

HEART HUMILITY

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Sermon in a sentence: "... humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time" (1 Pet. 5:6).

Scriptures: 1 Peter 5:1-11; Philippians 2:1-11

1 Peter 5:1-11 (NASB) Therefore, I exhort the elders among you, as your fellow elder and witness of the sufferings of Christ, and a partaker also of the glory that is to be revealed, 2 shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; 3 nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. 4 And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to your elders; and all of you, *clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.* 6 *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,* 7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you. 8 Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. 9 But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world. 10 After you have suffered for a little while, the God of all grace, who called you to His eternal glory in Christ, will Himself perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you. 11 To Him be dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Philippians 2:1-11 (NASB) Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, 2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. 3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind **regard one another as more important than yourselves**; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, **He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.** 9 **For this reason also, God highly exalted Him**, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, 11 and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Humility: A modest or low view of one's own importance. Webster: "Having or expressing a sense of inferiority, dependence, or unworthiness; meek... Lowly in feeling or manner; submissive; deferential."

Without a doubt, God has a marvelous and phenomenal plan for each and every one of us, His children. He created us. He loves us. He died for us. He saved us.

As He works *with* us and works *on* us, He's trying to achieve a grand objective, but it's usually a very long time before we *see* what it is or *know* what it is He's doing. However, He definitely has a plan.

When His work is completed, and His glory is being revealed *in* us and *through* us, it would be very easy for our humanity and our flesh to get in the way. We could actually start thinking more highly of ourselves than we ought to think, or even begin to think that somehow we contributed to our own success. The Lord doesn't want this to happen.

The ways in which God chooses to perfect His plans are usually very strange to us and we often deem the things He does unnecessary. *His* way is usually much harder than we think it needs to be and demands much more sacrifice than we think is warranted. Therefore, we often choose to do things *our* own way instead of *His* way.

Questions come up in our minds about the way God conducts His business.

- **Why pray when He already knows what we need?**
- **Why fast when we know He has the power to answer every prayer instantaneously?**
- **Why witness to everybody when He could just send us to the ones He knows will receive the Good News?**
- **Why return a tenth of our income to Him when He already owns the whole world?**
- **Why did He debase Himself to become a human being?**
- **Why couldn't He just speak the word and save us all if He wanted to? Why did He have to die?**
- **If He *had* to die, why the torture of crucifixion?**
- **Etc., etc., etc.**

Questioning God’s reasoning and decisions and going our own way quickly leads us down the path of pride. In our hearts we say: “I know better than God.” “If I was doing this, I would do it another way.” “Why would God even care if I skip a few steps along the way? It’s OK as long as I make it to the finish line isn’t it?” “I have a brain too.”

On the other hand, there are the times you *are* doing what God wants you to do and others make it their business to oppose you. This brings on feelings of frustration, anger, hostility and even revenge.

All the while, the Lord is trying to forge and form our character into the image of His own character.

Day by day, we come to crucial decision points, where we can choose to go left or right – toward the path of pride, or toward the path of humility.

Pride is a one-way street. It only leads to destruction. (Prov. 16:18)

Humility is also a one-way street. It leads to exaltation by God. (1 Pet. 5:6)

Exaltation without humility is a spiritual death trap.

Back to our first definition: humility is having “a modest or low view of one’s own importance”.

Phil. 2:3ff Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; 4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a

bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 **Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.** 9 For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name.

From our heart, we have to believe that God knows what He's doing and that if He's taking us down a very rough path, it must be the very best way for us to go. He is re-making us in His own image, after His own likeness, for His own divine purposes.

We must follow gladly, with 'heart humility'.

When you have a few minutes, read Leviticus, chapters 8, 9 & 10. Mark all the times you read: "just as the Lord commanded Moses" or similar words (15 times). Mark all the times you read that Moses also gave commandments (12 times). Rules, rules, rules. Orders, orders, orders. A little more than half of the occurrences were commands of God, and a little under half came from the man of God.

God was extremely specific about the way He wanted His priests and Levites to look and act. In chapter 10, we read about a couple of Aaron's sons who decided it was all just too much, and chose to ignore some of the rules and do things their own way. In fact, it seems they only broke one rule. One little rule. One small inconsequential rule.

The incense oil in their holders had to be lit, so they lit them. A fire is a fire, right? As long as the incense is lit, who cares how it's lit? Apparently God cared a whole lot and struck them dead for their disobedience.

Let's do what's right and pleasing to God. Let's obey with a willing heart. Let's kill pride and give life to humility.

The Lord definitely desires to exalt His people in this world. But He can only exalt the humble.

But, you may say, humility and exaltation are at opposite ends of the spectrum. Why would, (or should), exaltation be of any interest to me whatsoever? Simply because *God* wants to exalt us by doing His divine work through us.

*** To “exalt” is to “raise or elevate in rank, position, dignity ... to praise highly; glorify, extol....” (Collins English Dictionary) ***

*** **We are exalted when God is able to act in us and through us without interference.** ***

This is the reward of the humble and with “heart humility” we need to allow God to work in us and through us.