

# God Exalts the Lowly

by Erlo Stegen

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*To experience God's power and work in our lives, we must become humble and recognize our own insignificance, just like Bethlehem, the birthplace of Jesus.*

**Duration:** 45:52

**Scripture:** Micah 5:2, Matthew 20:26-27, Matthew 23:12, Luke 9:48, Luke 14:11, Luke 18:13-14

**Topics:** "Lowly"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker shares a story about a gathering of ministers, magistrates, and high-ranking officials in a luxurious setting. One person, who is referred to as 'He,' asks the Lord how to bless these people. The Lord instructs him to serve tea and coffee to everyone, which he does without complaint. Despite being the least important person there, he is asked to pray and bless the food. The speaker then connects this story to the concept of Christmas and emphasizes the importance of humility and being the least in order to allow God to work through us.

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## Transcript

We read from Micah chapter 5, the second verse. But you, Bethlehem, Ephrata, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times. We'll end reading there.

In this book of Micah, they say there is no other verse as important as this verse, which declares the coming of the Messiah. And it starts like this, but you, Bethlehem, Ephrata, though you are small among the clans of Judah. Let's end there.

Firstly, it says, you, Bethlehem. Now, if we would translate that, it would mean, house of bread. And, Ephrata, Ephrata meant abundance or wealth, and that was the region in which Bethlehem was situated.

It was a very fertile region, and that is why Bethlehem was known as the house of bread. And it was fitting that Jesus should be born in a house of bread, him being the living bread. But let's continue from there.

You, Bethlehem, Ephrata, though you are small among the clans of Judah. There was probably no other village in Judah like Bethlehem. It was a very small village.

And another one says that it was the smallest amongst a thousand villages in Judah. Now, that is something very significant. Now, this Bethlehem, which was such a small village, the smallest among the

clans of Judah.

Small and insignificant. But today, there is no village as important, as exalted, and as significant as Bethlehem. For what reason? Because our Lord was born there.

That is where he was born, and where his origin was. And so God had determined and ordained, in that small, insignificant village, he should be born, who would be the bread of life for all nations. And I would be happy if that would stir us in our hearts.

That village, Bethlehem, the smallest amongst the clans of Judah, insignificant. It wasn't even considered a village or a town. But that is where our salvation, where light, where that bread of life came from.

Now, we would like to be a blessing to people. We would like others to find Jesus through us. You would like others to live because of you.

Or to receive life through you. That would only happen if you become the least of everyone. That is a great spiritual lesson.

The one who thinks himself great, and who considers himself to be someone, must realize that is of Satan. That is how Satan will get into your life, and he'll get you out of God's way. God doesn't work through a great person, or through a great place.

But he starts there, where it is small. I don't know whether you've ever come to the realization that you're small. Now, a person can bear a grudge and get irritated and angry and upset.

Why? Because that person isn't small in his own eyes. Paul says of himself, I, the least of all the apostles. Now, humanly speaking, I don't know of anyone else whom God worked through as much as Paul.

Until today, the whole world is blessed and helped through him, and through the letters and books that he wrote, many of them which have been taken up in the Bible. Why? Because he was greater than anyone else? No, because he was the least. When you pray, pray and say, Oh God, make me to be small, to be the least, so that he that is the bread of life might be made manifest through me.

The Bible says, he who is exalted in the eyes of people, that one is despised in the eyes of God. That one who is exalted in the eyes of men is despised by God. Very often in the Bible we find that rivers are symbolical of the Holy Spirit, where it even speaks of rivers of living water that will flow from the innermost being.

I've never seen a river flowing uphill. No, water will always seek the lowest place. You will never find the Holy Spirit there where it is exalted.

And I would say, the greatest sin of all sins is the sin of pride. And that sin very easily infiltrates into people. And there where there are high places, without fault or without mistake, you will find sin there, without exception.

Jesus said, whenever you go to a banquet or a feast or a wedding, don't go and look for the front seats, no, go and look for the seats that are the furthest to the back. Until the master of the banquet then comes and says, friend, don't sit there at the back in that insignificant seat, come to the front. And Jesus said, he who humbles himself will be exalted, but he who uplifts himself, that one will be humbled.

Because you will go and look for that very good position, and you go and sit in the front of the banquet where important people sit, and then the owner of the banquet, the master of the banquet will come and say, friend, would you mind vacating that seat, going somewhere else, because there's somebody else that needs to sit where you are sitting at the moment, and then you are embarrassed and humiliated in front of everyone. The Bible says pride goes before a fall. Those two things go hand in hand, they're inseparable, you'll always, when you've got pride, a fall will go together with it.

Jesus says, he who humbles himself, that one will be uplifted. You my friends, oh God, I want you to work through me, make me something in this world. You just playing the fool, it's not God that will work through you, it's Satan himself.

Jesus said, learn of me, I am meek, and lowly in heart. If we haven't yet learned that lesson, then we haven't learned anything at all. To humble yourself.

We learned it from Jesus. And if you are humble, you will never fall. But if you uplift yourself, the sun won't set before you having sinned and fallen.

For that way in which you find yourself leads to destruction, it's an abomination to God, if you want to be great in the eyes of men. The Lord Jesus said, the greatest should become the least of all. The first, the last.

And the one who is the least, that one will become great. Jesus said, learn of me, and he got up and he wrapped around himself a towel and he did the work of a slave, going about washing the feet of his disciples. The Lord Jesus said, learn of me, and he did the work of a slave, going about washing the feet of his disciples.

There is no task as lowly as that, and as looked down upon as that, where a person washes the feet. Especially if that person has got athlete's foot, and there is some toe jam in between the toes, because the person hasn't been washing his feet properly, and all that athlete's foot starts, the fungus starts to grow. And nobody wants to do that job, washing the feet of someone else.

