

Awed by Jesus' Humility

February 24, 2019

Last week in our current series, Living in Awe of Jesus, we focused on *Living in Awe of Jesus' Power*. And we discovered that Jesus demonstrated his power and control over various diseases, Satan and his demons, nature and even death (by raising at least 3 people from the grave). People were awed by His power and as a result it gave legitimacy to His teaching. And as I mentioned last week, the purpose of these miracles wasn't to just make people's lives easier or more comfortable, but to bring and to demonstrate the power of the Kingdom of God come down to earth. Jesus was showing what it looks like when God is in charge of the world and totally in charge of people's lives. Jesus showed us what it looks like when someone entirely submits themselves to the will and power of God in their lives.

And so with that backdrop, it might, at first glance, seem a bit strange to follow that sermon up with a sermon on *Living in Awe of Jesus' Humility*. In our culture and pretty much in any culture in any time period, people of power we don't often equate them with being people of great humility. Because, most often we see people who are humble as people who are a bit weak, and giving in to the opinions and power of others. We would much more likely equate people of power as people who take charge and don't let anything get in their way, whereas people characterized by humility work in the background and are typically not the people in charge or have much power.

Therefore, Power and Humility almost seem like an oxymoron or opposites. And yet what I hope to demonstrate this morning is that's a false perception and a large reason we have so many problems in our society and in our lives. I will present this morning that real power, God honoring power, can only flow out of a life of humility.

But before I begin talking about humility I want to start with it's opposite, which is pride. We see pride rear it's ugly head in the very beginning of the Bible when Satan first appears. We know from elsewhere in Scripture that Satan's fall from heaven and God's favor was because he got puffed up and full of pride and wanted God's place of power and control. When that failed he shows up right after the account of creation and uses pride to tempt Eve. He convinces her that God's been lying to her and Adam and holding back something that they could achieve if they merely ate of the forbidden fruit. Satan created this gnawing desire of discontent to have more, to be more – in essence to achieve God status. And Satan's been sowing those same seeds of discontent in each and every one of us ever sense. And all through the Bible we see the result of man acting out that desire for more. More power, more influence, more success, better health and wealth etc. etc. Never content with what we have – always wanting and feeling entitled to more.

The late great theologian, John Stott once said, "Pride is your greatest enemy, humility is your greatest friend."

C.S. Lewis called pride, "the great sin" and said "Pride leads to every other vice; it is the complete anti-God state of mind."

Pride can be summarized as an attitude of self-sufficiency, self-importance, and self-exaltation in relation to God. Towards others, pride is an attitude of contempt and indifference.

And the truth is that most of us struggle to recognize pride in ourselves. It's often easy to spot pride in others, but we fool ourselves into thinking we're not prideful, when in actuality we likely have areas of pride that can easily control our lives.

Jesus told a parable about pride in **Luke 18:9-14**.

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: (what's that – pride)

“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’

“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’

“I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

The Pharisee spent his time in prayer bragging about his achievements. He didn't really even need God. He was pretty righteous, at least in his own estimation, through his own efforts. He was successful, by man's standards, and self-sufficient.

The tax collector realized how deeply he needed God's help. And that's the key, realizing you're a sinner, that you can't achieve the life God's called you to live and throwing yourself at God asking for His help. Jesus summarizes the parable with a well established principle talked about several times through the Bible. God brings down the prideful and elevates the humble.

We see this principle in operation in the life of Jesus.

Paul writes in **Philippians 2:3-11**

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

Selfish-ambition or vain conceit is pride. In contrast to that he instructs us to choose an attitude of humility and then points to Jesus as our ultimate example of humility. If anyone was ever entitled to hang on to what they had it would have been Jesus who created the world and each of us. But it says that Jesus willingly gave that all up. And not only did Jesus choose to give up his position of ultimate power in heaven, but he gave it all up and came to earth, not as a king but as a baby born to two pretty unknown parents and in a small town in a manger. And eventually he chose to give his life up in the most humiliating death, death on a cross, which by its very essence would strip everyone of any sense of pride or dignity as you were beaten, tortured and hung naked on a cross for everyone to see. He willingly gave that up because He first and always submitted His will to that of His Father in Heaven. The end result was the same as the summary of the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. That God exalted humble Jesus to the highest place possible – back to heaven and ruling over all.

