



Christology-Part 7

Kenosis

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We are here to continue our study of Christology.

Christ said, verse we should have memorized by now, Matthew 16:15—Matthew 16:15.

And Jesus turned to his disciples after surveying what they heard people saying about Christ, and he asked them that poignant question, “But who do you say that I am?”

That is a question that we should be spending our Christian lives focusing on. If you’ve been a Christian now for two years, you’ve had two years to get that thing honed in clearly.

As a matter of fact, in John 17:3, that’s what Jesus said: “This is eternal life.” Not only they may know God the Father, but they may know Christ whom the Father has sent. That’s our task. That’s what we’re here for.

I mean, you’re going to meet Christ face to face one day, and I guarantee you’re going to have an insatiable thirst to know all that you can about Christ. And you’re going to look back at your Christian life, and we don’t want to say, “Wow, we didn’t dig hard. We didn’t think hard. We didn’t work to figure this out.”

And of course, there’s the negative motivations we find in 2 Peter 3, 1 John 2, 1 John 4. If we have the wrong Christology, it’s a damning problem. So we’ve got to make sure we understand all that we can about Christ. That’s why we’re here.

We’re going to look at a passage that is probably—I can say this, I suppose—is probably the most debated passage in all of the New Testament as it relates to Christology.

And we could look at a lot of views on this, but instead of going all around, I’m just going to try to present it clearly—as clearly as I can—say a few things that it’s not, but we need to zero in on this Philippians 2 passage and understand what it’s saying and what it’s not saying.

So before we dig in, let’s take some time to talk to God and see if we can deepen our knowledge of Christ tonight.

Pray with me, please.

God, nothing could be more important for us. As I’ve just said, it is so critical. In your word, you tell us that we should know who you are. We should just deepen and enrich and broaden that knowledge of you. We’re supposed to grow in the grace and the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

So thanks for that, God. There’s so much we can glean and mine from your word—on a lot of topics, on a lot of issues, on how to live our lives, on how salvation works, on the conundrums of theology.



But when it comes down to it, really the core of Christianity is the study, the worship, the adoration of Jesus Christ.

So we want to understand your Son better tonight. We'd like to just understand this text that is so debated and so confusing for so many people. It's been a debate. They've had councils on this one passage starting in the third century.

And it's been an issue that has been the platform for all kinds of aberrant thinking, even in our day, in the modern era. And so, God, we want to know it. We understand it. We want to look at it. We want to be able to get a firm handle on what this text is saying.

So give us that tonight, please. Clear thinking about it. Give us a great study. Let us go home enriched by the study of your word as we study what it says about your Son, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray. Amen.

All right. Philippians chapter 2.

Let us dive in to Philippians 2, and I printed it there for you. And let me read it for you as you follow along.

"Do nothing from rivalry or conceit." Paul certainly has been told of issues in the church. In Philippi, there were problems. He's addressing those very practical Christian problems.

And he says, "But in humility, instead of rivalry or conceit, count others as more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others, and have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus."

Who?

It's all by way of illustration now—template, if you will. It's a template for us.

"Who though he was in the form, the *morphē*, the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, to be hung on to. But he made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form.

"He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

And I have more than that, do I not? Verse 9:

"For God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father."

Paul injects this very important Christological passage in a very practical problem in the church, and that is they weren't getting along and they weren't preferring others above themselves, and they needed



to exchange their arrogance and their, what is the word he used there? Conceit. There it is. I'm sorry. Verse number three, with humility.

Now, the core of this passage that is of interest to us tonight, because it has been the platform for debate from the third century right on up to the present time, there have been major movements in the church and in theology that is focused on this text.

This is the phrase and the sentence that we're interested in:

Christ Jesus, who although he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped.

Now here's the phrase. You need to bracket it off here:

"He made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant and being born in the likeness of men."

I mean, clearly this is a passage about the incarnation of Christ. I mean, we learn a lot about the deity of Christ here, which we're not going to get into. We've been there. That he was preexistent. That he existed in a continuative tense. Five tenses in Greek and they choose the continuative tense here. He existed in the form of God. It's not a perfect or completed tense. That's who he is.

And then he—this word here—which is translated in a phrase, made himself nothing, and then took the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men.

Let's unpack this just a little bit here.

The Greek word *kenao* is usually just transliterated into our discussion, and we need to get familiar with this word, and it's the word *kenosis*, and that's the whole debate. What does this mean, *kenao* in this passage? What do we mean, as the ESV puts it, that he made himself nothing?

If you just studied the word, it's a verb, and it's the main verb in this sentence. What would that—what does that mean?

Well, you look it up in a dictionary, you find words like void, empty, to divest, to pour out. It clearly is a verb that talks about you got something, and then that something is emptied out. Problem is, we're not literally emptying out anything, at least not physically.

It could be—I mean, we're going to try and understand the text—any more than the thing to be grasped as an object in the previous phrase that he's clutching for. These are illustrative words, as we'll see.

So translators have tried to translate this in a variety of ways.

For instance, the ESV—here's our translation, we've read it a few times already—made himself nothing.



The NIV, by the way, it's exactly the same way it is translated. So it's a familiar phrase to us if you've been in the NIV for a number of years before you made the migration over to the ESV.

The New American Standard, which many of you have used or do use, is the same as the Revised Standard or the New Revised Standard, and that is the phrase *emptied himself*, and that I suppose is a more seemingly wooden and literal translation.

Very interesting, by the way, that the ESV translates this, made himself nothing, because the ESV often follows the revised standard and the new revised standard and the NAS. It's odd that we find the ESV on the side of the NIV in a phrase or a translation—we'll talk about that later—why that might be.

If you remember the old KJV or the new King James, it uses this phrase made himself—now here's a little interpretation in this—of no reputation. Okay, well there is no word reputation here, but that's the way some people have grown up looking at this passage.

Well, he—he made himself of no reputation, and that has still made it into modern translations only because in the early 17th century that's the way it was translated.

So here's the phrase—a variety of ways that it's translated—but it all comes down to this word and this discussion we put under the heading of the *kenosis*.

What's happening here? What is being emptied? What does that mean?

Now, some things it can't mean. Let's work on this for a little while.

What
Kenosis
Cannot Mean

And by week seven, there are some things we've established and we understand from 13 weeks, I hope, in understanding bibliology, that this is a unified book that God has inspired. He's breathed it out. It's not full of contradictions. These issues and statements have to all be resolved.

