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Sermon Notes

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## **Veiled in Flesh: God Without Honor**

**Matthew 13:53-58**

Book of Revelation:

Revelation = unveiling, a pulling back of the concealing veil

- Not so much a revelation of the future... as most people think it to be
- Not so much a revelation of heaven, and all the worship that goes on there constantly
- Not so much a revelation of the destruction of Satan and his evil forces
- Not so much a revelation of judgment day and the eternal states of heaven and hell

It IS all of these... but it is much, infinitely much more than that

It is **“The revelation of Jesus Christ”**

Why did Christ need to be “unveiled”? What hid Him from our eyes? Was it not the humility of His lowly incarnation?

Charles Wesley, “Hark the Herald Angels Sing”: “Veiled in flesh the godhead see, hail the incarnate deity”

Steve & Vicki Cook, “This Fathomless Love”:

Lord, what moved Your heart to love lowly man  
Before any star could herald Your praise?  
And why did You come abasing Yourself,  
**Veiled in a robe of frail human clay?**  
Why would the adored become the despised  
To bear all the furious wrath that was mine

This was the veil... that the eternal God should enter the world as a human baby, should grow up like other boys do, should live in a hometown with a normal family... and then present Himself to His neighbors as God incarnate, their Creator and Redeemer

Only the eye of faith could pierce this veil of clay and see the Glory of God behind it

## I. What Christ Gave Up—Temporarily

### A. The Amazing Humility of God the Son

***Philippians 2:6-8*** *Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death-- even death on a cross!*

1. Truly God... robed in glory, constantly worshiped in heaven

a. the glory of the pre-incarnate Christ

***Ezekiel 1*** *I looked, and I saw a windstorm coming out of the north-- an immense cloud with flashing lightning and surrounded by brilliant light. The center of the fire looked like glowing metal, 5 and in the fire was what looked like four living creatures.*

*Fire moved back and forth among the creatures; it was bright, and lightning flashed out of it. The creatures sped back and forth like flashes of lightning.*

*Beside the creatures were chrysolite wheels intersecting wheels...their rims were high and awesome, and all four rims were full of eyes all around.*

*Spread out above the heads of the living creatures was what looked like an expanse, sparkling like ice, and awesome. When the creatures moved, I heard the sound of their wings, like the roar of rushing waters, like the voice of the Almighty, like the tumult of an army. When they stood still, they lowered their wings.*

***25*** *Then there came a voice from above the expanse over their heads as they stood with lowered wings. 26 Above the expanse over their heads was what looked like a throne of sapphire, and high above on the throne was a figure like that of a man. 27 I saw that from what appeared to be his waist up he looked like glowing metal, as if full of fire, and that from there down he looked like fire; and brilliant light surrounded him. 28 Like the appearance of a rainbow in the clouds on a rainy day, so was the radiance around him. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown*

b. the worship of the pre-incarnate Christ

***Isaiah 6:1-4 In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord seated on a throne, high and exalted, and the train of his robe filled the temple. 2 Above him were seraphs, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. 3 And they were calling to one another: "Holy, holy, holy is the LORD Almighty; the whole earth is full of his glory." 4 At the sound of their voices the doorposts and thresholds shook and the temple was filled with smoke.***

***John 12:41 Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him.***

Before Christ came to earth, He shared all of the Father's glory, sat on the throne of the universe, and was the focus of perfect and constant adoration and worship by spiritual beings.

No one in history had as much to lose as did Christ!

Illus. David Livingstone, missionary in Africa: "People talk of the sacrifice I have made in spending so much of my life in Africa. Can that be called sacrifice which is simply paid back as a small part of the great debt owing to our God, which we can never repay? ... Away with such a word, such a view, and such a thought! It is emphatically no sacrifice. Say rather it is a privilege. Anxiety, sickness, suffering or danger ... may make us pause and cause the spirit to waver and sink; but let this only be for a moment. All these are nothing when compared with the glory which shall hereafter be revealed in and for us. I never made a sacrifice. Of this we ought not to talk when we remember the great sacrifice which He made who left His Father's throne on high to give Himself for us." - David Livingstone

2. Free, willing choice to give up His clear glory, position of honor
  - a. not compelled or forced
  - b. gladly, for the joy set before Him, entered the world
3. Even more amazing: the adored chose to become the despised
  - a. He knew the prophecies: he would be despised and rejected by men
  - b. He knew His incarnation would be disbelieved, His person rejected, His body crushed at the cross
  - c. He willingly entered the world to die a humiliating death on the cross

