

No Ordinary Man (Part 3)

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Which is yours in Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself. By taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

May God add a blessing to the reading of his word. Would you please be seated? If you've ever gone on a trip, which I'm sure all of you have at some point in time in your life, especially if you've traveled somewhere far, if you've traveled somewhere that was going to take you outside of the country, then you know that it requires a lot of planning and preparation to be able to pull those kinds of trips off.

And if you're anything like me, I despise that part of a trip. I can't stand the packing and the planning and the preparing, especially again if you're going out of the United States and you've got to get a passport and all of those different hoops that you have to jump through.

[1 : 5 6] It's not always a pleasant thing, but it's necessary in order for you to be able to take the trip, because otherwise the trip would be a disaster. You wouldn't truly enjoy it because of your lack of preparation and planning.

And so this is the third week, as you've probably noticed, that we've been on this scripture. And we will come back next Sunday. Not next Sunday. We will. That is Sanctity of Life Sunday.

So we will be focusing on that next Sunday. But we will be back the Sunday after that where we will wrap up, I believe, this portion of scripture.

But it's important that we make sure that we understand what it is that Paul is saying here about Jesus being fully man, being fully God.

And we've got to be able to do the planning and the preparing so that as we journey through this scripture again in a couple of weeks, that we have a good understanding of who Jesus is and what Jesus has accomplished and what this means for you, for us who believe.

[3 : 1 1] To do that, again, we've got to understand the fullness of Christ's deity and the fullness of his humanity and understand why that is so essential. Why we must understand these things.

Paul is here presenting Jesus as the supreme example for all of us to emulate. Here he affirms with the rest of scripture that Jesus is no ordinary man.

That Jesus is the God-man. Being fully God, being fully man, two natures in one person.

This is one of the doctrines of the church that we don't allow anyone to mess with or corrupt. I originally said that this was a pillar to our faith and I had to scratch that out.

No, this is foundational to our faith. This isn't just for support. This is what all of the support is being founded upon, right? For strengthening that Jesus is the God-man and that the work that he accomplished for us is foundational to all that we believe.

[4 : 2 3] And if you take that truth away, everything that we believe as Christians falls apart. It comes tumbling down.

And so I want to try and jump back into where we left off last week. If you remember where we were answering the question, why is Jesus' full humanity necessary?

And then we should have time to answer the following question, why is Jesus' full deity necessary? So let's review. If you remember, last week we saw, firstly, that Jesus' full humanity was necessary for representative obedience.

If you remember, Adam, as Scripture says, as our representative, failed us in disobedience. But Jesus, as a man, was able to be our representative and obey God perfectly in our place.

Secondly, we saw that Jesus' full humanity is necessary so that he could be a substitute sacrifice.

[5 : 37] If Jesus had not come in the flesh, if he had not added humanity to his deity, he could not have died in our place. He could not have paid the penalty that was due to us as a result of our sin.

So now let's add a third thing that's necessary here. And that is that Jesus would be the one mediator between God and man.

Why was Jesus' humanity necessary? So that he would be the one mediator between God and man. In verses 5, the end of verse 5, going into verse 7, again Paul says, Christ Jesus, who though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but he emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

In order to be our mediator, Jesus had to take upon himself a human form, thus again adding full humanity to his full deity.

In Mark chapter 9, verses 2 through 8, many of you are familiar with that story. Jesus takes with him three of his disciples, Peter, James, and John.

[7 : 05] And he leads them up to a high mountain by themselves. And here in this passage, we see the brilliant glory of Jesus' divine nature blaze forth through the veil of his human flesh.

Let's read that together. Mark chapter 9, verses 2 through 8. And after six days, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and he led them up a high mountain by themselves.

And he was transfigured before them, and his clothes became radiant, intensely white, as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses, and they were talking with Jesus.

And Peter said to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. For he did not know what to say, for they were terrified.

And a cloud overshadowed them, and a voice came out of the cloud. This is my beloved son. Listen to him. And suddenly, looking around, they no longer saw anyone with them but Jesus only.

[8 : 21] This is a sort of, kind of like a preview. You know, whenever you go to the movies, and you see the previews before the movie that you're there.

And maybe the case is there's a movie that's coming out, and you're really, really looking forward to seeing it. And they play a preview for it, right? And in that preview, they give you a glimpse of what you are going to see one day when that movie finally releases.