So whatever emptied means, it can't mean a few things.

For instance, turn in your Bibles to John 14, verses 8 and 9.

I know one thing it can't mean, whatever we've seen here, which summarizes where we've been in some previous lectures on Christology.

Philip, talking in John 14 to Christ, middle of his—nearing the end of his earthly ministry—he asks him this or says this to him.

Verse 8, familiar line:



“Lord, show us the Father, and it is enough for us.”

That’s a small request. I just got a little request. Let’s see the Father.

Jesus answers, verse number 9:

“Have I been with you so long, and you still do not know me, Philip? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father, how can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?”

I mean, that’s one of many lines—I threw this one in because we haven’t looked at it yet—that summarizes where we’ve been as it relates to the incarnation of Christ.

We know that whatever *kenosis* means, it cannot mean—which many heresies have grown from this passage in Philippians 2—try to make it mean that somehow Jesus stopped being God, or that the *logos* stops being God, or that the Word is no longer—though he exists in the form of God or has equality with God—now that equality goes away because whatever it was to be God, he gave up to become man.

Clearly, it’s a statement about the incarnation.

Emptied, *kenosis*—does it mean that he emptied himself of divinity and became a man? He swapped out divinity for humanity?

Well, we’ve studied a lot about the hypostatic union, have we not? And we say, well, of course, that can’t seem to be.

So it doesn’t mean that the pre-existent or pre-incarnate Christ somehow now takes on human form, and in Bethlehem—or more specifically, and technically in Nazareth—he ceases to be God and becomes a human.

It can’t mean that, based on everything else we’ve studied. No time to prove that now.

Colossians 2, verse number 9.

While most of us would say, well, clearly that’s not what it means, and we’d have to throw out a lot of the New Testament to say that the incarnation was the emptying of divinity to become humanity. Certainly all our discussion of the hypostatic union goes away.

But maybe it means this because I start to read the Gospels and it starts to look like maybe this could be true. But Colossians 2:9 doesn’t let me think this way.

Speaking of Christ, summarizing who he is, verse number 9 says:

“For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily.”



Okay? The whole point of the continuation of Christ's and who he is in terms of divinity and humanity—we know that whatever divinity exists, it exists in totality.

So we know it cannot mean that what Christ did in the incarnation was lost part of his divinity.

Well, we know he doesn't stop being God to become man, but maybe he's not now fully God if he's man. And we've dealt with that and the hypostatic union or in our discussions of the coexistence of these 100% God, 100% man.

Well, we can't go back on any of that now because we find the word *kenosis* related to the incarnation.

Another passage might be Hebrews 1:3 and 4, which you know, but 3 is the key one:

"He is the radiance of God's glory, the exact imprint of his nature. He upholds everything, the universe, by the word of his power."

If he's all of that in bodily form, then the bodily part does not somehow necessarily exclude total divinity.

Thirdly, Matthew 8—another passage I'd like you to look at—Matthew 8:26–27.

Okay, well maybe if he doesn't cease to be God to become a man and he doesn't take half of his divinity and get rid of it—he empties himself of that to become a man—maybe it means something as it relates to the inhibition of his ability to express his godness because he's in human form.

And we could spend a lot of time looking at the positive statements here of how this is true.

But here's one classic one in Matthew chapter 8. Matthew 8:26 and 27, the storm on the Sea of Galilee. And many of you are going to come with us to the Sea of Galilee.

"He said to them, 'Why are you afraid, O you of little faith?' He arose, he rebuked the wind and the sea, and there was a great calm."

"The men marveled and said, 'What sort of man is this that the winds and the sea obey him?'"

Whatever it means to empty yourself, it doesn't mean that Jesus was unable to exercise divine power because you and I can't command the weather, right? We can't just rebuke a storm and have it go away.

Clearly, the disciples understood what we would understand, and that is that is an act of divinity.

And so Christ, woken from his sleep, gets mad about being interrupted from his sleep—I assume that's part of the frustration—and their lack of faith, clearly that was the point. And so he rebukes the sea and they go, "Wow, that's uh not human."



So whatever *kenosis* means, it can't mean that you have to stop being God to become man. Clearly Christ is God and man.

And it doesn't mean that he lays aside half of his divinity to become man.

And it doesn't mean that his divinity is so somehow contained or veiled, as is often said in this debate, so that he cannot exercise his divinity. Clearly, there are many examples. This is one, and a dramatic one, where he exercises his lordship, his sovereignty over nature.

And so he can still exercise divine power, and he does that many times in his ministry.

Okay, that's what it can't mean.

What Does It Mean?

What does it mean?

Let's make sense of the concept of *kenosis*. A couple things.

First thing we can do is look at the syntax of this particular verse or verses.

Syntax—I was going to throw that word out, but it's a good one to know. The grammatical layout, arrangement, structure of any sentence—that's the syntax of it. How it's all put together. How the participles hang on the verbs and how it all works.

And since we had such a great time with our grammar lesson in John 1:1, I didn't shy away from using the word syntax.

The syntax of Philippians 2:6 through 8. Okay?

A couple of things. Let's just look at the key phrases here.

Here's the key verb:

"But he made himself nothing."

Okay? That's the key and primary verb in this particular sentence.

Now, there are some participles that follow right behind it. And the first one that follows is:

"Taking the form of a servant."

And if you've been through some of our classes where we have helped you with syntactical outlining or sentence diagramming, right?



If we were making a sentence diagram and you find the main verb that he takes—he made himself nothing—we now begin to, like in the Great Commission, we’ve often done it with the Great Commission in Matthew 28, we find that the participles help us define the main verb.

What do you mean by the main verb to make disciples, right? Well, baptizing, you know, teaching and going. Those are the three participles there. And that helps us understand what the process of discipleship is.

Well, what do we mean by making yourself nothing?

Well, in this case, one who existed in the *morphē* or the form of God now takes on the *morphē*, same word, of a servant.

Which, by the way—side note here—if *morphē* of God, if we were in a whole other discussion about the divinity of Christ and people said, well, *morphē* of God means some kind of, you know, relation to Godship, but it doesn’t mean Godness, then you’d have to say that if he’s a servant here, the *morphē* of a servant doesn’t mean that he’s really a servant. It’s just, you know, kind of related to a servant.

The point is he’s in the form of God. He takes on the form of a servant, same phrase, *morphē*, the form of, and that is what stands between is the main verb.

He makes himself nothing to be that.

