

What Angels Wonder

The Advent Series

The Submission of Christ

What Angels Wonder



December 2011 Pulpit Series

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Jesus Christ
Our Highest Calling
Our Greatest Purpose
Our Soul's Source and Joy
And Our All-Consuming Passion

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“The Devil’s Lie: Just ‘Say No’ to sin”

December 4, 2011

James 4:7-10

Advent #1 – Hope

James 4:7-10 (7) Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. (8) Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. (9) Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness. (10) Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up

Theme: “Suffering against Sin by Submission”

*ref.book: “Touching Godliness Through Submission”, -KP

Yohannan

INTRODUCTION

As well-meaning as some people are, simply deciding not to sin and to live a good Christian life is not enough, because we simply don’t have the capability of making ourselves *better* people. If we did, then we would not be in the situation we are, which necessitates us becoming better. We must invite and allow

God into the equation and to do His unique, heart surgery on our behalf. We must submit to and draw near to God. (v7 & 8)

This is a true spiritual battle for the true believing Christian. It is not enough to just decide and simply say no to sin. This is a call to action!

1 Peter 2:21 states that “*Christ suffered for you, leaving and example that you should follow in His steps*”. Therefore, Christ is our example. And in this series, we must understand that He is our example of **submission**.

Understand that ...

I Submission Begins With Me (v7)

** Submission is my response to God’s invitation to trust and obey Him.*

(7) Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

“**yourselves**” is an all important word here.

A Submission may be an Unpleasant Virtue

Verse 7 - “Yourselves” - Submission begins with **me**.

Submit – means to willfully position myself under – specifically, under the authority of God. But too often we want to be in charge – we want to be on top – we want to be #1.

“Yourselves” – Submission is not something God magically does. Submission is not something that ambushes you and overcomes you against your will. It is that which the believing Christian chooses to do, under his or her own volition, as an act of our will. This is something we do to ourselves.

Its like getting dressed in the morning. It doesn't just happen to you, unless of course you are George Jetson. You do it for yourself. It is self imposed – an act of our own human will and choosing.

The desire to be obedient and pleasing to God is ultimately what governs this – it is the motivation behind this action.

B Submission is suffering against sin, because it opposes our fallen, sinful human nature.

Once the believing Christian begins exercising his/her will to choose God's ways, then the battle begins. Many Christians aren't even engaged in the battle. (cp. 1 Pet. 2:11 – sinful desires that “wage war against your soul”)

Some of you might be thinking, well I'm a Christian and I'm blessed. Or I'm spirit filled and I don't struggle with sin.

If you are not struggling with and against sin, you are either not a Christian or you are a defeated Christian who has lived sin so long in the mire of sin, you can't even realize it.

I knew a fellow I worked with in the nuclear plant. He told me, “I'm a Christian and I don't sin”. That was what he thought. James writes to believers and has to encourage them to “*resist*”.

Resist = to willingly position *yourself* against or in opposition against something – specifically against our enemy the devil. Too many get that turned around – they resist God and submit themselves to the devil and his impulses.

Eph 6:13 Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to **withstand** (resist) in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.

1Pe 5:8-9 Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: (9) Whom **resist** stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world.

((Submission must begin with me. Suffering against sin is part of submission. It is my response to God's invitation.))

Understand also that...

II Submission Is The First Step On A New Journey **(v8)**

** Submission is a life long journey with a life long process of sacrificing ourselves for Christ, over and over and over again.*

(8) Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded.

A Submission reflects a true and sacrificial heart for God – for most, that is a new journey in a new direction.

In verse 8, we are given a command and an Invitation to...

Draw near – that is, take volitional steps to position yourself closer to God - *to approach God.*

“A journey of a thousand miles, begins with a single step.”

1. Submission is an acknowledgment of God’s purpose and desire for you.

2. Submission is an acceptance of Gods invitation and plan for you.

3. Submission is our willing participation in God’s Eternal Plan.

B Submission makes for a very risky game.

What you or I do, after you and I read this passage, will determine what kind of Christian we really are. True or False? Genuine, or fake? Am I submissive to God’s will for my life or arrogantly holding onto my way and my life and my personality and my perspective.

**** This is where submission can be a risky game.** If we are willing to obey and submit and to draw near to God, then God will in turn reciprocate

and draw near to us. He will come near to you.

i.e. If, as an act of your will - you begin taking steps to do what it takes for you to draw near to God, then He promises to meet you half way and to draw near to you.

This is not like some human earthly relationship, where you might open yourself up toward another person - you risk sharing something personal and making yourself kind of vulnerable, but in turn, the person gives you the cold shoulder of rejection. – Risky!.

God is not like that. You don't have to fear rejection or getting the cold shoulder from God. God is not like that. He promises, you show me you mean business and take steps to draw close to me, and I will meet you and I will surpass your own efforts and reward you with my own divine, grace-empowered, sin-resisting life, but not until.

