

# Philippians 2

by John Nelson Darby

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*The sermon emphasizes the humility and obedience of Christ as a model for believers, highlighting the significance of His humanity and ongoing service in our lives.*

**Scripture:** Philippians 2:5

**Topics:** "Redemption", "Humility of Christ"

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## Description

John Nelson Darby emphasizes the dual nature of Christ, highlighting His humility and humanity as essential for our understanding of God and our relationship with Him. He explains that Christ's incarnation allows Him to associate with us, demonstrating perfect obedience and love through His suffering. Darby clarifies that 'working out your own salvation' is about personal responsibility in faith, not a contrast to God's work. He illustrates how Christ's life exemplifies the character of God and serves as a model for believers, culminating in His redemptive work on the Cross. Ultimately, Darby reassures that Christ continues to serve us even in glory, emphasizing His ongoing intercession and care for our spiritual cleanliness.

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## Transcript

We get here how the Lord humbled Himself, and associated us with Himself according to the counsels of God.

The Deity of the Lord Jesus is the basis of everything for our souls. Without it God could not be known to us. Who could leave His place but a Divine Person? I say that because I desire this evening to speak of His humanity, that brings Him specially near to our souls, and enables Him to associate us with Himself. It is His human place I speak of. It inspires our hearts with confidence. "In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily" that is the reality of humanity. "Though he were a Son yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered (Heb. 5:8). He understands it all as having gone through it. He never gives up the place in which He has associated us with Himself. He has set Himself apart in the glory that all that is divine may be presented to us in a Man - in Christ - and thus win the affections. He never gives it up nor will give it up.

There are several other passages to which I desire to refer, to show the reality of His having become a Man. But first I refer to verses 12 and 13, because they present a difficulty to some. "Work out your own salvation" is often taken as contracting our work with God's. It is a simple blunder. They had lost the Apostle, now they must do for themselves. If they had lost Paul, had they lost God? No: that is just what

they had not. It is our part in contrast with Paul's, not in contrast with God. The effect is to produce in Christians exactly the character of Christ. Verses 14 to 16 are word for word a description of what Christ was in this world. We are set to be practically what Christ was in it.

219 Now I turn to speak of the humiliation. Just by meditating on what He is we become like Him. The great starting point of all this wonderful truth is Proverbs 8, where Christ is spoken of as the wisdom and power of God before the world was. Before ever the world existed it was man, not angels, that was His delight and the object of the testimony of His grace in redemption. The delight - predilection of God (speaking reverently) - was in man.

All that God is morally has been brought out in redemption - holiness, majesty, love. "It became God . . . to make the Captain of our salvation perfect through sufferings. Now that was first expressed in incarnation. The redemption work was necessary to bring us into the enjoyment of it. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself." Perfect love was there in the presence of perfect evil - that which is not in heaven. There is no evil to bring out patience there. We can therefore follow Him step by step and learn God: thus only angels can see Him. There is spiritual power by grace to contemplate and feed upon it. God prepares the body for Him, and He says, in free love, "Lo I come to do Thy will O God."

Now I turn to Luke 2. It is sweet to see the perfect unjealous glorifying of God in these angelic and holy beings. All Christian doctrines are facts, so that the simplest can understand better than the wisest because he does not reason about it. "Glory to God in the highest, peace upon earth, good pleasure in man." Heaven itself is celebrating this wonderful thing that is proved by Christ becoming a Man. If you go to an inn it is a kind of epitome of the world: they look at you, scan you, and assign you your place. There was no place for Christ. He began in the manger and finished on the Cross, and had nowhere to lay His head all the way along. The moment He takes that place, man can deal with God so to speak, and refuse Him any place. In the end of the chapter the Lord was in perfect submission - Son of God - but entirely subject. He does nothing at all until called out - what a lesson for us (verse 51).

220 In Matthew 3 we see Him take this public place. He was that "Holy thing born of the virgin Mary, called the Son of God. God was changing everything, bringing God and man face to face. It was not a law to see how man could stand before Him at a future day of judgment, but God come to man as he is. God comes as a present thing in the heart and conscience. God and man are thus face to face whenever a soul is converted. Just as I am God meets me - perfect light showing me what I am - and then all perfectly settled. And it is perfect grace.

It is no question of the law here - they were condemned already. The kingdom was going to be set up, and the people go to be baptized of John in Jordan confessing their sins. "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John to be baptized of him." He needed no repentance. I trust I need not say that here, yet He does go there doing His Father's will. "Suffer it to be so now, for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." He enters by the door taking His place among those in whose hearts God's Spirit and Word had wrought. At the first step He says, I must go with them. Then man is put into his proper place. I am speaking of Christ now. Redemption was needed to put us into it. The way it was shown that His delight was with the sons of men, was by His Son going there. The Lord came thus among these godly ones, and heaven is opened. Four times we find heaven opened. Here He comes among these poor things, who, when God came claiming good, had only the confession of none. The Father owns Him as Son, and the Holy Ghost seals and anoints Him. It is a wonderful passage bringing out the whole Trinity. The Son is there. The Holy Ghost descends upon Him in the form of a dove. The Father's voice is heard;

and all brought out in connection with the Son become a Man, taking man's place according to the thoughts of God's delight. Redemption was needed to put us into it. By it He can say, I have brought you into my own place.

221 I get the sweet and blessed truth there of His coming there as Man, taking man's place according to God. What is the next step? We have first His place, ours with the Father and God. Is there no other place? In the world I mean? Yes: with the devil. Perfect obedience has brought Him where sin brought us (Matt. 4:1). We have to do with Satan, Christ makes our place: as to all the difficulties of our path, He puts Himself into them and passes through them "in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." He meets Satan as we have to meet him, only Satan is overcome now. The first two temptations are the wiles of Satan, the third is open iniquity. Let me say a few words on the details. There is no harm in taking food when hungry: but Satan comes to tempt Him to command. He says I came to obey. That is the obedience we are sanctified to. Did He have His own will and God stop Him in it? Never! Here when everything depended on it - when He was in all the sorrows of the wilderness - for the Son of God a single word was sufficient, and for the devil too. The power and authority of the Word of God was shewn when everything depended upon it. There is another thing, confidence in order to obey. That was where Eve failed. "Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God." Tempting is distrusting Him; people say it is when you are trusting Him too much! There is entire confidence to enable me to do His will. The last thing was the world (verse 8). The devil shews Him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them. Alas, a little thing often turns off our hearts. He makes our place with the Father, and gives us next the power of our path with Satan, and in the world, serving us as love delights to serve (selfishness wants to be served). You might say that is all over now that He is in glory. John 13 shews us the contrary. He had been with them in gracious love and condescension, He is going back, as the unsullied One, to the Father getting all things into His hands, but do not think He has given up serving you. With all His glory in sight, just going out to the Father He says, "I cannot stay down here with you in the world, I will not give you up, but I must make you fit to have a part with Me where I am going. You are clean through the word that I have spoken unto you, but you will be picking up dirt by the way; that will not do for heaven." When it comes to communion I cannot have an idle thought in my heart that does not hinder it. He washes our feet. That is His present service for us in glory. It was not because Peter repented that Christ interceded, but because Christ interceded that Peter repented. There is no excuse for defiled feet. There is not one of us that does not fail here, and the type of the Red Heifer figures it. Your failure gave Christ the Cross. That is what makes sin so horrid. There was only one place where He was alone when He had become a Man - the Cross.

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