

Jesus Lived & Ministered from His Human Nature

Philippians 2:6-8
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Introduction:

1. **This** series on the Holy Spirit was timed to coincide with Pentecost:
 - a. **Ascension Day** – this past Thursday, May 13
 - b. **Pentecost** – 10 days later – May 23 (**NEXT SUNDAY!**)
2. **Today:** Jesus Lived & Ministered from His human nature.

A. Jesus had a divine nature & human nature

1. First message of this series was called The Divine Seed King.
2. We learned that all the kings of Israel failed – even the good ones – and as a result the nation went into exile, as the Mosaic Covenant warned.
3. They needed a righteous king to keep the Mosaic Covenant.
4. Just before S. Kingdom went into Babylonian exile God promised exactly that through the prophet **Jeremiah**.
5. **Jeremiah 23:5 (NIV)** *I will raise up to David a righteous Branch, a King.*
6. Yet, who but God is righteous?! Exactly! So, in the very next verse, God promised that the Davidic king coming would also be divine!
7. **Jeremiah 23:6 (NIV)** *... he will be called: The **LORD** Our Righteousness.*
8. **David, Isaiah, and Daniel** all prophesied that the king would be divine!
9. Yet, He was **human** as well – **Isaiah** said a child is born in David's lineage!
10. That means He had **2 natures**: a **God nature** AND a **human nature**.
11. What do we mean by nature?
12. **Person** is an individual with suitably complex mental capacities which include consciousness, self-consciousness, and relationality.
13. **Different kinds of Persons:** divine, angelic, human persons.
14. **Nature:** a set of characteristics which determine the kind of Person it is
 - a. **Trinity Persons** (3) have divine characteristics (attributes): omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent.
 - b. **Human Persons:** **NOT** omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent – limitations!
15. Jesus didn't take on a 2nd 'person-ality' – then He would have had multiple personalities with 2 consciousnesses, 2 minds, and 2 wills.
16. He was One Person – we don't have two Christs!
17. But this One Person (Jesus) had 2 natures: divine nature with divine attributes, AND human nature with human attributes.

B. Jesus chose NOT to rely on His divine attributes

1. The Hebrews writer made an explicit statement about Christ's humanity
2. **Hebrews 2:14-18 (NIV)** *... he (Jesus) too shared in their humanity ... ¹⁷ he had to be made like his brothers in every way ... he himself suffered when he was tempted.*
3. What does it mean that Jesus was made like His brothers in every way?
4. Did He genuinely struggle with the challenges of life like we? Did He really suffer when He was tempted?
5. Or did He have access to something that we don't have access to?
6. We've just touched on the crux of the matter! Paul had this to say ...
7. **Philippians 2:5-8 (ESV)** *... who (Christ Jesus), though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but **emptied himself BY** ⁽¹⁾ **TAKING** the form of a servant, ⁽²⁾ being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And ⁽³⁾ being found in human form*
8. (V.6) Paul restates that **Jesus is God!** He has always & will always be God
9. That means Jesus has always and will always have a divine nature!
10. It also means that even while on earth He had ALL the divine attributes!
11. What then does the verbal phrase, **emptied himself** (v. 7a) mean?
 - a. 3 participial phrases follow which define what this phrase means:
 - **Taking** the form of a servant (v. 7b)
 - Being born in the likeness of man (v. 7c)
 - Being found in human form (v. 8a)
 - b. **Observation 1:** these phrases **DO NOT** say that Jesus discarded His divine nature or any attributes of deity. **Then He wouldn't be God**
 - c. **Observation 2:** the phrases tell us that the emptying had something to do with **ADDING** ("**TAKING**") a 2nd nature (human) to Jesus.
 - d. **And as** we already learned, human natures have limitations – they are **NOT omniscient, NOT omnipotent, NOT omnipresent!**
 - e. **Emptied HIMSELF:** He voluntarily chose to do this!
 - f. **So then, by taking on a human nature, Jesus LIMITED Himself!**
12. He set aside that which would be incompatible with living a truly human life – as we already saw, He was made like us in **EVERY WAY!**
13. **So, Jesus** (one Person) had 2 natures, with corresponding attributes:
 - a. **In eternity past** He lived from His divine nature & attributes
 - b. **On earth** He lived and died from His human nature & attributes – by the power of the Holy Spirit!

