



## **The Fullness of Deity Dwells Bodily**

**Pastor Mike Fabarez**

Well, it is Christmas time again. We are in December and I find that every December I feel a little different about Christmas. So I don't know how you're doing this Christmas. If you're like a Christmas nut, you know? Maybe you're not equally excited every year. Maybe you are excited and that's good. Maybe you're stressed now that we're in December and Christmas time is upon us. Maybe you are weary. I don't know. Maybe you're just indifferent about another Christmas. I'm not sure how you're feeling about Christmas, but I would tell you that if you understand Christmas and what we're commemorating as we ought to, I can almost assure you that every single person in this room ought to be, ought to be, should be more intellectually astonished at this thing that we're commemorating. You should be more emotionally stirred by what this is all about. And internally, you ought to be reassured. You ought to be strengthened, heartened. You ought to be emboldened. You ought to be comforted, frankly, by the reality of what this celebration every December is all about.

And I guarantee I can do that for you this morning if your heart is inclined and attuned to what I want to talk about. It's ten words in Colossians Chapter 2, just ten English words in our text. And I want you to look at those words with me. And I think that you can leave this auditorium stepping into this new Christmas season more astonished, more stirred, more reassured. And all of that comes from a very simple truth. At least it simply stated, it is profoundly deep and it's found right in the middle of Colossians Chapter 2. But before we get to verse 9, which is the verse of the day, it's so small, you know, on your worksheet, it's like is that the verse? It's a tiny little like spilling out of a couple of words there. I want to look at the context. Paul is writing to this church and he's concerned for them. This is really in some ways a defensive concern about things that are pulling these people away, things that promise to be deep, things that promise to be important and profound.

A lot of philosophy going on in Asia Minor, modern-day Turkey, at this particular point, middle of the first century. And Paul starts in verse 1 saying, I'm struggling, I'm working hard. I want to get you guys thinking rightly here, and I want you to know I'm struggling for you and not only for you in Colossi, but also for those in Laodicea not far away and for all those who haven't seen my face. I care about even the Christians that I haven't even met yet, "That their hearts may be encouraged, being knit together in love, to reach all the riches of full assurance of understanding and the knowledge of God's mystery," there's a key phrase, "the knowledge of God's mystery," all really hangs on this comma, "which is Christ." "Christos." Christos is the Greek word for "Messiah," the Hebrew word which transliterates to "Messiah" and we both transliterate Messiah and Christ, that all speaks of that one person, that all the prophetic promises of the Old Testament are looking forward to, the coming of THE ONE, the one, the one. And the one that's going to come, this son of David who everyone has been looking forward to, who everyone has been prophesying about, that everything in the Old Testament is aiming toward is described here as God's mystery. God's mystery comma that is Christ, "which is Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. Right? This is what Christmas is all about, the coming of Christ. It is God's mystery and I just want you to



see here, you should be more intellectually stirred by the reality of this, because in him apparently "are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge."

Why am I saying all this? Because you're in a world that's trying to pitch a lot of things to you. "I say this in order that no one may delude you with plausible arguments." Well, that one sounded good. That's a good-sounding argument. "For though I'm absent in body, yet I'm with you in spirit," I'm there thinking of you, I'm praying for you, I'm thinking of you all the time, "rejoicing to see your good order," your standing firm, your believing the right things, "and the firmness of your faith in Christ," this mystery of God. That you're not just because the smarty pants is gone and traveled away, that Paul's not there anymore, I don't want you to stop thinking that there's depth here, there's profundity here. The mystery of God, this person of Christ, this is what it's all about. You need to know that I'm praying, I'm thinking, I have taught you and I'm writing to you now. I don't want you to drift away from knowing that everything that is important, everything that is deep, is right here in the person of Christ.

"Therefore," verse 6, "as you received Christ Jesus the Lord." Right? You have embraced the Christ of the Bible, the Old Testament. You've put your trust in this historic Jesus. He is your boss, the Lord. "So walk in him," continue in him, follow him, do what he says, dig deeper. "Rooted and built up and established in the faith." That's what you need this Christmas. You need to go deeper, you need to understand this at a more profound level. These are great words here, right? "Rooted and built up in him established in the faith, just as you were taught." Now, I was sitting there teaching you, Paul said. And when you do, "you will abound in thanksgiving." It will be a comforting and reassuring thing. The stuff that's going to grow out of your understanding of who Christ is, God's mystery, is going to be amazing. "See to it now," recapitulation of the concern. "See to it that no one takes you captive by philosophy and empty deceit, according to human tradition, according to the elemental spirits of the world, and not according," to the one who is the mystery of God, the Christ, "to Christ."

Here are our ten words, "For in him," in Christ, "the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily." This is such a profound set of words. That's all I really want to drill down on this morning. "In him is the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily." Those last three words, two of them are what we call "Hapax legomenon." They're two Greek words that only appear once in the New Testament. I mean, Paul is reaching for vocabulary words that are so unique to the New Testament. This is the only place we find them. The word "deity" here and the word "bodily," the way it's described. These are words that are used to try and describe something just that's mind-boggling is trying to put into words the mystery of Christ, that the whole fullness, not some divine spark that was in this person, not just he had a stroke of divine genius, but the whole fullness of godness, the old translations say the "Godhead" dwells bodily, dwells in this human fleshly container and "you have been filled in him who is the head of all rule and authority." He's over everything.

