

# “Go to Hell Satan”

Philippians 2:1-13

These words from Paul’s letter to the Philippians speak to us today too. They speak to us of the power and the presence of God in our lives - the power and presence of God that we are called to “*be to and for*” others. Today we’re going to look at what is often called the *Christ hymn*, found in Philippians 2:5-11. These verses were part of an early Christian hymn that was sung in the New Testament Church before Paul even wrote the letter to the Philippians. This was a song they knew and sung and Paul took it and used it in writing his letter to remind them of how they were called to treat each other and how they were called to consider the needs of others using Jesus Christ as his example of love and self giving *by coming to be one of us*. Although he was God, Jesus came to live with us and be one of us; just as He gave up the right to be recognized as God when he became one of us, so also we are called to give up our own right to position and power and give of ourselves for others. Even though Jesus had the right to be recognized as God, He stepped from heaven to earth and into a human being, in a sense hiding his divine nature within human flesh, with which he would the go to the cross for you and me.

**Php 2:5** Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,

**Php 2:6** who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,

**Php 2:7** but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form,

**Php 2:8** he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death--even death on a cross.

These words have been understood and misunderstood quite a lot in the history of the church, and especially over the last couple of centuries as people have looked at the nature of Jesus; who Jesus is and who Jesus was in His life on the earth; and who Jesus is today in glory and with us here now. These words have been taken by many different theologians and scholars to mean many different things. For instance, the passage as it is written in the NRSV and many other translations is

**Php 2:6** who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited,

**Php 2:7** but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,

That has been understood by some scholars through the history of church as meaning that He is God in glory, the Word of God through whom God spoke and all that was nothing became everything that is; that the Word of God which said, *let there be light* (Gen 1:3), is this Jesus Christ, the Word of God, the second person of the Trinity; and that this person then *emptied Himself* and became a human being. Some have interpreted this as meaning that Jesus quit being God or emptied Himself of His glory, or emptied Himself of His omnipotence, or of His omniscience, or of His omnipresence ... of His all power, all knowing and all presence nature ... all of these things are essential to being God. Some people have said He emptied Himself of these divine attributes so He could be confined within the shell of a human being like you and me.

The problem with this understanding is that it means that Jesus, who walked the dusty streets of Palestine, who preached and taught us the nature of God, who healed and worked miracles, who forgave sin, who went to the cross and died for you and me ... this Jesus, therefore, would not really be God. He might be understood as partially God or 30% God or 50% God ... but he would not be knowable as fully God if he lacked even one attribute of the Divine nature. This understanding says that Jesus was sort of, kind of, a very special semi-divine human being who had *a link* to God, the Father in heaven, and who had a memory that could access some things that happened before His life and before the creation of the universe and who had magical powers and who could do incredible things. And, because of this, it

would have to be admitted that this being really wasn't 100% human either. He wouldn't have the frailties of being human and He wouldn't have the possibility of sin. He would be too perfect to be human, and too inferior to be God. In short, the idea that Jesus emptied Himself of His divinity in order to become one of us ends up destroying our understanding of Jesus as being *fully God* and *fully human*. Throughout its 2000 years of history the Church has proclaimed that Jesus Christ is a full-fledged human being, just like you and me, who was also 100% God ... including the all-knowing, all-powerful and ever-present nature as God.

So what does Paul mean when he writes that Jesus *emptied Himself*? *He emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness* – what does it mean that He *emptied Himself*? I like the King James translation, where it states that Jesus: *made himself of no reputation*. I believe that this gets closer to essential meaning of the Christ Hymn than most other translations. Instead of divulging Himself of powers ... instead of getting rid of the glory of Divinity that was part of Him as being God, Jesus takes that glory and Divinity and hides it within humanity. He doesn't continue to push it forward for everyone to see every instance of His living but, rather, He takes it and conceals it behind what it means to be human: behind the flesh and blood and bone of Jesus' humanity was hidden, or concealed, His Divinity. It came forth in many different instances, the most obvious of which being the Transfiguration: when He stood with Moses and Elijah on mount Tabor and He, Himself, was transfigured into a glowing brightness of divine glory and, as John says, *we beheld his glory* (John 1:14).

Every bit of being God, including unlimited knowledge and unlimited power, is still part of Jesus' nature. This doesn't mean He always exercised His power: He walked the streets, He didn't simply zap and beam Himself from one place to another ... He walked the streets. He also walked on water. He spoke with human beings, revealing the knowledge of what it means to be a human being, and yet He also spoke divine truth in a way that no human being could ever speak. He forgave sins, something that only God can *really* do. He cried and felt pain, something a human does. He overcame the sting of death, something God that does. He ate and drank, something that humans do. He worked miracles, something that God does. He is *both* God and human; He is *both* God and man. That's the proclamation of the church: He is both divine and human.

The divine is *concealed* within His humanity so that it does not overwhelm us and we can interact with Him as our brother.

