

YEAR END GIVING **SLIDE**

There's 2 weeks left in 2022

- End this year in a way you won't regret...
- Actually, end this year in a way you'll be proud of.

We are so close to reaching our year-end giving goal. Like, so close!

- So, I'd encourage you to find some organization,
 - even if it's not here,
 - but if this is your home church
 - I'd ask you to prayerfully consider here.
- But find some organization
- and make an insanely generous gift.

Even if you don't follow Jesus...**BE GENEROUS**

INTRODUCE **CHRISTMAS SLIDE**

Well, if you have your Bibles, and I hope you do,

- please grab them and turn to Philippians chapter 2.
- You can open a phone or a tablet to Philippians 2,
- or you can use one of the hard-backed black bibles
 - under every single chair.
 - You'll find Philippians 2 on page **981**.

INTRODUCTION

So, we're in the second week of our Christmas series where we're taking a deep dive into Christology.

- Normally we preach right through books of the bible at Fathom,
 - and we'll jump back into that in the New Year,
- but for this series I'm doing theological sermons.

And Christology is the study of Christ.

So, the text we're basing this off of is Matthew 1:22-23 which reads:

SLIDE MATTHEW 1:22-23

[22] All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

[23] "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us).

EXPLAIN: SERIES

So, we're taking those three words...GOD...WITH...US...and
We're using each one as a starting point for three Christological doctrines.

- Last week we looked at GOD
 - and we dove into the doctrine of CHRIST'S DIVINITY.
- Today, we're going out of order, and we'll tackle US
 - as we examine **SLIDE CHRIST'S HUMANITY**
- And on Saturday, Christmas Eve, we'll look at WITH
 - and the doctrine of CHRIST'S INCARNATION.

And once again, I'll give you my reason for preaching these three messages this Christmas season.

- Because our interpretation of WHO the Son of God is,
 - will drastically affect HOW we see God.
- AND if you don't rightly THINK about God...
 - you can't rightly FOLLOW God.

So, we're flexing our brains a bit as we do some Christology this Christmas.

EXPLAIN: SCANDAL

Now, last week,

- as we looked at CHRIST'S DIVINITY
- we saw how unbelievably powerful Jesus Christ is.
 - He's the CREATOR of all things.
 - He is the SUSTAINER,
 - holding all things together...
 - with the word of his power.
 - And he is the SAVIOR of the world.

Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!

But here me...I don't think that's the scandalous part of Christology.

- I think the real scandal of Christianity is today's doctrine:
 - CHRIST'S HUMANITY.

The real scandal of Christianity...

- is that God the Son...
 - the second person of the Trinity...
 - co-eternal with the Father...
 - has always been...
 - will always be...

The real scandal is that God the Son...put THIS on.

Like, THIS!

- And listen...maybe you...
 - Cross fit...
 - And practice mindfulness...
 - and clean eating...
 - and keto...
 - and stretching...
 - and detoxes...

And so, when I say that God the Son put THIS on, you're like,

- "yeah, I can see why!"
- But listen...NO!

The divine and almighty Son of God...put on flesh!

- He became like us.
- He dwelt among us.
- He is not a myth.
- He is a historical person.
- God in the flesh.

This is the doctrine of CHRIST'S HUMANITY.

And the reason why I say this is scandalous is because that's what it was!

- God would NEVER condescend to our level.
- God would NEVER become weak.
- God would NEVER become dependent.
- God would NEVER...oh my goodness...die...on a cross.

But 1 Corinthians 1:23 says...

SLIDE 1 CORINTHIANS 1:23

[23] but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles,

EXPLAIN: OXYMORON

Now, this doesn't pack as much of a punch today as it did back then.

- But a crucified Christ?
- A crucified God?

This was an oxymoron. Two things put together that don't go together. Ok?

It's like...

- Freezer burn.
- Soft rock.
- Tight slacks.
- Government efficiency.
- Adorable cat.

Ok? A crucified Christ just didn't make sense.

- And the Greek word for **stumbling block** is *skandalon*,
- where we get our word scandal.