"In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands," which, again, is not an illustration or a description that's needed in our, you know, circles in church today. But back then, when that was seen as everyone who was looking forward to the Messiah better have this mark of the Covenant people of Israel, this thing called circumcision, eighth day for your male children. Right? That was a concern and it was a debate in the early Church and

he said you need to know all of that looking forward to the ultimate taking off of a heart that is dead to God and having it, as Ezekiel put it, in a circumcised-marked heart. God has done something in your heart to open you up to the mystery of God, the person of Christ. "You were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by the putting off of the body of flesh." You were no longer dead in your transgressions and sins, but "by the circumcision of Christ," Christ changed you. The profundity of Christ began when you, as it said in verse 6, received and embraced Christ Jesus as Lord.

"Having been buried with him in baptism." Here's our word "Baptisos" that's a transliterated word in English, right? We always talk about this on the baptism day. You've "been buried with him in baptism." This is the picture, not of water, but of what we see in Romans Chapter 6 of us being placed into Christ. God now sees me as in this other human that is now being described as having the fullness of deity dwelling bodily. And we are in him. We've been placed into him. We've been "buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead." I am seen, as it says in Romans 6, as dying with him and being buried with him and being raised with him. Profound theological, deep concepts. And he says all of that changed everything about who I am. "I was," verse 13, "dead in my trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh." Again, that's an analogy that is so relevant to their day. But you can picture it as, to use another illustration that Ezekiel used, as "a heart of stone." I was dead to God, heart of stone. "But God made me alive together with him."

And here's the real thing. "Having forgiven all of our trespasses, having canceled the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands," "the wages of sin is death," I should die. I should not be in fellowship with God. I should not have the gifts of God. I'm experiencing them now but when I die I should be cast into outer darkness. But instead, everything that was against me that should make Mike Fabarez or you being cast into outer darkness, all of that, if my faith is in Christ, if I've trusted in Christ, if he is my Lord, if I'm walking in him, this picture of what it means to be a Christian. Right? "Set it aside." Where did all that go? All the condemnation that is for me, it's been "nailed to the cross," which is what they did by putting the charge over the head of the criminal and they nailed it to the cross. Here's why he's dying. He's an insurrectionist. Here's why he dying, he's a thief, he's a murderer. And instead, it was all the sins that I had racked up against God, they've been nailed to the cross and therefore they've been paid for it. That's bizarre. It must relate somehow to verse 9. It sure does. "The fullness of deity dwelt bodily." And he died there bodily on a cross.

And he set aside everything that was against me. "He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame." And those words he uses about cosmic powers, about demonic powers, about the ultimate demonic being, Satan, who apparently it says in Hebrews "has the power of death." He was the tempter. He moved us away from God in the temptation in the Garden. And every person born of Adam and Eve in a lost race and all of that, it seems as though that whole interest of the enemy was going to win. And all these people, just like Satan, would forfeit their position of blessing before God. But all of that's reversed and all of them were "put to shame" because Christ the one who is the "fullness of deity dwelt in bodily form," he died on a cross and my sins were appended to his cross and now they're shamed and Christ triumphed over them and him. That's a great, great section of the Bible. And it all



hangs at Christmas time on that one verse 9, those ten words "in him, the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily."

Christmas is about that. You set up your little nativity scene, you put your little ornament on the tree. It's got a little baby in a manger, right? How are you picturing this? Do not yawn when you see the nativity, don't yawn when you think about a little baby and I say, "Well, what is that?" You say, "Well, that's when, you know, God came and put on humanity." Well, even if you wouldn't put it that way. But "Jesus was born." "What does that mean?" "Well, the Son of God was born." "What does that mean?" Here's what it means: in Christ, this person born in a manger, the fullness of deity, of godness, all that is God, right? It now dwells bodily. That's just a mind-blowing thing. It doesn't add up. It does not make sense. Right? Which is exactly how it ought to be. Because if God makes sense, if we can just take him and go, I figured it out. Which, by the way, is the source of all the doctrinal errors in Church history. I mean, really, it's either ignorance of reading Scripture and saying, "I don't get it, so why don't we just say it like this so I can get it?" If we say the nature of God, the essence of who God is, if we talk about the ontology of God, the being of God, and we say it in a way that we think, well, this fits nicely and perfectly into my little brain, then we've missed all of the revelatory data that God has given us about who he is.

God has revealed himself in a very strange way. We talk about this word "trinity." People say, "Ah, that's not in the Bible." Oh, you're right, it's not the Bible. But all the data of the Bible can be nicely summarized about God with this word "tri-unity," tri-unity, Which, by the way, doesn't compute, does it? Tri-unity? Well, we can have analogies about things that are three and they kind of have a harmonious, unified whatever. I can get a little trio of musicians to play a beautiful song, and that's not what we're talking about. We use the tri-unity word, trinity, tri-unity. This is how God reveals himself from the very beginning. There is one God, Old Testament and New Testament, one God. This one God is a God that even in the Old Testament the word for God is a plural noun, "Elohim." Any time you have a transliteration of "im" at the end of a Hebrew word that's transliterated, that's a plural noun. Elohim is a plural noun. And the reality of this God that is too big to fit into a singular noun, this God now, this one God, the one God who is, we're not polytheists, there's one God, is now revealed in Scripture to exist eternally and co-eternally with equal value in three persons. And that's a mind boggling concept and one that's hard for us to compute in our minds.

But it's as clear as all the verses we read about the fact that the Father is God, he is God. He is the God of the universe. He is ontologically in every way, with every attribute, God. He's the eternal God. He's the sovereign God, the omnipotent God, omniscient God. And then we hear about the Spirit of God and the Spirit of God called the Holy Spirit is this person of the Godhead who is holy and omniscient and sovereign and co-equal with God. He is God. And then we have this one, called the Son, "one like the Son of Man" that is presented, and he has all the attributes of God and he is then presented as God in the Scripture. So we have one God clearly over and overemphasized in Scripture with now three persons with a distinction in persons.