It is a lie from the Devil, that if you “***just say no to sin, then the devil will flee***”. Submission to God is a crucial 1st step.

From a practical standpoint, this starts with you and with me. You take the first step, God will meet you where you are.

Cleanse and purify – confess – stop acting as though it does not exist.

Acknowledge your sin, pride, lack of submission to God
Confess your sin to God. Open the door for Him to forgive your sins and cleanse you from your unrighteousness.

Psalm 19:14 Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

We cite that all over the place, - but look at the context.

Psalm 19:10-14 [your statutes are]More to be desired ... than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. (11) Moreover by them is thy servant warned: and in keeping of them there is great reward. (12) Who can understand his errors? **cleanse** thou me from secret faults. (13) Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous **sins**; let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression. (14) Let the words of my

mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O LORD, my strength, and my redeemer.

If we are not submitted to God then we are....**Double minded** – two spirits – two wills – straddling the fence – living like two different people – saying one thing but living another, without the awareness of sin, or the concern to address it.

“You can’t walk with one foot in the church and one foot in the world – it will only cause you to trip up”. (Darrell Means in Sunday School class)

You know how we can be double minded Christians? Not that we need a lesson in this. But the position of a double minded Christian is one that says, “Yes I am a Christian – I go to church, I am involved in ministry, I genuinely love the Lord and want my life to glorify Him”.

While at the same time, being insensitive to one’s own short falls and sinfulness – having blind eyes to one’s own spiritual needs and immaturity – refusing to consider one’s own areas of transformation that God wants to bring about in one’s own life.

Some may say, “I’m not mean, I just speak my mind”, or “This is how I am and its how I will always be.”

A double minded Christian wants the end result, but has no intention of doing what it takes to get there. They want to get to the destination, but refuse to take the crucial journey through the valley of the shadow of suffering against sin through submission.

((Submission is the first step on a New Journey and it’s a life long process of sacrificing one’s self over and over again for

Christ.))

Understand that...

III Submission Must Be Personal, Emotional & Volitional(v9

** Submission is something that no one else can do for you.*

(9) Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to heaviness.

A. I must personally own submission - This is personal

Verse 9 **Afflicted, mourn, weep, heaviness** -doesn't sound too pleasant. True repentance = emotional grief and regret resulting in a mental resolution, and practical behavioral change.

B. I must personally be grieved by my own sinfulness

--This is emotional.

OT – Hebrew repentance involves sorrow, resulting in **a change of behavior**. IN OT we see ashes and sackcloth, weeping and wailing

NT – Greek/Roman repentance involves a changing of the mind or thought process, resulting in a **change in behavior**.

If you never feel grief over sin – if you never experience being contrite of heart, perhaps you have never truly repented from your sin.

Psa 34:17-18 The righteous cry, and the LORD hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. (18) The LORD is near unto them that are of a broken heart; and saves such as be of a *contrite* spirit.

Psa 51:17 The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a *contrite* heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.

2Co 7:8-10 For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it--though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while. (9) As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us. (10) For godly grief produces a **repentance** that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.

C. I must personally choose to submit to God's ways and will for my life and I choose to live differently, - think differently – treat others differently – view God's calling differently - *This is Volitional.*

* True submission will result in true repentance, which will result in true Christian life transformation.

((Submission must be personal, emotional and volitional and no one can do it for you.))

Understand that...

IV Submission Brings The Promise of God's Attention & Action (v10)

* *Submission views one's self realistically*

(10) Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up

Verse 10 **Humble self-** *Yourselves – This is where spiritual warfare begins and ends –the battle is in our minds – with our thoughts, our resolution – with our choices – with our perceptions.*

1Pe 1:13-14 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ; (14) As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the **former lusts** in your ignorance:

1Pet. 2:11 Dearly beloved, I beseech you as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from **fleshly lusts**, which war against the soul;

Rom 12:1-2 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present (or *submit*) your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (2) And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God.

How is it that we as Christians, so often remain defeated by sin?
Submission or lack of it.

What is it that keeps us from being transformed into the likeness of Christ? ***Submission or lack of it.***

How can Christians, be “Christians”, and yet remain so indistinguishable from the fallen, sinful culture around us?

Submission or lack of it.

Why is it that so few Christians actually change – or desire to change?

Submission or lack of it.

Interesting in 1 Peter, he uses the term Shepherd 3 times in this letter (1Pet.2:25 / 5:2 / 5:4. He uses the word “flock” at least twice (1Pet. 5:2 / 5:3), and sheep once (1Pet.2:25). And uses the term “astray”, once (1Pet.2:25).

Like a sheep must learn to submit to its shepherd, the true believing Christian must not only learn the importance of submission in terms of its theology and truth in Scripture. We must learn to **“do it!”** .