And so here, Jesus gives these disciples a brief glimpse, a preview, if you will, of what we will all one day see, when, as Jesus says in Matthew chapter 24, So the disciples here are getting just a preview of what that day will look like.

When Jesus comes in great glory. This event came after Peter's confession, if you remember, that Jesus was the Son of God.

That He was no ordinary man. That He was the Christ. That He was the Son of the living God. And now, what he believed in faith was revealed to him in sight.

[9 : 54] As he would later testify in 2 Peter chapter 1, verses 16 through 18. And he testifies, For we did not follow cleverly contrived myths when we made known to you the power of the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eyewitnesses of His majesty.

For when He received honor and glory from God the Father, and the voice was born to Him by the majestic glory, This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased. We ourselves heard this very voice, born from heaven, for we were with Him on that holy mountain.

So this moment was powerful. And it was etched in the minds and the hearts of the disciples who saw it.

Even in John, 1 John. That which we've seen, that which we've heard, right? That which we've touched, the glory of Jesus Christ, who was no ordinary man.

Centuries before this event took place, God brought His people out of the land of Egypt, where, as you remember, they were enslaved.

[11 : 05] If you remember also, God manifest His presence in a cloud, in the form of a pillar. By day, the Israelites would follow the cloud pillar, and at night, it would turn into a pillar of fire, in order

to light their path, so that they could continue their journey into the promised land.

Let me ask you a question. Have you ever traveled with somebody who is a bad traveler? You know what I mean? Kids typically are not good at traveling, right?

When are we going to get there? Why are we going to this place? Would you stop? I want to go to the bathroom. You know, when can we go home? All these different things, right? You've probably been on a trip with a bad traveler.

You, yourself, may be that bad traveler. Let me tell you something. There was nobody worse at traveling than God's people in Exodus. These people were terrible travelers.

No matter what God had done for them, it was never enough. He had freed them from slavery. He had led them through the wilderness to the promised land, right?

[12:16] He had parted the Red Seas. He had done all these amazing things, and yet it was never enough for them. In fact, they wanted to go back at points.

It's crazy. And you remember one of those points was when Moses was going to meet with God, where he was going to receive the law from God and the Ten Commandments.

And he went up on top of Mount Sinai, where he received that instruction. But he was there for a little bit longer than the Israelites would have liked.

And you remember what they did? They said, basically, Moses is gone. We don't know what's happened to him. They go to Aaron, right, his brother, and they say to him, Up, make us gods who shall go before us.

And they say, As for this Moses, the man who brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him. Right? Such loyalty.

[13:21] Look at these loyal people. Moses, who God has used, right, to lead them out of slavery. And he's gone for just a little bit longer than they like, and so all of a sudden they say, You know what?

Forget him. We want to go. Forget Moses. Forget God. Let's create our own, and let's continue to go. You talk about people who were eager to jump off the bandwagon.

It was these stiff-necked Israelites. And so while Moses is meeting with God, God, being God, sees what's happening down in their camp.

And he gets hot. He gets angry. And he says to Moses, Now, therefore, let me alone, that my wrath may burn hot against them, and I may consume them in order that I may make you a great nation. Then Moses intercedes on behalf of his brethren. And he plays the part of mediator between God and his people.

[14:29] And if you remember, he pleads for God to turn his wrath from them, and God relents. Now, we've got to understand it's not that Moses was right and God was wrong, because God was certainly right in this instance.

It wasn't that Moses was righteous and God was not. That could never be the case. But we'll see that this is foreshadowing here, which we will understand better in a few moments.

But that we're seeing is God is revealing us something here about himself, and something here about Jesus, his son, that would later be revealed and fulfilled.

Then when Moses came down from the mountain, remember, he was livid. He saw for himself all that they were doing, and he threw the tablets of stone on the ground, and they broke into pieces. And it's suffice to say that that day was not a very good day for the Israelites. Let's just say that. If you want more, go to Exodus chapter 33, and you will read all about it.

[15:39] And I recommend that you do that. It was not a good day for the people of Israel because of what they had done. Then once that episode was over, in Exodus chapter 33, verse 7, it says that Moses would take his tent, and he'd pitch it outside of the camp, far from the camp, and he called it the tent of meeting.

And everyone who sought the Lord would have to go out to the tent to speak with the Lord through Moses, his mediator.

When Moses would enter the tent, it says that the pillar of cloud would descend and stand at the entrance of the tent, and the Lord would speak with Moses. And when all the people saw this, when they saw the pillar of cloud standing at the entrance of the tent, the Bible says that they would rise up and worship, each at their tent door.