And again, you can start talking about hypostasis and subsistence and all the words we use in theology to describe it, even the word trinity. You can use those words and we can go deep



with all of the vocabulary of Latin and Greek way back to the beginning, the Greek fathers, the Latin fathers. Okay, we can talk about all that. But here's the basic math. The Bible says there's one God. The Bible says that Jesus is God, the Spirit is God and the Father is God. That's what we're left with. Use some words to describe it. Right? But you can give up on the analogies and illustrations because none of them work. Well, Mike, you're, you know, you're a pastor and you're a father and you're a husband. And there you go. There's the Trinity. It's not the Trinity. That, by the way, will get you in big trouble in Church history depending on when you lived. That's called modalism. And modalism says there's only one person who happens to wear three different hats or has three different roles. That is not what we're saying.

We're saying there's something bizarrely different about the God who created us, that he is an eternal fellowship of three persons existing with distinction between the persons, that they can all use the pronoun "I." They can say "I" and they can say "you" about the other person of the Godhead and yet they are of one essence. Who they are is one. And that's a very important thing. The substance of God, the ontology of God. He is a tri-unity. He's a being that exists in three. And that's hard to compute that. That's the new math, right? That's the Bible math. It doesn't seem to work. And yet that's exactly how the Bible presents us with three people who can speak to one another, like Jesus talking to the Father, saying "I" and "you" talking about another, "allos" in Greek, another that is going to be sent, and the Father and the Son send the Spirit into the world. The Son goes back to the Father. All of these discussions can be had, in particular in great emphasis in John Chapter 15 through John Chapter 17. We can see all of this description going on with "you" and "I," and yet they're all described as being fully God.

That's the unique nature of biblical Christianity. Every cult group has taken an exit somewhere where they say, "That's too hard for me to understand." Well, see, that's the thing about the incarnation, which let's now introduce that word because we talk about it every Christmas that Christ now is incarnate. Divinity, the second person of the Godhead, the Son of Man, "one like a son of man," is now putting on humanity. He is by nature God, but he puts on now the nature of humanity. And now all of a sudden we have one person, the second person of the Godhead, existing now in two natures, the nature of God and the nature of man. Or to use our passage, godness, the full godness, full godness exists. Deity is the word, the translation in our text. It comes from the root word in Greek "God," "Theos." His godness exists now with a full godness bodily. This is the word "Soma," a form of the word soma, which is the Greek word for now he has humanity.

That's a weird thing. You have one person with two natures, you have one God in three persons. That is orthodox Christianity. And while everybody has been trying to work to figure out the biblical data, particularly in the first five centuries of the Church, they finally got around to saying, well, let's just carefully use these words and not go out of bounds with these words. And that's the best we can do. But at least for us to look at the Bible and say how many Gods are there? One God. How does he do this? As just an eternal tri-unity, a triune God. Three persons, one God. And if you don't like that? Great. You can become a cultist and you can just exit biblical Christianity and orthodox Christianity and you can say, "Well, I've got a better way to say it." Good luck with that. Every time we simplify theology the way God describes either the things that are, the things that will be or the things that he is, we instantly become



heretics. So we have to stay within the lanes here and we humbly accept the fact or we should accept the fact that there is one God existing co-equally, co-eternally as three persons.

Now let's drill down to the incarnation. God, the second person of the Godhead who's eternally existed as the Son now puts on flesh. That's why the word incarnate is helpful, particularly, and I tried to teach you here at this church, if you want to think about it right, you just think about chili with meat. Chili con carne. That's the way to think about this here, right? Carne, it's got meat now. It's got flesh. Chile con carne. He puts on flesh. One of the early Church fathers tried to correct some of the errors of misunderstanding Christ. He talked about being enfleshed, at least the translation, being enfleshed. He's enfleshed. The second person of the Godhead who is fully divine, is enfleshed. Now, that's an important thing for us to understand. We should think about it and drill down on it and start to be astonished at the reality of it. Number one if you're taking notes just make this observation. We need a, here's the command, here's the imperative, we need to "Reconsider the Incarnation" of the divine being. We have the second person of the Godhead who now puts on flesh. He becomes a human. Well, it's not that he then stops being God. We need to think this through and figure this out biblically.

So let's try and do that. How is the wholeness, the whole fullness of deity dwelling bodily? How does that work? Well, let's first of all talk about this one from the biblical perspective in the Old Testament. Go back to Daniel Chapter 7 with me. And remember, when I use the God word, this is not a spark of divinity. This is not like you saying, "Well, God lives in my heart." If we're talking about the FULLNESS of deity dwelling bodily, this means that every angel should worship him, this means that every being should worship him, this means every rock and tree and star and the moon all should give glory to the God who is. And that means that Jesus, this little tiny figurine that you have on your table at home is to be the focal point of the glory and praise and worship of all that is, should go to that being because the fullness of deity dwells bodily in that little tiny fleshly container. That's the idea. He's God.

