

HUMILITY IN THE LIFE OF JESUS

INTRODUCTION: So far in our mini-series on humility, we've looked at three different aspects. First, we looked at humility's view of *sin*.

--Humility is seen in **sorrow over sin**—not joy in it.

--Humility recognizes that sin **hinders the blessing of God**.

--Humility agrees with God that sin must be **forsaken**—not hung onto!

--And humility desires that sin be **pointed out**. The humble has the desire of David in **Psalm 139:23-24** "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

Second, we looked at humility's view of *self*.

We saw from the parable of the **prodigal son**—and the **Pharisee and publican** that went to the temple to pray—that the humble person sees themselves as **unworthy of the forgiveness and mercy of God**.

We saw in the prayer of Solomon that the humble person sees himself as **unwise**—and needing wisdom from God.

And we saw in the example of King Jehoshaphat—and the Apostle Paul—that the humble person acknowledges **they are weak** and need God to strengthen them.

Last week from Isaiah 6, we noted **how** a person **should respond** when they **see God**. When Isaiah saw God on His throne, high and lifted up, he cried, "**Woe is me!** For I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts."

The holiness of God—and the awareness of Isaiah's sinfulness—brought about a **humility** in Isaiah. But it also brought a **response** from God. God provided **assurance of forgiveness**, as well as the promise that God **draws near** to—and **dwells with**—those who are contrite and of a humble spirit (Is 57:15).

Humility should not just be viewed as **shame because of sin** or **feelings of unworthiness**, though. Why? Because humility is also a **positive** trait—a **virtue**—that was seen in the **life of Jesus**. It certainly wasn't related **to sin or Jesus' response to sin** because Jesus had no sin! But it was an attitude that characterized His life, and He was undoubtedly the **supreme example** of humility. This morning I want to consider: *Humility in the Life of Jesus*. We will look at *Humility in the Death of Jesus* next week and *Humility in the Teaching of Jesus* another time.

Let's consider first...**1. Humility in the nature of Jesus**

Imagine what it would have been like to "**hang around with**" Jesus when He was here on earth. Contrary to what you may have seen in **pictures** attempting to show what Jesus looked like, there was **not a "halo"** around His head! In fact, the prophet Isaiah reminds us that there was nothing in the **appearance**—the physical characteristics of Jesus—that would have **attracted** people to Him.

Isaiah 53:2 "For He shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: **He hath no form nor comeliness**; and when we shall see Him, **there is no beauty that we should desire Him.**" We know from vs 3 that Isaiah is certainly talking about Jesus, the Suffering Servant: "He is despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief: and we hid as it were our faces from Him; He was despised, and we esteemed Him not."

There was nothing **physically** attractive about Jesus—and yet He **attracted** a lot of people! Why? --Because of what **He said**? Certainly! Lk 4:22 says that those who heard Him marveled at His gracious words. --Because of what He **did**? Of course! There were obviously people that followed Him because of the **miracles** that He did and what He **could do** for them.

Did people only follow Jesus because of what He **said and did**? I don't think so! We often forget that children loved Jesus—and that He loved them!

Why did children love Jesus? What was the characteristic that attracted children to Jesus? It was **gentleness and humility**! Jesus tells us as much in Matthew 11:28-30. It is obviously true that **humility** was part of His teaching and example—“take my yoke upon you, and **learn of me**”—but it was also part of who **He was**: “...**I am meek and lowly in heart**...”

A. Jesus was meek (Mt 11:29)

“Meek” is translated from the Greek word “prah-ooce” and means: “**mildness** of disposition, **gentleness** of spirit, meekness.” The Greek word occurs only 4 times in the NT; 3 here in Matthew.

In **Mt 5:5**, we see Jesus's teaching on the beatitudes: “Blessed are the **meek**: for they shall inherit the earth.” **Mt 21:5** “Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, **meek**, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.” “Ass,” of course, is the KJV word for **donkey**.

