

Christ Community Covenant Church
Down to Earth – “Humility”
Pastor Dave Scherrer - December 25, 2016

We are wrapping up our **Down to Earth Christmas** series. You remember it has a bit of a double meaning. First and foremost is that we celebrate what the angels spoke of to the shepherds, that on this day in the city of David a King was born who is the Messiah and the Savior of the world. It is this King we serve and it is this King we worship, even the Lord Jesus Christ.

But there is another embedded reality that comes with the Down to Earth theme and that is that there are real life, practical and critically important truths that we can glean from the Christmas narrative if we are willing. These down to earth realities are a part of the Christmas gift from God as well.

Gloria helped us kick it off with thoughts on **down to earth obedience**. Then two weeks ago we looked at what a **Christmas down to earth lifestyle** might look like based on how the Holy Family carried themselves in this season. Last week we reflected on love. **Love came down to earth at Christmas, but we also discovered that hope and joy and peace and grace and mercy and truth all came in the flesh as well.** God incarnate brought the fullness of His character with Him in Jesus. If you're looking for hope this Christmas you have come to the right place. Looking for forgiveness or wisdom? Right here! Need a helping of grace smothered in love and peace. Dinner is served! Your Christmas banquet is set in Christ.

Your cup runneth over!

Now this morning we look at one last down to earth theme – Down to earth humility.

Where are Kings born?

Sure, in a palace! The more splendid the better!

3 Pictures of the Château de Versailles not shown here but are in yours slides
Home for French Kings (Louis XIV) from 1680 and ended at the French revolution in 1789, Encompassing 721,182 square feet, the palace has 700 rooms, more than 2,000 windows, 1,250 fireplaces and 67 staircases.



Swedish Royal Palace , Stockholm, Sveriges Kungahus The palace is built in baroque style by the architect Nicodemus Tessin and is formed as a Roman palace. The palace has more than 600 rooms divided between seven floors.



Russian Wooden Palace, **Kolomenskoye**, built during the reign of Tsar Alexis Mikhailovich, became a royal residence in 1660s.



Weiyang Palace – 3 sq miles. Built in 200 BC at the request of Han Gaozu, under the supervision of his prime minister Xiao He, it served as the administrative center and imperial residence of the Han Dynasty.



This is a cave in Israel. Not quite as palatial.

DISCUSSION: What is humility?

“Humility is so shy. If you begin talking about it, it leaves.”

~ Tim Keller, *Christianity Today*, Dec. 2008

“What we suffer from today is humility in the wrong place. Modesty has moved from the organ of ambition. A man was meant to be doubtful about himself, but undoubting about the truth; this has been exactly reversed. Nowadays the part of a man that a man does assert is exactly the part he ought not to assert — himself. The part he doubts is exactly the part he ought not to doubt — the Divine Reason.”

~ G.K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*, 1957

Humility is essential to the Christmas story and to the Christian Life

Jesus wasn't humble for the same reasons we are (or should be). So how can looking at Jesus' Christmas humility help *us*? Our humility, if there is any at all, is based on our finiteness, our fallibility, and our sinfulness. But the eternal Son of God was not finite. He was not fallible. And he was not sinful. So, unlike our humility, Jesus' humility originated some other way. Here's my favorite Christmas text. Look for Jesus' humility.

Philippians 2:6-8 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.

What defines Jesus' humility is the fact that it is mainly a conscious act of putting himself in a lowly, servant role for the good of others. His humility is defined by phrases like:

- “he emptied himself [of his divine rights to be free from abuse and suffering]”
- “he took the form of a servant”
- “he became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross”

So Jesus’ humility was not a heart disposition of being finite or fallible or sinful. It was a heart of infinite perfection and infallible truthfulness and freedom from all sin, which for that very reason did not need to be served. He was free and full to overflow in serving.

Another Christmas text that says this would be Mark 10:45:

Mark 10:45 For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Jesus’ humility was not a sense of defect in himself, but a sense of fullness in himself put at the disposal of others for their good. It was a voluntary lowering of himself to make the height of his glory available for sinners to enjoy.

Jesus makes the connection between his Christmas lowliness and the good news for us:

Matthew 11:28–30 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

His lowliness makes our relief from burdens possible. If he were not lowly, he would not have been “obedient unto death, even death on a cross.” And if he had not been obedient to die for us, we would be crushed under the weight of our sins. He lowers himself to take our condemnation upon himself, being made sin on our behalf.

Now we have more reason to be humble than before. We are finite, fallible, sinful, and therefore have no ground for boasting at all. But now we see other humbling things: Our salvation is not owing to our work, but his grace. So boasting about our salvation makes no sense at all, only boasting of Christ. And the way he accomplished that gracious salvation was through voluntary, conscious self-lowering in servant-like obedience to the point of death.

So in addition to finiteness, fallibility, and sinfulness, we now have two other huge impulses at work to humble us: free and undeserved grace underneath all our blessings and a model of self-denying, sacrificial, servanthood that willingly takes the form of a servant.

So we are called to join Jesus in this conscious self-humbling and servanthood.

Matthew 23:12 ¹² Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Pride vs Humility

Pride is self-satisfaction - Humility is authentically self-aware
 Pride is self-sufficiency - Humility is dependent of the sufficiency of Christ
 Pride considers itself above instruction – Humility loves the instruction of the Lord
 Pride is insubordinate – Humility is servant hearted and obedient

Pride takes credit for what God alone does – Humility doesn’t know anything but God
 Pride exults in being made much of – Humility is invisible
 Pride refuses to trust in God – Humility is care-free faith

Humility doesn't believe you are worthless. Humility is believing that others are worthy of being served and now in my own confidence according to the love of God who has made me whole, I am worthy to be the servant of all. This is humility. It is truth and love mixed together in a blender – out pour humility and grace and mercy.

Are you humble enough to be care free?

1 Peter 5:5-7 Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, ⁷ casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

Lord, I pray that this “shy virtue”—this massive ground of our salvation and our servanthood—would peek out from her quiet place and grant us the garments of lowliness.