Now here's how he's described in Daniel Chapter 7 and I'll take you to a larger section of this in your discussion questions this week. Let's just start in verse 13 to jump in the middle of it. "And behold, he saw on the night visions," five centuries before Christ was born, "with the clouds of heaven there came one," here's a key phrase. "like a son of man." One of Jesus', matter of fact in terms of him describing himself, his favorite phrase for describing himself, the son of man. Called the Son of God. He has no problem with that phrase Son of God. Because in the Trinity how the Trinity now, we call it the economic Trinity, how the relationships work, he is the Son of God. The Father is the father and the Son is the son. And in that relationship, their roles in redemption, their roles in providence, they're distinct. But in that distinction, he now likes this phrase in his earthly ministry, the Son of Man. And here's how it's put in the prophecies that lead up to it. He's one like a son of man. It's as though he's born of a man. It's almost like, where's your dad because you're a human being here? And the answer is, he doesn't have one. He's got a stepdad. He's got a guy named Joseph who's walking around with Mary, but he did not impregnate her. That's why the virgin birth is critical to the concept of who this is. I spent 55 minutes on this one Christmas a few Christmases back. You can look that up. The concept of the virgin birth, why that's so important to this doctrine. And it's



essential. We can't get rid of that. This particular miracle is critically important. And Mary is "found to be with child by the Holy Spirit."

So here is God now saying, I am going to put the second person of the Godhead, the fullness of deity within a body, and this is now not a son of man, it is one like a son of man. And in this prophecy "he comes before the Ancient of Days," descriptor now, nomenclature for the Father, "and was presented before him. And to him," Son of Man, "was given dominion and glory and a kingdom, that all peoples, all nations, all languages should serve him." And do not forget from the Ten Commandments in Exodus Chapter 20, all the way to, I mean, every description of God, there is only one God who should be served and worshiped. All things serve God. Everything is about God. Everything is about the Triune God. God is God and he is to be worshiped and served, all people should worship him, all people should serve him. And yet now we have the Son "who all peoples and nations and languages should serve him," and his oversight, "his dominion," his sovereignty, "is an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom," his reign, his rulership, "shall not be destroyed."

And all of this in the prophecies of Scripture are looking forward to this one who is now given a position before human beings that he is to be served and to lead over all human beings. And what's interesting is he becomes a human being without detracting from his divinity. Go back to... We sang it. Go back to Isaiah Chapter 9. It's a good place to go. Isaiah Chapter 9. We just got done singing these words. And these appellations, these titles, we just sang them. "Wonderful Counselor," look at verse 6, bottom of verse 6, "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God," the fullness of deity, "Everlasting Father," his dominion is going to be everlasting. And he is co-eternal and co-equal to the Father. And he's the father in the sense that this is not a description of the economic Trinity, how he exists within the Godhead, it's how he exists over us. "All nations, all people, all languages should serve him." He's the father of all people in the sense that he's our father and he's our leader. We look at the enflesh one, and he's the "Prince of Peace," he solves the problems. "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."

Now, all of that is in a prophecy, look at verse 6, of someone being enfleshed. "For to us a child is born, to us a son is given," and just like Daniel Chapter 7 says, "the government shall be upon his shoulders. That means everyone should serve him. He's in charge. He's the chief. He's the unmitigated leader of all things. "And he shall be called Wonderful Counselor," we get all our information from him, "Mighty God," he's got all power, "Everlasting Father," he is the one who will always be in charge of all people, "Prince of Peace," he's the one bringing peace. There's no rival. There's no usurping of his authority and "Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end," it will go on forever, "on the throne of David and over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteous from this time forth and forever more." The triune God's going to get this done. And "the zeal of Yahweh," "LORD", capital "L," capital "O," capital "R," capital "D" always translates to that Hebrew word Yahweh. He's the eternal co-existing triune God. "The Lord of hosts," the one who's in charge of all the armies of heaven, "will do this." God's passionate and he's going to get it done. Because there's going to be a child born and that child will then serve as the human representative of all the people as the leader. But in him, "The fullness of deity dwells bodily," because he's going to be a child. He's going to be a male child. He's going to be a son.



Go to John Chapter 1 real quick. John Chapter 1. Everywhere we start to see this when we look for it starts in Genesis 1. We see God creating and he creates with a word. And then the Spirit is hovering over the face of the waters and creation takes place. The tri-unity of God here in the fact that there is an agency of creation which is described even in Genesis 1 as the word. We have the God of the Father of the Trinity now architecting this thing and purposing it, we have the Son as the agency of it, that is called the "word" as this passage will then elucidate. And then we have the Spirit functioning in the work of creation. We see this everywhere when we start looking for it. And that "word" is picked up on here, which I know has a lot of Greek background and philosophical background and enlistment of overlapping in this big Venn diagram of intellectualism of how this word is used, "Logos" that's translates "word." But here is the way Christ is described. And I know this, by the way, you might as well drop down to verse 14 because we know where this is going. "And the word," the logos, "became flesh." He was enfleshed. He was incarnate. The whole fullness of deity dwelt bodily, fleshly, soma, in the body, "and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory of the only Son," "Monogenēs", and the one who is unique. He's the one and "only Son from the Father," the Trinity here, "full of grace and truth."

So that's where we're going. But it starts in verse 1. "In the beginning was the Word," it's always been, "and the Word was with God and the Word was God." And by the way, don't start with your Jehovah's Witness friends and their New World Translation. Folly. Look it up online. Look at our stuff. Go to PastorMike.com. Look at how we've described it. Insanity. Ridiculous. No knowledge of Greek. No understanding of Greek grammar. Don't know the rules of grammar. It's the most ridiculous translation that's ever been. And people foolishly, blindly follow it. That's another sermon. Getting angry. Verse 1, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." That is the proper translation of the syntax and grammar of this particular sentence. I assure you. Dig a little deeper than just believing somebody who knows no Greek translating the text in a translation put together by cultists. Is that firm enough?

