

Humility - discourse

Open #229, Oh, To Be Nothing

Consider, if you will, were I to ask for a show of hands concerning your humility: one showing for **great** humility, one for **average** humility, one for **little** humility. Think for a minute what your response would be. We certainly would not want to admit to having very little humility, after all, the Scriptures are adamant that we be humble. How about average humility? Should we not also be more humble than the ones we work with? Than our neighbors? Than worldly people? Should we not, then, as prospective members of the body of Christ admit to great humility? But if we do so, does that show pride? And negate the humility that we do have? Is this an uncomfortable topic to consider? Then all the more reason to explore it.

During the time we have, we hope to develop a greater working definition of humility so that we, like Moses, can admit to having great (or at least greater than average) humility. Actually, the Scripture, according to King James and Revised Standard said that Moses was meek: *(Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth.) (Numbers 12:3 KJV)* and we will also explore the similarities and differences between these two terms which are at times used interchangeably. The NIV and the New American Standard do use the word “humble” in this Scripture instead of the word meek.

To develop a greater working definition, we must expand from a basic definition. Sometimes in daily conversation, humility, and especially meekness, carry somewhat negative connotations, the idea of attributes not to be desired in the workplace or in interpersonal relationships. If you are approaching a client to sell something, or going to a meeting to present something, you don't want to appear humble and meek, do you? You want to appear self-assured, confident, bold! But are these necessarily contradictory? Let us see.

The dictionary definition of humble or humility is lack of pride. Also the lack of vanity or self-importance; or modesty, unpretentiousness. Scripturally it is associated with being teachable.

The dictionary definition of meekness is, submissive; patient, unresentful, **free from self-will.**

But what about being self-assured, confident, or bold? If the Scriptures tell you to be humble and meek, how could we possibly be confident or bold? Aren't these contradictory terms? How do we harmonize Colossians 3:12 KJV: *Put on therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering;* and Hebrews 4:16 KJV: *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.* Shall we, as some do, throw out one or the other of these Scriptures? Let us look at two other Scriptures to see if they may bring a harmonization to these thoughts: The first Scripture is Jesus' words - and they show the very epitome of humility: *(John 5:30 KJV) 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.* Add to these the boldest of words from our brother Paul: *(Philippians 4:13 KJV) I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.*

Of mine own self I can do nothing - BUT - I CAN do all things through Christ! That is the key. What kind of confidence, what kind of boldness can we have in our own flesh? *(1 Corinthians 1:27-29 KJV) But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; {28} And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: WHY? {29} That no flesh should glory in his presence.* We are weak. We are ineffectual. We are fallen. Paul tells us *(Romans 7:18 KJV) For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.* If Jesus, the perfect man, Jesus, said that of HIS own self he could do nothing, why do we fallen creatures think that WE can do anything of our own?

How miserable! How depressing - - to know that no matter how hard we try we can never do anything right. How discouraging! We might as well just quit right now and enjoy what is left of our little miserable lifetimes. - - BUT WAIT! - - What was the other thing we heard? I CAN DO ALL THINGS THROUGH CHRIST WHICH STRENGTHENETH ME! ALL THINGS! You mean I will be like a super-hero? I can lift buildings and stop freight trains? Dear Brethren, don't think so - - - small! The Scriptures tell us: *(Matthew 17:20 KJV) And Jesus said unto them,. . . : for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you.* Can YOU move a mountain? Look outside at the magnificent Rockies - Which of those mountains can YOU move? Or maybe He was just talking about the

mountains in Israel - Can you move Mt. Sinai? Or Mt. Horan? Was Jesus lying? - or exaggerating? - or maybe just speaking in a parable again?

Did Jesus move any mountains? - - - Think about that a minute - did Jesus move any mountains? Either literal mountains or figurative mountains? OK, Did Jesus move any literal mountains? As the Logos, He not only moved them, He MADE them! - along with the rest of the universe - - - Talk about POWER! How about figurative mountains? In Scripture, mountains, as you know, are kingdoms. Did Jesus as a man move any kingdoms? Perhaps the better question would be, is there any kingdom which was NOT moved by Jesus, in some way? And what kingdom is Jesus NOW moving - or REMOVING? Satan's Kingdom! THE Christ, head and body WILL MOVE SATAN'S KINGDOM! To what location? The lake of fire. Annihilation, oblivion, non-existence! Never to be revived. But by what power can we do this? Only if we are of the body of Christ! I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.

