinners scarier than the possibility of not passing the test, not making the team or not getting the job.
- this coming judgement should feel more certain than taxes or *just as certain* as the changing of seasons.

This judgement **is coming**. And we cannot endure it. For those who have rebelled against the rule of God at any point in your life, this is what awaits you/us on the day of judgement... **until... our substitute.**

(11) **Jesus became obedient to death, even death on a cross** – and in doing so, his death absorbed every pound of impact and every degree of heat of the fire of God's judgement. Jesus absorbed it all on the cross.

How can we even begin to quantify how hard he was hit?!

It is **in** the absorbing of this **hit** that we find the most extravagant mix of **perfect justice** and **amazing mercy**. For everyone who places faith in Jesus is covered by His work on the cross. His death was a substitutionary death for any who place faith in Him.

The cross is a humble sacrifice of substitution.

Jesus came from far away – from perfect peace with the Trinity – all the way to us (putting on human flesh – **entering the world as a baby**) to tell us He loves us **and** to **show us His Love**. In doing so, He redeems every sinner who places faith in Him.

I invite you to give your life to following this Jesus. Close in prayer.