Verse 2. "He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men." Who is the life-giver? According to John 5, God is the life-giver, the Father. Oh no, but the Son is. Just as the Father gives life, so the "Son gives life. He gives life as he wills." So, the Son is the giver of life. The Son is the agent of creation. Matter of fact, "Nothing was made that has been made without him." That is how like Psalm 100 describes what it means to worship someone is that we worship the creator. We are the sheep of his pasture. He is our creator. Every passage ultimately gets around to just having two categories, the infinite eternal God who is our creator and everything else that's been created. Angels, archangels, cockroaches, antelope, people. All have been created and everything else is the Triune eternal co-existing, co-equal God. That's the picture of the Bible. And everyone in this camp is "God," and everyone over here is "creature." And the Bible says that Christ is in the "God" camp.

Look at verse 9. "The true light, which gives light to everyone." This analogy of giving light, verse 4. Right? "The true light...was coming into the world. It was like he lived here with





finger nails and eyelashes and elbows and kneecaps. "He was in the world, and the world was made through him." That little baby in the figurine of your nativity set is the creator of everything. Every cow, every camel or whatever you've got there on the shelf. He created it all, designed it all, designed the eyeballs and the lungs and the hoofs of everything there. That's the creator, the fullness of deity, the creator of all things, the one to whom all honor and glory is deserved was there enfleshed, the fullness of deity, the fullness of godness dwells bodily.

"He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world didn't know him." And you know what? Your neighbor doesn't know him. And you and I barely know him because we don't even think when it comes Christmastime. "Oh, yeah. Yeah. God born a man. Hmmm. Yeah." You got to rethink the incarnation. Incarnation. Deity, full deity flowing bodily. Go to Luke Chapter 2. Luke Chapter 2. Theologians have pointed this out and it's very important for us to catch. When you read about Jesus in this particular passage, sitting with the big shots, the Ph.Ds who are 40, 50, 60 years old, who knows? They're guys that know the Torah, the law, the prophets, the writings. They know it inside out. And they're sitting there in the temple. And of course, the scene is after this pilgrimage feast the family and extended family of Mary and Joseph go to Jerusalem and they're on their way back and they're a day's journey back, which is about a 3 or 4 day's journey back to Galilee, depending on the pace that you take. And a day into it, they all go, "Where's Jesus?" And you think, man, that's a bad mom, bad mom. And then you realize, well, this is your perfect son, the oldest son, and you've got extended family with you and the kid, I mean, you don't have to worry about Jesus doing a stupid thing if you're a mom, right? Just imagine that for a minute. I know you can't imagine that because your kids do stupid things. Mary's son, Jesus never did a stupid thing. Okay? He's morally perfect. He's responsible. Everything's right. He's a 12-year-old and he does everything right.

And so they're days out. It's like us driving to Chicago and we're in Flagstaff or whatever, and we realize, "Where's Jesus?" "I don't know. I thought you had him." This is a bad argument between mom and dad at this point. And they go, "I thought he was with Uncle Tim. I thought he was with Jim. I thought... whatever. I don't know. The last I saw him, it was in LA." And so they all turn around and come back. And they find him there in the temple and he's having a Q&A with all the leaders asking them questions. And I know when you think about that and you think, "Oh, yeah, you're kind of proud of Jesus, aren't you, the 12-year-old Jesus?" Get him. Right? Why? Because your brain, your God, man. Your God. Right? That's what you're thinking. Of course, he's going to wrap the Ph.D's into pretzels because he's got the brain of God. Is that what you're thinking? That's how we think. That's not how we should think. This little brickabee, this little story is stuck between two things. We call it an inclusio. This distance between verse 40 and verse 52. And read verse 40 and read verse 52. And between it is the story of Jesus wrapping the Ph.Ds into pretzels. At least that's how you think of it. But what we have is him conversing, intellectually conversing with the most learned biblical scholars of the day in Jerusalem and on the Temple Mount.

Verse 40, "And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him." Okay. Growing. Can you admit that if you were doing well-checks with the baby Jesus you would expect him to grow physically and he would actually let you. His chin



wasn't sprouting any hairs at first. And then you go through, you know, no pimples and then he gets to adolescence. You would say, of course he's going to grow. Of course, all the cells in his body are going to replicate and his fingernails are going to grow long, and he's going to cut his fingernails and his toenails. And yeah, he's going to grow. Of course he's going to grow because he's human. What you need to understand here is it says "the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom." Now you think, well, what does that mean? Is it like filled, like it's being poured into him? Is that it? It seems to be.

Well, let's just go down to the inclusio verse in verse 52, "And Jesus increased." Now, if there's any doubt about it, now we have a verb that makes it perfectly clear. "He increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man." How in the world does God increase in wisdom? Answer: he doesn't. God doesn't. That's the whole point. The nature of God, the divine nature of the fullness of deity does not increase in wisdom. But this is where you have to get your brain around the two natures of the Son of Man. He also has a human nature. And the human nature, not co-mingled, not confused, to use some of the language of theologians through the history of the Church. Not co-mingled, not confused. We have two natures and he can function here between either. Let's think about this. In the nature in which he is growing up as a child is the expression of his personality through his nature as a human being, which means he didn't come out reciting the Torah in Hebrew as a baby. He was doing the same thing your babies did: "ga-ga blah-blah." That's what he was doing because he didn't know how to talk. How does God not know how to talk? How did the cells in God ever die? Well, God doesn't have any cells. They don't die. He doesn't die. He's immutable. He never changes.