Key word here is implementation.

We must not merely learn *about* submission, we must take up the call and accept the invitation for action – we choose to put it into practice , or experience it. We must willfully, and obediently submit or surrender to God’s will and purposes and we must be willing to Suffer in our flesh against sin, - not merely by saying “*no to sin*”, but first, through total submission to God.

1Pe 5:5-7 Likewise, you who are younger, be ***subject*** to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." (6) 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.

((Submission brings the promise of God's Attention & Action and it causes us to view ourselves more realistically))

APPLIED

Submission = surrendering to God and to His word and purpose

Suffering against sin = the battle between my will and God's will

Read "*Touching Godliness Through Submission*", p24-25

Where It all Begins

v7) Submit *yourself*

v10) Humble *yourself*

God is not in the habit of twisting your arm in order to make you submit.

** This is God putting the ball in your court.*

v7) **You** take the initiative to submit to God.

You do what it takes to resist the devil

v8) **You** take the first step to come near to God

You acknowledge and confess your sins to God

v9) **You** repent with genuine repentance and broken hearted contrition

v10) **You** do what is necessary in order to humble yourself before God.

**This is all Suffering Against Sin, through Submission*

The Promise from God's own word

v7) the devil will flee you. Not by simply saying No, but in submitting fully to God, drawing near to God, Him drawing near to you and then with you resisting the devil.

“Flee” = to escape by fleeing for your life

In Mat. 4:11 the devil left Jesus after He had resisted. It took a while, but the devil left him.

Mat 4:10-11 Then Jesus said to him, "***Be gone***, Satan! For it is written, ""You shall worship the Lord your God and him only shall you serve."" (11) Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him.

Angels ministered to him

Satan will flee. Heaven's Armies will come running.

Heb 1:14 Are they not all ministering spirits sent out to serve for the sake of those who are to inherit salvation?

v8) God will draw near to you

v10) God will lift you up.

Too often we forfeit Heaven's divine intervention of miraculous strength and grace and even angelic helpers, because we don't make it this far. We often don't suffer against sin, through submission.

There are too many Christians who are not fighting the good fight. They are not involved in the day to day struggle against sin.

Surrender and submit to God and you open the doorway of blessing and experiencing God like you have never experienced Him before.

James 4:6 But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

If you never admit and confess your sins to God, you will not experience the grace for victory.

James 4:17 So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.

Give it all up. Let it all Go. Lay it all down.

Submission...It goes against all that our fallen, sinful, human nature stands for.

“Missing God’s Best: *The Result of a Rebellious Heart*”

December 11, 2011

Psalm 81:8-16

Advent #2 - Joy

Psalm 81:8-16 (8) Hear, O my people, while I admonish you! O Israel, if you would but listen to me! (9) There shall be no strange god among you; you shall not bow down to a foreign god. (10) I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it. (11) "But my people did not listen to my voice; Israel would not **submit** to me. (12) So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels. (13) Oh, that my people would listen to me, that Israel would walk in my ways! (14) I would soon subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes. (15) Those who hate the LORD would cringe toward him, and their fate would last forever. (16) But he would feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you."

* ref. "Touching Godliness Through Submission", - KP Yohannan

INTRO

Kids Sermon / Song

(No kids sermon, but KidsQuest singing "Blessed are all who fear the LORD and walk in His ways" – Ps. 128:1)

Psalm 81 are people who....

- 1) Listen only to the sound of their own voices.
- 2) Desire only the desires of their own hearts.
- 3) Fail to truly trust in God and desire **not** to walk in His ways.

* *Sunday School class said: "That sounds like America!"*

Questions: Is our nation experiencing God's very best? Are our families experiencing God's very best? Is our church experiencing God's very best?

In Ps. 81, God gives us both the cause and remedy for not experiencing God's very best.

I God Alone deserves the Place of Preeminence **(v8-10)**

* This is all about the Supremacy of God – God in 1st place

(9) Hear, O my people, while I admonish you! O Israel, if you would but listen to me! (9) There shall be no strange god among you; you shall not bow down to a foreign god. (10) I am the LORD your God, who brought you up out of the land of Egypt. Open your mouth wide, and I will fill it.

That is... Gods blessings resulting from His preeminence.

Q: What does a rebellious heart look like? How does it become rebellious? (We are born that way)

Jer. 17:7 Blessed is the man who trusts in Jehovah, and Jehovah is his trust.

** The person who trusts fully in the Lord will experience God's best.*

A God urges His people (v8)

** With God, it's a case of urgency.*

"Hear Oh Israel.." - "Listening" is mentioned 4 times.

When we refuse submission, we refuse God's promises and we choose the path of self dependence and miss out on the very best of Gods blessings. -- At least its what God considers the very best.

"Listen" – means to pay attention – show a little genuine interest – take to heart – change one's behavior.