That, remember, in the context, is about Christians not getting along, being conceited instead of humble, putting their interest in front of other people’s interest and not putting their interest above their own.

And so this is a statement that is going to speak to the pastoral concern of the Apostle Paul, that you need to make yourself nothing, and what does that do?

It keeps you from being the one who thinks that I’ve got the right not to give way or yield to you, and now I’m going to take the mindset of a servant.

The next participle comes right after that:

“And being born in the likeness of men.”

Now, clearly the focus is on Christ, but he’s still an example for us. He is God, and now he’s going to be born as a person.

Being, taking, servant, born. God becomes man. The monarch, the sovereign, becomes a servant.

That picture there is on the—that distinction, that contrast is between this verb to empty yourself.



Now, follow in the next verse here, being found—and I didn't repeat this for the sake of space—being found in human form, here's the same syntactical structure again:

“He humbled himself.”

Okay?

Now, there's another main verb in this next phrase. He humbles himself, and we have another participle coming after that:

“Becoming obedient.”

And in this case, it goes even further. Now that he's a man, his humility brings him to the place of suffering death.

Context again: I'm trying to help congregants get along. Don't be prideful. Be humble. Don't put your interests first. Put other people's interests above your own.

The *kenosis* of putting yourself on a lower shelf and the humility of suffering or sacrificing for the sake of someone else's good—that's the pastoral concern.

The words made nothing, *kenosis*, and humility, *hupotasso*—those words are helping us change our mind about how we're going to function even though we may feel like we've got the right to do this or my ideas or my views or my priorities or my preferences should come first.

With that said, and to get back to a statement I made a little while ago about grasping something, what I'm arguing for here in this is not that we're looking for something to go away in the divinity of God, right?

Other than—and not material or not literal—but other than the rights or the exercise of the rights of someone who has the right to be served, but instead chooses to serve. One who should be exalted in worship, but is willing to be crucified and nailed to a cross, right—beat up.

The point is the losing of something is like the humility of the mind that is willing to do something that you really—it doesn't even make sense that you should do. You have the right to be exalted and you're going to be humbled.

If we look at this word as some kind of literal, what loses in Christ's life, we can look for something far too literal as opposed to more of the analogous losing of something, the metaphorical, the philosophical losing of something, and not, hey, how much of his divinity went away? Or did he lose all of his divinity? Or his gas tank of divinity went to zero.

That's not the point of this word.



And that's why, by the way, if you are in theological books or reading theological journals, *kenosis* becomes a bad word among conservatives, because what people do who look at this word, *kenosis*, or this verse, they'll say, there's our proof right there that whatever God was, Christ was, in his divinity before his incarnation, he's not after his incarnation.

That doesn't match the rest of Scripture to say that his divinity is gone, that his divinity is partially gone, or that his divinity is somehow so masked that he can't use his divine prerogatives or rights.

The point is that he chooses not to. And in choosing not to for the greater good of the salvation of those that he has chosen to redeem—see, he's showing that he is—this is a metaphorical word now—he's emptied himself. He's humbled himself.

And that may sound like a two-step here, but you've got to remember the context. Paul is not putting up a chart on a board and saying, let's talk about the incarnation. Paul is talking about a pastoral concern in the church.

And some would even go so far as to say what he's employing is a hymn that was popular in the day that he now utilizes—they're singing it in worship—to try and make a pastoral point about relationships among Christians in the church.

So *kenosis*, if it's taken in a literal fashion, will lead us eventually into some kind of heretical mindset about the loss of divinity, the impairment of divinity or the guising of divinity to where it cannot be used, and that doesn't match the rest of where we'll be tonight and where we've been in weeks previous.

To be humbled, not to become something less than he was, it's simply to restrict his own rights and be obedient to the point of even the severity of a Roman crucifixion.

To be made nothing is not to lose who he is, but to take the form of a servant or be born as a man. When he's not a man, he's exalted God.

Now, that sounded interesting. But what we need to do is try and make some observations here about this text. And this may not even be telling or convincing is what I meant to say. But let's put them down and then we'll see if we can prove some of it. Okay?

My contention is that *kenosis* is not losing anything. All right? It's the choosing to refrain from your rights.

And the incarnation, if we look at deity, is not the subtraction of anything. It may be the restraint of certain things.

But in reality, the thing that is so bizarre is it's not a promotion. It's a seeming demotion. And the thing that is added to divinity is humanity.



And that's what we're seeing in the passage, is that someone who didn't need to yield to someone else's good does yield to someone else's good. And if you want to call that a subtraction, it's a self-imposed willingness out of love and service and humility to do something for the good of someone else.

So if I can think of *kenosis*—this may sound like double talk, but I'll prove it to you, I think, before the night's over—I'm looking at *kenosis* as the addition of humanity.

Now, I'll state the definition when we finally get there as some kind of subtraction, as I've tried to say throughout this explanation. If it's a subtraction at all, it's the willing and voluntary restriction of some of my rights. But it's not the losing of some things.

As a matter of fact, when divinity puts on humanity, that's an addition of an entire nature, right? Now we have two natures.

I've already said this briefly, but in verse number 7, you need to recognize—and it has implications in other attacks on Christology—it was self-imposed.

And we'll get to this at the last part of our night in discussion, but this was not something that was imposed upon Christ.

The statement is very clear that he emptied himself. He humbled himself.

And those self-statements are helpful because we recognize that whatever Christ does, it's from a position of power and willing restricting of himself and the exercise of his rights and prerogatives, not the restriction of them.

It wasn't something done to him. It was something he does to himself. That's important.

Right—it's not in a passive voice something that was imposed on him. It was something he chooses to do as an agent, and he humbles himself.

So it's self-imposed whatever it is.

And it is, I guess, in the most basic way, it's an addition of a nature, going from divinity to divinity plus humanity.

Thirdly, it's humbling—and let's just restate that I suppose—if you're God and you're going to become a man, that's a step down, not a step up.

If you're going to be worshipped by angels and then be crucified by sinners, all of those things are just a gruesomely, almost horrific, humiliating reality.

And that's a part of what makes this, I think, a tremendous act of self-denial and not the restriction of something imposed upon Christ or the loss of something.



Fourthly, it's necessary to save, and that was the point. If we're going to save humanity, Hebrews told us as we looked at why the incarnation, we recognized he needed to be like us in every way to fulfill all righteousness and to receive all punishment.

He had to do what we didn't do, and he has to incur what we don't want to incur.

And that whole purpose couldn't be done without the death of Christ on a cross—necessary to save.