And in I Peter 3, Peter is writing about women—specifically **wives**—and reminds them that God is more concerned about **their heart** than He is about their **hair...or... jewelry... or clothing**. **I Pet 3:4** “But let it be the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, even the **ornament of a meek and quiet spirit**, which is in the **sight of God of great price**.”

Meekness, then, is obviously a **good** thing, right? If it **characterized** the life of Jesus...and if those who demonstrate it are **blessed**...and if it is in the sight of God a **great price**/of great value—it is certainly something we should desire! It is also important to realize that **meekness** does not indicate weakness. In fact, some define meekness as “**strength under control**.”

Jesus said He was meek; but He also said... B. Jesus was lowly in heart

What does that mean? In a word, it means...**humble**. The same Greek word translated “lowly” here is translated **humble** in two verses many of us are familiar with:

James 4:6 “But He giveth more grace. Wherefore He saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the **humble**.”

I Pet 5:5 “Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the **humble**.”

Mt 11:29 is not the only time Jesus said He was meek and lowly in heart, meaning humble. He actually made a number of statements with a similar idea, but because He didn't use the word humble, they can be easily overlooked. I'm calling them... C. Jesus' statements of “nothingness”

Please turn to John 5:19. We are going to go through a number of these statements and won't be spending much time on any one of them.

John 5:19 “Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can **do nothing of Himself**...”

John 5:30 “I can of **mine own self do nothing**: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I **seek not mine own will**, but the will of the Father which hath sent me.”

John 6:38 “For I came down from heaven, **not to do mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me**.”

John 7:16 “Jesus answered them, and said, My doctrine **is not mine**, but His that sent me.”

John 8:28 “Then said Jesus unto them, When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that **I do nothing of myself**; but as my Father hath taught me, I speak these things.”

John 8:50 “And I **seek not mine own glory**: there is one that seeketh and judgeth.”

Paul had a “not I, but Christ” attitude. Where do you suppose he got that from? From **Jesus** who had a “not I, but the Father” attitude!

Andrew Murray wrote: “Christ was nothing, that God might be all. He resigned Himself with His will and His powers entirely for the Father to work in Him.”

How different from us. We want our **way**—and our **will**—not God’s.
We want our **plans**...and our **pleasure**...and our **promotion**—**not** God’s plans...or God’s pleasure...or God’s promotion. Oh how we need to learn to be **humble** like Jesus!

Jesus not only **said** He was meek...and lowly in heart...and “nothing” He **practiced** it! As mentioned earlier, Jesus was the supreme example of humility and we are going to look at that next.

2. Humility in the example of Jesus

How was Jesus an example in humility? I’m sure there are more; we are going to look at three.

A. Humility seen in serving others

Probably the most famous example of Jesus serving others is when He washed the disciple’s feet. Please turn to John 13. We don’t have time to go through the whole passage, so I’m just going to highlight a few things.

--Notice vs 3-5. It was customary at that time to offer guests a basin of water to wash their feet. Some homes had servants that would wash the feet of the guests. Jesus took on the role of the **lowliest servant** and washed the feet of the disciples—something one of them should have thought to do for the others. That was not their mindset, however. ‘It was beneath them; too lowly for them.’ They thought **too highly of themselves**—but Jesus did not!

--Now vs 12-17. Again, can’t elaborate too much on this but don’t miss these things.

--v 15 Jesus was being an example for them—and us!

--v 17 Happiness comes from serving others

I remember reading a quote by a famous preacher of years gone by that went something like this: “Happiness is not found by **searching** for it, but is **stumbled upon** on the road to serving others.” Jesus taught that—and Jesus lived it!

What about us? The world says the way to be happy is to **be served**.

Jesus says the way to be happy is to **serve others**.

Are we **others** oriented? Do we **esteem others better** than ourselves? Do we feel we are **too important** to do certain things? Are we looking to **serve**—like our Master—or do we want to **be served**?

Second, the humility of Jesus is seen.... B. Humility seen in dependence on the Father

Maybe I’m the only one who has some of these random, strange thoughts, but imagine how difficult it would be for God...coming to earth in the form of a man [Jesus]—to be **dependent** on the Father when He was **equal** with the Father! And yet that is what Jesus did when He came to earth!