When God refers to submission it begins with a choice, but is not merely a choice, but a reference to the overall disposition of one's heart.

This is not merely an option He offers. It is the only way.

B. God's clarifies His message (v9)

** With God its an issue of allegiance*

He is not to be part of the mix - Not one of many interests – but the Main Thing. Therefore God notes the breaking of the first two commandments.

Ex. 20:1-4 – no other gods / bow down to no idols (Deut. 6:13)

C. God promises His Blessing (v10)

** With God, it's a promise base on experience.*

The reason God gives for their allegiance, He is the One who has freed them, delivered them, led them, provided for them and shown Himself to them as their Supreme Source. He reminds them of His own track record.

((God alone deserves the place of Preeminence))

II The Human Heart is The Home of Rebellion **(v11-13)**

* *Sometimes we over estimate ourselves*

(11) "But my people did not **listen** to my voice; Israel would not **submit** to me. (12) So I gave them over to their stubborn hearts, to follow their own counsels. (13) Oh, that my people would **listen** to me, that Israel would **walk in my ways**!

A. There was a time when Rebellion Ruled (v11

* *God tests us to reveal the state of our heart*

1) listen – pay attention to God and taking to heart

2) submit – Rebellion rules in every heart until God becomes preeminent .

A Picture of Submission: I'm sure you have been outside when it's pouring rain. If you don't have an umbrella handy, you usually hurry toward the closest ledge or building entrance. You look for any kind of covering you can get under to protect yourself from getting all wet.

In many ways, this is a picture of what the word *submission* really means. It is a deliberate action we choose to place ourselves under a covering that will protect us. It is our choice whether we will stand in the rain or take cover under what God has provided for us. No one can force us to “arrange ourselves under” our authorities. But it seems rather strange to brave the downpours on our own and end up repeatedly getting soaked to the skin.

[Taken from “Touching Godliness Through Submission”, KP Yohannan ,
p.40]

Jere. 17:9 The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it?

Deut. 8:16-20 – to test – they were led in the wilderness, to humble them and test them – to know what was in their hearts.

Failure to listen and implement

Failure to take action

Failure to submit to God and His preeminence indicates a rebellious and deceitful heart.

[Consider the story of the Golden calf. Ex. 32:25 – “out came this calf..”]

B. There was a time when God moved (v12

* *God lets rebellion have its way in us. God gave them over to their own ways.*

Rom 1:24-25, 28 Therefore God also *gave them up* to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves. (25) For they changed the

truth of God into a lie, and they worshiped and served the created thing more than the Creator, who is blessed forever. Amen.

Romans 1:28) And even as they did not think fit to have God in their knowledge, **God gave them over** to a reprobate mind, to do the things not right,

C. There was an intent for Israel to obey (v13

** God's Heart is for His people to obey*

1) Listen (v11 & v13

(13) Oh, that my people would **listen** to me, that Israel would **walk in my ways**

Psa 128:1-2 A Song of Ascents. Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways! (2) You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be blessed, and it shall be well with you.

NOTE: "Listen" is mentioned in v8. v11 and v13. What do you think the emphasis might be here? **Listening to God**
Which includes:

2) Obedience to God's Word

3) Following the Example God's Son

1 Peter 2:21 speaks of Jesus leaving us an example that we should follow His steps. Or "walk in His ways".

Luk 2:46-47, 51 After three days they found him in the temple, **sitting** among the teachers, **listening** to them and **asking** them questions. (47) And all who heard him were amazed at his **understanding** and his answers.

v51) And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.

At the age of 12 yrs old Jesus is....

Sitting – Interested

Listening – Focused

Asking – Learning

Understanding – Understanding.

In all His ways, Christ is submitting to God's authority over Him. This was the overall condition of His 12 yr old heart.

Even Jesus as a young person, is a wonderful example for us today.

((The Human Heart is The Home of Rebellion))

III Blessing is The Desire of God's Heart (v14-16)

* God desires **His** people to experience **His** blessing , in order to display **His** glory.

A. Gods Plan was to give Victory in battle (v14

** The Potential of Victory is always in God's plan. If we will submit to Him and "Walk In His Ways"*

Oppose their enemies

(14) I would soon subdue their enemies and turn my hand against their foes. (15) Those who hate the LORD would cringe toward him, and their fate would last forever. (16) But he would

feed you with the finest of the wheat, and with honey from the rock I would satisfy you

B. Gods plan was judgment for His enemies (v15

* *God's Warning is part of His Promise.*

Gods enemies are the enemies of His people. And the enemies of God's people are the enemies of God.

1) Cringe – refuse to submit. We cringe or wince when we anticipate something that is unpleasant or detestable.

There are some people who cringe at the thought of true submission to God, even some Christians. The path of God's blessing is through the valley of the shadow of submission.