And of course, we didn't spend much time on this, but we did read it once. It's on your worksheet there.

Verses 9 through 11 make it clear, whatever humiliation was involved in adding humanity, that humiliation was temporary because he was given a name which was above every name, the name of Jesus.

Every knee should bow—those in heaven, earth, under the earth—and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

So whatever the *kenosis* is, it's something that is the addition of humanity. It is self-imposed. It's a terribly humble and gruesome step down. Necessary for some greater good—salvation—and it's temporary.

All right, let's continue in our discussion of this, and it may become more helpful when we see other passages that theologians haven't stumbled over quite as much as the one they stumble over here.

I'll call this parallel assertions.

There's a lot of assertions in the Bible that we read, and we go, "Oh, I get that."

When we read the words emptied himself or made himself nothing or whatever else we might do with the word *kenosis*, we can kind of choke on that and lead ourselves into the wrong view of the divinity of Christ. But these are easier, it seems, at least.

2 Corinthians 8:9.

Let's look at this one in context here. 2 Corinthians 8:9.

And you'll see that 2 Corinthians 8:9, though it's a whole different topic, has a very similar analogy or paradigm to it.

If you and I are arguing in the church over some issue—I don't know—it could be the night we have home fellowship group or how it should work or when it should start or when it should end. Let's just take that, right?



To exercise or respond to the teaching of Philippians 2, I've got to give up my right, which of course my idea is better than your idea, that's what I think at least, but I give that up, concede, and I'm willing to take a lesser position in the discussion or argument to let you and your interest be considered greater than my—

Well, the same thing happens in the discussion of giving, and that's the context here in 2 Corinthians chapter 8.

I mean giving is an issue of me letting go of something I have rights over. I have the—I have my money. It's my money. I can do what I want with my money.

That bag—that stinking bag—comes around every week and now I'm—I've got a decision to make about parting with—with my money.

And that's a selfless act of giving something that I'm going to do for the good of someone else, which specifically was about the giving for the crisis in Jerusalem here.

So that's the context, and he's, you know, pleading with these folks to get involved in the grace of giving here.

Verse 6:

"We urge Titus that he'd start, should complete among you this act of grace."

Verse 7:

"But as you excel in everything, in faith, in speech, and in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you, see that you excel also in this act of grace," which is the grace of giving.

"I say this not as a command," right? This is your right to do what you want with your money, "but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine," right?

Just—you can see the parallel to Philippians 2.

"For you know," here's our verse, "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty, we might become rich, so that you by his poverty might become rich."

Now that picture doesn't lead us usually into any Christological debates or heresies, but we get it.

He gave us something he didn't have to give us, and that made him poor, in what sense?

In the price that he paid, and having to live as a human being, and having to be betrayed by Judas, and having to be beat by Roman soldiers, by having to be crucified by sinful people, have been humiliated, hung naked on a cross, whatever it might be, to be the ultimate—to be the object of the Father's wrath.



All of those things were terrible. They were poverty.

But he did all that for the good of the ones he was saving so that they might become rich.

Now that doesn't usually strike to the heart of Christ's nature—who he is—so we get that.

But what I'm trying to say is that's a parallel assertion to what we see in the statement of *kenosis*. "He emptied himself" is like "he became poor."

And we don't instantly say, well, if he became poor to save us, that means he ceased to be God. He was less than God. He limited his godness.

No, we recognize that the sacrifice of living among us was like becoming poor or like this very big statement to empty yourself and become a servant.

So, just to sum it up: three words—riches to poverty. There's an idea.

It's like the *kenosis*, the emptying of yourself. It doesn't mean when I become less than I am, it just means that I'm giving something that may be costly or sacrificial.

How about this one? Isaiah 53:2.

Isaiah 53:2, one of the most familiar Christological passages of the Old Testament looking forward to the death of Christ. But it starts out with this description of Christ.

And even from an Old Testament perspective, this is quite an alarming statement about the suffering servant. The servant of God, you wouldn't think would need to suffer at all.

The arm of the Lord, right, is going to be revealed. Verse 1.

Look at verse 2 now:

"He grew up before him," the servant did, "before God, like a young plant."

What kind of plant? In a beautiful garden, with all the lush soil? No, no, no.

"He grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground," right?

That's the picture of something that just is not—it's not cultivated, it's not set in a beautiful context, it's not like something you'd paint on a painting. It's like a root growing out of a parched piece of ground.

And then he clarifies in that analogy:



“He had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him.”

As a matter of fact:

“He was despised and rejected by man, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, as one from whom men hide their faces. He was despised and we esteemed him not.”

The picture of—here’s how I put it—the root out of dry ground is a picture of the servant of Christ who in Isaiah 53 ends up redeeming all of the people and forgiving them of their sins by making his life a guilt offering.

He is the hero of the passage, and he’s described as a root out of dry ground.

It’s the paradox of God’s hero, the Savior, being seen in a humiliated form, a humble form—a root growing out of a dry piece of ground, a dry parcel.

How about this very utilitarian statement in Matthew 8? Very simple statement. You don’t even need to turn to this one. Let me just read it for you:

Jesus said to him—you know this, it’s also in Luke 9—“Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”

Here’s a statement of Christ as a homeless person.

It’s a picture of the Son of Man, which is the strongest statement in Daniel. Did we not look at Son of Man not being a reducing statement, but a magnifying statement?

Here is a huge Christological label of the powerful one riding on the clouds coming out of heaven as the exalted and deified, you know, Savior of Israel, and he’s pictured as a homeless person who doesn’t have anywhere to call home.

That picture is rich becoming poor, the root that saves the nation being out of parched ground, the great Savior and King of the people of Israel being homeless.

How about this one?

This one I want you to look at: John 17. Get the whole context here. 5.

Call it the great high priestly prayer of Christ. He’s interceding for his disciples just before he goes to the cross.

Not just before, but soon to go to the cross.

Verse 1:



“When Jesus had spoken these words, he lifted up his eyes to heaven, and he said, ‘Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that the Son may glorify you, since you have given him authority over all flesh to give eternal life to all whom you have given him.’”

“And this is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent.”

“I glorified you on earth, having accomplished the work that you gave me to do,” which is a bit of a seemingly paradoxical glorification in a humbled state.

Verse 5:

“And now, Father,” note this, “glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed.”

The paradox of glorifying God as a human being being betrayed and spit upon and crucified is nothing like the glory that’s going to come to him which he had before the world existed.

