

Matthew Phillipians 2:1-11 19th Sunday after Pentecost Oct, 18, 1987

I'm only human. How often those words ^{as the excuse that} follow a failure. ~~They are used~~
~~as the excuse that explains the failure.~~ Did I lose my temper? Well, I'm
only human. Did I do a sloppy job? What do you expect, I'm only human.
Did I lie or cheat or steal? I'm only human.

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness, and
let them have dominion over the fish of thesea and over the birds of the air
and over the cattle and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that
creeps upon the earth. So God created man in his own image, in the image of
God he created him, male and female he created them.

Created in the image of God. Only human?

Psalm 8 says it this way: what is man that thou art mindful of him and
the son of man that thou dost care for him? Yet thou has made him little less
than God and dost crown him with glory and honor. Thou hast given him dominion
over the works of thy hands; thou hast put all things under his feet.

I'm only human? I'm only the crown of creation? only the one given
Lordship over all the earth?

I'm only human. How God must cringe when he hears that said. As if he
created a defective creature. As if we are his failure.

Of course we all know the story of where everything went wrong. If you
eat of the fruit of the tree, you will not die, you will be like God. That ^{let us be respect}
is ~~where~~ the trouble began, where the trouble remains. We are not satisfied
with being only human. We want to be at the very top. I want to ~~be~~ ^{be} the
Lord over my life, ^{I want to be able to take care of myself, so with a lot more way buy. I will use no ally for God. we} ~~my future, my destiny.~~ ^{real person} Always that is the forbidden fruit
for which I grasp. That I might be the ^{master} ~~captain~~ of my fate, the ^{captain} ~~guardian~~ of
my soul. That I might be my Lord, and maybe yours too. In Eden, in Northeastern
Ohio, in your home and mine, that is where the trouble begins, sin begins.

Our second lesson this morning says this about Christ: though he was in
the form of God he did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,
but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness
of men.

In Eden Adam did count equality with God a thing to be grasped, and grabbed for the fruit. In Christ God himself let go, ungrasped what it is to be God, Christ emptied himself that he might live on earth as a ^{human} man. In Jesus God shows us not how God ~~lives~~ lives, but how God created humans to live.

Can you hear that echo from Eden? He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped. He who was fully God chose to be the very thing that God has created you to be. Human. If you want to know what a human being looks like, then look at Jesus.

How did Jesus walk on this earth? So often we have thought that Jesus lived as God on this earth. Knowing all things, having all power, never being tempted by doubt or fear or lust. But when we read in the gospels how often we see Jesus at prayer, asking his Father in the same way that we make requests of our heavenly Father. How many times we sense that Jesus walked by faith, trusting in the one who could not be seen. And when we hear that cry from the cross, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" then we sense what it means that Christ emptied himself.

Jesus did not seek his own glory but having emptied himself, he became obedient unto death, even death on the cross. Therefore, Paul tells us, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which 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 confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father,

What Christ did not seek, that which he did not grasp was given to him by his Father. Jesus is Lord, ~~Jesus is Lord~~ God has led us to confess. The one who emptied himself has been given all glory and honor.

Have this mind among yourselves, Paul tells us. The mind of Christ who emptied himself. Christ who did not look only to his own interests. Christ who did not seek to exalt himself but who sought only to be obedient to his father.

There is the saying, Happiness is not granted to those who seek it. Who

is happy? The one who is busy with living, who grasps hold of life ~~and goes~~ and forgets to worry about self. Jesus who would not grasp at being god, was raised to the highest glory. Adam, grasping to be God, falls to less than human.

God has created you to be human. He has created you for faith, not sight.

Sometimes I walk with joy with my daughter in an advanced
fashion

When I was young

When I was an intern, my supervisor commented, Lynn, you are only twenty five, but you think like a fortyfive year old person. I puffed out my chest. That was just the compliment I wanted to hear. But then he finished what he had to say: I hope that when you are forty-five you do not think like a sixtyfive year old. I realized he was not complimenting me at all. I was out of synch, like a sparkplug firing at the wrong time.

We think God would want us to be godlike but no, he wants us to be human. Not knowing, but believing, not judging, but loving, not removed and separate from human life but right in the center of it. Christ became human that God might make us what he has always wanted us to be. Human.

Encouragement, love, affection, sympathy, humility, these are the words
that describe the life God brings us in Christ. These are the words
not for those who have risen above all others but for those who