Guess what? The baby Jesus changed. If there were pictures back then and photographs, Mary would have had a whole collection watching all the changes of Jesus. How in the world does the second person of the Godhead change? Well, the second person of the Godhead, the fullness of deity does not change. But the humanity, the nature of humanity changes. It changes. It changes because he's also human. And guess what? The amount of knowledge that he had. He didn't know how to talk, but he learned to talk. He didn't know but one language in the home, probably Aramaic starting. But he learned all the other languages that you would learn as a learned person at 12. You better know some Hebrew if you're going to talk to people about the Torah, you better know the language of the Bible, you better know Koine Greek if you're going to go through the city streets in Galilee and come all the way to Jerusalem, you better know some Greek. He learned all of that because guess what? He was a morally perfect person because he's God. He did not sin and therefore he did his homework. He studied the word. He meditated on the law day and night, just as Psalm 1 said, because he's a morally righteous person and he grew in wisdom.

The wisdom of his humanity continued to be built, just like the stature of his body continued to grow. And this is the mind-boggling concept of you digging deeper and being astonished. The fact that God exists, the second person of the Godhead who is in two natures. And in the nature of this exchange he was smart enough to hold his own with the Ph.Ds in Jerusalem because he had studied for 12 years of his life. Right? Let's just say seven years of his conscious life or whatever, where he could remember things. He was a learner. And he was able to grow in stature, just like in wisdom and in favor with God. Well, that's a mind boggle.



The Father was increasingly pleased. Why? Because in the human nature of the second person of the Godhead, he continued to yield himself to the will of God and continued to do all that God had asked to do. As Hebrews says, he was obedient and he continued to be obedient. And God was pleased, increasingly pleased with every turn, every twist, every fork in the road. And in favor with man because guess what the Ph.Ds on the Jerusalem Temple Mount thought. This kid's smart. And his respect grew. These things describe the human expressions. The human nature of the Godman, Jesus Christ. Just as his body grew, his wisdom grew, "his favor with God and man grew." You got to rethink the incarnation. It's not just, you know, the godness of God just worked through the human. Well did it? Well, at times it did. And we'll talk about that now. And we'll all start with, and I know this is a long first point of the three-hour message. Did I tell you that when I started?

Let's go to Philippians Chapter 2 real quick. A classic passage on the christology of who Christ is. Paul was a great pastor. Great. I mean, he's enlisting one of the best christological theological statements about the two natures of the Godman, Jesus Christ, all tucked into a pastoral concern that people look out for each other and put other people's interests before their own. And that's where he starts, right? First few verses here, verse 4. Let's get to it. Let me catch up with you here. What did I say? Philippians 2?

Verse 4, "Let each of you look out not only for your own interests, but also the interest of others. Have this mind among yourselves," let everybody think this way, "which is yours in Christ Jesus." You can see it right there. You're studying his life. You're learning how he did his ministry. You should think like he thought, "Who," let's think about how he put interests before his own, "though he was in the "Morphē" of God. The morph. You know that word, the form of God. And when you think about form and morphē and you think about like, you know, 3D printers or you think about, you know, forms. You just got to remember, this word used in the first-century context was used more of the substance of something, the reality of something, not just how it looked. There's another word coming up here in this text called the Greek word is "Schema." And it has to do with more of the external look of it all, the scheme of it.

But the form here is describing its nature. He existed in the nature of God, the morphē of God. He was of the substance of God. And though he was in the substance or form of God, he didn't... because God has no physical form. We're not talking about physical form here. "He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped," to be clutched, to be hung on to. He could say, "You know what? I don't have to keep all of the substantive expressions of the godness of God. I can limit some of those. I can limit them not to become less than God but to be obedient here as he's going to go on to say. "But he emptied himself, taking the morphē of a servant, of a servant. A servant has a master, has a leader. A servant is seen as a derivative person in some kind of economic reality. And here he's going to have the morphē, the substance of a human who is now responsible to the king, the maker, the creator. So we have him in the substance of godness and now he takes on the substance of a finite creature, a servant, a person, which all people are supposed to be because all servants should be serving God, all people should be servants of God.



And now he's born in the likeness of man. He's seen now as being like a human being. He's in the likeness of man, he's not fully a man in the sense that he is fully human, but he doesn't have just humanity. He has two natures. He has the form of God that is maintained, being found in human form. Now, in English it's the same word, but this is the word we get scheme from the schema. The sense of who he is. He is now functioning in the sequence and the work and the look of a human being. He humbled himself. This is what he's pastorally trying to get the people of Philippi to do, the Christians of Philippi to do, humbled himself by becoming obedient, "obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." So he is going to submit himself to the Father.

He is going to be reliant upon the Spirit. He's going to be reliant not just upon the Spirit, but among people. He's reliant on people in John 4 to get him a meal. When the lady touched him, remember who was seeking to be healed, he turned around and asked the disciples who touched me? That wasn't a game or a charade. He was dependent on people for information sometimes. Because in his humanity he was dependent upon God when he would, in that humbled state, which he's not in anymore, but in that humbled state, the pre-glorified humanity of Christ, that he would only at the Father's will, under submission to the Father, choose to express his divine humanity, his divine nature.

And in his divine nature we see the things that come and pop off the page of Scripture as miraculous events. Look, he's telling the molecules of the storm on the Sea of Galilee to stop. Well, that's a divine act. Raising the dead, a divine act. And he does that and he says, I am doing this. He's saying, "I will be raised up." Right? Not just that the Father is, but I will. I'm the life-giver. He says these things from the divine nature, the expression of his divine nature. And ultimately, at one point he even peels back all of the humility of his human nature at something called the Mount of Transfiguration, where he shows Peter, James and John, look, this is what I'm going to look like, glorified when the humble state of my humanity is now transformed and glorified to match the divine state of my divine nature. This is who he is. All for what? "For obedience even to death on a cross."