That kind of previous glory and future glory as nothing compared to the present glory is the kind of ABC paradigm that makes us think whatever’s happening in the present glory of Christ, it’s nothing like the glory that we see prior to the incarnation or after the incarnation.

With one exception, by the way—we call it the transfiguration, right? Where he steps in his humbled state and shows his glory, which sounds a whole lot like the description of Christ in Revelation chapter 1 as a glorified being and his eyes are radiant and are like fire and he’s brilliant and you can’t even hardly look at him.

And he’s talking, you know, with the apostles of old—the prophets of old—that picture is one exception to the glory before versus or compared to the glory after.

That’s a lot like the *kenosis*.

Whatever glory he had, it seems like it’s an emptying of glory for a kind of glory that then gets restored to him, which is the same paradigm of Philippians chapter 2.

One more—last one—Mark 10:45.

You don’t need to turn to this one either because you know it, and I’ve already referenced it, at least in theory. And that’s the statement that Jesus makes clearly and plainly recorded in multiple gospels when he says:

“For even the Son of Man”—there’s the high and exalted appellation of Christ again—“he came not to be served,” and the key phrase there is “came not to be served,” right?



Clearly, that's what we're all about—serving Christ—but he came to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

So the whole concept of the paradox of the one who should be served that we're called throughout the epistles to serve is now coming in a weird kind of backwards arrangement to serve is a lot like the rich becoming poor.

It's God becoming man. It's the great thing that saves us, the arm of the Lord, being like a—like a weed growing between two bricks in your driveway.

It's like the one who dwells in heaven being homeless.

It's like one who has great glory kind of having this weird, bizarre, paradoxical glory and having to go back to heaven to get his glory restored to him.

If you take those kinds of parallel assertions and you compare them to what we see in Philippians chapter 2, I think you can say these are all saying the same kind of thing, which does nothing to detract from the ontological nature of who Christ is—his being.

He is God and he is man, and that's how we've set it up as we looked at the passages in the last six weeks.

100% God, 100% man.

Whatever emptying means, it means what these passages mean about him taking on an entirely different kind of ministry here on earth that's humiliating. It's like the rich becoming poor, the arm of the Lord being a weed, the king of heaven being homeless, etc.

All right, still making sense of *kenosis* if we can.

Here's where I want to go in trying to at least sympathize with the lesser glory, if you will, of the earthly ministry of Christ.

These—with those passages in mind, and I only want to look at these passages with those passages we just read in mind—need to be things that get us to recognize that Christ did this voluntarily.

He added humanity and did something with his divinity that was not the limitation of his divinity. It was not the giving up of his divinity. It certainly wasn't even the partial giving up of his divinity.

But it was something he chose to do to fulfill all righteousness for us.

And one of them had to do with his prayer life.

Look at Luke 6:12 and 13.



Jesus is about to choose the 12 disciples. You can read this in any of the gospels, the synoptic gospels.

And just like you and I, when we're going to make a big decision—look at verse number 12, at least if we're good disciplined Christians—it says:

“In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night there he continued in prayer to God.”

Then when day came, verse 13:

“He called his disciples and chose from them twelve whom he named apostles.”

If you think about it long enough, this entire thing called prayer starts to make no sense unless I have a whole different kind of existence for Christ in a humbled state here on earth.

His reliance on prayer is an example of the rich becoming poor, the arm of the Lord being a weed and, you know, a root out of dry ground, the glory of the great infinite transcendent one becoming a servant for sinful people.

That's the heart of *kenosis*.

Matthew 12:27 and 28.

Kenosis, whatever it means, it means that Christ has in his ministry chosen to do some things that he didn't have to do. Like rely on prayer.

Does the king of the universe have to, you know, seek wisdom and insight in his prayer life to make a decision about who the 12 are?

Didn't he know that from the beginning of eternity?

Matthew 12, a similar issue.

We've already seen that he can stand up out of a dead sleep and command storms to stop, right?

In verse 27, though, of Matthew 12, it says in this whole debate about casting out demons:

“If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your sons cast them out? Therefore, they will be your judges.”

“But if it is by”—underline this now—“the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.”

Interesting.

Can't Jesus cast out demons by his own authority and by his own power? Well, of course he can.



But whatever the *kenosis* means, it means that the Christ who is God is praying before making decisions, and he's relying on the Spirit for his empowerment to cast out demons.

Interesting.

Another passage that may help us in this before we leave this one—well, there's a couple of them.

Luke 4.

Luke 4:1. It's one of a few I wrote down, but Luke chapter 4—look at this one with me.

Here is Jesus. I'm even thinking to myself, if you're the second person of the Godhead, I don't understand why you need any reliance on the Spirit, but look at this.

Double hit in verse 1 of Luke 4:

“Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit.”

Well, that's interesting. Whatever that means, we still try to figure that out in our sanctification. But reliant on, moved by, following, compliant with, full of the Holy Spirit.

“He returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness.”

For what? For his temptation, right?

So the Spirit takes him out there—or drives him out there, as one of the gospels says—and he is full of the Holy Spirit.

That's just an interesting way to describe the one who existed in the form of God.

Well, he existed in the form of God, but whatever his *kenosis* meant, it meant he was reliant on the Spirit.

But if you're taking notes, please put this one and put it as a CP, right? A comparison passage.

This is not a CF. This doesn't confer with the former passage. It contrasts the passage, and that would be John 16:13, when Jesus describes the coming of the Spirit.

Well, his ministry has been, at least at certain times, under the empowerment of the Spirit. But he says this about the coming of the Spirit to our lives:

He says, “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. And he will not speak on his own authority, right? But whatever he hears, he will speak, and he will declare to you the things that are to come.”



It's an interesting statement about that.

Christ wants to do things in their life. And he says things like this at the end of the gospels, "I'm with you always to the end of the age."

Well, he made it clear in the upper room discourse who's with them is the Spirit. He's with them by proxy in the Spirit of God.

And the point is the Spirit of God is going to go, and he's not going to speak on his own authority. He's going to be there for you because of me, and he is going to be me for you.

Not blurring any of the persons of the Godhead here. But the only way Christ is in us is because the Spirit is in us, because Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father.

The point is the power and authority of Christ, it seems to go back and forth as it relates to the Holy Spirit. He's led by the Spirit into the desert, filled with the Holy Spirit, and then passages like this, the Spirit there won't be speaking on his own authority.