And so, Moses would speak with the Lord face to face, and he would mediate between God and his sinful people.

A mediator is one who operates as a go-between, right, between two parties who are in conflict. God in his holiness, man in his sinfulness. Moses operated here as the mediator.

[17:00] And if you remember, during one of those meetings that Moses had with God, he made an astonishing request of him. He had seen God manifest his presence in the burning bush.

He had seen God manifest his presence in the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire. But now Moses dared to ask that God would reveal to him, that God would show to him his unveiled glory.

And God responded, When my glory passes by, I will put you in a cleft in the rock. I will cover you with my hand until I have passed by, but my face you cannot see.

Why? Because no one may see God's face and live. And so, if you remember, the very next day, Moses ascended on top of the mountain.

God descended to the top of the mountain, and there they met. And God fulfilled his promise to Moses. While Moses was not able to see God's glory directly, just being so close to it was enough to make his face shine and radiate the reflection of the glory of God.

[18:24] So much so that when he came down from the mountain, the people were terrified. And as that glory began to fade, Moses would wear a veil, remember? Because he didn't want them to see the reflection of that glory of God fading away from him.

Now let's go back to Mark chapter 9. Jesus and the transfiguration with his disciples. We're back on top of a mountain. God's glory is once again on display.

There's a mountain. There's a cloud. There's a voice. Even Moses is there. But this account is different in a couple of significant ways.

Back in Exodus, Moses' obstructed view of God's glory passing by him in the cleft of the rock left him with a shiny face, again, that reflected the glory of God.

Like how the moon reflects the light of the sun. Here, Jesus is doing something much greater than merely reflecting God's glory.

[19:31] God's glory is emanating from him. How can this be? The author of Hebrews puts it like this.

Hebrews 1, 3. He, Jesus, is the radiance of the glory of God. The exact imprint of his nature.

In Greek, the word for imprint that is used here is used only once here in the Bible. In extra-biblical literature, it was used as an expression for an engraving on wood or an etching in metal or a brand on an animal's hide or an impression on a clay or a stamped image on a coin.

So what's being said here is that Jesus is the exact representation of the nature and the very essence of God.

He doesn't just reflect God's glory. He radiates his own glory. Why? Because he is God. R.C. Sproul had a great way of illustrating this.

[20:39] And I want to share that with you. He would look out into his congregation and he would look for a child. And he'd ask the child a simple question.

He'd ask it, What color is a lemon? What color is a lemon? And the child, he said, always got the answer right, responding, A lemon is yellow.

Then he says, Then I would follow up with a deeper question. What color is a lemon in the dark?

With that, we move into the realm of the age-old philosophical inquiry about primary and secondary qualities.

Nearly everyone assumes that a lemon remains yellow when the lights go out, he says. However, color is not a primary quality. It is a secondary quality.

It is not something that inheres inside of an object. The objects we experience in this world is the result of the action of light.

[21:42] For all the hues of the rainbow are found in the pure light of the sun. In the absence of light, all we perceive is black. But when all the colors are mixed in the purity of the light, we see absolute white.

Thus, the fact that Jesus' clothes were pure white tells us something about the light that was emanating from him. Bursting forth through him, right?

Making his clothes turn bright white like no Clorox bleach could ever accomplish. Amen? Amen?

Another significant feature of the encounter in Mark 9 is what didn't happen here that would have happened on Mount Sinai.

Peter, James, and John are in the presence of God, and yet they do not die. They see Jesus' glory emanating through him.

They see it. But they do not die. They were terrified at what they had seen. And so there we see that Peter is trying to process what he's experiencing with what he knows from Scripture.

[23 : 08] That nobody can see the face of God and live. That no man can stand in his presence and not be utterly obliterated by his bright, pure, limitless glory and holiness.

So what's going on here? In verse 6, Peter didn't know what to say. Again, they were seeing this. They were terrified, but they were still alive.

And so I imagine Peter, as he's trying to cover his face and he's scared, he's terrified about what he's seeing. Am I going to die? Am I going to be obliterated here? I'm seeing something that I should not be seeing.

And so he mutters out a response, Rabbi, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents. One for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah. And so you stop and think, with all of this that's happening, with all the thoughts that could be going through Peter's tent, Peter's mind, why is he thinking about tents?