B. "Veiled in Flesh": The Hidden Glory of the Incarnation

1. Central stumbling block of our faith: the incarnation

***John 10:30-33 "I and the Father are one." 31 Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, 32 but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many great miracles from the***

***Father. For which of these do you stone me?" 33 "We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God."***

*"I believe that Christ was a man like ourselves; to look upon him as God would seem to me the greatest of sacrileges." Leo Tolstoy (1828-1910)*

2. A "Mere Man", Claiming to be God
  - a. physical body: face, eyes, hands, hair, certain height, tone of voice, personality
  - b. normal development: infancy, boyhood, young manhood, full manhood
  - c. normal family relations: parents, brothers, sisters
  - d. normal physical issues:
    - got hungry and needed to eat
    - got thirsty and needed to drink
    - got tired and needed to sleep
  - e. emotions: joy, anger, astonishment, grief, tears
  - f. physical limitations: one place at one time, seeming frailty
  - g. most difficult of all: death... and not just any death—death on a cross
  
3. YET for those with eyes to see and ears to hear, ample evidence of His deity
  - a. perfect moral character: absolutely sinless, constantly filled with love for God and love for neighbor
  - b. perfect knowledge of God's word
  - c. supernatural knowledge of hidden things
  - d. astonishing power over God's world
  - e. fulfilled prophecies
  
4. Christ's glory still there... but veiled in flesh
  - a. Mount of Transfiguration: a glimpse

***Matthew 17:2 There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.***

- b. daily ministry: a view for the believers
- c. Christ's atoning death: a perfect revelation of the attributes of God

God's perfect justice and wrath: hating sin enough to destroy it so violently

God's perfect love: pouring out that wrath on His most precious Son

A glory only the eye of faith could see... the unbeliever sees only the grotesque, twisted form of a dead Jew, bloody and hideous

The believer sees the glory of God and their own salvation, and thus the sight becomes the most glorious in history

### C. Dishonor Only Temporary

#### 1. Three Great Requests Made from Son to Father

- a. give me my glory

***John 17:5 And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.***

This is astonishing boldness if Christ were not eternally God, co-equal with the Father

- b. give me the nations

***Psalm 2:7-9 I will proclaim the decree of the LORD: He said to me, "You are my Son; today I have become your Father. Ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance, the ends of the earth your possession. You will rule them with an iron scepter; you will dash them to pieces like pottery."***

The Father invited the Son: ask of me, and I will make the nations your inheritance... I will give you full dominion over all the earth...

Christ HAS asked this of His Father, and it has been given to Him

***Matthew 28:18 Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me."***

Christ rules actively over all the earth as King of kings and Lord of lords... it is His by right, for the Father gave it to Him

The fullness of this request will only come at the second coming of Christ...

***Revelation 1:7 Look, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, even those who pierced him; and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.***

***Revelation 19:11-16 I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and makes war. 12 His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. 13 He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. 14 The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. 15 Out of his mouth comes a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. 16 On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS.***

Christ's full glory will be seen only with the end of the age

Christ's authority over the nations is especially powerful in the calling out of chosen ones to be His people, His church, His loved ones...

***John 17:2 For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him.***

this is Christ's third great request which fully restores His glory

- c. give me my chosen ones... their full salvation... forgive all their sins, adopt them as your children, protect them in this world, purify their souls until they are perfect, give them eternally perfect bodies, and bring them into heaven to see my glory

***John 17:24 "Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.***

## 2. Three Great Requests Will Be Answered YES

- a. YES, my Son: I will give you all your heavenly glory back... the glory we shared before the world began
- b. YES, my Son: the nations all belong to you NOW... You rule over them secretly every day... and You will return to rule over them openly later

- c. YES, my Son: the elect will all come to Christ... and be totally forgiven, totally saved, and will see Christ's full glory forever

God the Father is zealous to see Christ fully glorified... Christ laid down His glory temporarily, but the zeal of the Lord Almighty is to see the Son exalted to the highest place

## II. Dishonored by Disbelief

### A. Christ Visits His Hometown

**vs. 53-54** *When Jesus had finished these parables, He departed from there. He came to His hometown and began teaching them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?"*