I'm sending him to you. You're going to have this one that is going to now speak as I would have him, certainly as it relates to the presence of Christ in our lives, which is his repeated promise to the disciples.

"I won't leave you orphans." He'll have the Spirit.

And yet, passages like this, he's reliant on the Spirit.

John 5:19.

This one gives us trouble sometimes when we read it. So Jesus—Mark 5:19—let's just look at this. We'll come back to more of the context in a minute.

So Jesus says to them, verse number 19:

"Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise."

Thirdly, we've got a real reliance on the Father throughout this whole ministry.

And in that paragraph, there's more there I want to get, and we'll read it later, but that's a big statement.

Or how about this one—as you're writing that down—Mark 13:32. Mark 13:32.

"Concerning the day or the hour, no one knows, not the angels in heaven, nor the Son, only the Father."



Well, whatever the *kenosis* means, right, it means that his ministry is reliant not only on the Spirit of God, but he's reliant on the Father, and he's deferring in his own ministry to say, the Father knows things here that I am not privy to.

What? How can that be?

That's the mystery of the *kenosis*. That's the mystery of the rich becoming poor. That's the mystery of the strong arm of the Lord being revealed from heaven, but being like a tender root out of dry ground or parched ground—hard to process.

Matthew 4:11.

This passage takes us back in our minds to Elijah, and it's awkward. It's awkward because Elijah, after running away from Jezebel, down the mountain after the Mount Carmel showdown, I mean, we get some of what's happening there.

This, though, is the Son of God, the Daniel 7 one, the one to which every knee will bow. He's the one who says, if you believe in me, you'll have life.

He's the one who says, "I, like the Father gives life, I give life to anyone I choose."

He's there after his temptation in the wilderness, and it says this in verse 11:

"Then the devil left him, and behold, angels came and were ministering to him."

Whatever that means, right?

But you see him here even in a period of his ministry reliant on ministering angels to do something to prop him up.

As though he needed it?

Well, I suppose whatever his *kenosis* means, it means that he chose to restrain his prerogatives or his rights as deity and allowed himself to be reliant on prayer, the Holy Spirit, the Father, angels.

And then this will, of course, blow our minds even more.

Of course, you've read it and you know it, but to think about it in light of his divinity is a bizarre concept.

Mark chapter 5. I'm sorry, Mark chapter 5, verse 30. I'll give you a couple of examples here.

Mark chapter 5, verse 30.



Great crowd followed him, verse 24.

There was a woman who had a discharge of blood for twelve years, suffered much at the hands of physicians—which Mark adds, but Dr. Luke doesn't throw all the physicians under the bus quite like he does.

She'd spent all that she had and was no better—rather she grew worse.

When she had heard the reports about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his garments, for she said, "If I touch even his garments, I'll be made well."

Immediately, the flow of blood dried up and she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease.

And Jesus, perceiving in himself that the power had gone out from him, immediately turned in the crowd and said, "Who touched my garments?"

And the disciples said to him, "You see the crowd pressing around me, and yet you say, 'Who touched me?' We're not going to be able to help you with that."

Or how about this one—John 11:34. Yeah, that's Lazarus. Let's look at that one real quick.

John 11:34.

Verse 32:

Mary came to where Jesus was, said to him—she fell at his feet—saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

Verse 33, John 11:33:

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and was greatly troubled.

And he said, "Where have you laid him?"

And they said—they had answers this time, right? "Lord, come and see."

"Jesus wept."

The Jews said, "See how he loved him."

All I'm saying is these are questions that I believe are real questions, and he's wanting real answers.

And he's not asking God, the Holy Spirit, angels, or the Father. He's asking people, and he's relying on people.



I mean, more mundane, you can picture John 4—he's hungry. He needs food. He's tired. He sits by a well. He sends his disciples in to get him lunch, right, in the middle of the day.

Meets the woman at the well and starts a dialogue with her.

He's hungry. He's relying on people to bring him food.

He relied on angels to minister him in the desert.

He relies on the disciples to say who touched him.

He's relying on Mary and Martha to say, where's Lazarus's grave?

Now, doesn't the omniscient one who's dwelt from all time, who designed, you know, Lazarus according to Psalm 139 and formed him in the womb of his mother—does he not know where Lazarus is?

Well, apparently, whatever the *kenosis* means, he's showing a genuine reliance on people.

Rich become poor. The one who should be served is a servant. The arm of the Lord is the root out of dry land.

Summary of the Kenosis

Let me summarize what I believe the *kenosis* is.

It's funny because I walked into my little cubby and happened to have a theology textbook there, and I plopped it open just to see because, of course, I've been studying to talk to you about the *kenosis*.

And I thought, I wonder what this book says about the *kenosis*.

And I threw the page open, and there were ten theories of the *kenosis*—ten, you know, competing theories of the *kenosis*.

Which I thought, well, that's funny. I didn't take that approach, but here's my take, which I was glad to see was actually in that book, and I start it because I think that's the right view of the *kenosis*.

Here's my summary of the *kenosis*.

In all of these cases, no matter what it is, it is not that Christ could not, okay? It is not that Christ could not, it's that Christ would not.

And this gets back to the day we asked ourselves why the incarnation—what's this all about—including things like tempted in every way, yet, you know, as we are yet without sin.



Whatever it was to do what he was called to do, to save us, to fulfill all righteousness, to do what we couldn't do, to incur what we were supposed to incur—his *kenosis* involved him restraining, right?

Not because he could not, but because he would not exercise his divine authority, his divine rights, his divine prerogatives—whatever it might be—in certain situations.

Now, in other situations, he did. He calmed the sea. Why? Well, he didn't like their lack of faith. He probably wanted to keep napping.

I mean, he exercises his divine authority, but not always.

As a matter of fact, those are very unique situations that seem to build a case for who he is, which was important, and also to fulfill what the Scripture had said in the Old Testament about him.

So the *kenosis*, in summary, is it not that Christ could not, it's that he would not exercise his divine authority in certain situations.

And I would say in most situations, but not in all.

"Who touched me?" Legitimate question.

"Where did you lay Lazarus?" Show me where. I'd like to go there.

I mean, those are legitimate things, and yet he can see Nathanael, right? When he encounters Philip under the tree—you're not there—how does that—that proves to Philip, surely you are, right now you're the Messiah, you're the Christ.

So he can, but he doesn't. Most of the time, he doesn't.

Matthew 4 and Matthew 14 are examples—be good to write down and I'll remind you of what they are.

Matthew 4—you know your book of Matthew—you know that's the temptation in the desert.