Now why would you have to be obedient to death on the cross? Because that's the purpose. Number two, jot this down. Finally, number two with two minutes to go. Number two, "Remember the Purpose of the Incarnation." The purpose. What's the point? Here it is: the cross. Right? Now, everything of the scheme of humanity is the purpose as well. We talk about the passive and active righteousness of Christ. God has to provide me the sinner if he's going to save me, which he doesn't have to do, but he chooses to glorify himself by saving sinners like me. And to do that, I need human righteousness lived out and applied credited to me, "Logizomai." It has to be accounted to me, the Greek word. And then I need my sin accounted to him. And that's going to have to involve this cross thing that Colossians 2 talks about of my sin being placed on him. He absorbs the punishment that I deserve. So this great exchange of his righteousness for my sin, I've got to have that exchange take place. And that's the purpose of the incarnation.

It's the reason that he put on humanity in the first place. Because why go through this bizarre thing of the fullness of deity dwelling bodily? Why? Well, because I need human righteousness and I need a payment for sin in a human receptacle. I need God to see my sin



in his Son and treat him as though he were me. And that's what takes place on the cross, Second Corinthians Chapter 5, "God made him who knew no sin to be sin." He becomes the sin that I have sinned. "So that in him I might become the righteousness of God." That's the great transaction of the cross. And it only is possible if God, the second person of the Godhead, becomes a human.

Does he leave his divinity behind? No. If he left his divinity behind, he would die for one person, one life for one life. But he remains intact, his divinity and therefore that divinity giving him ultimate worth as human two natures, not co-mingled, not confused, but inseparable. Now in Christ, he now is able to redeem me. He's not only able to redeem me, he's able to redeem you. He's not only able to live for me and exchange his righteousness for mine. He's able to, in his divine, infinite, eternal divinity, to have that righteousness also extend to you. That's why all of us in this room can be saved by one person because the one person is the eternal God co-existing with the Father, co-equal with the Father, and the Spirit existing in two natures that provides for us the foundation for our redemption.

John 5. Not that we have time for this but let's go to John 5. As long as we're trafficking in the deep waters of the incarnation. John Chapter 5 verse 24. "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word," Jesus says, "and believes him who sent me," believes him and the promises he made regarding the coming Christ that he would be crushed for our sins, that he would be the atoning sacrifice for our sins, the spotless lamb, the sinless person. "And believes him," well, then you'll have "eternal life." Not that everyone doesn't have eternal life. We all have eternal life. But the kind of life we're talking about is the kind of life you want. The good kind of life. Life-life. What kind of life? The life that "does not come into judgment." You don't get judged. You don't get cast into outer darkness. "But he's passed from death to life." So I deserve death. I am a sinner. "The wages of sin is death." But I don't get to have that because I now believe Christ's words and I believe the promise of him who sent him. And now I get to have the kind of life I want to have, which is a good life with all the unmitigated blessings of God, all of that. And I don't have to be judged for my sins even though I'm a sinner. But I pass from the category of death into life.

"Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live." We're talking now about the totality of me, which is not just my soul, my spirit, but also my body. My body is going to be resurrected. I'm going to be raised. I'm going to live the way I'm designed to live as this dichotomy of spirit and body. And I'm going to be called up before God, just as verse 26, "For the Father has life in himself, so he's granted the Son also to have life in himself." And so I now get to be a recipient of the Son's and the Father's direction to make me live. "And he's given him authority," verse 27, "to execute judgment because he is the Son of Man." And here's the thing, I want to be on the good side of the judge. "Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs," both the righteous and the unrighteous, "will hear his voice and they will come out, those who have done good," and the ultimate good we just read about in verse 24 is to believe Christ and the promise of him who sent him, well, you get "the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil," those who reject that, those that continue to live in their sin and store up and rack up sin for the day of God's judgment, "they'll get the resurrection of judgment."



Everyone's going to live eternally. But you're going to live in a state of what the Bible calls the Second Death, which is not annihilationism. It's you having to pay for the penalty of your sins or you getting unmitigated blessings of God. And all of this comes down to Christ. Why? Because he's infinite. Look at verse 21. Just again to emphasize the reality of who this is. "For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, so the Son gives life to whom he will." I want him to give life to me like I believe his words. "For the Father judges no one." Well, I thought God was the judge. Well, God, the Triune God is the judge. But the person of the Godhead that is judging, who has the gavel here has been given to the Son. "All judgment is given to the Son." Well, why? Well, in part because we want you to see that the Triune God is co-equal. "That all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father." Do you catch that? "Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him." How many people should you worship? Exodus 34:14. You should worship only God. Well, what God? The Triune God and the Son better be honored the way the Father is honored.

And that's by the way when you want to be a peacenik, that's like, "Oh, you know, those Muslims are worshiping the same God I am because they call him Allah and he's great." They do not worship the same God that we do. Why does the Muslim not worship the same God that we do? Because you cannot honor the Father with prayers five times a day facing Mecca on your mat. You can't do anything with alms or anything else. Taking pilgrimages to Mecca or Medina. You cannot honor the Father because you don't honor the Son. And you do not think he is the Son of God. You do not see the fullness of deity dwelling in bodily form. You don't. And therefore you don't honor the Father. You're egregious to the Father. You're under the judgment of the Father. Is that clear enough? Have I got myself in enough trouble in this sermon at this point?

Alright. I said this and tacked this word on and I didn't mean to tack it on as an appendage, but it is really where I'd like to lead you. And that is I want you to be comforted, reassured, bolstered by the incarnation. And to do that, I don't have time for anything else but Isaiah 40. So go to Isaiah 40 with me, please. Isaiah Chapter 40. It's a passage we often hear at Christmas only because Handel put it in almost word-for-word translation or depiction of the King James translation of Isaiah 40. But we're used to hearing these words at Christmas even made it into some of our Christmas songs that we sing around here. But it starts with this comfort. Look at this, Isaiah Chapter 40 verse 1. It's helpful for us to know that all of this should be ultimately a comfort to us because Christ has come to take the penalty of our sins. And that can't happen unless he's fully divine. That's why Muslims or Hindus or any other religion have no hope if you do not have the "only name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved," because it's the only mechanism that works.

