

The Apostle's Creed

Sunday School
August 27, 2023

Lesson Notes: WEEK 5

"The Name of Jesus – Part Two" and Philippians 2:5-11

Last Sunday, we began our three-part discussion on Jesus being:

- **One**, a personal Messiah
- **Two**, a personal Son
 - One of the greatest aspects of Jesus' sacrifice was that he **limited** himself to a human mind, body, emotions – while remaining divine. He did this by having **two natures**: one human, one divine. Our Westminster Confession of Faith (Chapter 8, section 2) words it like this: *"so that two whole, perfect, and distinct natures, the Godhead and the manhood, were inseparably joined together in one person, without conversion, composition, or confusion."*

Continuing our discussion of:

2. A personal Son

- Philippians 2:5-11 addresses two different "estates" of Jesus' life:
 - **WSC # 27 asks:** "What was Christ's humiliation?" Answer: *"Christ's humiliation consisted in His being born, and that in a low condition, made under the law, undergoing the miseries of this life, the wrath of God, and the cursed death of the cross; in being buried, and continuing under the power of death for a time."* This is what verses 6-8 address.
 - **WSC # 28 asks:** "What is Christ's exaltation?" Answer: *"Christ's exaltation consists in His rising again from the dead on the third day, in ascending into heaven, in sitting at the right hand of God the Father, and in coming to judge the world at the last day."* This is what verses 9-11 address.
- The "hypostatic union" & "kenosis" take place during Christ's estate of humiliation.
 - **Hypostatic union**
 - *Hypostasis* is the Greek word for subsistence (individual existence). With the Incarnation, the Son of God was constituted a complex person with **both** a human and a divine nature. Jesus has two complete natures: *one fully human* and *one fully divine*. The doctrine of the hypostatic union teaches that these two natures are united in one person in the God-man. The hypostatic union is the joining (mysterious though it be) of the *divine* and the *human* in Jesus.
 - Philippians 2 **DEFEATS** all sorts of early Christian heresies against the person and work of Christ. These heresies were so rampant that the **Council of Chalcedon**, which met from 8 October to 1 November in 451 AD, met solely to **CONDEMN** heresies on the hypostatic union and the nature of Jesus' *humanity and divinity*. The Council of over 500 members established the "**Chalcedonian Definition**":

- “Therefore, following the holy fathers, we all with one accord teach men to acknowledge one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, at once complete in Godhead and complete in manhood, truly God and truly man, consisting also of a reasonable soul and body; of one substance with the Father as regards his Godhead, and at the same time of one substance with us as regards his manhood; like us in all respects, apart from sin; as regards his Godhead, begotten of the Father before the ages, but yet as regards his manhood begotten, for us men and for our salvation, of Mary the Virgin, the God-bearer; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, recognized in two natures, without confusion, without change, without division, without separation; the distinction of natures being in no way annulled by the union, but rather the characteristics of each nature being preserved and coming together to form one person and subsistence, not as parted or separated into two persons, but one and the same Son and Only-begotten God the Word, Lord Jesus Christ; even as the prophets from earliest times spoke of him, and our Lord Jesus Christ himself taught us, and the creed of the fathers has handed down to us.”
- **The key phrase from verse 6** to better understand the union is at the end: “*did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.*” If Jesus didn’t submit to God the Father when He became a human and instead, *remained fully omniscient*, then:
 - Why did he experience emotions like we do?
 - Why did he pray? Was he praying to himself?
- **Kenosis.** We see this Greek word used in **verse 7**, meaning “*the relinquishment of divine attributes by Jesus Christ in becoming human.*” Like we mentioned last week, because of Jesus taking on a HUMAN body and MIND, he **emptied/laid aside** his complete *omniscience, omnipresence, and omnipotence*. This is fascinating to think about in many ways:
 - **John 1:14** = “*And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father.*” In **John 1:1**, it says: “*In the beginning was the Word...*” But, by verse 14, Jesus has “become” something...
 - **He had DNA** that can be traced all the way back to Adam (Luke 3:23-38).
 - **Had to learn how to walk**, talk, grow up, experience pain & limits.
 - **His body** aged and changed just like ours does.
 - **He was NOT a direct link** to “*God’s hard drive*” where the entire Old Testament was already downloaded into his brain. He learned **Scripture** (Luke 2:52).
 - **The Holy Spirit** helped intervene and guide Jesus along the way (Luke 4:1-2). With his divine will, Jesus was given a greater sense of understanding, **EX:** With his miracles, God’s divine will was displayed. *This does NOT mean that:*
 - **One**, Jesus is divine simply because he does miracles. **EX:** Think of all the Old Testament saints God used to do miracles (Moses, Aaron summoning some the plagues, Elijah, Elisha (even his bones in 2 Kings 13:20-21)).
 - **Two**, Jesus knew exactly what miracles would be displayed. Jesus didn’t know how many miracles he was going to do – if he did, he would just be

going through the motions. “*Now there were also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written*” **John 21:25**.

- **With verses 6 and 7** – we shouldn’t have a “*subtraction*” mindset, but instead an “*addition*” mindset. By becoming human, he added the FACT that he was no longer equal with God the Father by becoming a SERVANT for us – ALL so he could experience exactly what we experience, yet without sin. Otherwise, we’re all participants of the Christian heresy known as **Apollinarianism**. This heresy was formed in the mid 300’s AD by Apollinaris of Laodicea, who accepted that *Christ had a true body, but couldn’t accept that Christ had a human spirit and mind*.
 - **The penguin** EX from last week:
 - **One**, *yes* – *God the Son KNOWS* what a penguin is, because He was a part of Creation (Genesis 1:1-2, John 1:1-3).
 - **Two**, *however* – *in his estate of humiliation and receiving a human mind/will*, he wouldn’t have known what a penguin was because he had never seen one personally or gone to the arctic.
- **In Jesus’ humiliation**, he remained perfectly obedient to the CROSS!

3. A personal Lord

- Do we call out to God as our Lord, our master, our “*kyrios*”? How is Jesus our Lord? Verses 9-11 show us in three ways:
 - **First**, his name is above every name.
 - **Second**, everyone will bow to his name.
 - 1 Thessalonians 4 explains the “*beginning of the end*” when Jesus returns.
 - Revelation 19 tells us we will clearly know & see that he is “*King of Kings and Lord of Lords*.”
 - **Third**, everyone will confess him as Lord.
- What emotion should we have from **Philippians 2**?
 - **JOY**. Paul speaks of **joy 16x** in Philippians. Everything is fulfilled in the name, person, and work of Jesus. **As Isaiah reminds us**, “*And his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*”

For further reading, check out:

- B.B. Warfield, “*The Person and Work of Christ.*” P & R Publishing, 1950.
- David Mathis article (<https://www.desiringgod.org/articles/what-is-the-hypostatic-union>)
- Donald Macleod, “*The Person of Christ.*” Intervarsity Press, 1998.
- Kevin DeYoung article (<https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/blogs/kevin-deyoung/theological-primer-hypostatic-union/>)
- Pastor Seth’s class notes on “*Christology in Systematic Theology*” by Derek Thomas, January 2012. I can make copies if you’d like – ask me anytime.
- Westminster Shorter Catechism, questions 23-30. Page 871 in our Trinity Hymnal.