

He Emptied Himself

by Scott Hynds

Jesus came to this world because we needed him, not because we wanted him, to bring us God's love, salvation, and mercy.

Duration: 35:56

Scripture: Isaiah 55:8-9, Luke 2:1-19, John 3:36, 1 Timothy 2:6

Topics: "Humility"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of choosing to serve God and accepting Jesus as the Savior. He highlights the need for mankind to be saved and redeemed, and expresses gratitude for God sending His Son to fulfill this purpose. The preacher encourages memorizing Luke 19:10, which states that Jesus came to seek and save the lost. He also mentions 1 Timothy 2:6, which describes Jesus giving Himself as a ransom for all. The sermon concludes by emphasizing the indescribable gift of Jesus and the need for true worship and adoration towards God.

Transcript

Turn with me to Luke's Gospel, chapter 2, the gospel of Luke, chapter 2. I just want to, this morning, for a little while, just to share a message, obviously, with a Christmas feel to it, but more importantly, a gospel message. I think it's befitting that I should in many ways share and highlight why he came and why we need the Lord Jesus Christ. Luke chapter 2, reading from verse 1, And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

That's what it says, I'm reading from the New King James, our text. Now this census, verse 2, first took place while Cernaesus was governing Syria. So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth into Judea to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child. So it was that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered. And she brought forth her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now we see here clearly in verse 1 regarding Caesar Augustus and his decree about a registering of the people in the Roman Empire at that particular time. Now it wasn't to take money, it was a census, there may have been the collecting of money later on. In fact in Rome they would have taken up a similar

census and counted the people and their families and their servants and even the property for at some stage that would have been used for the state.

So we see this decree and Joseph here makes his way to Bethlehem. He is descended as we know from David, that is his lineage. And he makes his way to Bethlehem.

Most of us I'm sure know this morning that Bethlehem means house of bread. And how befitting that the bread of life would be born in Bethlehem. That's what John's gospel calls, well Jesus himself said in John 6, I am the bread of life.

I am the bread of life. And the bread of life came down and was born in Bethlehem. Now Mary didn't need to accompany him to Bethlehem.

She didn't have to go, but she did go. So the prophecy obviously would be fulfilled that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. And while they were there she delivered her baby and she brought forth her first born son, wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

I'm absolutely mesmerized by our God this morning. I really am. And the plan of God before creation.

And in Philippians 2 chapter 7 we see something of the incarnation. We see something of the scooping down to earth of the word of God. Of God himself.

And in Philippians 2 chapter 7 it says this, but he emptied himself, this is what one translation says, but emptied himself taking the form of a bond servant and being made in the likeness of men. God emptied himself. Now what does that mean exactly? What it means is this, that he veiled himself.

That the word traces or beams of deity. He revealed to some who he was. But when he emptied himself it speaks of that glory, something of that glory of God that was hidden from the world, hidden from man.

He emptied himself. And I began to think about that and I began to think about how God emptied himself and I thought to myself, do you know something? Some of us this morning, if not all of us, need to empty ourselves. Amen? As we sung this morning, I surrender.

And we need to empty ourselves. As they say in Northern Ireland, you need a good emptying. That guy needs a good emptying or that woman needs a good emptying.

And we do, we need to daily realize that I need to empty myself that God might fill the vessel. Hallelujah, that God might fill the vessel. But we see something in this scripture which totally amazes me.

God empties himself and then in the scripture it says here, he was made in the likeness of men. God became flesh, Paul says in the epistle to Timothy. He became a man and then he goes on further.

He was in the form of a bond servant. He didn't become, as it were, a prince. He wasn't born in Herod's palace, but a bond servant in a carpenter's home.

He came from infinite riches of glory and honor to dwell among us. In John 1.14 it says, and the word was made flesh and dwelt among us. What an awesome ways God this morning.

An awesome ways God. And we always use this scripture, well I do anyway. It's a scripture that we all know, probably to explain somewhat the mystery of God.

That his ways are not our ways and his thoughts are not our thoughts. And his ways and his thoughts are higher than ours this morning. You see, if it was our choice to come into this world, I believe that indeed we would choose more luxurious surroundings.