It was scandalous that God would subject himself to human fragility...

TRANSITION

So, let's get into our text in Philipians 2, and we'll learn some more about **SLIDE CHRIST'S HUMANITY**

PHILIPPIANS 2:5–7

[5] Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, [6] who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, [7] but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

POINT: HIS BRITH

Alright, let's begin with one aspect of CHRIST'S HUMANITY... and it's a big one. **SLIDE HIS BIRTH** – He was **born in the likeness of men.**

Now, the doctrine of the virgin birth is a big deal, but honestly, I don't think many Christians know why it's a big deal.

I asked several people this week,

- and while they all agreed it was an essential doctrine,
- they had difficulty explaining why...

ILLUSTRATE: CREEDS

But, this doctrine is in the major Christian Creeds.

The Apostles Creed says,

- *"I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,*
- *who was conceived by the Holy Spirit*
- *and born of the virgin Mary."*

The Nicene Creed says,

- *"For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven,*
- *and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary,*
- *and became man."*

So, it's kinda a big deal!

There are some doctrines that are non-essentials...

- as in, we can disagree on how they work,
- and still be “in the club.”

But there are doctrines that are deemed essentials of the Christian faith,

- they are in our creeds,
- and we would say that to believe differently from them
- would amount to heresy
 - (and I don't throw that word around lightly).

So, why then is the virgin birth an essential?

Well, let me give us two reasons...

EXPLAIN: HYPOSTATIC UNION

First, the virgin birth made possible...

- the unity of full deity
- and full humanity in one person.

The virgin birth made possible...

- that Jesus Christ
- is both fully divine
- AND fully human.

Soren Kierkegaard called this doctrine “*the ultimate paradox*”

- And the virgin birth...
- was the means...
- that God used...
- to send his Son into this world.

EXPLAIN: OTHER OPTIONS

Now, he could have done it in any way he chose!

- But no other means would so clearly unite...
- humanity and deity in one person.

God could have created Jesus a complete human body in heaven and send him down without any earthly parents, or upbringing.

- There certainly would be fewer doubts as to his divinity...
 - if that were the case.
- BUT it would have been very hard for us to see...
- how Jesus could be human as we are.

Alternatively, God could have let Jesus have two natural human parents,

- and just transmit his essence into the baby in-utero...right?
 - Let Joseph in on that mix...
- But then it would bring his divinity into question.

TRANSITION

So, one reason why the virgin birth is essential...

- Is because it shows us
- that Jesus is fully God
- and fully man.

But let me give a second reason.

EXPLAIN: SALVATION FROM GOD

The virgin birth also shows us that salvation comes from the Lord.

- Salvation can never come through human effort,
- but must be the work of God himself.

And the virgin birth is essential to our salvation.

- Jesus can only be the savior...
 - the one who saves his people from their sins...
- if the virgin conception is true.

I'll show you...

We saw last week that Jesus is divine.

- He is God, and thus,
 - he is infinitely holy, just, and perfect.

But Jesus is also natural.

- He is a man. Therefore,
 - he CAN be tempted, and hurt,
 - and ultimately,
 - he can die.

So, Jesus is God,

- he is infinitely holy and thus,
- he's able to atone for the sum total
- of every sin ever committed
- in the whole world.

But he can't die. God can't die.

BUT Jesus is also a man.

- So, he can die.
 - And thus he is uniquely qualified to identify with us,
 - and actually become a sacrifice for sins.

Son of God. And Son of Man.

Fully God. And fully man.

And no other option would have worked!

- Only the son of God...
- and the son of man...
- as one being...
- could be the savior.

TRANSITION

Jesus is fully God AND fully man...

This is fundamental for those of us who call Jesus our Lord and our Savior.

- His virgin birth.

But the text goes on. Philippians 2, look at verse 7 again:

PHILIPPIANS 2:7-8

[7] but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. [8] And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

POINT: HIS LIMITS

So, in becoming man, the text said that he **emptied himself**.

And it's my second point about CHRIST'S HUMANITY...

it's **SLIDE HIS LIMITS**

Now, gosh, we have to do some work on this...