Paul's challenge in this powerful text is that we ought to take the same approach to living our life. We ought to also submit our entire selves to the control of our Heavenly Father.

Listen to several other passages that point out how Jesus submitted himself to His Father.

John 5:19 (NIV) *Jesus gave them this answer: “Very truly I tell you, the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.*

John 5:30 (NIV) *By myself I can do nothing; I judge only as I hear, and my judgment is just, for I seek not to please myself but him who sent me.*

John 5:41 (NIV) *"I do not accept glory from human beings, (meaning Jesus didn't seek nor desire man's approval. That's a pretty big deal because at some level, most of us seek other people's approval. And because we do it dictates that we live our lives in such a way that we get others approval.*

John 8:28-29 (NIV) *So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him."* (whose approval do you live for?)

John 8:54 (NIV) *Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me.*

I could refer to many other Scriptures but I think you get the point. Jesus totally submitted his will to that of the Father in Heaven. He wanted to only do what the Father's will was. And if you take that approach to life, then it's actually very freeing. You don't have to wonder every moment if I say this or do this how are others going to react or what are they going to think of me. You are free to do whatever your Heavenly Father tells you to do. With that understanding, Jesus was the most humble man who ever lived, but he was far from weak, which we often associate with people who are humble. Jesus was strong and wasn't afraid to call sin sin and to cast the money changers out of the temple and to call the religious leaders of the time, "a brood of vipers" and "white-washed tombs". If Jesus was concerned and motivated by others' opinion of him he wouldn't have healed on the Sabbath, he would have hung around with the influential and wealthy people, instead of tax collectors and sinners. He wouldn't have reached out and touched the unclean, such as lepers and the Samaritan woman at the well. He would have lived his life quite differently if he was seeking the approval of others and trying to be a success from worldly standards.

That's why in reality, humble people are some of the most powerful people on the planet, because their power and influence is governed and given by God and not by man. Truly humble people, who have fully submitted their lives to God aren't afraid to point out sin in other people's lives in love, because they are more concerned about the direction of people's lives then just playing it safe and holding on to friendships. Their hearts are burdened more for people's salvation then for their friendship, and that's a powerful thing.

Jesus described himself as humble in heart as he invited others to come to him to find rest for their souls.

Matthew 11:28-30 (NIV) *"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*

Perhaps one of the greatest examples of humility was when Jesus took a towel and basin and washed the disciples feet in the Upper Room.

John 13:3-5 (NIV) *Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.*

One of the keys to this act of humility is the very first sentence. For that first sentence explains that Jesus knew that God was in charge of his life, had given Jesus control of the situation and that He knew where his identity came from (*come from God*) and Jesus knew his destiny (*He was returning to God*). If Jesus had struggled with His identity or destiny then it would have been difficult to wash these disciples feet. But when you know your identity and your destiny then it frees you and empowers you to do extraordinary acts of humility and love.

Conclusion:

So, how do you go about having this same attitude of humility as Jesus did and live out of that full submission to the Father?

- You need to ask God to reveal any areas of pride that currently exist in your heart.
- You need to ask the Holy Spirit to transform your heart to desire to be fully submitted to God's will.
- You need to examine the motives for why you do things. Are they done to gain other's approval or live out of God's love and approval of you that you already have? Remember, you are already a greatly loved child of God who has been blessed by God to live out His calling upon your life.

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Pride: *an attitude of self-_____, self-_____, and self-_____ in relation to God.*

Towards others, pride is *an attitude of _____ and _____*

Parable of the Pharisee and tax collector (Luke 18:9-14)

- Those who exalt themselves will be _____
- Those who humble themselves will be _____

How do we see the humility of Jesus in Philippians 2:3-11?

Who did Jesus submit his will to always?
How is submitting your will to God freeing?

Jesus demonstrated his humility by washing the disciples feet.
According to John 13:3, what empowered Jesus to do this?

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Application:

- You need to ask God to reveal _____
- You need to ask the Holy Spirit to _____
- You need to examine the _____ for why you do things.
Whose _____ are you seeking?

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