

GracePoint: A Weekly Sermon Discussion

9 = Who Is Jesus

9/3 @6:30

Grace Group at
the Church

9/5 @6:00

Grace Group at
2070 Corley Dr

9/5 @6:30

Grace Group at
1710 Mariposa Dr

ICE BREAKER: If you could be remembered for one thing, what would you want that to be?

REVIEW: Was there anything covered or said on Sunday that you had any questions or comments about?

READ: Philippians 2:5-8

One of the important branches of theology is what we call “Christology”. As one commentator defines this it is: “the study of who Jesus was and what he came to do.” If you study this for any amount of time you will see what some people call a “low Christology” which means a low view of who Jesus was and what he came to do. For example, people who think he was “a good teacher” or “a moral person” who came to show us right and wrong. On the other side is what is (creatively!) called a “high Christology”. Here come beliefs that Jesus was God, the perfect holy just second person of the Trinity who came to save a people. It turns out Paul had a VERY high Christology, as evidenced in what we just read. So today we will be looking at the Christology of Paul to make sure we are on the same page as he was!

Paul starts with a phrase that, for many of us, doesn't carry the weight that it should. He says that Jesus was “in the form of God”. What does this mean? Short answer: that Jesus WAS God because all the things that make God “God” Jesus possesses. To help us out, here is a bit of a longer answer: “Form” here is a philosophical word that means he can be defined as God and the definition of God must include Jesus. So his power is the power of God, his goodness is the goodness of God, his mercy is the mercy of God, His justice... I think you get the point. To help make this point clear, it is actually helpful to think of How God made us. Genesis says that we are made in the “image” of God. This means that we reflect, or represent God in some way. Jesus here is not just the image of God, rather he is made of the same stuff -- his FORM is that of God -- he is not just the image. (we can note, he is ALSO the “image of the invisible God”, but that is a thought for later!) Jesus is above us, greater than us, he rules and reigns over us. As Paul would say elsewhere, all things were made “from him and through him and to him.” (Romans 11:36)

DISCUSS: Why is it so important that Jesus is God (in other words, why can't he be *just* a good teacher)? Why would people deny this truth?

But that is not the whole story. Paul's high Christology does not end with Jesus being God, because there is something else we read. He is also found “in human form” (verse 8). And here it is important that we understand that all the same things we said about being in the “form of God” are also true here. He is a person, by every definition of the word. He had a real body. He was really born (though, miraculously to a virgin, but still born). He really grew up physically and emotionally meaning grew in stature and maturity. He felt real human emotions and real human pains. Conversely, he experienced real human joys and real human pleasures. This is why we say that Jesus is “fully God and fully man”. The fancy name for this phenomenon is the “hypostatic union” (note, I used to always tell the kids in my youth group, I really do not care if you remember the fancy words like “Christology” or “hypostatic union”. What I do really care that you remember are the truths that those words represent!). This means that united in the one person of Jesus is the *form* of God, so he is fully God, and the *form* of man, so he is fully man. Neither lessens or removes the other so both are there in one person fully and simultaneously.

DISCUSS: Why is it important that Jesus is man? Why would people deny this truth?

DISCUSS: In reality, these two thoughts are barely scratching the surface of who Jesus is, what thoughts would you want to add? In other words, what do you think of when you think of Jesus?