**The Humiliation**

Introduction:

1. Merriam-Webster defines “humiliation:” “to reduce someone to a lower position: to make someone ashamed or embarrassed.”

2. Cambridge Dictionary defines it as “the feeling of being ashamed or losing respect.”

3. Collins English Dictionary says, “Humiliation is the embarrassment you feel when someone makes you appear stupid, or when you make a mistake in public.”

4. Humility is the idea of lowering oneself before others. 1 Pet. 5:5 says, “Cloth yourselves with humility toward one another.”

5. The word “humble” is in the same family. Throughout Scripture it is contrasted with self-exaltation. Lk. 14:11 says, “He who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

6. Humility is always commended in Scripture in both the O.T. and N.T.

7. But what I want to talk to you about is the humiliation of Christ. In our recent study of John 13 my attention was drawn to this. In that text the Son of God assumed the humble task of washing the disciples’ feet. Implied was His plan to cleanse them from their sin by offering Himself to the humiliation of the cross.

8. Each first day of the week we reflect on this death. Often the focus is on the pain and suffering He experienced, but this barely begins to address the humiliation He experienced.

9. Is humility appropriate to God and is it appropriate that the Son of God should experience humiliation?

Discussion:

I. He emptied Himself (Phil. 2:3-8). What does this mean?

 A. Jesus, purposefully and willingly left the glory and perfect relationship He had in heaven

 to become a man.

 B. He did not forfeit His deity, but He did give up the glory of heaven. He made himself

 subject to the Law, to everything that man is subject to. He became human.

 1. He needed sleep. He became thirsty and hungry.

 2. 2 Cor. 8:9 says, “though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you

 though His poverty might become rich.”

 3. When He was born He was wrapped in cloths and laid in a feed trough. He who

 knew heaven was squeezed through a human body, rudely awakened to the cold

 world, the Son of God.

 4. He was circumcised on the eighth day, symbolizing the cutting off from the world and

 joining to God that characterized the Jewish people. The sinless Son of God, took

 upon Himself the mark that memorialized the need for man to be made right with God

 who demanded a circumcised heart (Deut. 10:16; Jer. 4:4). He who had been in

 heaven in perfect relationship with God was now joined to people who needed to be

 made right, who needed to be joined to God.

 5. While on the earth He was in some sense deprived of the presence of His Father like

 He had had before. Like all humans after Adam, born outside the presence of the

 Garden of Eden and such close intimacy with the Father.

 6. He had entered a world of perversion, violence, hatred, suffering and injustice. It

 was a world that smelled of death, deterioration and decay. It was a spiritual

 battlefield, humans dead and dying everywhere, bodies entombed out of sight in an

 attempt to soften the grim reality.

 7. He worked as a carpenter (builder). Backbreaking, grueling, uneventful, the work of

 the common man, not that of a king, surely not the work of the Son of God.

 8. Increasing in wisdom (Lk. 2:40), studying, learning to talk, learning to read,

 memorizing the Torah, reading the prophets, the writings. Seeing in them His

 coming work it must have born down on Him what He was going to have to do.

 9. Submitting to the baptism of John He identified Himself with those who needed to

 repent and be forgiven, although He knew no sin.

 10. Condemned by His family as though He had lost His mind.

 11. The Pharisees and rulers questioned Him ruthlessly, their hatred become more and

 more intense as He identified Himself with His Father. He was condemned as a

 blasphemer, friend of sinners and one who had a demon.

II. He was betrayed.

 A. The passage in John 13 reminds us before He washed the disciples’ feet that “the devil

 had already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, to betray Him.”

 1. And betray Him he did, with a kiss, into the hands of the ruthless, for 30 pieces of

 silver. It defies our imagination what Judas is thinking, but then sin doesn’t make

 sense. There can be no adequate explanation!

 2. And then there is Peter who states in adamant protest, “Never shall You wash my

 feet!” “I will lay down my life for You,” he proclaims. He cut off a servant’s ear in

 defense of Jesus. And shortly thereafter denied Him three times, cursing and

 swearing.

 3. Yet there was no cursing and swearing in Jesus’ life. Not even when he was a

 teenager, not even when he hit his thumb with a hammer.

 B. Pilate preferred to satisfy the Jews, although he knew that for envy they had delivered

 Him up (Matt. 27:18).

 C. The crowds, persuaded by the chief priests and the elders, asked that a known thief be

 released instead of Jesus (Matt. 27:20).

 D. He was mocked, made a laughing-stock, a spectacle, stripped and nailed to a cross, the

 very epitome of shame. After all anyone who was executed in this way was a looser.

 E. Here was the greatest manifestation of His humiliation.

 1. The wrath of God executed against Him.

 2. God’s holiness executed against sin.

 3. The righteous for the unrighteous, the Son of God, for my sin.

 4. Such humiliation that the sun cannot shine upon it, and such humiliation that the

 earth quakes in terror.

 5. How the Father must have suffered in the anguish of the humiliation of His Son.

III. Why? Why such humiliation?

 A. John answers . . .

 1. God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son . . . For God did not

 send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world may be saved

 through Him (Jn. 3:16-17).

 2. This is My commandment, that you love one another just as I have loved you.

 Greater love has no one than this that he lay down His life for His friends. You are

 My friends (Jn. 15:12-13).

 3. These signs have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son

 of God; and that believing you may have life in His name (Jn. 20:31).

 B. Paul too . . .

 1. God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ

 died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be

 saved from the wrath of God through Him (Rom. 5:8-9).

 2. There is no other way for the wrath of God to be satisfied. He took the humiliation

 of our sin upon Himself.

 3. When the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared He saved

 us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according

 to His mercy . . . poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior (Titus

 3:4-6).

III. How will you respond?

 A. Jews and Muslims today regard it as incredulous that the Son of God, the King, would

 endure such hostility of sinners against himself (Heb. 12:3). No king would humiliate

 himself like this. Herein is the unique message of Christianity: the King serves the

 people with humiliation. Peter had a problem with Jesus washing his feet. I can hear

 him say, “Don’t humiliate yourself before me.”

 B. But then those who heard him preach on Pentecost were cut to the quick. Their hearts

 crushed. They cried out what shall we do? Peter knew because he too had betrayed

 Him. Repent and be baptized. Humble yourself and receive the forgiveness His

 humiliation has purchased for you. Let Him wash your feet. Let Him cleanse you.

 C. We are to move from humiliating the Lord to praising Him.

Conclusion:

1. What will your answer be?

2. Will you humiliate Him further?

3. Will you exalt Him as your King?