14. What are some ways in which Jesus LIMITED Himself by living and ministering out of His human nature rather than His divine nature?

C. **Ways in which Jesus limited Himself**

First: Jesus was not in all places at once – yet God is omnipresent.

1. Jesus self-limited Himself to time and space – you can't argue with that!
2. Yet, the Scriptures teach us that God is omnipresent (everywhere!)
3. **Psalm 139:7-8 (NIV)** *Where can I flee from your presence? ⁸ If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.*

Second: Jesus had human physiological needs – yet God is self-sufficient

1. He was thirsty (Mt 25:35), hungry (Mt 4:2), and weary (Jn 4:6).
2. Yet, God can never experience any of these b/c He is self-sufficient.
3. **Acts 17:25 (NIV)** *And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else.*

Third: Jesus died – yet God is eternal and cannot die

1. **Psalm 90:2 (NIV)** *Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.*

Fourth: Jesus lacked knowledge & grew in wisdom – yet God is omniscient

1. God is omniscient, meaning that He has total knowledge
2. Yet, last week we saw that Jesus grew in wisdom & knowledge as a boy!
3. On another occasion, a woman, hoping for healing from a chronic problem with bleeding, touched his garment and was instantly healed.
4. **Mark 5:30 (NIV)** *Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?"*
5. The dialogue that followed, revealed that Jesus really didn't know!
6. Speaking to His disciples about the coming Day of the Lord, Jesus said ...
7. **Mark 13:32 (NIV)** *No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.*
8. Considering that Jesus is fully God, this is a startling thing to say, unless we acknowledge that Jesus limited Himself to living within the confines of human existence.
9. **Objection:** But Jesus 'knew' Nathanael, though they had never met (Jn 1:47-50). Doesn't that prove that Jesus was divine? Not at all!

10. Other saints also received outside 'knowledge' and they weren't divine!

11. **Elisha** (2 Kgs 5:15-27)

- a. When Elisha refused payment for the healing of Naaman, his servant Gehazi sought to profit from this for himself.
- b. So, he secretly pursued Naaman to receive something from him
- c. When Gehazi returned home, Elisha called him out on it, because he supernaturally 'knew' what Gehazi had done

12. **Peter** (Acts 5) – the HS told Peter that Ananias and Sapphira lied about giving the proceeds from their land sale. As a result, the couple died.

13. Actually, one of the NT spiritual gifts is the gift of knowledge (1 Cor 12:8; 14:6). Many Christians have experienced this. I have experienced it!

14. Jesus clearly self-limited Himself in the use of His own **inherent divine attributes**, to rely, as we should, on the Holy Spirit, instead!

Fifth: Jesus experienced temptation – yet God cannot be tempted

1. **Hebrews 4:15 (NIV)** *For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin.*
2. Not only was Jesus tempted, but He was tempted exactly like we are!
3. If Jesus used any help from His divine nature, then He didn't experience temptation just like us! **Further, He suffered when tempted!**
4. **Hebrews 2:18 (NIV)** *... he himself suffered when he was tempted.*
5. So intense was His temptation in Gethsemane that He sweat great drops of blood, and then the Father sent an angel to minister to Him!
6. **Luke 22:43-44 (NIV)** *An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him.*
7. But God CAN'T be tempted, let alone suffer in temptation!
8. **James 1:13 (NIV)** *For God cannot be tempted by evil*
9. FURTHER, why would Jesus (God) need help from an angel He created?!
10. Jesus didn't resist temptation by using His inherent divine attributes, but by living by the same HS we are to live by. And He did it perfectly!

Sixth: Jesus grew in obedience – yet God is already complete and perfect

1. **Hebrews 5:8-10 (NIV)** *Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered⁹ and, once made perfect....*
2. He not only learned obedience, but He was made perfect!

3. The word, “perfect” is from the Greek, teleios, which carries with it the idea of “completion,” or “full grown,” or “maturity.”
4. **Jesus learned obedience until He became mature in obedience.**
5. The Father gave Him increasingly difficult assignments to prepare Him to obey the most difficult assignment – death on the cross (Phil 2:8)!
6. He didn’t learn obedience through disobedience, as we fallen humans do, but by being tested with more and more difficulties and suffering
7. **Hebrews 2:10 (NIV)** ... *it was fitting that God ...should make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering.*
8. But how can Jesus learn obedience if God is already perfect (Mt 5:48)?!
9. **Answer:** because Jesus chose to live by human nature & its attributes, rather than divine nature, in full dependence upon the Spirit.

