Sermon: **Of his own free will he gave up all he had** (Philippians 2.7)

Major branches of the worldwide Church are Protestant, Catholic and Orthodox.

Christian theology recognises a problem – a gap between God and humanity. Jesus came to bridge that gap.

In the West (Protestant and Catholic) the focus was on the *process*, Sin and the Cross;

In the East (Orthodox) the focus was on the *result*, Theosis (roughly meaning ‘union with God’).

We are so used to the former that we find the latter odd. We find the foundations of Theosis in the Bible:

* John 17.21 **“May they be in us, just as you are in me and I am in you.”**
* 2 Peter 1.3 **“the one who called us to share in his own glory and goodness.”**
* Ephesians 3.19 **“be completely filled with the very nature of God.”**
* Romans 5.2 **“the hope we have of sharing in God’s glory.”**

It is similar to the Wesleyan theology of sanctification or holiness. Holiness is not being ‘holier than thou’, or being Mr Perfect, but being Godlike in character and attitudes.

What Christ did was to come down to earth, to be one of us, so that he could take us back to God.

He could not do this unless he came down among us (Incarnation)

To do this meant TEXT:

* Relinquishing divinity and becoming a slave – the lowest in Roman society. (ie humility)
* Obedience even to suffering a nasty death; so not only the worst life, but also the worst death.

The result was supreme elevation – along with all those who trust him!

Not that others will bow to *us*; but we benefit from all the work Christ did.

Thus as Christians our task is not only to free from guilt and sin, but to allow God to transform us inwardly.

So take time to be holy!