There are not short cuts! There are no bypasses!

There are not short cuts! There are no bypasses!

2) Everlasting punishment – for God's enemies, but Everlasting victory for Gods people who submit to Him.

C. The Blessings was to woo His people (v16

* *Failing to Submit is Forfeiting God's blessings and it is a woeful thing..... to God.*

Take heart – All is not lost – Yours is the kingdom of heaven

Rom 2:4 Or do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?

Abundant Provision and blessings – the possibility always exists.
But also it is the desire of God's heart.

Jer 17:7-8 "Blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose trust is the LORD. (8) He is like a tree planted by water, that sends out its roots by the stream, and does not fear when heat comes, for its leaves remain green, and is not anxious in the year of drought, for it does not cease to bear fruit."

The blessed person is the one who has willfully submitted to the Preeminence of God, experienced God's best and has joy that transcends circumstances and surpasses all understanding.

((Blessing is The desire of God's heart))

APPLIED

- The Value of Submission

Heb 12:9-11 Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh who corrected us, and we gave them reverence. Shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of spirits and live? (10) For truly they chastened us for a few days according to their own pleasure, but He for our profit, that we might be partakers of His holiness. (11) Now chastening for the present does not seem to be joyous, but grievous. Nevertheless afterward it yields the peaceable fruit of righteousness to those who are exercised by it.

– The Harvest of Righteousness

Are you willing to do what it takes to experience God's best for yourself, your family, or your church?

* The heart that refuses to submit to God, refuses not merely the blessings of God, but the person of God – they refuse God Himself.

* “The same spirit that seeks to exalt Christ, seeks to humble self.”

Jesus, as our example, invites us to come to Him, and learn from Him, for He is “meek and lowly of heart” and the perfect example of submission to the Father.

Mat 11:28-30 Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. (29) 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. (30) For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Our final Scripture verse is a focus on our Lord Jesus as an example of lamb like submission to our Heavenly Father.

Isaiah:4-7 Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. (5) But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed. (6) All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. (7) He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth.

Christ, Our Example

The title “the Lamb” . . . describes His character. He is the Lamb in that He is meek and lowly in heart, gentle and unresisting, and all the time surrendering His own will to the Father’s. . . .

Anyone but the
Lamb would have resented and resisted the treatment men gave Him. But He, in obedience to the Father and out of love for us, did neither. . . . No standing up for His rights, no hitting back, no resentment,
no complaining! . . . When the Father’s will and the malice of men pointed to dark Calvary, the Lamb meekly bowed His head in willingness for that too.

Roy Hession, Calvary Road

[Taken from “*Touching Godliness Through Submission*”, KP Yohannan ,p.67]

Jesus Christ is God’s Lamb and
our wonderful example of Submission.

“Mary and Joseph: Submission to God’s Unknown”

December 18, 2011

Mat. 1:18-25 / Luke 1:26-46

Advent #3 – Peace

Hebrews 5:8-11 (8) Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. (9) And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, (10) being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. (11) About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing

INTRO

Children’s Church

We often think, because Jesus was God in the flesh, - we think He automatically obeyed God – He automatically lived a holy life or that He was automatically fully submitted to our Heavenly Father.

Heb 5:8 though being a Son, yet He learned obedience by the things which He suffered.

Mary & Joseph submitted to God’s plan,...

Question: So how do we benefit from Mary and Joseph's submission and obedience to God?

Answer: The submission of Mary and Joseph affected and influenced the submission and obedience of Jesus.

The Submission of Christ

Luk 2:40 And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

Luk 2:51-52 And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. (52) And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

Jesus grew and as He grew He learned obedience...

The Submission of Christ

Heb 5:8-11 (8) Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered. (9) And being made perfect, he became the source of eternal salvation to all who obey him, (10) being designated by God a high priest after the order of Melchizedek. (11) About this we have much to say, and it is hard to explain, since you have become dull of hearing.

One of the things which was "hard to explain" was the fact that the Son of God Himself, had to learn – He had to grow. In His eternal state of God, He enjoyed equality with God, yet as a human boy, He learned to submit to His own parents.

Perhaps this is one of the things Angels Wonder about.

1Pet 1:11 To [the prophets of old] it was revealed that not to themselves, but to us, they ministered the things which are now reported to you by those who have preached the gospel to you in

the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven; which things the **angels desire to look into.**

This tells us that angels are not all-knowing and it also tells us that some things about Jesus were difficult to understand, much less explain.

And one of those things being, that in His humanity, God's Son learned and grew. Therefore, both Mary and Joseph had great influence on the life and character of Jesus.

Today we look at the Submission of Mary and Joseph to God's unknown and the effect that had on Christ, and ultimately the effect it has on us today.

2 things to consider today...