We would have chosen Herod's palace, but God's ways are different to ours and God's ways are different to the world's. When the world goes north, God goes south and that should be the same with God's people. We should walk contrary to the world and to all that the world believes and does.

You see, God chose a more lowly place. He could have had a palace, he could have had a golden crib, and also I suppose some silk baby clothes embroidered with gold, and nurses and so forth. But instead he chose a cave, a faying trough and some strips of sheet or cloth.

Now we are told on arrival in Bethlehem that the pregnant Mary and Joseph found no room at the inn. Bethlehem, as we know, was a hive of activity and I'm sure everywhere else was full. Multitudes had descended on this place because of the registering, the taxes.

You know, I was thinking about how great and how sovereign our God is. It wasn't Caesar that decided regarding the decree, it was God. And you know something, God can influence the hearts of wicked men.

Don't you know that? Don't you know that our God is sovereign this morning? Don't you know that our God has all power? Don't you know that God can prompt and manipulate and influence the hearts of men in government? God can influence unregenerated, unsaved presidents and kings and princes. He can do it. And he did this in the heart of Caesar.

It wasn't Caesar's decision, it was God's decision. Because the Messiah will be born, where? But in Bethlehem. In Bethlehem.

There was no room for the Prince of Peace in this dwelling place. And I suppose it wasn't because the man didn't want them in there, it was because the place was full. There was no room for him.

And sadly, as we know, there's not much room for him today in this world. There's no room for him in the schools around the world. There's no room for him in the workplace due to religious bigotry.

There's no room for him in the top 40 singles church, they don't want them in there. There's no room for him in the majority of the peoples of this world and in their hearts. There's no room for him.

Some might say, why should I make room for God that doesn't exist? So many don't believe in God today. They don't believe in God because of the suffering. It reminds me of a little story.

You may have heard this story before about this man who makes his way to the barbers to get a hair cut and a shave. It's quite long hair and quite a long beard. And he sits down in the barber's chair and the barber begins to shave him and then cut his hair.

And they begin to talk, as barbers do, to those of their, the hair that they're cutting, the peoples hair. And they begin to engage in some conversation. Next minute it turns around to religion and the barber begins to tell this man in the chair that God doesn't exist.

God doesn't exist. Because if God existed there wouldn't be any suffering. If God existed there wouldn't be any disease.

If God existed there wouldn't be any rape and murder and pillaging. If God existed there wouldn't be malnutrition. If God existed there wouldn't be famine.

If God existed there wouldn't be poverty. And so on and so on. And this guy, funny enough, in the chair is a believer and he thought to himself, you know, I'm not going to engage in some frivolous debate with this man.

He's not open. He's closed. And anyway, the barber finishes the shave and the hair cut.

And this guy pats him and thanks him and he walks outside. And as he gets out the door he notices this hippie type individual walking down the street with long hair and a big long beard, matted hair, matted beard. And the guy that just had the hair cut walks into the barber's shop again and shouts out to the barber, barbers don't exist.

The barber looks at him and says, what are you talking about, barbers don't exist, I just cut your hair. He says, barbers don't exist because I just saw a man out there with long hair and a long beard, so therefore barbers don't exist. Now the barber says, aha, barbers do exist, but the problem is he won't come to me.

And the Christian guy says, aha, God does exist, but the problem is people won't come to him. People won't come to him. God's knocking this morning.

Amen. We thank God this morning that he's still in the business of saving people and knocking on the doors. But as we know, for whatever reason, people will not welcome him in.

They don't want him in their lives. The Father has to knock. And it makes me think, did Joseph knock at the door? Did the Father knock at the door? Because it has to be the Father that knocks.

It has to be. Because the scripture tells us in John 6, again, Jesus says, No man can come to me except the Father which has sent me draw him and I will raise him up on the last day. So the Father has to knock.

The Father has to bring revelation to that person who Christ is. Do you remember Peter? Remember Peter said to Jesus, you are the Christ. You are the Christ of God.