1. Ministry base was Capernaum

**Matthew 9:1** *Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town.*

Greek: his own town

2. In Matthew 13, however... this is the hometown, the place of His growing years

**vs. 54** *He came to His hometown*

Greek: his home country... "patris" the place where he grew up

3. Immediate ministry: teaching!!

- a. priority was always on the teaching ministry

**Mark 6:34** *When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things.*

The people were perishing in sin because they did not know the Lord or His word... their greatest need was teaching, not physical food or physical healing

Jesus' teaching ministry was varied... he taught in fields, on the streets, at the Temple, out in a boat

But one of His favorite places to teach was the synagogues

- b. pattern later followed by the Apostles in the Book of Acts... to the Jew first meant to the synagogue first
- c. synagogue the center of Jewish daily life... the place also of worship in their local community... visit to the temple only required three times per year
- d. center of synagogue worship: the reading and explaining of the Old Testament scriptures
- e. site of Christ's earlier rejection by His own people

4. Connected ministry: miracles

***Luke 4:23-24 Jesus said to them, "Surely you will quote this proverb to me: 'Physician, heal yourself! Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.'" 24 "I tell you the truth," he continued, "no prophet is accepted in his hometown.***

B. Amazed but Unconverted: Questioning, But Not Seeking

Two great evidences God gave Christ to prove His deity: miracles and teachings

Hometown people took offense at both... although they were amazed

1. Amazed at Christ's Supernatural Wisdom
2. Amazed at Christ's Supernatural Powers
3. "Amazement": In This Case, Actually a Form of Unbelief
  - a. series of questions... none seeking truth
  - b. verdict already reached
  - c. all questions are questions of origin

***Q1: "Where did this man get this wisdom***

***Q2: "and these miraculous powers?"***

***Q3: "Isn't this the carpenter's son?"***

***Q4: Is not His mother called Mary?***

***Q5: Are his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas?***



**Q6: *And His sisters, are they not all with us?***

**Q7: *Where then did this man get all these things?***

The series of questions are probing at the roots of Jesus' astonishing person and powers... but completely without faith!!!

**Conclusion: *And they took offense at him.***

Note: their shock at watching Jesus grow up from a boy with family surrounding him... a normal Jewish boy if they were unwilling to look closer... it proves the total normalcy of Christ's upbringing

Completely refutes spurious "Gospel" (like apocryphal Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew) which has accounts of the growing boy Jesus using supernatural powers in a boyish manner

Illus.: Pseudo-Matthew: infant Jesus made a palm tree bend over to the ground so His mother Mary could have something to eat; at age four, miraculously struck down another boy because he had destroyed something Jesus made... when Mary interceded with Him, Jesus then raised the boy from the dead

UTTERLY FALSE!!! Jesus never did any miracles in Nazareth until this time

#### C. Family Ties: Familiarity Breeds Contempt

Illus. "Familiarity breeds contempt"... old saying; the better you know something, the less you think of it

1. Already seen this in Matthew 12
2. Christ's own family did not fully believe in Him
3. How much less His neighbors
4. Again, strong evidence of Mary's other children: they were listed by name

**vs. 55-56 *aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon and Judas? Aren't all his sisters with us?***

5. Contempt clear

**vs. 57 *And they took offense at him.***

- a. they completely rejected Christ...
- b. "took offense" Greek word related to the bait of a trap
- c. Jesus was officially deemed as dangerous as trap bait... enticing but deadly

6. Christ's pronouncement:

***But Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown and in his own house is a prophet without honor."***

Christ clearly states: your unbelief strips me of honor... in other places I will have honor; among the poor and needy sinners, tax collectors, prostitutes, I will be honored; among the Roman centurions who are humble and needy, I will be honored; by the Samaritan woman and her village, I will be honored; by the children of Jerusalem, I will be honored; and by the Gentiles in Macedonia, Arabia, Libya, Rome, and even to the ends of the earth and the ends of time, I will be honored. But by my hometown and some of my own family, I will be dishonored

D. Unbelief Results in Few Miracles

***vs. 58 And he did not do many miracles there because of their lack of faith.***

1. Clear statement of link between faith and miracles
2. Other such evidence abounds:

[To the desperate woman, bleeding for twelve years] ***Matthew 9:22 "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed from that moment.***

[To the two blind beggars] ***Matthew 9:29 Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith will it be done to you"***

[To the discourage disciples, explaining why they failed to drive out a demon] ***Matthew 17:20 He replied, "Because you have so little faith. I tell you the truth, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you."***