Verse 1, "Comfort, comfort my people, says your God. Speak tenderly to Jerusalem, and cry to her that her warfare is ended." This is not just the Babylonian sacking of Jerusalem. This goes on, extends on ultimately to the thing that we're all concerned about, and that is that our "iniquity is pardoned. That she," the people of Jerusalem, "has received from the Lord's hand double for all of her sins." And I'm thinking, okay, is that just godness being satisfied? Is there some kind of propitiation in human payment for sin? Well, there's not. Yeah, I know they were disciplined, but that's a discipline of God that the Babylonians sacked Jerusalem. What really



is only going to propitiation for my sin, really going to satisfy the justice of God is for the eternal sacrifice of his Son. And so the only comfort, the ultimate comfort is received by the fact that the sins that I've committed have been paid for not only doubly, but infinitely, an exponential multitude by Christ paying for the sins of you and me on the cross.

"A voice cries," verse 3, "in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord; make straight in the desert a highway for our God." He's coming. We're getting straightened out here. "Every valley," one day when he arrives, "is going to be lifted up, every mountain and hill is going to be made low; the uneven grounds are going to be level, the rough places a plain, And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh will see it together, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken," and he won't take it back. This is the truth. One day we will see the glory of the Lord. The invisible God.

How are we going to see that? Verse 6. Well, it isn't going to be people. "A voice cries and I say, 'What shall I cry?'" Voices cry. I said well what am I going to cry? Cry this: "All flesh is grass," right? Seems like that's it. "All of its beauty, like the flower of the field," comes and goes. "The grass withers, flower fades when the breath the Lord blows on it; surely the people are grass." They're not infinite. They're not going to stay. They're not going to accomplish anything. They can't do it. They're weak. "The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God will stand forever." And the word of God here and throughout the book of Isaiah into Isaiah 52, the clarity of the fact that God, if he's going to solve a problem, it can't be done by people. People can't do it. There's no one to stand in the breach. God has to take his own right hand and solve the problem himself.

And the salvation of God is accomplished by his own right arm. That's the picture in Scripture. And he's done it. And the word of God, the promise of God, of solving the problem, which went all the way back to Genesis 3, when they said God is going to through the seed of the woman going to crush the head of the enemy. That's the picture. God is going to solve the problem. "So go up on a mountain, verse 9, O Zion, herald," preach, proclaim, "the good news; lift up your voice with strength, O Jerusalem and herald the good news. Lift it up. Fear not; say to the cities of Judah, 'Behold your God!' Behold the Lord God comes with might, and his arm rules for him."

Do you know how you're going to see the glory of God? Not by the invisible God passing by in a cloud, but by the strong arm of his Son enfleshed, incarnate ruling. "Behold, his reward is with him." When Christ comes back and we see the arm of the Lord, we see Christ, "and his recompense is before him," before the reward comes the payment. And there's going to be judgment for the lost and there will be reward for his people. How good will it be to be with Christ? Well, "he tends his flock like a shepherd; he's going to gather the lambs in his arms; he's going to carry them" in his chest, "in his bosom and gently lead those that are with young." This is going to be the perfect reception of God and his people. And it comes to the visible expression of the glory of God when Christ comes the second time. Because he came the first time to pardon sins. That ought to be comforting. It's a hard doctrine. It's a hard doctrine. I get it.



Daniel Webster, do you know that name? 150 years ago one of the brightest legal minds we had argued before the Supreme Court multiple times, many times I don't remember how many. He was a Christian, an outspoken Christian. One day he was sitting, I think it was in D.C. at some dinner party, and they started to pick on him. This will happen particularly in higher echelons of society when you claim to be a Christian they'll think you're an idiot. And they said to Webster, how in the world? Here's the question. How in the world can you really believe that Jesus Christ can be both God and man? To which the brightest legal mind of the day, said, "Well, sir, I can't comprehend it. And I would be ashamed to acknowledge Christ as my savior if I could comprehend it. He would be no greater than myself. And such is my conviction of my accountability before God, my sense of the sinfulness before him, my knowledge of my own incapacity to recover myself, that is the reason I feel that I need a superhuman savior."

I mean, that's just barely touching on the fringe of the doctrine of the incarnation. But it should be what comforts you. Your trust isn't in David. Your trust isn't in Moses. Your trust isn't in Peter, James or John. It's in the one in whom the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form. And that savior has said, I'm going to die for you. Your particular sins that you committed this week on the charge before God on my cross being paid for fully and I will rise as the template of the resurrection that God will provide for you. It's about you believing his words and believing the promise of the one who sent him. If you're not there yet, today's the day you need to get there.

Let's pray. God, I do pray for the people in our room where Christmas is just a sentence about God becoming a person or Jesus being born, the Son of God arriving on earth and they've never even really contemplated the depth not only of what it means but what Jesus calls us to do. To repent of our sins, to put our trust in his finished work, and to follow him to be the shepherd that we follow. John 10 that we hear his voice and we follow him. And in this world there are a lot of voices competing for our attention. And I pray that we'd be the kinds of people who put our trust fully in your Son. That it brings great comfort to us as we walk in this world with our doubts and our guilt and our minds just being pulled and tugged on in every direction that we would say we trust in the voice of our good shepherd, the one in whom the fullness of deity dwells bodily.

In Jesus name. Amen.