

Total Opposites

Jesus Became His

So We'd Become Ours

A Sermon on Philippians 2:5-11

Year A - Lent 6 - Palm Sunday

9 - April - 2017

JJ¹

Some say opposites attract. Like magnets, some couples are so different that you're surprised they could be married to each other. Sometimes kids like to annoy parents or teachers by responding with the opposite answer of what you're looking for. Kids find it funny. You don't so much. Sometimes opposites work, and sometimes they don't. Just look at politicians! But like night and day, or oil and water, by nature, we all are the total opposite of our God.

We see that truth in our text today. And you might find it strange to turn to this portion of Scripture on Palm Sunday, but you'll see just how fitting it is. Today is all about **TOTAL OPPOSITES**. It's about how **Jesus Became His, So We'd Become Ours**.

Consider how Jesus entered Jerusalem. This isn't something we should be seeing. Do you realize that? We shouldn't see the Almighty God do this! Our Lord Jesus comes into his Holy City, Jerusalem, riding on a donkey with crowds of common people shouting praises and preparing a path for him. Yes, it was a beautiful thing they did as they confessed their faith, but is that really how you expect the King of kings and Lord of lords to enter *his* city?

Yet Paul tells us that "[Jesus], being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself..."

Before Palm Sunday, Paul brings us back to Christmas. In fact, he brings us back a bit further to Jesus' conception. Paul brings us to the moment in time when God became man—when God became his opposite!

This is just one of many things about our Savior, Jesus, that is just too big for us to really wrap our minds around. There is nothing to which we can compare such a change as the Creator becoming part of his creation. Jesus, the Son of God, willingly—out of sheer love for his enemies, rebellious mankind—became man!

The way God the Son became man was truly humble too. He did not come in the way you would expect. He didn't come with frightening power and a show of might like he did at Mt. Sinai. He came into this world as a human infant! Describing that moment, Paul says Jesus "... made himself nothing..." Not exactly a

¹ JJ is the acronym for *Jesus Juve*, which is Latin for "Jesus Help". It is a short prayer used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the beginning of their work.

flattering description of the human race, is it? A better translation of that phrase would be to say that "...he emptied himself..." Meaning, God the Son set aside his glory and the full use of his power according to his human nature, all so he could become his **Total Opposite**.

And just think of the day of Jesus' birth. Only a handful of people knew that he was something more than what he appeared to be. In much the same way, Christ entered Jerusalem. He did not ride into the city on a chariot with throngs angels waiting on his every need and the kings of the world bowing before him. He came into the city riding on a donkey, a far cry from anything royal!

You see, friends, all this reflects the wonderful, total opposite nature of our Savior. Paul tells us that even though Jesus is 100% God, he "did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage..." Jesus never once used his power and wisdom to serve himself. Jesus tells us what he used his power to do when he said, "the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mt. 20:28).

Even though Jesus is 100% God, he became 100% man and a servant, all to keep the law for us and to save us. Paul re-

minds us that Jesus "humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!"

You see, it wasn't enough that he humbled himself by becoming his **Total Opposite** by become a man, he humbled himself even further. His perfect obedience to the will of the Father led him to his death! Our obedience is mediocre at best. Jesus' obedience didn't even have a hint of unfaithfulness or hesitation! And

not only that, he died on a cross! That meant God's curse was on him—the curse of hell! Just as he himself said to his Old Testament people, "Cursed is anyone who is hung on a tree" (Deut. 21:23; Gal. 3:13).



Friends, that's why Jesus went to Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. He went there to begin the end of his work to save us! He went there to finish becoming his **Total Opposite**,

So We'd Become Ours. As we'll remember again later this week, Jesus gave his life on the cross to pay for all our sins. And when he rose from the dead, the Father put his stamp of approval on his sacrifice and "exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus

Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

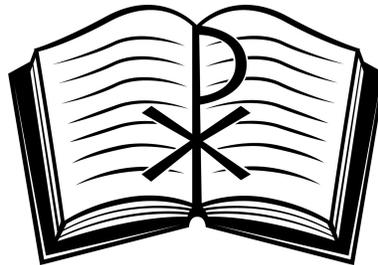
Friends, the only reason all those people could shout out their “Hosannas!” that day is the same reason why you and I can today. It’s because through the gift of faith, **We’ve Become Our Total Opposite.**

By nature, you and I are just like everyone else on this earth. By nature, each one of us is no different from the murderous maniacs of ISIS. As a human race, we’re completely inbred when it comes to sin. There is no fresh blood that can be brought into our human race that could suppress the mortal defect of sin. Not one of us wants to acknowledge Jesus as our God and Savior. Not one of us wants to kneel before him in submission and praise. Because Adam and Eve fell into sin, we each are born into this world as God’s complete opposite. We are his enemies. Therefore, our eternal home should be the opposite of his home. His home is heaven, ours should be hell.

But that’s the beautiful thing about our God being our complete opposite. God is love. He gave his only Son so that fresh,

pure blood could be brought into our fallen human race. Jesus became his **total opposite** and poured out his holy blood for us, so that now we would be our **total opposite.**

At your baptism, God broke the chains of your slavery to sin, Satan and selfishness. Through the gift of faith, God has answered the question: “Who is he?” He is Jesus—Son of God and Son of Man. God has given you knees that love to kneel before him in repentance and faith. God has given you a tongue that loves to sing his praises and tell all the world about the name that is above every name, that Jesus is the Savior of the world!



Dear friends, shout out your Hosannas to the One who marched into Jerusalem to save you! Sing “Hosanna!” to him who made himself his **to-**

tal opposite so that you could be yours. Sing “Hosanna!” to the One who will one day bring you into *his* holy, heavenly Jerusalem. Amen.

SDG²

² SDG is an acronym for *Soli Deo Gloria*, which is Latin for “To God Alone Be The Glory”. This is a statement of humility used by many ministers and sacred musicians at the end of their work to let themselves and others know that it isn’t about getting glory for themselves, but about giving all glory to God.

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