

# Our Lord's Resurrection

by W.F. Anderson

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of mothers, the pivotal change in the world is Jesus' resurrection, and the law of the kingdom is that God exalts the humble and the servant.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 34:5-7, Matthew 26:26-28, John 13:14-15, Philippians 2:5, Philippians 2:9

**Topics:** "Easter Sunday", "Christian Humility"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the significance of Jesus' last meal before his crucifixion and the importance of the bread and wine representing his body and blood. The speaker emphasizes that Jesus humbled himself and became a servant, and encourages the listeners to adopt the same attitude of serving others. The sermon also explores the themes of brokenness and strength, drawing parallels to the Christian festivals of Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. The speaker concludes by highlighting the privilege and responsibility of being a mother and the importance of keeping Jesus at the forefront of one's thoughts.

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## Transcript

Good morning. You know, in all the cities we've moved to over the years, we've always counted homes as homes. This is a home to Earth, and she's got a home outside of where she was born, North Carolina.

I'm glad to be back. Glad to see you again. I don't know why you sit so far away from the front, but I wish we had a lapel mic.

I would come down to you. Now, if you won't come to Mahama, Mahama would be glad to come to the mountains. I'm glad to be here, and I have an apology to make.

Cheryl, I'm glad you sang that song. I am not going to speak on mothers. The wounds in my heart from the loss of Jenny are just too tender.

They do that, and I hope you forgive me for not speaking about mothers on Mother's Day. I will say that my children and grandchildren were very, very blessed to have a mother and grandmother, Jenny. When we were preparing her funeral, she had laid it all out ahead of time, but we were preparing the eulogy.

We had the family around just to talk about her and what we wanted to say. I turned to grandchildren and said, what do you think of when you think of Grandma? And one of the five-year-old girls immediately piped up and said, Jesus. I thought that's the highest accolade a grandchild could give her.

When she thought of Grandma, she thought of Jesus. So, mothers, God bless you all. You have a tremendous privilege as well as a tremendous responsibility.

I'll keep going. I'll talk about mothers. I didn't mean to.

You are honored. I think God in the Old Testament describes himself more than once in terms that we associate with mothers, not with fathers. God has all the tenderness that we think of in mothers.

God has all the nurturing desire that we think of in mothers. God speaks in himself in those terms. To me, it's a high honor to be a mother and to reflect something of the character of God in your own family, in your own life.

It's a tremendous, tremendous privilege. But I couldn't carry on with that, so I want to turn this morning to look at chapter 2. The passage you know well, but I admit since Jimmy's death, I am reluctant to give up the celebration of Easter so quickly. And I want to talk about our Lord and his resurrection and exaltation in Philippians chapter 2. Verse 5. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name. That is the name of Jesus.

In his book, A Farewell to Arms, Ernest Hemingway wrote that the world breaks everyone, and some are made strong at the broken places. And on Good Friday the world broke Christ, with his permission. But on Good Friday the world broke Christ, and on Easter Sunday he was made strong at that broken place.

And this is a story of that brokenness and being made strong in Philippians chapter 2. It's the story of the three great Christian festivals of Christmas and Good Friday and Easter Sunday. And you'll find Christmas in verse 7, that he took on the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And you find Good Friday in verse 8, he humbled himself and became obedient to death.

And you find Easter in the resurrection, ascension and exaltation in verse 9. And those are the three great festivals of the Christian Church. And of the three, it's not to say one is more important than the other. One couldn't exist without the other.

But the emphasis in these testaments is on the resurrection and exaltation of Jesus Christ. The pivotal change in the world is not primarily the Incarnation. The pivotal change in the world is not primarily that Christ died.

The pivotal change in the world is that Christ rose the third day out of death and lived triumphant forevermore. If he had been born and if he had died, it would have been a tragic story and that's all. Unless he was raised the third day, there is no Christianity.

Paul is clear about that in 1 Corinthians chapter 15. And the emphasis falls on the resurrection and the exaltation of Jesus Christ. That he rose from the dead.

And so I can stand at Ginny's grave and I can say in one sentence, not the sentence, but the angel said it on that Easter morning. I can say she is not here. Her body is here, but she is not here.

I cannot yet say she is busy. But one day I will when Jesus returns. And the key, the core of Christianity is that Jesus Christ rose from the dead the third day.

But I want to look at what Paul says and I want to examine what he says in those earlier verses before we come to his exaltation. If I could title this by the way, I have a title for the law of the kingdom in the life of Jesus. Because that's what it is.

But I'll explain that I hope in a minute. Paul is not writing theologically. Paul is writing pastorally.