- but Jesus Christ,
 - in his full humanity,
- empties himself of SOME of his divine benefits
 - while on this planet,
- and takes on our LIMITS.

So, let's work through three aspects of Christ's limits while on earth.

EXPLAIN: BODY

First, HIS BODY.

Like I mentioned in the introduction.

- He puts THIS thing on!
- Jesus had a human body,
- and thus, experienced what we do.
 - Jesus grew through childhood to adulthood
 - Jesus got tired
 - Jesus got thirsty
 - Jesus got hungry
 - And ultimately, Jesus died.

We'll cover this in a few months when we get to Good Friday and Easter,

- but the culmination of HIS LIMITS...
 - in terms of his human body...
- is seen when he died on the cross.

His human body

- ceased to have life in it
- and ceased to function,
- just as ours do when we die.

So, Jesus temporarily emptied himself of some benefits of his divinity.

This also meant that he temporarily emptied himself of his onmi-presence.

- He was unable to be everywhere...
- at all times...
- while he was embodied on Earth.

EXPLAIN: MIND

Second aspect of his limits...HIS MIND.

- Jesus had a human mind.
- Jesus went through the learning process
 - just like all other children do.
- So, he wasn't just born with a fully formed mind!
 - He learned how to eat,
 - how to talk,
 - how to read and write,
 - and even how to obey his parents.

SLIDE LUKE 2:52

[52] And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

So, Jesus grew!

Also, Jesus didn't know everything!

- He gave up some of his divine rights
- concerning his omniscience.

SLIDE MARK 13:32

[32] "But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.

LIMITS SLIDE

- So, not only did Jesus limit himself by having a frail body...
- he also had a mind, just like us.

EXPLAIN: EMOTIONS

But finally, we see his limits when it comes to his EMOTIONS.

- Jesus experienced the spectrum of emotions...
- that we as human beings experience.

Things such as anxiety:

SLIDE JOHN 12:27

[27] "Now is my soul troubled. And what shall I say? 'Father, save me from this hour'? But for this purpose I have come to this hour.

The Greek word for *troubled* here...

- could also be translated as *anxious*...

Jesus also experienced sorrow:

SLIDE MATTHEW 26:38

[38] Then he said to them, "My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me."

- And Jesus even experienced loss and mourning,
- as seen when his close friend, Lazarus died.

SLIDE JOHN 11:35

[35] Jesus wept.

TRANSITION

Y'all, Jesus was fully human, as seen in **SLIDE HIS LIMITS**

- The humanity of Jesus says that...
- the most powerful God...
- appears to be the most powerless.

Now, there is one more aspect of Christ's divinity that I'd like to address, and then we'll move to some application.

Look at verse 8 once more:

PHILIPPIANS 2:8-11

[8] And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. [9] Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, [10] so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, [11] and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

POINT: HIS NATURE

- So, his virgin BIRTH was necessary.
- His human LIMITS were necessary.

But finally, we must engage with the question of **SLIDE HIS NATURE**

Specifically, what was it about him...

- that made his death something...
- that would evoke God the Father...
 - to exalt him
 - AND bestow on him a name above all others
 - AND have us bow and confess that his is the Lord?

Well, although the New Testament clearly affirms

- that Jesus was fully human,
 - just as we are,
- it also affirms that Jesus was different in one important respect:
 - he was without sin,
 - and he never committed sin during his lifetime.

HIS NATURE was SINLESS!

OBJECTIONS

Now, some object...

- that if Jesus did not sin,
- then he was not truly human,
- for all humans sin.

But that fails to recognize that humans are now in an abnormal situation.

- When Adam and Eve were first created in the Garden,
 - BEFORE they sinned,
- they were TRULY human...
- and NOW, all of us,
 - after sin became a reality,
- are NOW in an ABNORMAL situation.

Sinfulness was not originally a part of human nature.

EXPLAIN: VIRGIN BIRTH

This is again where the virgin birth comes into play.

- The virgin birth makes possible...
- Christ's true humanity without inherited sin.

All of us as humans inherit sin (original sin) through our first father, Adam.

