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The Humility of Jesus

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The Humility of Jesus

“Then Jesus came from Galilee to John to be baptized by him in the Jordan River. But John tried to prevent him, saying, ‘I need to be baptized by you, and yet you come to me?’ So Jesus replied to him, ‘Let it happen now, for it is right for us to fulfill all righteousness.’ Then John yielded to him. After Jesus was baptized, just as he was coming up out of the water, the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him. And a voice from heaven said, ‘This is my one dear Son; in him I take great delight.’” —Matthew 3:13-17

The time had arrived for the beginning of Jesus’ earthly ministry, and as our example he does it with humility. He begins by being baptized. John the Baptist—being filled with the Spirit—protests, knowing that the Messiah is the flawless One and Only. John knows there is no need for Jesus’ repentance. He has nothing to repent from. Yet Jesus abases himself as an act of association with all of the sinful people whom He came to save, setting an example of humility. Surely He knew that he deserved highest honors.

Jesus’ actions and John’s protest are much like a time later in His ministry when He wraps a towel around himself and washes His disciple’s feet, this time to the protest of Peter:

“Because Jesus knew that the Father had handed all things over to him, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, he got up from the meal, removed his outer clothes, took a towel and tied it around himself. He poured water into the washbasin and began to wash the disciples’ feet and to dry them with the towel he had wrapped around himself. Then he came to Simon Peter. Peter said to him, ‘Lord, are you going to wash my feet?’ Jesus replied, ‘You do not understand what I am doing now, but you will understand after these things.’ Peter said to him, ‘You will never wash my feet!’ Jesus replied, ‘If I do not wash you, you have no share with me.’ Simon Peter said to him, ‘Lord, wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head!’” —John 13:3-9

Jesus’ gracious lowering of himself in these two situations is so surprising, so deep, and so mysterious, it takes both John the Baptist and Peter totally off guard. At the time of Jesus’ baptism, John’s ministry was at its height. He had obtained a great name and was respected, yet he remained humble in the presence of the Master. It is always important for us to remember that if God chooses to use us and others

begin to take note and applaud—it is Jesus in us that they are applauding, not us. We often take ourselves much too seriously, improperly elevating ourselves. It is easier to be humble when we remember that we are saved by grace alone, that we are dearly loved and belong to God, that we have life only to please Him. Jesus surely did not give much weight to man’s opinion. He was fully aware of what was in a man.

As Jesus begins his earthly ministry, we see the presence of the Trinity in a special display of glory. Heaven applauded and affirmed the work that was about to begin and to which Jesus enters into with firm resolution. Sin had shut up heaven and Christ’s work would now open it to all who would believe. The Holy Spirit had been present in the beginning of Creation and now we see here His presence at the beginning of this new world which Jesus has come to offer. Isaiah had prophesized:

“A shoot will grow out of Jesse’s root stock, a bud will sprout from his roots. The LORD’s Spirit will rest on him—a Spirit that gives extraordinary wisdom, a Spirit that provides the ability to execute plans, a Spirit that produces absolute loyalty to the LORD.” —Isaiah 11:1-2

“He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” — Colossians 1:13-14

God speaks His Words of confirmation and pleasure of His Son. Jesus reconciling the world to God is a joyful message indeed. The Spirit manifested itself in the likeness of a dove, but God the Father is manifested by a voice. How endearing and comforting that must have been to our Lord’s ears. God appeared to Jesus by reiterating His relationship, “This is my one dear Son”, and by affirming His mission, “in him I take great delight.”

Become More

“The Holy Spirit is the Comforter, the Helper, the Guide, the very presence of God living in you. The great promise of God in prayer is this: We ask God for the gift—He gives us the Giver. We ask God for the supply and He gives us the Source. We ask God for the money and He doesn’t give us cash; instead, so to speak, He gives us the bank ... He delights in giving us himself. The resources of heaven are ready and waiting for the people of God who desire to make much of him in this world.” — David Platt

Go out in to the world today with the humility and purpose of Jesus Christ.

Further Reflections

“He delivered us from the power of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.” — Colossians 1:13-14

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.” —1 Peter 5:6

“It is only the fear of God that can deliver us from the fear of man.” —John Witherspoon