

## He Emptied Himself

Dan Huff

*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross (Philippians 2:5-9).*

This is a very rich and thought-provoking statement from the Apostle Paul. The American Standard Version (ASV) says, “*but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant...*” (2:7a)

What does it mean that Jesus emptied Himself? He was willing to set aside His glory and His authority that He had in heaven. As some of our poets have described, He left the palace, the court of heaven in all its glory and magnificence, and what did He exchange it for? He was born in a manger – a feed trough – among the animals. It appears He was born into a financially poor family, from the two birds that were offered as a sacrifice instead of a lamb (Luke 2:22-24; Leviticus 12:8).

How can any of us finite mortals understand the immortal taking on mortality, the mighty taking on frailty and weakness, laying aside spiritual glory, power, and authority to take a body like yours and mine (John 1:1-3, 14)? He did not consider this something that He had to grasp at all cost and could not let go.

When Jesus emptied Himself, He did not set aside His character, principles, or Who He is. He was/is 100% man and 100% God. Consenting to be a man was the most remarkable display of a humble spirit. This brought to fruition the plan for our salvation, which Peter informs us was in place before the Father, Son, and Spirit even created us (1 Peter 1:20-21). Why did Jesus do this? Motivated by love for the Father and fallen mankind, who were lost in the bondage and slavery of sin, He was willing to empty Himself, making no reputation for Himself.

Before His betrayal, Jesus prayed, “*And now, O Father, glorify Me together with Yourself, with the glory which I had with You before the world was*” (John 17:5). There was glory Jesus had which He emptied (i.e. divested Himself of). As His death, burial, and resurrection were near, He longed for that glory.

I believe He had set aside or emptied Himself of His glory so that He could be approachable by men and women. Retaining that glory could have made it impossible for Him to fulfill His purpose for coming. Paul points out that Jesus, King of kings and LORD of lords, now dwells in unapproachable light (1 Timothy 6:16). Could this be a part of the glory He laid aside to become one of us?

He was not only made in the likeness of men, but He partook of our nature, our struggles, and our infirmities. He experienced pain, sorrow, and disappointment. He was a servant of all – emptying Himself of privileges and advantages. Obeying the Law of Moses, He did not consider Himself above the law as many in power do. He yielded perfect obedience to the will of God.

*Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted (Hebrews 2:17-18).*

*For we do not have a High Priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need (Hebrews 4:15-16).*

He understands our plight – our temptations and weaknesses – offering help in our time of need. He emptied Himself of privileges and advantages. Jesus is God. Jesus has the power of God. Yet, He never used that power for His own personal comforts or self. Can you imagine having the power to come down off the cross but not exercising that power? Though He was reviled, He did not revile in return (see 1 Peter 2:21-25).

Consider having the power, the ability, and the means to comfort yourself to prevent your death. Consider the greater power He displayed – exercising His self-control – not using the power to help Himself or destroy His

enemies because He knew the world was resting on His shoulders. The redemption of the souls of men and women depended on Him. There was no plan B or C.

He humbled Himself and became subject and obedient to death, even the most shameful and cruel death man could devise at the time—the death of the cross. It was not the death of a soldier dying in a blaze of glory and honor. It was not the death that a faithful servant might incur, falling among robbers, although Jesus was THE faithful servant (**Mark 10:45**). It was the death of the lowest: the long, lingering, painful, humiliating death of the cross. It was not the nails that held or kept Him on the cross; no, it was love! It was love for His Father and the Father's plan for our salvation (**John 4:34**) and love for our lost souls. His whole humiliation and service from birth to the cross was His own voluntary act (**John 10:17 -18**). He yielded and submitted Himself. No one took His life from Him; He gave it.

Considering what Jesus has done for us, what should our response be to such amazing love?