Seventh: Jesus performed miracles by the Holy Spirit – yet He is omnipotent

1. **Acts 10:38 (NIV)** ... *how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him.*
2. Peter & Luke say Jesus did miracles by the HS, not from His divine nature
3. Jesus Himself made that claim!
4. **Matthew 12:28 (NIV)** *But if I drive out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you.*
5. What could the Holy Spirit possibly add to the divine nature of Jesus?
6. Absolutely nothing! Jesus’ divine nature has always been omnipotent!
7. Despite what I have shown, some still believe that there were certain miracles Jesus performed which were in a class only God could perform!
8. And so, they deduce that Jesus performed those from His divine nature rather than by the power of the Holy Spirit.
9. But was there a category of miracles Jesus performed which were beyond the reach of HS-empowered human beings?

D. Others did miracles as great as Jesus’ earthly miracles

IMPORTANT DISTINCTION:

1. We **ARE NOT** talking about works/miracles Jesus did by means of His divine nature & attributes BEFORE & AFTER the incarnation such as:
 - a. **Creating** the world & universe or
 - b. **Upholding** the universe by the word of His power (Heb 1:3)

2. We **ARE only** talking about works/miracles Jesus did using His human nature & attributes, empowered by the Spirit, **DURING** His incarnation!

First: Human miracles which **EQUALED** Jesus’ miracles

1. Jesus healed the sick & raised the dead
 - a. Elisha & Elijah each raised a widow’s son to life (1 Kg 17; 2 Kg 4)
 - b. The disciples & Paul healed the sick & raised the dead (Mt 10:8)
2. Jesus was teleported into a locked room (Jn 20:19, 26)
 - a. **Ezekiel** was physically lifted & transported by the Spirit directly to the exiles at Tel Aviv near the Kebar River (Eze 3:12-15)!
 - b. **Philip** was teleported from his appointment with the Ethiopian eunuch to a place called Azotus (Acts 8:39-40)
 - c. Jesus’ walking on water didn’t trump these either, for if you can be teleported then you can certainly ‘walk’ or hover on water too!
3. Jesus multiplied bread to feed thousands
 - a. Jesus fed a multitude of 5000 (Mt 14) and another 4000 (Mt 15).
 - b. **Moses** fed the Israelites with manna for forty years (Ex 16:35) and twice gave them water to drink from a rock (Ex 17:6; Num 20:8-11)
4. Jesus calmed the wind and the waves (forces of nature)
 - a. This miracle is often cited as evidence that Jesus is divine (Mk 4:39-42), because it is argued that only God can command nature.
 - b. Satan (Job) & humans also performed miracles of nature!
 - c. **Moses** parted the Red Sea so that an entire nation could walk through on dry ground! (**Joshua, Elijah, Elisha** parted Jordan)
 - Is that really a qualitatively lesser miracle? Absolutely not!
 - It could be argued that it is even greater, because while storms come and go, seas and rivers NEVER part!
 - d. How about **Moses’** plague miracle of darkness for 3 days – so dark no one could see another?! Nile River turned to blood & back again.
 - e. How about **Moses’** plagues: hail, boils, frogs, gnats, flies & locusts?
 - f. Three observations:
 - While the storm on the Sea of Galilee was a localized storm, Moses’ plagues and storms were national in scope!
 - Not only did Moses stop the plagues; He initiated them too!
 - Moses’ miracles distinguished between Egyptians & Israelites
 - g. Moses did these miracles by the power of the Spirit (Nu 11:16-17)