3. BUT limitations to this idea
  - a. lack of faith does not prevent miracles

Jesus did many miracles where there was no faith at all: the stilling of the storm, the healing of the demoniac of the Gadarenes, the paralyzed man of John 5, the feeding of the 5000... all of these received benefits without any personal faith... none is even mentioned in the accounts

- b. strong faith does not produce miracles

Faith is passive... a conduit of receiving from God what He intends to give... faith does not itself generate anything. If God does not will a miracle, it will not happen, no matter how much faith a person has

4. HOWEVER: Faith is the key attribute of the soul which Christ is seeking

Thus the unbelief of Nazareth, Christ's hometown, shut down Christ's healing ministry by Christ's own choice!! Why bless this rebellious people with a stream of miracles that would only increase their guilt but not result in their conversion?

5. Christ is free in the matter of miracles... He doesn't owe them and can do them or not

#### E. The Shocking Dishonor of Disbelief

1. Real issue here: shocking dishonoring of disbelief

***John 8:49 "I am not possessed by a demon," said Jesus, "but I honor my Father and you dishonor me.***

2. Christ was adored and glorified in heaven... mighty archangels hid their faces

3. Christ dishonored and rejected on earth

4. Greatest dishonor to Christ is to disbelieve His claims

The world, even Christ's own people, rejected Him and spurned Him... their unbelief stripped Him totally of His glory: NOT in REALITY, but in their own minds... in their own hearts, Christ was nothing

And thus does unbelief do the greatest damage to the honor of Christ. In the heart of the unbeliever alone is Christ totally without glory

***John 1:10-14 He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. 12 Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- 13 children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.***

### III. Veiled in Flesh, Unveiled by Faith

The Apostle John says Christ's flesh was no final hindrance to their view of His glory:

***John 1:14 The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.***

#### A. Faith Lives by Truth, Not by Sight

1. Faith receives the revelation of truth about Christ

2. No one else could speak the words Christ did

3. No one else could do the miracles Christ did
4. No one else could fulfill the prophecies Christ did

B. Faith Cuts Through the Veil of Flesh

C. Faith Sees Glory Where Unbelief Sees Shame

1. Jesus' hate-filled enemies stood at the foot of His cross and mocked His grotesque frailty

***Matthew 27:40 and saying, "You who are going to destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! Come down from the cross, if you are the Son of God!"***

2. But since that day, Christ's faith-filled people from every nation have stood at the foot of the cross and seen a perfect glory shining from the Lamb of God
3. Faith sees the truth of the Cross... the Son of God did not come down from the cross so that His kingdom would include redeemed sinners from every nation

D. Faith Alone Save the Soul

Faith gladly receives from the Father what the Father has to give... just like Simon Peter at Caesarea Philippi:

***Matthew 16:16-18 "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" 16 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." 17 Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.***

The Father gives this revelation: unveiling His Son in your hearts to see a blinding glory that will shine forever

***2 Corinthians 4:6 For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.***

Though no light has yet pierced your eyes and blinded them with unspeakable beauty, yet in your hearts truth is brilliant...

- This lowly Son of Adam was also the Perfect Son of God
- This quiet preacher of righteousness was truth incarnate
- This humble servant of sinners was also the King of the Kingdom of Heaven
- This crucified, bloody Jewish convict is the glory of your soul, your only hope on Judgment Day

The eye of faith alone can see Christ properly in His earthly life and ministry

#### E. Faith Alone Sees the Final End of Christ's Kingdom

This humble suffering servant will someday show Himself openly to a hateful world and take His rightful place standing over them while they all bend the knee to His glory

***Philippians 2:9-11 Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 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.***

Faith alone accepts the prophecies of the Book of Revelation that Christ's glory will fill a whole new world with eternal brilliance

***Revelation 21:23 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp.***

By faith is Christ given His rightful place in your hearts today... as King of the Kingdom of Heaven!!

And by faith in Christ, you will be there on His coronation day when He reveals His full glory and takes His throne in the new heavens and new earth

## V. Applications

Four Ways People Dishonor Christ

- A. Disbelieving His Claim
- B. Disobeying His Command
- C. Delighting in His Competitors
- D. Delaying His Coming

Remedy: REPENT and BELIEVE THE GOOD NEWS

- A. Believe His Claim... He IS God in the Flesh; Come to faith today
- B. Obey His Commands... You honor Him when you treat Him as King
- C. Delight in His Alone... Don't run after worldly idols
- D. Speed His Coming by courageous, faith-filled evangelism and mission work