Jesus did not **cease** to be God when He came to earth, but He chose to **limit** the independent exercise of His attributes and lived **dependent** on His Father. When challenged by Satan to turn **stones into bread**, Jesus certainly **could have done that** but did not. Instead, angels came and ministered unto Him (Mt 4:11).

We already saw Jesus’ dependence on the Father in His “nothingness” statements. Another way Jesus showed His dependence on the Father was in His **praying** to the Father. If there was any “**man**” who didn’t need to pray, it would have been Jesus! Instead, He demonstrated His dependence on the Father by praying and serves as an example to us and how **we** should pray.

--He prayed **daily**. **Mt 6:11** “Give us this day our daily bread.”

Do we depend on God for our **daily** needs—or just the **big** ones?

--He prayed **early**. **Mk 1:35** “And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.”

Is seeking God the **priority** of our day—or is it something we allow to get crowded out?

--He prayed before making **big decisions**. The night before He chose the 12 disciples, He spent all night in prayer. **Luke 6:12** "And it came to pass in those days, that He went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God."

Do we lay our plans before God and want Him to show us the **decision to make & the path to take**?

--He prayed **during trials**. **Mt 26:39** "...O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt."

Do difficulties and trials **draw us to God**—or do we **turn away** from Him?

Lastly, C. Humility seen in submission to the Father

That's a sermon in itself, isn't it? Of all the things that demonstrate humility in the life of Jesus, His **submission** to the will of the Father is to me the **pinnacle** of them all. We just noticed the submission of Jesus in Mt 26:39—"nevertheless not as I will, but as thou wilt." In Lk 22:42 it says, "nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done." Dozens of other verses we can look at; here are just a few.

--Remember what the 12-yr old Jesus said to Mary & Joseph when they found Him in the temple after being left behind in Jerusalem? **Lk 2:49b** "...wist ye not [know ye not] that I must be **about my Father's business**?" **John 8:29** "And He that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; **for I do always** those things **that please Him**."

Hebrews 10:7 "Then said I, Lo, I come (in the volume of the book it is written of me,) **to do thy will**, O God."

I don't know that we can truly grasp the **depth** of Jesus' submission to the will of the Father.

--He went **where** the Father wanted Him to go...and **when** the Father wanted Him to go there.

--He **did** what the Father wanted Him to do—all the time, **every time**—the **way** the Father wanted it done. --He **said** what the Father wanted Him to say—nothing more and nothing less—without fail!

Probably the best way to somewhat grasp the submission of Jesus to the will of the Father is to consider what happens when a person enlists in the military, especially at Basic Training. You basically become "will-less" during that time. In other words, your will—your desires—become irrelevant—and the will of the Drill Sergeant is what must be followed!

--The DS decides what you **wear**...and what you **eat**...and when you **sleep**.

--The DS decides what you **do**...and **when** you do it...and **how** you do it.

--The DS decides what you **say**...and **when** you say it...and even **how** you say it.

The will of the Soldier, then, is "given up" to the will of the Drill Sergeant. Jesus gave up **His** will to the **will of the Father** even more thoroughly than that! Jesus' motive was different, too! Jesus gave up His will because He **wanted** to—not because He **had to**!

What about us? We sing "let my will be lost in Thine," but do we **mean** it? Is that really the desire of our heart? Oh, how different our world would be if Christians purposed in their heart to seek—and do—God's will in every area of their lives! What if every child of God started their day with, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?"

So what does God want us to do in light of what we have heard from His Word today?

1. Are you humble—or proud? Here's one very simple way to find out: What are you trusting in to get to heaven? If you are trusting in **you**...your baptism...your church...your good works...you are proud! You are telling God you don't need Him and His way to be forgiven because you think your way is better!

2. Second—for those that are children of God—what about you? You **started** humble—are you still striving to be humble? Are you **dependent** on God and seek to do what God wants you to do—or do you seek first **your** kingdom; your plans...your pleasure...your priorities...your promotion?