And what was Jesus' reply? Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father which is in heaven. It's the Father this morning that needs to open the heart and reveal unto the world who Jesus really is. And praise God this morning, he revealed it unto us.

And praise God for that day where we invited God into our lives and to dwell and to take our lives and to possess our lives. The man says, there's no room for you here in the inn, but I tell you what, there's a cave here beside us. The Lord's birthplace was to be a cave.

Justin Martyr was one of the early church fathers. And he said that the cave was next to the inn and was used for livestock. And he only lived 40 miles from Bethlehem, so scholars rely on this account as probable.

That was said, or he was alive around AD 100, so not a long time after the Saviour's death. So there was the cave next door to the inn. And I began to think a little bit about that.

We're full, you can't come in here, but there's a cave next door so you can stay there. And there's some compassion there I suppose, from the innkeeper to Joseph and the pregnant Mary. And I began to think about that, and I began to think about that there are individuals within the church, individuals within Christendom today.

And for them it's like this, Jesus, I don't want you in the dwelling place so to speak. I don't want you living in me, but I want to keep you around a wee bit. If I can keep you near, that's okay.

And there's a facade of religion for whatever reasons that might benefit them. And it's just an exterior, it's just a form of religion, but there's no power and there's no spirit there. And for whatever reasons, selfish reasons, you know Jesus, you can't have my life.

I can surrender all, but I want you around. And there are people in the church, and that's a picture of individuals. I'll keep you around, but you can't live inside.

Many years ago, when a prince was born in a particular realm, there would have been a mass multitude of people that would have waited for that arrival of the prince to be born. I think possibly of Henry VIII, most of us know the story of Henry VIII and the wives. And this man wanted an heir so much in his life, he even believed that he was cursed.

And his wives give birth either to stillborn babes or to girls. We think of Mary, which I think was his first born and oldest. We think of Elizabeth.

But eventually he would have a boy who would become King Edward. And I'm sure when he emerged into this world that the bells of London rang for I don't know how many hours. And the joy and the jubilee of the people of London because a prince was born, an heir was born in the realm.

And so there was that expectancy beforehand and then there was that joy when the prince was born in England. Spectacle. Pump.

And then I think of Jesus' birth. What about that? When we look at the cave, who was present? Who was there? Well, there was mum and dad and perhaps a few innstock. There was no pump, there was no spectacle, there was no multitudes there.

As the scripture says, all of heaven may have been watching. The angels of God, the scripture says, desired to look into these things. They may have been scratching their heads, they may have been puzzled or confused as to what was going on.

Certainly the Father and the Holy Ghost, they knew what was going on. But there was no multitudes. You know, the Gospel of John, in John 1 says this, verse 10 and 11, He was in the world and the world was made through Him and the world did not know Him.

He came to His own and His own did not receive Him. There was no room for Him. And the Bible says that He is before all things and by Him all things consist, Colossians chapter 1. He is before all things.

He created all things. Paul goes on to say in Colossians. He created the beauty around us when we look at the picturesque fields and hills of northern Ireland.

When we think of the mountains with the snow and the trees and we can see the splendor and the beauty of God's creation. But yet it wasn't long before God was ousted out. And it sort of reminds me of men who

have built up successful companies over the years.

I mean million dollar companies, maybe billions. Blue chip companies in America or in the UK. Many years ago they had this idea, this concept.

And they worked hard and they spread it and they wept to build up this company. Then at some stage they bring others in to their company and their support. And there comes a time I suppose when the board begin to believe the majority that they don't need them anymore.

The one that started it, the one that pioneered it, the one that created the company is then ousted out. Because you see he's a dinosaur. You see he's not the face now for the company.

He doesn't fit with the vision now of the company. That old man who brought them people in, that old man who gave them opportunity. That old man that gave them promotion, that helped them along the way, that brought them into his creation.

Now he's ousted out. And that for me is a little picture of God and humanity. God gave the world to man and we were to subdue and so forth and be fruitful and multiply.

Just obey me and follow me and yet man rebelled, man sinned. And from Adam, man there's no time for God, there's no room for you, we don't want you. We'll take the earth and we'll subdue it and we'll keep it but we don't want God.