Humility, Meekness, Confidence, Boldness - yes we can have them all!

Most of us have little problem with confidence and boldness - even though it is often misplaced, we have confidence and boldness in our own flesh, our own abilities. But most of us do have problems with humility and meekness. We forget who we really are. Our dear Br. Larry Davis has reminded us that ALL beings except our heavenly Father are **created** beings. If created, we are a product of the creator - his property to do with as he chooses. If we have been blessed with temporal goods, or health, or wisdom, or physical beauty, can we take the credit? *For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what hast thou that thou didst not receive? now if thou didst receive it, why dost thou glory, as if thou hadst not received it?* (1 Corinthians 4:7 KJV) If we are blessed with poverty, or poor health, a feeble mind, a lack of physical beauty, should we complain? (1 Peter 4:12-13 KJV) *Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you: {13} But **rejoice**, inasmuch as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that, when his glory shall be revealed, ye may be glad also with exceeding joy.*

Is humility mandatory? Think about that - - Is humility mandatory? Before we can answer, we must consider about whom are we speaking and what time frame. Is humility mandatory for the world of mankind right now? If so, they are in real trouble! No, of course not. Will humility be mandatory during the Millennium? Or let us say by the end of the Millennium? What do you think? Would you think "yes"? I would say, "no". First, true humility cannot be mandated, second, consider the individual's result of pride

when fully atoned with the father - what will that individual's fate be during the "little season"?

Then what about those prospective members of Christ's body - now? Again, true humility cannot be mandated, and for those who choose to be less humble they may lose their invitation, and chance losing their life.

Let us consider now an aspect we have not before discussed - the aspect of self-will - but more than just self-will, the concept of control. Let us define self-will as the desire, control as the result of that desire. We have many desires of self will - lots of I want's and I wish's; it is the attaining or attempt to attain these self-willed desires which lead to control - control of situations, control of resources, control of environment, control over people.

If you think about it, we really have very limited control over our lives - most of what we think we control is really an illusion of control. For example: Do you have control over your money? Well, after paying the rent, the groceries, the utilities, the taxes, the insurance, then yes, you have a few dollars left. But you can eat whatever you want - as long as it's in your diet. You can wear what you want - but there is a dress code at work. This great "land of the free" has put us in a box. Then we put ourselves in a smaller box by the choices we make.

And do we have control over things in our lives - or do they have control over us? Anyone who owns a house knows the answer to this - there is always the lawn to cut, painting to be done, etc. Let us look at another example: We decide to purchase a TV. Well there is really not much to watch on TV, so we get a VCR to go with it - after all, look at all the Bible Student material that is available on VCR tapes. But it's Friday night, I feel like kicking back and just relaxing - maybe I will rent a movie. Do you see where this leads? The potential is there to spend consecrated money on an item which will further take away from consecrated time no matter how self-will has justified it. Now if we do use this to watch Bible Student material, and maybe share it with others for this same purpose as a witness, then we are in control of the object instead of it being in control of us.

Time. Do you have control of time, or does time have control of you? Honestly, both. As with other resources, there is a set amount of time available, and much is previously mortgaged. Sleep takes, or should take, 1/3 of our time. If we don't get enough sleep we get sleep deprivation. Time for meals, time for work, time for daily activities. This is where time controls us - (except as we can redeem back the time). But how do we

control the time over which we do have control? I would here like to bring in another concept: active vs. passive control. In active control, one plans and schedules the time; in passive control, no schedule is made, or if made, not adhered to, and the time just passes away - but you are still in control of it.