Second: Human miracles which **EXCEEDED** Jesus' **earthly** miracles

1. I am including 2 miracles that occurred outside the planetary system
2. **Example 1: Joshua commanded the sun & moon to stand still** (Josh 10)
 - a. Joshua and the Israelites were fighting against 5 kings.
 - b. When he realize that their enemies would escape under cover of nightfall, he called for the sun and moon to stop!
 - c. **Joshua 10:12-13 (NIV)** *Joshua said to the LORD in the presence of Israel: "O sun, stand still over Gibeon, O moon, over the Valley of Aijalon." ¹³ So the sun stood still, and the moon stopped, till the nation avenged itself on its enemies ... The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day.*
3. **Example 2: Isaiah moved the sun's shadow back ten steps!**
 - a. God granted Hezekiah's request by giving him another 15 years. Isaiah offered a sign: sun to go ahead or back by 10 steps.
 - b. Hezekiah chose the latter, saying that it was more difficult for the sun to stop and go backward than to speed up a bit!
 - c. **2 Kings 20:11 (NIV)** *Then the prophet Isaiah called upon the LORD, and the LORD made the shadow go back the ten steps it had gone down on the stairway of Ahaz.*
 - d. Mind-blowing! The sun not only stood still but backed up!
4. **Summary:** A divine nature isn't required to perform miracles, not even miracles of nature! What you need is the Holy Spirit!

E. What convinced people that Jesus was God?

1. Notice the disciples' reaction when Jesus calmed the storm on the sea
2. **Mark 4:41 (NIV)** *They (disciples) were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? **EVEN** the wind and the waves obey him!"* (cf. Mt 8:18-27)
3. There's two ways to understand the conjunction "even" (kai)

First: the comparative use or effect.

1. This sense would be saying that the miracle of nature is the clincher – Jesus must be God because he performed a miracle of nature!
2. But as we already noted, others had done miracles as great or greater, and no one thought they were divine!

Second: the cumulative use or effect

1. What Mark is saying is that this miracle is being ADDED to previous unnamed miracles, which they had all witnessed together. **SO MANY!**
2. **John 21:25 (ESV)** *Now there are also **MANY OTHER** things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written.*
3. Though others had performed miracles as qualitatively great as what Jesus was doing, NONE had performed such a vast **NUMBER** OR such a vast **VARIETY** of miracles – not even close! That got their attention!
4. **John 7:31 (NIV)** *Many in the crowd believed in him. They said, "When the Messiah comes, will he perform **MORE** signs than this man?"*
5. Their spiritual eyes had been opened – they had crossed a line – He was the Promised One and He was **more** than what they had ever imagined!

Conclusion

1. **Jesus** didn't perform those miracles using His divine attributes – He lived and ministered using His human attributes ...
2. **AND** His human attributes were empowered by the Holy Spirit!
3. **Jesus** expected His disciples to do the same, which is why He was upset with them, saying they had such little faith (Mt 8:26)!
4. He had already told them they were going to the other side (v. 35). That was His will, and He expected them to deal with it themselves!
5. None of us will do such a great **NUMBER** of miracles nor such a great **VARIETY** of miracles as Jesus did!
6. **HOWEVER**, EACH believer can do the same kind of work that Jesus did while He lived and ministered on earth!
7. **John 14:12 (ESV)** *Truly, truly, I say to you, **whoever** believes in me will also do the works that I do; and **greater works than these will HE do, because I am going to the Father.***
 - a. First, Jesus said this in the context of speaking about the Holy Spirit!
 - b. Second, the definite article translated, "Whoever" (the one), and the pronoun "He" are both singular!
8. **Every single** believer can do the same work as Jesus, though they only have human attributes, because they have the HS to do it like Jesus did!
9. **Significance:** there isn't a challenge or assignment that is TOO BIG for you to overcome, accomplish or endure – just like Jesus did!
10. Why? Because, using **ONLY** His human attributes, Jesus accomplished ALL He did by the leading & empowerment of the Holy Spirit!

11. That includes healing people, freeing people from the devil, ministering effectively, producing lasting kingdom fruit, discipling people, and patiently enduring through suffering – just like Jesus did!
12. And there's no storm that can swamp you! Trust Him. Listen for His will in your situation. Then carry out His instructions in the power of the HS!
13. **John 14:13 (ESV)** *Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.*
14. Within God's will, you can do **ANYTHING** that Jesus did or even greater!
15. **Example: Story of CR this last year:**
 - a. Mid-August meeting with CR Coaches – might not be able to start the CR mentoring season in September due to church split.
 - b. But we completed the mentoring season and grew through it!
 - c. **SLIDE:** Map of world with red tags showing CR global spread.

Reflection:

1. Are you facing an impossible storm, problem, suffering, or assignment?
2. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you His will for you in it.
3. Then ask Him for steps or strategies to navigate it.

PRAYER