

Undercover Boss

Phil 2:5-11

INTRODUCTION

- A. Michael Rubin runs GSI Commerce, a company that handles online orders for Toys R Us, Polo Ralph Lauren, the NFL, & other retailers.
1. What if Michael Rubin had to work in a warehouse or a call center like many of his employees?
 2. This past December, he had the opportunity to find out when he spent nine days taping an episode of the new CBS reality-TV show *Undercover Boss*.
 - a. Rubin stopped shaving, put on some sunglasses, & wore a hat to keep the company's employees from recognizing him.
 - b. Workers were told that Rubin was a temporary employee & that the cameramen were filming a documentary.
 3. Rubin had the opportunity to work in a Kentucky warehouse & a Florida call center.
 4. About his experience, Rubin said, "As CEO, you're used to people making great presentations. You don't get a feel for what happens. I saw this as an opportunity to see what works, and what doesn't."
- B. The entire premise of "***Undercover Boss***" is to see what happens when a CEO exchanges the boardroom for a stockroom.
1. If you watch the program, you know that for many CEOs that adjustment is not easy. In fact, Michael Rubin was fired after just a few hours from one of the jobs in his company.
 2. Yet, it's one thing to go from being a CEO to an entry-level employee for a week or two & it's an entirely different proposition to go from CEO to lowly worker on a permanent basis.
- C. Jesus Christ, according to what Paul writes in this morning's text, is the true "***Undercover Boss***."
1. READ TEXT.
 2. He is One who had created this world, but it is he who came "undercover."
 - a. Verse 8 declares that Jesus was "found in human form."
 - b. In other words, he looked just like any other man; if you simply passed him on the street or in the marketplace you would never know he was the Creator.
 3. Those who go undercover in their own companies do so with a very specific purpose – to learn invaluable insights into their companies.
 4. Jesus went undercover for a very specific purpose – to redeem man from sin.
 - a. "God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him" (Jn 3:17).
 - b. "In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 Jn 4:9-10).
 5. This morning, we shall explore the type of boss Jesus became when he came as an "***Undercover Boss***."
 6. As an "***Undercover Boss***," Jesus was a RESIGNED BOSS, a RESPECTFUL BOSS, a RUINED BOSS, & a REWARDED BOSS.

A RESIGNED BOSS, vv 5-8

- A. "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."
- B. On *Undercover Boss*, one of the first scenes is the CEO's bringing the

board of directors together & announcing that for the next week or so he is resigning as CEO & going incognito in the company.

- C. The first scene in this episode of “***Undercover Boss***” is Jesus’ resigning his position in heaven.
1. What was that position in heaven?
 - a. He was “in the form of God.”
 - 1) The Greek term “form” here refers to outward appearance that conforms to the inner reality.
 - 2) Therefore, it’s not that to a heavenly eye Jesus only appeared divine.
 - a) Rather, he was divine through & through.
 - b) He would have looked divine & he would have been divine.
 - b. The Lord Jesus was also equal with God.
 - 1) Prior to his conception in the womb of Mary, Jesus was as much divine as is the Father & Spirit.
 - 2) Jesus testified to his equality with God.
 - a) “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am” (Jn 8:58).
 - b) “And now, Father, glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had with you before the world existed” (Jn 17:5).
 2. It’s important to note that the KJV does a much better job with v 6 than the ESV.
 - a. The KJV reads: “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.”
 - b. The ESV, however, reads: “Though he ***was*** in the form of God.”
 - c. The Greek is in the present tense & indicates that even when Jesus came to this earth, he did not leave his deity behind in heaven. He was ***God*** incarnate!
- D. Jesus in great humility resigned his position in heaven – He “did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing.”
1. The Greek term for “a thing to be grasped” or “robbery” is extremely difficult to translate.
 - a. The term occurs quite rarely in secular Greek & not at all in the Greek Old Testament.
 - b. Yet, the word apparently refers to a prize or booty. The idea is that Jesus did not consider his equality with God a prize to be tightly grasped & not let go.
 2. Therefore, Jesus emptied himself.
 - a. This Greek term refers to making something void or of no use.
 - 1) For example, Paul uses the term in 1 Cor 1:17 to speak of the cross being emptied of its power.
 - 2) Paul further says in Rom 4:14 that if the adherents of the Law are heirs of Abraham “faith is null and the promise is void.”
 - b. The idea is that Jesus voluntarily laid aside his divine rights & became a man.
- E. Can you & I even begin to fathom the great humility/resignation it took to become the “***Undercover Boss***”?
1. He gave up all the glory & splendor of heaven to become a lowly man & to expose himself to sickness, temptation, & death.
 2. He had the praise of all God’s angels, yet he laid that praise aside to be cursed & spit upon.
 3. The great resignation that took place when Jesus became the “***Undercover Boss***”!