And yet he has written the greatest theological passage in the New Testament on the person of Christ. This is the one theologians go to when they want to explain how Jesus Christ is both God and man. And the basis of Christianity is here.

And yet Paul was writing pastorally. He is trying to get us to develop in ourselves the same kind of attitude Jesus Christ had when he left heaven and came to earth, and on earth and humbled himself and was willing to be obedient to God as far as death. He wants us to live like that.

We may not be called on to die for Christ as Jesus did for God. We may not be called to do that. But the attitude that led him to that point is how Paul wants us to be and how he wants us to live.

So the whole thing is pastoral. Let this attitude, let this mind be in you. Think like this.

Because nobody in the non-Christian world is going to think like this. To give up what he gave up, including his wife. To eliminate all the possibilities of the abilities that he had here on earth.

To use them for himself. But even for the good of others, I could put that in. To give all that up and commit himself to obey as far as death is not the way we think.

Self-development, achievement, accomplishment, moving up in the world, that's the way we think. And what Paul is saying in this passage is this is how Jesus thought. And this is how I want you to think.

This is how I want you to look at life and yourself the way Jesus did. So he begins this passage in verse 5, or verse 6 rather. Who being in very nature God.

Who being in the form of God. Let me get technical for just a moment. That being in the form of God, being is the present participle.

And I'm not going to explain, but the key to the Greek language, many grammarians say the key to the Greek language is participle. And the present participle has the meaning that this holds true while all the finite verbs that follow occur. That being in the form of God, whatever he means by that, being in the form of God was true of him while he was doing everything else.

So when he emptied himself, the King James translation, when he took the form of a servant, when he became human, being in the form of God was still true. When he humbled himself as a man, he became obedient to death. When he was hanging there on the cross, being in the form of God was still true.

That never changed. Grammatically, that's what Paul is saying. Being in the form of God, he did all these things while being in the form of God.

Are you with me? That never changed. And what we mean by form is shape, something we can see. What the Greeks meant by form, this particular word, is everything that makes something what it is.

It's got to include more than the outward appearance, what we call form. It's everything that makes God God, is the word form. Who being in the form of God, who being everything that God is, that makes God God, that was true of him while he did everything else he was supposed to do.

He never ceased to be God. Being in the form of God, he did not consider equality with God something to be grasped. Now, Paul may mean he did not consider that equality with God something to be held on to.

He may also mean, and this is, never mind, he may also mean grasping, and here grasping equality with God, grasping is not what it means to be God. Holding on is not what it means to be God. It's not the closed hand that describes God.

It's the open hand that describes God. It's not God holding on to all the rights that belong to him as God, but God giving them away. That's what God is.

We think, God thinks that being God means giving, not giving, not holding on to. In the parable of the prodigal son, when Jesus, in that parable, portrays what the father is like. When that younger son comes and asks for a third of the goods, that's his right at the death of his father.

The younger brother gets a third, the older brother gets two-thirds. So he came to the father and asked for his portion, the one-third that would come to him when his father died. And I don't know how his father did it.

Did he sell off one-third of his property, and forever after look at that one-third now owned by a neighbor? However, he did it. He gave that younger son the third that was rightfully the father's until the father's death. He gave it.

And when that younger boy squandered it and came home, what did the father do? Opened up his treasuries. The best robes, the rings, the sandals, the feet, the music, the dancing. He gave.

And when he went out to the elder brother, who refused to come in and join the festivities, who complained, you've never done this for me. What did he say to that older brother? All that I have, the remaining two-thirds, all that I have is yours. It's not mine.

It's yours. That's God. Not holding on to, not grasping, but giving, giving, giving, sharing.

So we are told that we as Christians are heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ. And God is saying to us, everything I have is yours. That's what God is like.

Great giver. And so Jesus being in the form of God would not be the kind of person who grasps and holds on to. That is not God.

That's Satan. That's us. But that's not God.

And so, being God, he emptied himself. King James translation. Good translation.

The literal one. And the word is used literally. Taking any kind of vessel that contains a liquid in it and emptying it out.

But it's also used metaphorically. To make oneself nothing. And that's his translation.

He made himself nothing. How did he do that? Here in passage, not by surrendering something, but by taking something. How did he empty himself? How did he make himself nothing? By taking on the form of a slave.

He did not merely perform the duties of a slave. He became one. And the same word form is used here.

That was used to describe him as God. Who being in the form of God. Everything that made God, God, he was.

And he took on himself everything that makes a slave a slave. And that involves taking on our humanity. The Son of God did not indwell a human body.