What was the first temptation Satan brought to him?

"You're hungry—forty days—you're hungry out here—so stones into bread," right?

Now again, take our summary and it makes perfect sense.

It's not really that you think he could not, right?

But for him—whatever the temptation was about, which is a microcosm of the macrocosm of all that Christ was doing—it was that he would not.



He even saw if he did it would be sin, giving into—that's the whole point of the passage—temptation.

So it's not that he could not. He would not, and he would not for a variety of reasons, and we've touched on some of those as it relates to the purpose of the incarnation.

But so much so is it a would not that it becomes sin when he does.

That's why if it's not in the three-year period of his earthly ministry that we see spelled out, there are some infancy Gnostic writings.

Remember the pot-smoking guys I've talked a lot about who didn't get their prop passed this last week?

They would write stories—fanciful stories—about the infancy of Christ.

Like when they'd say that some kid crossed him on the playground—they didn't call it that—and he would curse them and they would die.

Or that he would make little clay birds, these Gnostics would write about, and then the birds would come to life and fly away.

So in other words, he could get perfect revenge in elementary school and had really cool toys as toddlers, right?

Which would not be the exercise of his authority for the divine purposes of establishing what he does in Scripture for a very specific person.

Miracles were the exception, not the rule, right? Even in the ministry of Christ.

So each miracle had a purpose and a reason.

That's why it wasn't that he just did what he did because he could do what he could do. He chose not to.

And whatever the *kenosis* means, in my view, that's what it is.

Matthew 14, we have the same exact situation, which is now not a temptation, but an opportunity to display the glory of Christ and then make a point about him being the bread of life.

And that is, in Matthew 14—if you know your book of Matthew—that's the feeding of the 5,000, right?

What happens there?

We got no food. We'll send them all home.



No, you don't have faith. You need to watch now.

And he takes a very small sack lunch and turns it into a massive amount of food.

Matthew 4—it's sin for him to turn rocks into bread.

Matthew 14—it's okay for him, right? It's purposeful for him to do what he is empowered and capable of doing.

So it's not that he could not in any of these situations—could he live his entire, you know, life, earthly ministry, without prayer? Absolutely.

Does he have to depend on the Holy Spirit to cast out demons? No, he does not.

Right? All of these issues—he could do on his own, but he chooses not to for the purpose of fulfilling all righteousness and incurring all of our penalty.

Quickly—a real quick definition—and this is the definition I scrawled out years ago on my oral defense for my ordination as a young pastor.

Every candidate has to define *kenosis* and be able to defend it—which ordination has fallen out of favor. I don't even think half the pastors get ordained anymore, but that's another topic.

Anyway, here was my definition—hasn't changed over the years—of what the *kenosis* is.

The *kenosis*—which is pretty much a bad word if you take it as a literal losing of something.

If you're going to state it in any kind of losing of anything, here's how you state it, right?

The *kenosis* was Christ's humble and voluntary laying aside—if you want to call it anything, if you want to find some parallel and not just make this an analogy—if you want to say, what are you laying aside?

If you're going to lay aside anything in the picture of would not and not could not, well, then it looks like this:

The *kenosis* was Christ's humble and voluntary laying aside of the independent exercise of his divine privileges.

The *kenosis* was Christ's humble and voluntary laying aside of the independent exercise—of his divine privileges.



And some theologians would argue with my definition because they would say—and let's just picture my ordination—someone stands and says, well, what about the times in the passages of Scripture where Christ exercises divine authority like the ones you just quoted, where he calms the storm?

He's not reliant on the Father, it doesn't look like. He doesn't ask for the help of the Holy Spirit. He doesn't talk about it.

See, my point is, all of the ministry of Christ as the second person of the Godhead, every time he exercises his divine privileges, his divine attributes in some supernatural way that men cannot do, was part of the divine plan to accomplish what he was called to accomplish—not to exact revenge on a classmate as a kid—but to establish his deity, to bring the Father glory, whatever it may be.

Therefore, I don't have to look for a passage that says he relied on the Father, he prayed to the Father, he was empowered by the Spirit, because every act from the perfect second person of the Godhead—of anything divine—any divine exercise—was the plan of the triune God to do what he was called to do.

Therefore, I can say, in my mind, the *kenosis* was Christ's humble and voluntary laying aside of the independent exercise of his divine privileges.

If you just want to take that away from tonight, I think you've got something worthwhile.

Real quickly now.

Wow, we have five points left in no time?

Do this one quickly.

Know this, because this is debated.

Whenever we talk about *kenosis*, people often want to say, well, what about sonship?

Because isn't sonship *kenosis*?

And my answer is, from John 5:18, no.

Sonship is not *kenosis*.

Kenosis looks like great glory, then less glory, and then great glory again, and that's not what *kenosis* is.

John 5:18—just write it down and I'll recall it for you here—we did read it earlier tonight.

The Jews—or at least we were right next door to it—were seeking to kill Christ not only because he was breaking the Sabbath, but because he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.



See, because if you were to call God your Father and you the Son of God, you're making yourself equal with God.

We look at sonship as less than, because I'm thinking, certainly in my house, hey, he's my son, he's less than me.

But that's not how sonship works in the Scripture.

Cross-reference—that's not on the screen—Acts chapter 4, verse 36.

Here's just a, you know, practical usage of the word.

Here is a description of a guy named Barnabas and what his name means.

Joseph is his real name. He's called Barnabas by the apostles, which means "Son of encouragement."

It's a Hebrew transliteration, Barnabas. Son of encouragement.

He's a Levite, a native of Cyprus.

Son of encouragement—what does that mean?

That's not a statement of trying to show that you're less than encouragement, right?

This was not a slam on his lack of encouragement, right?

You're not a junior encourager.

No—matter of fact, you're such a senior encourager that we're going to call you the son of encouragement.

What does that mean?

Well, that means you're a chip off of the embodiment of encouragement. That means you are the embodiment of encouragement.

See, sonship in Scripture is not the *kenosis* of humiliation and less than.

So when we talk about the sonship of Christ, what I don't want to do in your mind is say, oh, that's the same.

To be the Son, to become the Son, is to lay aside the independent exercise of your divine privileges.

That's not what I'm saying.



As a matter of fact, here's a statement that should put that to rest.

The sonship of Christ is eternal.

Passages like 1 John 4:10 talk about Christ sending his Son. Well, if he's sending his Son, then he's already the Son.