Is Peter just like a camping fanatic? You know, hey, let's build tents and let's sing Kumbaya, you know, or something like that. No, there is something much deeper going on here in Peter's mind.

[24 : 24] Tent, the word used there is translated here in the Greek, it's tabernacle. Tabernacle means dwelling place. The tabernacle, if you remember, was the temporary place of worship.

That the Israelites built according to God's specifications that he gave to Moses. It was used up until Solomon's temple, remember?

The tabernacle was a portable tent. And it was divided into two rooms. You remember those two rooms? You had the holy place, which contained all of the furnishings.

And then you had the second room, the holy of holies, the most holy place, where the Ark of the Covenant was placed.

And if you remember, these two rooms were separated by a veil. The veil was a reminder of the reality that sin renders humanity unfit to be in the presence of God.

[25 : 37] Only the high priest could enter the holy of holies, and only on one day out of the year, on the day of atonement, where he served as mediator between God and man.

The tabernacle and the sacrifices and the priest who performed them filled the gap between humanity and his sinfulness and God and his holiness. So what is Peter suggesting here?

Well, I think he's suggesting a couple things. One, I think he thinks this is it. This is it. Jesus is revealing his glory. He is revealing his divinity, right?

Now we are going to launch into the kingdom of God here on earth. And so I think there's a couple things going on. One, I don't want any of you guys to leave. Let's build tabernacles where you can stay, where we can come and worship.

And I think the other thing is too, we need to be protected from what we're seeing so that we don't die. And as Peter says this, immediately a cloud appears and it envelops all of them.

[26 : 52] And God speaks through it. And he says, this is my son whom I love. Listen to him. And as soon as he concludes that sentence, it's like everything gets sucked back up into heaven.

Moses, Elijah, the cloud, the glory, it all just gets sucked back into heaven. And then the next thing the disciples know is they are there standing with Jesus as he was when they traveled with him up the mountain, as they had always perceived and known him.

What's significant about this is that it speaks to what the rest of Scripture says about Jesus. The New Testament depicts Jesus as the dwelling place of God's glory.

Let's look at a few Scriptures together. John 1, 4. John was there. He saw this. He said, Colossians 2, 9.

For in him, the whole fullness of deity dwells in bodily form. John 14, 9. Anyone, Jesus says, who has seen me has seen the Father.

[28 : 13] In Christ, we see the visible manifestation of God himself in the second person of the Trinity.

Though his glory was veiled, Jesus was nonetheless the very presence of God on the earth. Just as God's divine presence dwelt in a plain tent called the tabernacle before the temple was built, so did the presence dwell in the relatively plain-looking man who was Jesus Christ.

Because we are alienated from God by sin, we need someone to come between God and ourselves to bring us back to Him. We need a mediator who can represent us to God and who can represent God to us.

And there is only one person who has ever fulfilled that requirement. 1 Timothy 2, 5 and 6. For there is one God, there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all.

[29 : 38] Before we move on to the next point, this is something that I hope that we understand. That Jesus, as our mediator, did not simply divert God's wrath towards our sin someplace else.

He bore it Himself. Your sins were paid for. Not diverted, paid for. And Jesus bore them on the cross for you.

As our mediator, He could do that. And as our mediator, we know what God the Father is like. Because we know Jesus Christ.

why else was His full humanity necessary? We see also, fourthly, to be our great high priest.

To be our great high priest. And this all fits together. Verse 8, And being found in human form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

[30 : 43] So again, you remember the veil that was in the temple, that was there in the tabernacle, it was there in the temple, it was present when Jesus was dying on the cross.

And that veil signified the separation between God's holiness and man's fallenness, man's sinfulness. And at the very moment when Jesus cried out and He gave up His spirit, right as that happened and He said, It is finished.

And He gave up His spirit. At that very moment, that veil was torn from top to bottom in the temple. So again, we've been talking a lot about the tabernacle and what its purpose was for.

The temple was a permanent station for the tabernacle. It became the center of Jewish religious life. The temple was the place where animal sacrifices were carried out.

Where worship according to the law of Moses was fulfilled. But in Hebrews 9, verses 1 through 9, it tells us that the temple veil separated in the holy of holies that the earthly dwelling place of God's presence was torn in half.

[31 : 59] And this signified something very important about our separation from God by sin, about our high priest, the only one who was able and permitted to go into that holy place, place, to enter into God's presence to make atonement for sin.

That veil that was torn is estimated to have been about 60 feet high and about four inches thick.