I Consider The Submission of Joseph: In the face of difficult Delimas (Mat. 1:18-25)

** Joseph found himself in a most unique, yet difficult dilemma. And his response would affect the world.*

Joseph's Submission

Mat 1:18-25 (18) Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. (19) And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. (20) But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is

conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. (21) She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (22) All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: (23) "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). (24) When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, (25) but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

"He did as the angel commanded", though it was most unusual circumstances, in that he submitted to the will of God

"He took his wife", though it was a different dilemma, in that he began fulfilling the role and responsibilities as husband – man of the house – protector and caregiver – leader of the family.

This would not have been easy.

A. The situation would have been Relationally Distressing (v18)

** Initially Joseph would have had to deal with the emotions and reactions of a difficult and distressing relational dynamics.*

(18) Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

1) She was found to be with child

One woman who realized her husband had children by another woman, told me her story and how utterly betrayed she was.

Joseph was a man and may have experienced the same feelings.

Imagine the feelings of betrayal, the suspicion of infidelity. How long had this been going on? Who is the father of this child? Perhaps his own anger would have affected their relationship.

-- be sure the whole town would have know the situation – rumor would be circulating, accusations would be flying. Imagine His pain of his trust in his wife being violated.

B. It was personally Inconvenient (Divorce her quietly (v19)

** Imagine the bad effect this had on his good reputation.*

(19) And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

Joseph was a just, fair and honorable man. And his life has been interrupted. His marriage relationship has apparently been destroyed.

1) Can you imagine Joeseeph trying to explain this to his own family? Ostracized, the suspicion,

The shame (v19) must have been great. Imagine the accusations, the looks, the rumors and ruined reputation of a just and respectable man.

2) Imagine the treatment from his friends at work?

Humiliation, the joking – his own feelings of Hypocrisy - perhaps even hearing the names she was called behind his back.

3) It May have affected his business as a carpenter

**** And because of this dilemma, He was going to divorce her quietly.**

From the scripture, it seems that in the whirlwind of things, he still intended to honor Mary as best he could. No court room battles, no front page blame game – just an attempt to slip out the back door of life – get out of the public eye and divorce her quietly.

–This says mountains about the character of Joseph.

But this was all part of God's plan and Joseph needed help to see that this was the will of God and God had other plans for Joseph and he needed to submit.

C. It took some convincing from an Angel (v20

** When Our plans don't align with God's plans, it may take some convincing.*

(20) But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

Joseph was a godly man and willingly submitted to God.

(24) When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife.

He submitted. With all the relational distress and the personal inconveniences – He submitted to the Father's plan.

((The Submission of Joseph to God was evident In the face of difficult Dilemmas))

Mary also would have had great influence on Jesus.

II Consider The Submission of Mary: In the Face of Cultural Humiliation and Shame Luke 1:26-38

** An experience like this could easily result in very unpleasant and perhaps even dangerous circumstances.*

Mary's Submission

Luk 1:26-39 (26) In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, (27) to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. (28) And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" (29) But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. (30) And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. (31) And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. (32) He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, (33) and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." (34) And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" (35) And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy--the Son of God. (36) And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. (37) For nothing will be impossible with God." (38) And Mary

said, "**Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.**" **And the angel departed from her.**

In other words, she submitted to the will of God.

But imagine facing those circumstances and dealing with the cultural responses, the cutting comments on the street, perhaps the name calling and the looks and the whispering in the markets?

Imagine the possible consequences...

A. By the Law: she could have been executed

** Talk about dangerous situations, Mary could have been considered a criminal and executed for her crime.*

Exo 20:14 "You shall not commit adultery.

Lev 20:10 "If a man commits adultery with the wife of his neighbor, both the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

Adultery was the crime and death was the punishment. Boy, "We've come a long way baby" from a culture that thinks that way. There used to be a sense of shame connected with pregnancy out of wedlock.

One teenage girl from our old youth group was pregnant. Upon visiting her, the mother stated that "she wanted to have children before she was too old." Can you imagine that? What an excuse! No shame at all.

One of my buddies in High School fathered a child and they both were kicked out of school. Shame was associated with

immorality. He wasn't pregnant, but he certainly shared in the shame --- *then*.

For many in our culture today, not only is Adultery not a crime, its not even considered wrong. But times were different in Jesus day and Adultery was a crime and by the law, she could have been punished by death.

Imagine her own distress...

B. By the Experience: It was a confusing mistake

** Are you sure you want me for this?*

29) But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

She was alarmed – confused -concerned - could be some shame and humiliation involved in this.

Personal shame and cultural humiliation – Sounds like a pretty good reason to say “no” to this assignment.

((The Submission of Mary was evident In the Face of potential Cultural Humiliation and Shame))

APPLIED

** Jesus had Godly parents. And because of His Godly parents, their influence on Him helped to teach Him God's ways, and modeled for Him what Godly submission and obedience meant.*

Deu 6:4-9 "Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. (5) You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. (6) And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. (7) You

shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise. (8) You shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. (9) You shall write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Luk 2:40 And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.