He doesn't become the Son at the incarnation.

And I know that is sometimes debated, although mainstream evangelicalism will make it clear: we believe in the eternal sonship of Christ, which means that he was always the Son because Son doesn't mean *kenosis*.

If we think Son means humiliation, then we will think *kenosis* and sonship go together.

But if we know that sonship does not mean humiliation, then we recognize sonship, right, is equality with God.

And if that's equality with God, then I don't view them the same.

And therefore, I don't take passages like Hebrews 1 or Psalm 2:7 and start to say, well, when the Bible says, "Today you've become a son," right, or "Today you've become my Son," well, that means he became that son role.

That's not the point.

As a matter of fact, the context of Psalm 2 is the eternal decrees of God—a decree in heaven—that he is the Son.

There's temporal verbiage to that, but all the rest of Scripture makes clear he's the Son before the incarnation.

So Christ is always the Son.

Son is not a lesser than word, like *kenosis* seems to be—at least a humiliating position on earth.

Oh, you could say more on that.

Son does not mean ontological hierarchy.

Son does not infer that.

Son—ontological, but you being who you are in essence.



John 10:30—there's the statement, by the way. John 10:30 is just one example of this.

When he says in 31, "I and the Father are one," and the Jews picked up stones to stone him, the point is, we know what you're doing. That's blasphemous. You don't say that.

Sonship, when the Son says, "I'm the same as the Father," we're not saying, well, the Father then is of a greater rank than you in terms of his ontological essence.

So sonship—whatever it means—doesn't mean less than in any way.

It didn't start at the incarnation—the sonship of God.

It doesn't mean less than, and therefore, to state it differently, I suppose, it doesn't mean the being of who you are is somehow less than the Father.

What does it mean?

Well, I suppose if we're going to look at submission, we're going to also then bring the word *kenosis* back into this and say, well, what we mean by this is that the Son, during his earthly ministry, or during the *kenosis*, right—this humble part between the greater glories of the pre-incarnate and post-resurrection Christ, right—well, that kenotic period, if you will, is a period in which he was functionally submissive.

And that's why we see reliance on the Father, reliance on the Spirit, praying before the big decisions.

That is a functional submission to the Father.

And we see that.

"I don't do anything unless the Father does it."

"I just do what the Father says."

That functional submission is part of the *kenosis*, if you will, of Christ's humiliation.

Lastly—just to throw this in because everyone brings up this word when we talk about sonship—*monogenes*.

Monogenes, and probably made, obviously, most popular from the verse we all learn as kids:

"For God so loved the world that he gave his"—the KJV said what?—"only begotten Son," okay?

Which again, people say, well, that's when Christ became the Son when he was born. He was begotten.



Monogenes does not mean that because you are—whatever you want to call it, ESV says only Son—that you have a temporal beginning or that the sonship of Christ has a temporal beginning.

It's not what we mean by *monogenes*.

Monogenes—I got Luke 9—there's nine times the word—here's a good little paradigm for you.

Nine times the word *monogenes* shows up in the New Testament. It's only going to show up in the New Testament because it's a Greek word.

Nine times.

Four times it's found in context like Luke 9:38, and that's a good one—let me read it. I got it written down here:

“And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, ‘Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my *monogenes*.’”

Look at my son. He is my one and only child. He's my only son—*monogenes*.

Four times it's used that way to describe someone who has a kid who is an only child—*monogenes*.

Five times it's used of Christ in the most familiar one, John 3:16.

Monogenes doesn't mean you had a beginning. That's not the point.

I mean, he's already told us he's got a Son. Now he's saying, I just want to let you know he's the one and only Son.

The point of *monogenes* is unique. There is none other. He is the only one.

And that was the point of Christ being in the role of the Son in the *kenosis*—the *kenosis* of his life—this period of humiliation.

He is the one and only, and the one who accomplishes salvation, and given the name above every name, the focus of our worship.

And not even the Spirit can be seen as *monogenes*, because, well, he's never described as that, because the Spirit is trying to get our attention to the Son.

A lot of people get—especially Pentecostal—they're, “I need to focus on the Spirit.”

The Spirit's purpose is to get focus on the Son, because when we worship the Son, it brings glory to the Father.



And that's the point of the triune God.

And so we need to recognize the whole point of "He's the one and only" is the point that he is unique in the role that he plays as our Savior.

Book of the Week

Did we get through this lengthy outline? Wow.

A book that may help—and I know that it was muddy at the beginning.

What did they say?

"A mist in the pulpit is a fog in the pew?"

You've heard that one?

It was a little misty up here during the first part of the—trying to describe *kenosis* to you.

Here's a book that is crystal clear, of course, because it's in print.

Gordon Fee, excellent New Testament scholar, wrote a book called *Pauline Christology*.

He takes all of these key passages, and at length he deals with Philippians 2.

And he does a good job showing his view on it, that *monogenes*—not *monogenes*—but *kenosis* is an analogy of sorts.

And he does a great job describing that.

So *Pauline Christology*—if you're building your Christological library—don't skip this book. This is a good one. And it's a big book, but it's good. It's great.

All right. Woo!

Let's pray. Let's pray.

Let's pray before I let you go.

God, thank you for our time. Thank you for digging into this.

And I know it almost seems like a defensive approach to a text, because, well, we need to in some ways, because it has been used as a platform for heresy.



And I think in the 17th century and the way it became a launch into all kinds of anti-Christological schools of thought laid—it's become a great platform for people who want to give a head nod to us supernaturalists and say, well, Christ may have pre-existed, but his earthly ministry was nothing more than a human ministry, and 19th and 20th century stuff has just gone all over the map in that.

So we want to make sure that we can think through this *kenosis* and know that nine times out of ten when we see the word in print, usually someone who's trying to take us in a direction of limiting or detracting from or emptying out completely any divine nature in Christ, and that's just not the case.

So help us to retain what we've learned in the first six weeks so we can establish some clear meaning about what we mean here in week seven on the *kenosis*.

Thanks for this, God. I pray you would help us think through this, the humiliation of Christ, the humble ministry of Christ, that we can get all of this in proper perspective in our minds so that we can realize what a major thing it was for Christ to take on humanity and then be the object of derision and the focus of a crucifixion.

It's just amazing what you've done. The extent and the depth, the length, the height, the breadth of your love in doing that for us was amazing.

So God, give us a gratitude and a heart of worship and thanksgiving when we think about what a big step it was for you to humble yourself and become a man.

In Jesus' name, amen.