

A Godly Flock

by Anton Bosch

The sermon emphasizes the necessity of humility in believers' relationships with God and each other, particularly in acknowledging and supporting church leaders.

Scripture: Romans 12:3, Ephesians 6:19, 1 Thessalonians 5:12, Hebrews 13:7-24, James 4:6

Topics: "Church Leadership", "Humility"

Description

Anton Bosch emphasizes the importance of humility in the life of a believer, as it is a core attribute of a godly man or woman. Without humility, one cannot have a proper relationship with God, as He gives grace to the humble but resists the proud. Believers are encouraged to acknowledge, esteem, honor, trust, obey, remember, salute, and pray for their leaders, showing respect and support in various ways. The key to harmonious relationships within the church lies in the state of the heart, where both leaders and followers must cultivate humility and submission to one another's roles and gifts.

Transcript

One of the core attributes of a godly man or woman is humility. Without the reality of humility in the life of the believer he cannot have a proper relationship with God, as He "resists the proud but gives grace to the humble." (James 4:6, 1Peter 5:5). The first of the Beatitudes pronounces the poor of spirit to be blessed - it all begins here, since without a deep awareness of our poverty we have little need for God. Without humility we will always be in rebellion to God's dealings in our lives and thus will be resisting His will for us.

Without humility in our dealings we will constantly be at loggerheads with one another. Therefore each of us is "not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith." (Romans 12:3). If each believer in a group was to have a realistic view of himself there would never be any striving for position and selfish ambition. But it is when we think more of ourselves than we ought that we are brought into conflict with one another.

The Attitude of Believers Towards Leaders

Acknowledge them. 1Thessalonians 5:12, 1Corinthians 16:18. It seems strange that there should be need to remind folk that leaders must be acknowledged, yet from this we may deduce that leadership in the New Testament was so servile, that it may have been easy for believers to take them for granted. This should never be.

Esteem them. 1Thessalonians 5:13 Esteem will follow if the follower's heart is right and the leader is living a dedicated, holy and sacrificial life. This mitigates against despising those who humble themselves to wash our feet, but should also not be confused with the kind of preacher worship one sees in some circles.

Honor them. 1Thessalonians 5:17, 1Corinthians 9:7b. In this context honor refers to giving financially or materially - the laborer is worthy of his hire. However, it does not stop there - ministering brothers have many other needs as well. Believers are to minister to them in their emotional, spiritual and physical needs in addition to caring for them financially.

Trust them. 1Timothy 5:19 Sometimes folks are quick to believe the worst of evil reports and accusations against leaders. Paul implies that unless the case against them is proven, leaders are to be trusted.

Obeys them. Hebrews 13:17, 1Peter 5:5, 1Corinthians 16:15-16. We have dealt with this in some detail above.

Remember them. Hebrews 13:7 This text speaks to the potential of taking workers for granted, such as part of the furniture. Keep them in mind, feel for them and think about them.

Salute them. Hebrews 13:24 Again, it would seem superfluous to tell Christians to greet their leaders and yet it is easy for Christians to look right over those brothers who humbly serve them. At the very least, leaders should be warmly and lovingly greeted.

Pray for them. Hebrews 13:18, 1Thessalonians 5:25, 2Thessalonians 3:1 Leaders need prayer more than the average believer can realize. They face temptations, attacks, discouragements and hurts far more than others. The church should constantly intercede for them - not that they should be spared the difficulties because that is part of the territory - but that they should not be deterred and distracted from fulfilling their heavenly calling. (Ephesians 6:19).

The Practical

It is evident that the heart of the issue is not so much about structure but the state of the heart. This is required of leaders and followers alike. Without the right attitude the relationships proposed above could never be legislated into being.

It must also be born in mind that leadership and roles change depending on what function is in operation. So an elder would need to submit to a sister who serves tea by accepting the tea from her hand without complaint. Should there be someone who serves by playing a musical instrument to accompany the singing, chaos would ensue if the elder did not submit to the tune and tempo set by the musician - even though he is an elder. Each member must submit to the ministrations of every other member when that other member is serving. But at the same time the musician cannot use his position to control, dominate or manipulate the meeting.

In order for these dynamics to work, it is imperative that each member understands the limitations and the potential of his particular gift. He then needs to ensure that he functions in direct proportion to that gift. Should he extend himself beyond his gift, he is not only operating in the flesh, but he will also encroach upon the rights and responsibilities of others. No one has all the gifts and no one has supreme authority. Each needs the input of the others and must be in submission to every other member. Unfortunately, this all too often remains in the realm of theory and speculation. The challenge is not in understanding these principles, but in translating them into life.

This article is taken from Anton's book Building Blocks of the Church. P89ff. The book can be ordered at www.antonbosch.org/books

(To Be Continued)

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