The ancient Greek god, Roman god, did that. He did not just come down and inhabit a human body. He became human.

Everything that makes us human, he took. And what makes us human is far more than having a body. Everything that makes us human, he took to himself.

He became that. Why? Because he's God. Taking human form, becoming a slave, is not contrary to being God.

That's exactly, when presented with our needs, what God will do. You see that? This is not something different from being God. This is exactly what God will do.

Seeing God, the kind of God he is, and faced with our needs, our sinning human beings, that's exactly what God will do. It's not something unusual. It's not something different.

It's not something... Please understand me when I say it. It's not something remarkable. It's natural for God to do that.

And the Son of God emptied himself by taking that form of service, praise, and then he further said that that was Christmas. And having done that, as a human being, he can now go again in two directions. He can grasp or he can give.

And having become human, he humbled himself. As I was suggesting in the Bible class this morning, only strong people can be humble. Weak people cannot be humble.

Only strong people can be humble. And the Son of God, being God, could humble himself and become obedient unto death, even the cross kind of death. And that's good pride.

And pinned to the cross with all the human shame that that involves, this is God, being in the form of God, who has become human, that he might do that very thing. One of the reasons that that message is a stumbling block to the Jews is that that is not their picture of Christ. The idea of Messiah pinned to the cross, executed by Rome, that cannot, cannot, cannot be Messiah.

But what Paul is saying is that happened precisely because he is Messiah. Precisely because he is in the form of God. So he became obedient to death, even the death of the cross.

What I want to look at in the time we have left is what God did and why God did it. God's response to that begins in verse 9. Therefore God exalted him to the highest place. And that takes the resurrection and the ascension and the exaltation.

Theologians read the provided universe. Paul sums it all up in one word. God exalted him to the highest place.

Note it's not comparative, it's superlative. God did not exalt his own place higher than everybody else. He did that, but that isn't what Paul is saying.

God did not exalt Jesus to a place higher than human beings, but say less than angels. God did not exalt him to a place that's just higher than angels, but less than the position God has. Paul puts it in the superlative.

God exalted him to the highest place. There wasn't any higher place God could give him. He exalted him to the highest place.

Now that is not a reward that Jesus earned. That is the law of the kingdom of God. That's how God's kingdom works.

He that humbles himself shall be exalted. That's just the way God works. And when his son humbled himself, the godlike responsibility, response, is to exalt him.

And that's just the reverse of how we think. And Jesus tried so hard to get his disciples to see that. And how often did he say to them, the first should be last, and the last should be first.

How often did he say to them, he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. We don't think of the slave as being the greatest person in society. That isn't the way we think.

That's the way God thinks. That's how his kingdom works. So one day Jesus said to his disciples, who's greater? The one who sits at table, or the one who serves? Well, their response was natural.

The one who sits at table. Now Jesus' response is thus. I am among you, as he describes.

In God's thinking, the one who serves is greater than the one who is being served. In our thinking, the one who is being served has to be greater than the one who serves. When I go into a restaurant and I'm waited on, I have to admit, sometimes I don't even remember the name of the waiter or the waitress.

He or she is not that important. They are there to wait on you. I am the important one.

I am being waited on. I might want her or him to remember my name, but I'm not interested in remembering his or her name, because that's the waiter or the waitress. That's the way we think.

Who is greater in a corporation? The president or the janitor? Who is greater, the boss or the laborer? In our society, we know. But what we know in our society is not true in God's kingdom. In God's kingdom, the one who serves is greater.

That is so true that Jesus talks of becoming king, and he tells his disciples, I will make you sit down, and I will wait on you. Even when he is king, that's what God as king is like. He who serves is God.

That's God. That's what it means for God to be God. That's the kind of God he is.

I think as I told you before, you go to the books of Revelation, everything ends up, he will wipe away all tears from all eyes. And at least the picture is of God going around in his handkerchief, wiping our eyes dry of tears. That's what it means to be God.

And so God exalts the humble. God exalts the servant. And Jesus never did get that across in his lifetime to his disciples.

I know he didn't. He hadn't gotten it across in my life yet. But the last meal he had before the crucifixion, that night in that upper room, while he was talking about going to the cross, and the significance of the bread, etc., his body and his blood, what were his disciples doing? Arguing that shopping was a sin.

It never got through to them that he was serious that the servant was the greatest law in God's kingdom. But that law now operates in the life of Jesus. And he humbled himself, and God's response is, well, he's all in.

He's all in to the highest. That's the attitude that Paul wants to develop in us. That we compete, as I read this morning, we compete to serve each other.