SLIDE ROMANS 5:12

[12] Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned—

- But Jesus did not descend from the line of Adam...
- in the same way as we do...
- because he was conceived by the Holy Spirit.

This helps us to understand...

- why the legal guilt and moral corruption...
 - which belong to all other human beings...
- did not belong to Christ.

Jesus was not fully descended from Adam, cause he had no earthly father.

- And that break in the line of descent...
- was the method God used to bring it about...
 - that Jesus was fully human...
 - yet did not share inherited sin from Adam.

EXAMPLES

We have no evidence in any of the gospel accounts of Jesus sinning. Actually, all through the New Testament we find that same affirmation.

SLIDE JOHN 8:29

[29] And he who sent me is with me. He has not left me alone, **for I always do the things that are pleasing to him.**"

SLIDE JOHN 15:10

[10] If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, **just as I have kept my Father's commandments** and abide in his love.

SLIDE 2 CORINTHIANS 5:21

[21] For our sake he made him to be sin **who knew no sin**, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

SLIDE HEBREWS 4:15

[15] For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, **yet without sin.**

SLIDE 1 PETER 2:22

[22] **He committed no sin**, neither was deceit found in his mouth.

SLIDE 1 JOHN 3:5

[5] You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, **and in him there is no sin.**

This is no isolated doctrine...every author in the New Testament agrees:

- HIS NATURE was different than ours. He was SINLESS.

TRANSITION

So, this is the doctrine of **SLIDE CHRIST'S HUMANITY**

Now, I think you can see why this doctrine is important...

But let's also answer the question:

- how is this applicable to my life today?

Well, let me give you one reason:

POINT: HE CAN SYMPATHIZE

Because Jesus is fully human, **SLIDE HE CAN SYMPATHIZE** with us.

- The humanity of Christ,
 - is where the absolute POWER & JUSTICE of God
 - meets the absolute LOVE & MERCY of God.

So now, God can relate to us with mercy and acceptance...

WITHOUT compromising God's justice.

And Jesus now speaks to us...

- with the TRUTH of a DIVINE God...
 - he knows how things SHOULD BE!
- AND the GRACE of a true HUMAN...
 - He knows how things REALLY ARE!

APPLICATION

And honestly, we need both.

We need truth AND grace.

Truth without grace...

- is fundamentalism,
- it's legalism,
- it's moralism,
- it's judgmentalism.

But grace without truth...

- is sentimentality...
 - it's nostalgia...
- it's wishful thinking,
 - and Hallmark Movies.
- It's hollow and frail...

ILLUSTRATION: DOCTOR

Listen, when my mom got cancer,

- we didn't want an oncologist, who'd just tell us,
 - *"Oh, don't worry..."*
 - *It's not that bad...*
 - *you've got this...*
 - *just go home and have a cup of tea,*
 - *and just feel better!"*
- No! We wanted a doctor speaking truth!
 - Tell us the truth,
 - no matter how hard it is to hear,
 - so, we can figure out what to do about it.

APPLICATION: TRUTH & TENDERNESS

Hear me, friends:

You don't want a god who only brings GRACE...and no TRUTH.

You don't want a god who is ALWAYS AFFIRMING all you choose to do!

If your god NEVER DISAGREES with you...you might be worshipping you!

- You don't need a god saying your sins are OK...
 - that they're not that bad...
 - that they're not that big of a deal.

Your sins are a huge deal!

- Sin brought the curse of death on the earth.
- Sin has sent people to hell,
- Sin ultimately cost Jesus his life.

And because WE ARE sinners...

- we need a God who can deal with us in our messed-up state.
- Jesus can do both because he is God AND human.

So, he speaks truth...but with tenderness.

- Jesus suffered our loneliness,
 - our pain,
 - our abandonment,
- and so now hears us with sympathy
- and treats us with tenderness.

Every time you pray, you pray to a God who intimately knows...
what your pain feels like.

ILLUSTRATION: SHOTS

And, gosh, I love this illustration, and it was reinforced this week, cause we had Harper in the ER for dehydration.