A RESPECTFUL BOSS, vv 7-8

- A. Jesus “made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”
- B. One of the most intriguing parts of *Undercover Boss* is to watch the CEOs become obedient to their overseers.
1. This past week, Michael Rubin, the founder & CEO of GSI Commerce, was struggling to make boxes & ship merchandise quickly enough. The supervisor came by after a couple hours & told him that his services

- were no longer needed.
2. One week, the CEO of 7-11 was working a night shift, & his trainer said that it didn't look like he was doing anything at all.
- C. Jesus, as the "***Undercover Boss***," took the form of a servant & became obedient to the point of death.
1. In Greek, there are two terms for "servant."
 - a. One refers to a hired servant/an employee, but that's not the word Paul uses here.
 - b. The word Paul uses here means "slave," i.e., one who is bought & owned by the master.
 2. The needs of the master always came before the needs of the slave: Lk 17:7-10.
- D. Jesus became obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.
1. Jesus was supremely obedient to the Father.
 - a. "I do as the Father has commanded me" (Jn 14:31).
 - b. "Although he was a son, he learned obedience through what he suffered" (Heb 5:8).
 2. It's easy to obey in little things, but it's not the easiest thing to obey in big things.
 - a. Jesus obeyed in a very huge way by becoming obedient even to the death of the cross.
 - b. By becoming obedient to the point of death on the cross, Jesus became:

A RUINED BOSS, v 8

- A. "Being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."
- B. Jesus was quite ruined at Golgotha.
1. Not only did he die, but he died bearing our sins.
 - a. "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Cor 5:21).
 - b. "He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness" (1 Pet 2:24).
 - c. As he died upon the cross, the perfectly sinless Son of God was anything but sinless.
 - 1) He had, of course, not a single sin of his own.
 - 2) Yet, all the sin ever committed or ever to be committed came crashing down with its full weight upon him. Is it any wonder that the sun stopped shining?
 2. Jesus' body was extremely ruined at Golgotha.
 - a. Before Jesus arrived at the cross, he was severely beaten.
 - b. Nails pierced his hands & feet.
 - c. After Jesus was dead, "one of the soldiers pierced his side with a spear, and at once there came out blood and water" (Jn 19:34).
- C. On *Undercover Boss*, the CEOs are not exactly ruined, but they do make sacrifices.
1. It's quite intriguing as you watch these extremely wealthy individuals enter budget hotels & eat peanut butter & jelly sandwiches.
 2. Yet, by far the most intriguing part of the program is to see the CEO's come face to face with the everyday employees of their company.
 - a. They have an opportunity to see the heartaches, the hurts, & day to day struggles that so many have.
 - b. At the conclusion of the program, those employees are brought to corporate headquarters.
 - 1) The company then makes some sort of sacrifice – e.g., giving a couple \$10,000 for a wedding or a youth football team \$5,000 for uniforms.
 - 2) That sacrifice may be miniscule in the corporate world – the companies are far from ruined – but for the recipients, the sacrifice means the world.
- D. Jesus did not make a token sacrifice at Golgotha.
1. He made an enormous sacrifice, a sacrifice that removes the guilt & penalty of our sin.

2. Because Christians have seen the cross as a symbol of forgiveness & salvation, it's quite difficult to grasp the cross in first century images.
 - a. The Phoenicians & Persians had practiced crucifixion before the Greeks & Romans adopted it; only the worst offenders among slaves & foreigners were crucified.
 - b. Yet, Roman citizens were exempt from this form of execution.
 - 1) In fact, the word "cross" was not even uttered in polite Roman society.
 - 2) When one was sentenced to die by the cross, it was announced that the punishment was to "hang him on the unlucky tree."
 - c. The Jews saw crucifixion as proof that the condemned had been cursed by God.
 - 1) "If a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God" (Deut 21:22-23).
 - 2) Jesus, of course, took that curse away from us & upon himself: "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree'" (Gal 3:13).
- E. Oh, the ruin that Jesus took in order that you & I might not be ruined eternally!

A REWARDED BOSS, vv 9-11

- A. "Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so 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."
- B. While the CEO's distribute gifts, they often claim that it is they themselves who have benefited greatly from their experience.
 1. They find new ways to implement company policy.
 2. They discover different methods to care for the company's employees.
- C. Jesus himself greatly benefited from his experience as "***Undercover Boss.***"
 1. God has highly exalted him & bestowed on him the name that is above every name.
 - a. The Lord Jesus took the highest position possible after he ascended back to the Father.
 - 1) The Father "raised [Jesus] from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly places, far above all rule and authority and power and dominion, and above every name that is named, not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things under his feet and gave him as head over all things to the church" (Eph 1:20-22).
 - 2) "After making purification for sins, [Jesus] sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs" (Heb 1:3-4).
 - b. The Father gave him the name above every other name – apparently, that is the name "Christ," for that is what all will confess.
 2. At the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow.
 - a. The Greek indicates that God doesn't just want every knee to bow at the name of Jesus, but every name ***shall*** bow at Jesus' name.
 - b. Paul outlines three classes of living beings who shall bow at the name of Jesus.
 - 1) Those in heaven – angelic beings.
 - 2) Those on earth – the living at the return of Jesus.
 - 3) Those under the earth – the dead at the return of Jesus.
 3. Every tongue shall confess that Jesus Christ is Lord.
 - a. At that Day, there will be no discussion of how Mohammad & Jesus are equal – even Mohammad will confess Jesus as Lord.
 - b. There will be no more garbage about religious pluralism – Jesus

Christ will be confessed as Lord.

4. Notice that at the end of the age, the realization that Jesus is Lord shall move all the world to action.
 - a. Because it will be obvious that Jesus Christ is Lord, every knee is going to act (i.e., bow) & every tongue is going to act (i.e., confess).
 - b. There is no reason to wait until the “**Undercover Boss**” calls us before him to act.
 - 1) Why not act upon the truth of Jesus’ identity today?
 - 2) Why not confess his great name & bow the knee in submission to his will right now as we stand & sing?