Php 2:7...And being found in human form,  
Php 2:8 he humbled himself

He could have come as a king, He could have come as a ruler, He could have come as a military general, He could have come as a rich and wealthy person, but no ... He came as a slave, as a poor person.

Php 2:7...And being found in human form,  
Php 2:8 he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death--even death on  
a cross.

He could have come and fought wars with Rome and been victorious and established the kingdom of David and He could have done it by military power exactly as the Jewish people had anticipated and were expecting in their messianic expectations. He could have done that had He wished to - but no, that was not God's plan. Rather, *He humbled himself to the point of death on a cross*. In other words, rather than considering firstly His rights as God, His rights to power and glory and majesty and kingship as God, His right to be worshiped as God, His right to be considered God on earth ... rather than considering all of that important, He set it all aside without setting aside Divinity, and died for you and me. He died for you and me. But it doesn't end there -

Php 2:9 Therefore (because He did this) God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name,

Php 2:10 so that at the name of Jesus **every knee should bend**, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Php 2:11 and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Sometimes we go through these verses and we hear it and we think to ourselves “now that is pretty” and then keep going. We fail to hear the implication of the words ... so, hear them again -

Php 2:9 Therefore God also highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name,

Php 2:10 so that at the name of Jesus (at the expression of His authority) every knee should bend, (not some knees, not just your knees, not just our knees, not just Christian knees, not just the knees of believers – every knee should bow. Every person and being will recognize the authority and power of Jesus’ name) in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

Not just here on earth but in glory above and in hell below every knee shall bow. This, my friends, is good news for you and me. My brothers and sisters, we are facing in this congregation and amongst our members, and have been facing for weeks and months and years, the power of the evil one, Satan, the devil. We’ve been facing him and he’s been attacking us. We’ve been trying to proclaim the Gospel and be the family of God, here; and, for whatever reason and through whatever guise, he manages to get his little slimy paws in. He slithers in like he did in Genesis, in the garden, when he talked to Eve and convinces her the fruit of the tree is okay - go ahead and eat of it; it won’t hurt you, it’s to be wanted, it will make you wise and make you like God, in fact. “That’s why God doesn’t want you to eat it; He’s trying to trick you,” Satan said to Eve, “to keep you from being like God.” So, she listened and took and ate and gave it to her idiot husband and he ate ... and we’ve been in trouble ever since.

Ever since then the people of God have been struggling against the powers and forces of darkness; and, in Jesus Christ, we finally have *that name* which brings the authority and power that we need to tell that slithering serpent go to hell – literally. My friends, I don’t care what you’re facing today, the authority of Jesus’ name is absolute; the authority of His name knows no boundaries, no contradictions, no limitations - **it is absolute**. God gave it to Him and made it His. I don’t care what you are facing today, in the name of Jesus **we have victory** over the powers and forces of darkness. At the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, even Satan’s.

Php 2:11 and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,

When you see Satan sneaking his little slithery self into your life to become an obstacle to following the will that God has for you ... when you see him slithering himself into your relationships, into your family, into friendships, into your life and, yes, even into your church, my brothers and sisters, in that moment very moment take hold of the promise that, **in the name of Jesus**, every knee shall bow. Accept that authority and proclaim it. In the name of Jesus – **Satan, get out!**

I am saying that here, today, as pastor of this congregation, with members of this church in the hospital right now, with members of this Church ill right now, recovering right now, facing difficulties right now, with broken relationships and broken friendships, with broken families and hurting souls - all of this due to the trickiness and slitheryness of the evil one; my friends, I am saying as the pastor of this congregation, in the name of Jesus – **Satan, get out.**

My brothers and sisters, accept this authority too; accept the mind that *was in* Christ Jesus. Not to consider your own self to be important but rather to consider the importance of the other - your brother and your sister in Christ; to consider the importance they have in this family; to consider the needs they have before your own even and to say to Satan: “**get out.**” And, *in the name of Jesus*, he will.

We took Peggy for a procedure on Friday and I remember looking at her as we left the x-ray unit and we were rushing down those halls to go up to the CCU. I was watching her in the bed struggling for every breath, struggling to breathe, struggling to get that breath of life into her and knowing it must’ve felt like 20 or 30 people sitting on her tiny frail chest and what went through my mind constantly in that moment were the words “*in the name of Jesus*, Satan get away from her; *in the name of Jesus*, we bind you Satan.” And, I say that for everyone of you in your situation and in your families, when you see the slithery one moving into your life and attempting to trick you into eating from the tree and trick you into hurting your fellow Christian, my friends, exercise that authority that Jesus gives to us and *command* Satan out.

I expect a miracle; I expect a miracle for Peggy, I expect continued miracles for Jason. We’ve seen them already and we will see more. I expect a miracle for Carol; I expect a miracle for my mother. And *in the name of Jesus* we proclaim it and we expect a miracle for this family of God and *in the name of Jesus* we proclaim it. My brothers and sisters at the name of Jesus ...

**Php 2:10** ... every knee should bend, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
**Php 2:11** and every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Give Jesus a big Amen!