And now she's a champ at the doctor...

But when she was younger it was a different experience.

- When we took Harper to the pediatrician...
- for her 3-year-old check-up,
- her pediatrician,
 - Dr. Kelly came in.

And listen, Harper loved Dr. Kelly.

- We had a toy doctor's kit,
- and she would play Dr. Kelly,
- and I'd be her patient,
 - which was the best game, right?
 - Cause I just got to lay there,
 - and take a daddy break
 - while she did the check-up.

All the parents in here know that truth!

But Dr. Kelly comes in,

- and she does the check-up on Harper,
- and everything's looking good.
- And it's all going smooth.
- Until the very end of the appointment...
- when Dr. Kelly says,
 - *"Well, that's it..."*
 - *except for two shots."*

And Harper had watched enough Doc McStuffins to know what a shot is.

And she freaked out!

And so, here's what I had to do:

- I sat my little girl on my lap,
 - and she's fighting me,
 - but she's three,
 - so, I can take her.
- But, I have to grab ahold of her arms.
- And grab ahold of her legs.
- And I have to overpower her with my strength.

And while Dr. Kelly goes into 3-year-old Kevorkian mode...

- Harper looks at me...
- And with tears in her eyes...
- She says, *"Daddy...no...daddy...why?"*

And listen, all the truth I can muster won't help.

- I show her that poster...
- of all the sick and dying kids on the wall...
- to try to convince her that a shot is better than diphtheria...
 - which is a real creepy poster in a pediatrician's office...
 - just sayin'!

But the truth doesn't matter in that moment.

In that moment, she just needs me to hold her and rock her.

- Because I remember getting shots...
- And I remember being scared...
- And I remember freaking out.

And now, as a dad, I know the truth.

- The truth is, she needs the shots.
- BUT...she also has a daddy who loves her...
 - and can sympathize with her in this.

Jesus can sympathize WITH us...because he WAS us.

GOD...WITH...US...

CONCLUSION

This is the doctrine of **SLIDE W/PADS** CHRIST'S HUMANITY

This, paired with his divinity, makes Christmas pack a punch...

- that cute little baby Jesus...
 - with his rosy-red cheeks...
 - in the manger...
 - with all the animals...
- just cannot stand up to.

Pastor and scholar N.T. Wright says this:

SLIDE *"How can you live with a terrifying thought that the hurricane has become human, that the fire has become flesh, that Life itself has walked into our midst? Christianity either means that or it means nothing. It is the most devastating disclosure of the deepest reality of the world; or it is a sham, a total nonsense. Most people, unable to cope with either of those two things, are condemned to live in the shallow world in between."*

Church, this is Jesus.

- He is both divine and human.
- He is both just and merciful.
- He is both truth and grace.

HE IS WHAT YOU NEED!

I wonder if you know him this way?

- The hurricane become human...
- The fire become flesh...
- Life itself...walking into our midst.

If you don't know him this way, you can. The offer is on the table.

Surrender all you are to all that he is.

You just need pray, *"Jesus, I surrender all to you!"*

- Knowing Jesus this way...
- is what will deepen your faith and relationship with him...
- and keep you out of the shallow world.

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel.

GOD...WITH...US...

Let's pray.

RESPONSES:

Well, every week at Fathom we respond in 4 ways:

- COMMUNION – THE LORD’S SUPPER
- GIVING TITHES & OFFERINGS – fathomchurch.org/give
- PRAYER - fathomchurch.org/prayer
- SINGING

So, I’m going to read the Words of Institution from the Apostle Paul, we’ll take communion, and then we’ll sing:

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23–26 – WORDS OF INSTITUTION

[23] For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, [24] and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[25] In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” **TAKE**

[26] For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

Love you church, let’s stand and sing together.

RESOURCES USED:

- Chandler, Matt. *The Advent of Love*.
- Grudem, Wayne. Systematic Theology.
- Spurgeon, Charles. *The Condescension of Christ*.
- Tafilowski, Ryan. *Fathom Academy: Christian Theology (Week 3): Christology, Pt: 1*.