That's the competition. Most competition is who's going to be by. In the kingdom of God, the competition is how can we serve each other.

That's the law of the kingdom of God. And it is simply that law working in the life of Jesus. When God exalts him to the highest place, he says he went down to the lowest, and then God tells us what he did, in addition to exalting him, he gave him the name that is above every name.

Now, in my thinking, that cannot be the name of Jesus. It's not Jesus. God already gave him that name.

Before he was born, you could call his name Jesus. For the Jew, the name, Hashem, the name, is the verbal representation of God. It's not just something you call somebody.

It's the verbal representation of what that person is like. And so, they expect reverence for the name, but they would not pronounce it. And now today, we don't know what it sounds like.

We know the consonants, but the vowels that give sound to those consonants, we have no idea. They substituted, when they finally put vowels in their text, they substituted the vowels for the word Eboni, which in our King James Bibles, or other Bibles, is translated LORD with a capital L and small letters after that. And we don't know how it was pronounced.

We got Jehovah out of that, but that's not how it was pronounced. Now, scholars would say Yahweh. But, we don't know how it was pronounced.

We lost how that name was pronounced. It was so sacred to the Jews. And when they were copying the manuscripts, they did a separate pairing to put in these letters for the name of God.

But that tells me a couple things about God. He's personal. He has a name.

He has a name. And it's possible to relate to him on a personal level. He's the God of the name.

But anyhow, back to Exodus chapter 34 for just a minute. In the Old Testament, the book of Exodus chapter 34, Moses wanted to see God's glory. And then God says, what God does in verse 5, the Lord

came down in a cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name.

What is his name? The Lord. That name we don't know the pronunciation of. But that's it right there.

The Lord. That's his name. He proclaimed his name, the Lord.

And he passed in front of Moses proclaiming. This is what that name means. The Lord, the Lord, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love for thousands, forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.

That's God. Yes, he does not leave the guilty unpunished. That is, those who refuse to let him forgive them.

He does not leave the guilty unpunished. He punishes the children and their children for the sin of their fathers to the third and fourth generation. But that's of those who refuse to bow to the name.

But the name of the Lord means compassionate, gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love for thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin. That's what the name means. And what God has done is given that sacred name to Jesus.

He is that Lord described in Moses. That's the name of God. God's own name.

Whether it's Yahweh or Jehovah or whoever it is now, that name belongs to Jesus. God gave him that name. He didn't tell us why he did that.

Two intermediate reasons. One, that every knee should bow. And then those three prepositional phrases describe heaven, earth, under the earth.

Whether it's angelic, human or demonic, every knee should bow. Because he is that God, that Lord. And ultimately, everything is going to be brought under his position.

And every knee will acknowledge the truth that Jesus is that Lord. So every knee should bow. The second intermediate reason is every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.

There will be the verbal acknowledgement at last of truth. Every tongue will admit what is true. Jesus Christ is that Lord.

The ultimate purpose is to the glory of God. And he didn't stop there. To the glory of God the Father.

Ultimately, at the heart of the universe is loving relationship. To the glory of God. Not the Son.

He is the Son. But to the glory of God the Father. And at the heart of the universe there is that loving relationship with the Father and Jesus.

What do I say from this? I have to acknowledge from the passage before there was ever an Easter Sunday there had to be a Good Friday. And Jesus could not reach Easter except through Good Friday. And he had to be pinned to the cross before he was exalted to the throne.

That says a great deal to me. We get pinned to pain in life. Various situations.

We get pinned to pain. It may be because we are victims. We had no choice.

We bear that pain. We say no. I think a greater pain than some of us have to bear is that we were victimizers.

We think the people we have hurt. And we get pinned to that pain. It may be the pain of our circumstances.

I have never felt such pain in my life with no opportunity. Never. I had no idea what suffering was like until I lost her.

And you get pinned to that pain and there's no way to get away from it. You can't escape it. Whatever pain is in your life and you feel pinned to it.

What I want when I'm pinned to that pain is some divine anesthetic to relieve the pain. And I remember Jesus refused to drug wine. He felt all the pain of Good Friday.

I ask for a divine anesthetic. And he said, I am given a divine presence. The presence of one whose Good Friday preceded and exceeded my own.

And in your pain you can have the divine presence of Jesus. God. Amen.

Let's pray. Lord Jesus, we bow before you this morning in worship. Help us to bow in obedience.

Know your presence with us and to a greater degree than ever before to live as you live. May your presence be with us in this hour. And in all the hours of our lives.

I pray in your name. Amen.

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