Luk 2:51-52 And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart. (52) And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

Lets bring this on home for us today....

1) Consider your influence on others , especially your own family members. Jesus had Godly parents and humanly speaking, much of what he learned and how he developed as a child, would have been a result of their influence on Him.

What kind of influence are you to those around you? Are you an example of submission to God or of someone who is determined to do things your own way?

What do your actions teach your children? What does your character indicate to those around you at work? Do people consider you to be someone who is fully submitted to the Heavenly Father?

2) Consider The Submission of Joseph to God In the face of difficult Dilemmas – When you are faced with difficult dilemma

, are you willing to submit to God's ways, even when His ways may include inconvenient situations?

Do you submit to God's ways, as long as they are somewhat palatable to you? As long as His ways are not too intrusive and inconvenient?

When God's ways lead you away from your own ways, which way wins your submission?

3) Consider The Submission of Mary: In the Face of Cultural Humiliation and Shame

- When your reputation is on the line, are you willing to say, "Yes Lord, I submit"?

When it looks like submission to God's ways for you will prove costly, inconvenient, humbling, or even shameful – are you willing to submit anyway?

When submitting to God threatens you with a reputation that might cost you some of your friends or may forfeit that much sought after promotion – what happens then?

[Prayer]

“The Exaltation of Christ”

December 25, 2011

Philippians 2:5-8

Advent #4 – Love

Philippians 2:5-11

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

INTRO Communion Sunday

As believers in Jesus Christ, we have Christmas and Easter seasons that we call our own and we advertise that. We have these few days where we advertise our belief and hope and Athiests criticize us for it.

Athiests have 360+ days where they publicly post their

message of belief and hope. **NOTHING**. They have 360+ days, just let us have this one day.

1Pet 1:11 To [the prophets of old] it was revealed that not to themselves, but to us, they ministered the things which are now reported to you by those who have preached the gospel to you in the Holy Spirit sent from Heaven; which things the **angels desire to look into.**

Christmas is a mind blowing holiday. What do angels wonder about when it comes to Christmas? I can only tell what humans wonder about, when it comes to Christmas.

I The Submission of Christ to the Father (2:5-8)

** In His submission, we see Jesus Christ as The Model of All Mankind.*

Philippians 2:5-8 (5) Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, (6) who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, (7) but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. (8) And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

What is the submissive mind of Christ?

A It is a mind or attitude of humility (Phil.2:7)

(7) but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Scriptures doesn't present Jesus climbing the ladder of power. In fact, from our earthly perspective, He is not ascending into position, but descending.

First, there is ...

1. The Kenosis – The “emptying” or to abase

**** He willingly Submitted***

He made Himself “**nothing**” = emptied

This is often referred to as the Kenosis or the emptying of Christ.

It is also referred to as “the humiliation” of Christ.

At first this is not the exaltation of Christ, but His humbling!

But also note, that He made **Himself**, nothing. This was self imposed – “made Himself nothing...”. There was no divine struggle or battle within the Godhead. God the Son, willingly submitted to the will of the Father, and willingly made Himself nothing or willingly emptied Himself.

And to paraphrase Bill Hybels, Jesus did not ascend into greatness, He descended into greatness.

v.7) Emptied Himself, Humbled Himself, Made Himself of no reputation. This is the Kenosis of Christ.

Secondly, there is...

2. The Incarnation – God taking on flesh and blood

What did God the Son empty Himself of? His Deity or His position in the Godhead? His Sonship? His sinlessness?

He voluntarily, temporarily, limited His power, relinquished His position and resigned His privileges of being equal with God the Father.

Someone has stated, “He went from the glories of heaven to the garbage heap of humanity”.

v.7 continues - took on the form of a servant and was born as a man

Humbled Himself – did not fight to keep His position or privileges in heaven, but willingly accepted the calling of His Heavenly Father to become a lowly servant, and be born as a human.

God in flesh – The Incarnation. The emptying of Christ, and taking on flesh and blood of those whom He came to seek and to save.

Christ emptied HIMSELF.

((The Mind of Christ was a mind of humility))

B The mind of Christ was a mind or an attitude of others first.

v.8) “...by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

This was not a self-serving plan of action or a power move while ascending to greatness.

1. It was an Attitude of selflessness

Php 2:3 Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.

v.5) Mind = understanding, perspective, mindset, resolute purpose

2. It was an Attitude of Sacrifice

1Pe 4:1a Forasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind:

Christ's attitude of selflessness and sacrifice is the Spirit of Christmas. Spirit of Christmas is a spirit of giving, selflessness and a spirit of sacrifice.