But what does this all have to do with humility? Very simply, Who is in control? Can we in all humility do as we covenanted to do in our consecration vow and give control to our Heavenly Father? Or does our pride and self-will take it back, or partially take it back. I get the mental image of a yo-yo. If I have a yo-yo and I want you to keep it safe for me, do I give you to entire yo-yo, or do I keep hold of the string?

If I give my Heavenly Father control over my life, do I still want to hold the string? What does that say about humility, what does this say about trust? What does this say about my belief that my Father will do only what is good for me?

Have you ever seen a rat in a maze? From your vantage point above the maze you can see the start and the finish, and how the rat should go. Have you, yourself, been in a maze? It is a very different perspective, isn't it? But our Heavenly Father, from his vantage point can see the end from the beginning! And we want to take control!

During our class study of this subject of humility, we discussed several examples in the Scriptures of certain individuals who exemplified great humility, from the notable like Moses to the almost obscure. I would like briefly to share a few examples with you:

Moses: One of our prime examples in the Scriptures: Raised in the palace of the Pharaoh for 40 years, in exile as a shepherd for the next 40 years - THEN asked to do God's work.

Joseph: His father's favorite (sure made his brothers jealous, didn't it?), sold into slavery, raised to a position of authority, falsely accused and sent to prison many years, again elevated to the second highest authority in the land - but he never forgot his family. This reminds me of what Paul said: *(Philippians 4:12 KJV) I know both how to be abased, and I know how to abound: every where and in all things I am instructed both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need.*

The other Joseph - step-father of Jesus: engaged to a girl who he finds to be pregnant, accepts that she really is pregnant through the Holy Spirit and does not divorce her, accepts his dreams as leadings of the Lord to flee to Egypt.

Ruth: After her husband (and also her sister-in-law's husband) had died, decided to leave the country of her birth to follow her mother-in-law, not knowing the people, the customs, or anything. Her sister-in-law chose to stay. This reminds me of what the Apostles said when asked if they also would leave Jesus - *(John 6:67-68 KJV) Then said Jesus unto the twelve, Will ye also go away? {68} Then Simon Peter answered him, Lord, to whom shall we go? thou hast the words of eternal life.* It is also the attitude, and may picture, the church and great company classes.

(1 Peter 5:6 KJV) Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

The question before us now is, HOW do we humble ourselves? The simplest answer is: Humble yourself **IN** prayer to humble yourself **THROUGH** prayer. We are to come boldly to the throne of grace. But in no way does that mean irreverently! God is not our servant to supply our desires, God is not our errand boy to bring us niceties at our command. Do we sometimes forget who we are, and to whom we are speaking? A personal study of the "Lord's Prayer" is helpful. We come to our Heavenly Father, the creator of all, with heads and hearts bowed. I recently saw a bumper sticker which referred to prayer as "knee-mail". *(Psalms 95:6 KJV) O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the LORD our maker.* We are to come humbly before the Lord in prayer to request more humility. - and then **live** the answer to that prayer because we truly believe it will happen. Is the creator and sustainer of the universe too weak to make a change within us?

In conclusion, Humility is an attitude of heart. This attitude of humility can well be expressed in the simple words of our Pastor:

My Morning Resolve

My Earliest thought I desire shall be:

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord [for grace to help]. I will pay my vows unto the most high." -- Psalm 116:12-14

Remembering the Divine call, "Gather My saints together unto me; those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice" (Psalm 50:5), I resolve that by the Lord's assisting grace I will today, as a saint of God, fulfill my vows, continuing the work of sacrificing the flesh and its interests, that I may attain unto the heavenly inheritance in joint-heirship with my Redeemer.

I will strive to be simple and sincere toward all.

I will seek not to please and honor self, but the Lord.

I will be careful to honor the Lord with my lips, that my words may be unctuous and blessed to all.

I will seek to be faithful to the Lord, the Truth, the brethren and all with whom I have to do, not only in great matters, but also in the little things of life.

Trusting myself to Divine care and the Providential overruling of all my interests for my highest welfare, I will seek not only to be pure in heart, but to repel all anxiety, all discontent, all discouragement.

I will neither murmur nor repine at what the Lord's providence may permit, because "Faith can firmly trust Him, come what may."