At Jesus's birth there was mum and dad and perhaps a few wild stock. But we think in times past, in history past, multitudes were glued to the television. When Armstrong, Neil Armstrong landed on the moon.

How many untold millions, multitudes were glued to the TV or listening to the radio as that man stepped on the moon. Many Americans can also and even I suppose British can remember where they were the day that JFK was shot. These are pinnacle moments in history, momentous times in history.

There are so many more momentous occasions but there was a greater moment in history. A greater moment happened in a cave in Bethlehem when the Passover lamb was born spotless and perfect. God was made flesh and we can just imagine the stench of the master's surroundings.

You know something, I have been in some poor homes, not because of where I have been ministry wise but because of the job that I had in the past where we would go into homes where people had died or they had fled. They were council homes and I can tell you some people live rough. And you can just imagine the stench and the pungent smell of some of these places you just basically want to retch.

You are quite overwhelmed. Do you know something, Jesus being born or God being born into that cave didn't faze him one bit. It didn't faze him.

He wasn't fazed by anything especially where he would lay his head. In a few days time people will open gifts, and I stopped in one there just earlier on, wrapped up in Christmas paper. They will open up their gift and we have probably witnessed this whether in our own homes as parents or on television.

You can watch your child open up the gift and they get what they want and they run about the room and they shout and scream and the smile and the laughter and the joy of getting what they wanted. And I remember watching that on one of those camera shows one time and the wee boy literally he screamed

and shouted and left about the room because he got what he wanted. But sometimes you might get a gift or a child might get a gift and they open up the gift and what's inside there but socks and underwear.

Socks and underwear. And I tell you something, the same smile and the same laughter is not in that child. Do you know why? They didn't get so much what they wanted but what they needed.

And a child I suppose, a small child cannot see that. That the older mature parent or granny knows that the kid needs it. This reminds me a little bit again of Jesus who was God wrapped in human flesh.

Wrapped in human flesh. And in 2 Corinthians 9.16 it says, Thanks be to God for his indescribable gift. Indescribable gift.

And listen this morning, only God can reveal unto us this morning, unto the world that indescribable gift. And when we peel, peel back or unravel or unwrap who Jesus Christ really is. Then that should create truly a heart that leaps and skips.

A heart that is filled with adoration and with true worship unto God. Because you see, the world just don't get it. The natural man just doesn't get it because the natural man can't understand or perceive.

The natural man is enmity with God. And so therefore they see Jesus as it were. It's just like the socks and the underwear.

They don't get excited, they don't understand, they don't want it. They don't want it. It's not, listen to me, it's not that we wanted God's love, but that we needed God's love.

Mankind didn't want it. And that is the truth of scripture. Quite clearly, mankind was not interested in God's love.

And God sent his son to this world, not because we wanted it, but because we needed it. Praise God this morning. That it's not that we first loved God, but that God first loved us.

And to God this morning be all the glory. Always to God be all the glory. Now and forevermore.

It is his salvation. It is his love. It is his mercy.

It is his grace this morning. Glory to God that he called us out of darkness into his glorious light. Into his glorious light.

When you get to see who is contained inside, we will be absolutely and utterly amazed. When you get to see and realize that Jesus Christ is Emmanuel, God with us. Then like the shepherds in Luke, verse 20, I think it's Luke 2. You will glorify, you will praise God.

Hallelujah. He is indescribable this morning. He is indefinable.

He is indestructible. He is indisputable. And he is inseparable from the heart of the believer.

Hallelujah. Glory to God, I am about to tick off you this morning. Somebody, somebody stop me.

Why did Jesus really come to this world? Which had a greater stench into the nostrils of God than any stable or any cave. Because of rebellion and because of iniquity that had separated mankind from God. Well, Luke 19.10 encapsulates Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost.

Hallelujah. What a wonderful scripture. Early on in my Christian walk, I memorized that scripture.

And I encourage you to memorize it. He came to seek and to save that which was lost. 1 Timothy 2.6 says, He gave himself a ransom for all.

That word ransom can also mean return. He gave himself to an old rugged cross that we may return. That your mama may get up off its knees in the pig pen of this world.

