

## **Maundy Thursday – Philippians 2:5-11**

<sup>5</sup> Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,<sup>6</sup> who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,<sup>7</sup> but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup> And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup> Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup> so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup> and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

*I think we often make a critical mistake about humility. We imagine that being humble is being down on ourselves, telling everyone that we are not very capable or good. But such mealy-mouthed self-deprecation is in fact often another form of pride. True humility is not denying what you are. True humility is owning what you are good at but bending low for the sake of another's need. Imagine the star of the local basketball team, be it high school, college, or professional, it doesn't matter. In a happier and less fearful time he walks by a bunch of young boys playing a game of basketball on a school playground. True humility is not the denial of his talent and ability. True humility is joining in their fun, playing with them, likely teaching them a few things, but not being above them. True humility, the good kind of humility, would not sneer at their ineptitude and mistakes. True humility lowers the self to them.*

*Now ramp that up a million times and more. Jesus' true humility does not loathe the contemptible and rebellious creatures that we are. He takes upon himself our frail and mortal frame. He is born and lives a life of service. He walks to Calvary's brutal hill. He dies. But this is not a denial of his divinity or his perfection. This is in fact the assertion of those very things. He bends low in service because he is God and knows it. He makes himself nothing, takes on that servant form, becoming obedient even the torturous death of crucifixion because he owns his right to heaven's throne. He is God.*

*This Holy Week we find our worship distorted and our lives upended. We are offering you a chance to worship virtually. Do it. Listen and partake. It would be easy to feel cheated or to be disdainful of such worship. But that would be self-centered. Christ could have said the same about Mary's ministrations to the infant Jesus. She was a first-time mother who might not have known exactly what to do with a newborn infant. His friends were sometimes not very good friends. His creatures were terrible at praising him; instead, they killed him. But he bent low for their sake, enduring the cross for their sake. We are at home this Holy Week because vulnerable people need us to be there.*

*But also hear the second half of this song which the Philippians sang. God raised him up. Christ has gathered our lives into his own. He has met us at the very lowest but most common point of every human life – death. No one fails to die. But when we die, we fall into Jesus' capable hands. He has been exalted to a place above every other. Every knee bends at his name. There is no humiliation, no, not even death, which surpasses God's ability to reverse.*

*God be with you until we meet again. In Jesus' love and mercy, Pastor Wulf*