Okay, that's a big piece of fabric. And it was ripped in half from top to bottom.

Only God could do something like that. So what is the message that is being sent to us through that? I want you to turn in your Bibles to Hebrews chapter 9. If you don't have a Bible, there's one in your pew.

Or you can follow along with the words that I've provided for you on the PowerPoint. Hebrews chapter 9. This is very significant. We're going to read verses 1 through 14. And it says, Now even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly place of holiness.

For a tent was prepared. The first section in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the presence. It is called the holy place. Behind the second curtain was a second section called the most holy place.

[33 : 22] Having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold in which was a golden urn holding the manna and Aaron's staff that budded and the tablets of the covenant.

Above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat of these things we cannot now speak in detail. These preparations having thus been made the priest go regularly into the first section performing their ritual duties.

But into the second only the high priest goes and he but once a year and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the unconditional unintentional excuse me sins of the people.

By this the Holy Spirit indicates that the way into the holy place is not yet opened as long as the first section still stands which is symbolic for the present age.

According to this arrangement gifts and sacrifices are offered that cannot perfect the conscience of the worshiper but delay only with food and drink and various washings regulations for the body imposed until the time of reformation.

[34 : 34] But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come then through the greater and more perfect tent not made with hands that is not of this creation he entered once for all into the holy places not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood thus securing an eternal redemption for the blood of goats and bulls and

the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer sanctify for the purification of the flesh how much more will the blood of Christ who through the eternal spirit offered himself without blemish to God purify our conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

So you see the veil of a temple again was a constant reminder that sin renders humanity unfit to be in the presence of God.

The fact that the sin offering was offered annually and countless other sacrifices had to be made repeatedly and daily showed graphically that sin could not truly be atoned for or erased by the blood of animals.

When the veil of the temple was torn at the moment of Jesus' death it dramatically symbolized that his sacrifice the shedding of his blood was sufficient atonement for our sins once and for all. it signified that now the way into the holy of holies is open that we can go before the presence of God.

[36 : 29] Now we enter God's presence through Jesus our great high priest. The veil in a way also symbolized Christ himself who is the only access to the father.

father. He is the superior high priest and as believers in his finished work we partake of his better priesthood which means as Hebrews 4 14 through 16 says since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens Jesus the son of God let us hold fast our confession for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in our time of need this is amazing because of who Jesus is because of what Jesus has done we now have access to the father cleansing and forgiveness for our sins not just that we are declared innocent of them because

Jesus bore them in our place and not only that but his perfect righteous life sinless in every way that we could never live ourselves is credited to our account so that God looks at you a believer and what does he see a righteous person his son and so what does that mean you can enter into God's presence today that's amazing stuff that veil is gone it's no longer needed because of the finished work of Jesus Christ he represented us perfectly he was the perfect substitute sacrifice for our sins he is the mediator that we need the go between the one who stood in our place who died for our sins who gives us our righteousness as our great high priest and we can enter boldly into the throne room of God without fear of being obliterated by him this is awesome and great news so now very quickly why was

Jesus full deity necessary and I'm going through these very quickly not doing them full justice but our time is up only someone who is infinite God could bear the full penalty of sin Jesus met that requirement salvation is from the Lord it cannot be provided by any creature no human being could ever save himself only God could do that and has done that through his son Jesus Christ only someone who was truly and fully God could be the one mediator between God and man both to bring us back to God and also to reveal God most fully to us and I want to conclude by saying this I think often as Christians we hear all this man it's great news we've received it we've believed it we worship God because of it but there are times if you're like me where you've stumbled where you've fallen where you've messed up and you're tempted to wonder if it still could be true can I still enter into

God's holy presence look at what I've done and I know that's the way Satan works right yeah you can't you can't go back he won't have you he won't have you back you've got to earn your way back isn't that what we do I've done that before I've messed up and I thought oh God doesn't love me anymore I can't just go back to God I've got to earn my way I've got to earn his trust I've got to earn his love so that I can stand before him and he'll have me listen closely to what I'm telling you no you don't why because of Jesus because of what Jesus has done for you that fail is ripped it's gone you can enter into the presence of God because of Jesus who he is what he has done you can boldly enter into his presence and pray knowing that God is hearing it knowing that you are a child of

[41 : 36] God that is great news justified by faith not by works because of God's tremendous grace this is news that we need to hear that we need to be reminded of this is news that we must share is it not