And return to a loving father. And return to the grace of God. To return to the father's house.

He is a gracious Savior this morning. The Lord is gracious and full of compassion. Slow to anger.

And of great mercy this morning. He is the great physician. The great physician.

Sort of reminds me this morning of a plastic surgeon. Plastic surgery. There may be more, but I know of two types of plastic surgery.

There is cosmetic and reconstructive surgery. There is a big difference. Cosmetic surgery basically will take the structure of the body, the structure of the face.

It's really just to enhance, I suppose, the exterior. Probably a lot of people have plastic surgery to enhance their looks or their self esteem. That's cosmetic surgery, it's just the facade.

Reconstructive is very different. Reconstructive surgery speaks about the abnormalities that there is in the body or the face. The structure there has been damaged in such a way through deformity or through disease or through tumors.

And so therefore it's deeper. I want to say that this morning all of us, I'm sure, would believe that the world doesn't need cosmetic surgery. That doesn't work.

And certainly the message cannot be something that's cosmetic. Because all that will do is just enhance the facade, enhance your self esteem and your appearance. But it's about the heart.

And there are abnormalities in the heart, disease, tumors that have separated us from God. And God knew that from eternity past and sent the son, sent the great physician who could rectify those abnormalities, that disease of sin. And I praise God this morning that Christ can bring such a reconstruction, such a change in the heart of man.

That we can be called children of God this morning. Children of God. And as a preacher this morning, it is my job and my calling to indeed to speak about the latter and not the former.

Because if I speak and bring forth messages that just cosmetically help, in the long run it will not be profitable for that individual. The reason why God sent the son is quite clear for us all this morning. Because mankind needed a saviour.

Mankind needed a redeemer. Mankind needed help. And we thank God so much this morning that God sent the son.

And that he that has the son has life this morning. But he that has not the son has not life. And that is quite clear and quite simple.

Choose you this day whom you will serve. Life or death or good or evil. Paul spoke to King Agrippa.

And he preached with fervour. And he taught with fervour to that man. And we can see the words of King Agrippa in the book of Acts.

Paul, almost ye persuade me. Almost ye have got me. And how many this morning are in the valley of decision? How many this morning are like that? I hear what you are saying.

I hear what you are saying. You have almost got me. But I tell you what to do.

I am not going to buy him into my life. I will have him around my life. I will place him somewhere that is convenient for me.

That does not infringe upon my way of thinking. That does not infringe upon my lifestyle. So I will just keep him around.

I will have the token Jesus in my life. I will have the religious Jesus in my life. Brothers and sisters this morning that Jesus Christ gave us all.

And they did. Should we not give our all for him? Should we not enter into a new year in 2011? Where we fully surrender all to him. I surrender all.

I surrender all. I spoke about this one other time. If you ever, you know, probably you have never witnessed this first hand.

But if you are watching one of the war movies. Or even some of the footage on television. From the second world war.

You can see that some of the soldiers will surrender. To let's say the allies. And their hands are up.

And they surrender their weapons. And some of them may be armed to the teeth. And may want to hold back.

A pistol here. Or a grenade down in here somewhere. And so there will probably be a good thorough search.

On behalf of the allies that are before. The enemy and such is brought into the camp. Just in case that there is a further danger.

You know, we really need to realize this morning. That I surrender all. That I surrender all.

And it's not about surrendering so to speak. It's not just about those outward things. Or habits.

Above all things it's about the heart. It's about the will. It's about surrendering and prostrating yourself.

Before the one and true God. That's it. Certainly as we walk with him.

We are expected and we are challenged. God will prompt and put his finger on the areas that we need to also continue to surrender. But we must put our hands up this morning.

We must put our hands up to heaven. And we must say God I surrender my life. And you know something this morning.

I don't know where your heart is in here. Whoever is listening to this message. Or who will listen to the message.

I don't know. But it's my prayer above all things. That men and women will put their hands up to God.

And surrender their lives. And then they will begin to surrender other things that would hinder them from going onwards. That's just prayer.

We're closing now anyway. That's just prayer.

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