When merchants advertise, "get your gifts here this Christmas", they are unwittingly advertising the very spirit of Christmas and the attitude of Jesus Himself...that is, giving and sacrifice.

((Christmas reminds us of the Submission of Christ to the Father))

II The Result of Christ's Submission to the Father **(v9-11)**

* *The Experience of God's eternal divine will for Him from the beginning.*

Phil. 2:9-11 Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, (10) so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

A. As a result of His Submission to the Father, Christ lost nothing. (v.9)

As a result of humbling Himself, He was gloriously exalted by the Father.

(9) Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,

This placed Christ on track with the will of God for His life.

1Pe 5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, (cp. James 4:10)

Submission can be very fearful. We think, If I submit to God, my life goes down the drain, along with all my hopes and dreams.

B. As we follow Christ's example, God places us right where He wants us.

* Submission to God ensures that we find our way directly in the path of His divine and perfect will for us.

Phil. 2:10 (10) so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Jesus lost nothing, but gained His Father's good pleasure and experienced the Father's *best* for Him, which was from the beginning.

When we allow the mind of Christ to be in us, we too will submit to the Father's good and perfect will, only to lose nothing, but to experience the good pleasure of the Father very best for each of us in participating in His plan for us from the beginning.

Christmas is all about giving – Giving to others, Giving ourselves up for God's greater purpose and Giving to the Father and

((The Result of Christ's Submission to the is The Experience of God's eternal divine will for your life which He planned from the beginning.))

APPLIED

God gave His Son

Isaiah 9:6 For to us a child is born, to us a **son is given**; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.

John 3:16 "For God so loved the world, that he **gave his only Son**, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.

God so loved. God freely gave.

Someone from Sunday School class said, "Many seem to know Christmas, yet few seem to know the Christ of Christmas".

With Christ as our example, Christmas becomes so much deeper and richer in its meaning. Christ modeled for us humility, others first –

--giving selflessly and sacrificially for the Father's will.

No wonder Christmas is so focused on giving. Certainly not the mindset of merchants, but it is the mindset or the attitude of giving.

That is why we GIVE presents at Christmas, we are remembering Christ's example of giving.

That is why we take an offering for a local charity during our Christmas Cantata, what better way to celebrate the true spirit of Christmas than to join together in corporate giving to a common cause for Christ?

And it reminds us of God's Gift of His Son. "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus..." Is the mind of Christ, your mind?

If you are concerned that, if you surrender to God's will and plan "your life will go down the drain and all your hopes and dreams will be lost". Then you may not have a "***mind***" problem. You may well have a "***heart***" problem.

Let God deal with your heart.

Heart change will most likely lead to an attitude change.

Why don't you pray and ask God to change your mind and your heart, so that like Christ, you be willingly submissive to the will and plan of God for you.

Communion

What a beautiful focus for communion.

Don't close this booklet yet
without considering this all important question.

Is Jesus Christ the Savior of *your* soul and the Lord of *your* life?

Every person is born guilty of sin and in need of forgiveness.

For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;
--Romans 3:23

Our sin is against God, therefore our forgiveness can only come
from God.

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only
begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should
not perish, but have everlasting life. --John 3:16

God has appointed His Son as the payment for sins and sent Him
to die in our place.

For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is
eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.
-- Romans 6:23

God's love is demonstrated through the sacrificial payment of
Jesus Christ in our place for our sins.

...but God shows his love for us in that while we were
still sinners, Christ died for us. ---Romans 5:8
For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
will be saved." -- Rom 10:13
But to all who did receive him, who believed in his
name, he gave the right to become children of God,
- John 1:12

Before you close this book, why not be absolutely certain that you
are truly a citizen of God's eternal kingdom and loving family?

*Trust in Jesus Christ today and receive forgiveness for your sins
and citizenship into God's family and His Kingdom.*

The ABCs

A - Admit you have sinned and are in need of a Savior.

B - Believe Jesus died in your place, and you can no way help yourself.

C - Confess your sins to God. He already knows. Also Confess Jesus as you LORD. He desires and deserves to be your Lord.

Prayer: Take time to talk to God right now and open your heart and life to His instruction and leadership.

Connect with a local Bible believing, Christ centered church.

Commit yourself to meeting regularly with other Christians who are growing in their faith.

Heb 10:24-25 And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good works, (25) not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

Act 2:41-42 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls. (42) And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.

For more information or for spiritual help, please contact us at:
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Saegertown, Pa, 16433, Ph: 814-763-2934, www.christefca.org

*It is our prayer that you find **Jesus Christ** to be...
your highest calling,
your greatest purpose,
your soul's source and joy,
and your all-consuming passion.*

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May each lesson bring a growing submission, a deeper obedience and an increase of the righteous reign of the Lordship of Jesus Christ in the fullness of His Spirit, in His Church and throughout our mission field.

--- Downloadable free resources at: www.christefca.org --

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