But Jesus said, learn of me, I am lowly in heart, and not in some pharisaical way, indeed he was lowly in heart. Even amongst the Lord Jesus' disciples, there were two young men, and there was their mother as well, and she came and she said, Lord, I would like my two sons to sit on either side of you in heaven, one on the left, and one on the right. Oh, we love to be great, we love to be exalted and lifted up, but let me tell you, you will die without having been blessed.

Where are many of the preachers, the mighty preachers of the gospel today? Many of them have fallen into sin, sin with women, immorality, and things of that kind. Where did it all begin? Because of pride. And many of these preachers were orators, they could preach mighty sermons, and very eloquent.

And where those people started seeing themselves as someone who is better than others, and deserving of something, and that's how Satan comes into them. Uplifting yourself, pride is a terrible sin. When we were busy praying to God to send revival amongst us, that was the first sin that God showed to me, that sin of pride.

If you have pride in your life, even if God should send revival, and the Holy Spirit should come, He would flee from you, and you will even deny the fact that there is revival, because you've got no revival. And revival will run away from you. Because... Because of pride coming in, thinking that you are somebody,

thinking that you deserve something, and you count up all your qualifications, that you are now already so old, all your degrees, everything that qualifies you for something, not realizing that Satan has entered into your life.

And you number the things that you've accomplished and done, you say, well I've done this already, and I've done that, and you think that you're someone, whereas the Bible says, you're nothing. The Lord Jesus said, even though you have accomplished something, you should say, I'm an undeserving servant. That which is there, and which has been accomplished, was only done through God.

I am His undeserving servant. There's someone whom I know, who was invited to great conferences and meetings. To a great gathering.

There were ministers, magistrates, high up exalted officials, and they were gathered in a very posh place. And so he said, what should I do Lord, for these people to be blessed? And the Lord said, take a tray, and pour tea and coffee into some cups, and go and serve all of the dignitaries there. And he did that.

And he was like a servant to them, and he was the only one who did that. He didn't complain and say, well, why have I got to be the only one doing this, they leave all the work over to me, I've got to be like one now that wears an apron and is like a waiter here. And when they were together there, at the tables, and they were having this wonderful meal, the magistrate who had arranged that meeting, that gathering, The organiser got up and said, I'll ask someone now to pray for us, and to open and pray and to ask the Lord to bless the food.

And whom did he ask? That one who was the least of all of them going around and serving everybody there. Now someone might say, what has this got to do with Christmas? After all, we're celebrating Christmas at the moment. What kind of a Christmas sermon is this? But I don't see any Christmas better than this.

Where we read of Jesus born there in Bethlehem, the least of a thousand cities or villages in Judah. The least, the most insignificant, and that is where Jesus was born. And that, the least of all these villages or cities in Judah, that is where our salvation came from.

A person might say, well, how can I be treated like this? People don't take note of me, they don't greet me, they don't invite me. Realize, if that is your attitude, you're a child of Satan. Why am I given such a low down task? And Jesus said, he who is the greatest should become the least and the servant of all.

You expect Jesus to come down and to come to you, but you haven't yet become a Bethlehem. You're not a Bethlehem. You're not the least of all.

You expect Jesus to come to you, but you're not the least of all. A person doesn't want to be sent. Doesn't want to obey, doesn't like it if he's not noticed.

Realize, if that is what you are like, you're not on the way that leads to heaven, but that leads to another place. A child that grows up and doesn't want to listen to the parents anymore and to be told by the parents what to do. Why? That child now thinks he or she has something.

The devil has come in. Let me now mention the last point, because the time has gone. That Satan is Satan today, whereas he was Lucifer.

One of the archangels walking amongst flaming stones, it's because of pride that entered into him and then he became Satan. Most probably he was the greatest angel, but he turned into a devil because pride got into his life. Never forget that.

Never forget that. And you're of no use, you're just a tool in the devil's hand, if you aren't the smallest of all of them. I'm closing the scripture.

I'm closing the service now. I hope and I trust that that has been sufficient for you. And that that point has gone home and that you'll never ever allow that pride to come into you and realize if you're not the least, then you belong to Satan.

I'm closing the sermon now. And all these rights, it's all work of the devil. Children's rights and women's rights.

And where a wife will even back chat to her husband and even slap him. Well, if you do that, it's only because your husband is a good for nothing, otherwise he'd return you one that you'd fly through the air and never try to do it again. So let us learn from him, for he is lowly in heart.

And maybe you as the man, you say, well, I'm the man in the home. I'm the boss here. I'm not going to listen to anybody.

I'm not going to listen to a child. I'm not going to listen to my wife. Not realize that you've already become a tool in Satan's hands as well.

Well, you Bethlehem smallest amongst the clans of Judah, the smallest amongst the thousands of a thousand cities in Judah. But from you will come the savior of the world. When Paul speaks about himself, he says, I saw who became Paul, Paul meaning small.

And when he says, I'm not even fit to be called a servant of God or an apostle because I persecuted the church. I am the least of all. There's a man who heard about God's working.

That God spoke and that the Holy Spirit came down. And he said, Oh God, work, come down through your Holy spirit that I might speak in tongues before the church. And then when everybody's quiet that I translated as well, that I'll be something in the church.

And then the tongues did come down. And he spoke in tongues. When he wanted to stop, he couldn't.

Day and night, he couldn't even sleep anymore. All the time, his tongue was just going, speaking in tongues. If you'd meet with anybody, when he opened his mouth, you would speak in tongues.

Eventually the pagans, the heathen laughed at him. If you wanted to keep quiet, you had to take hold of his tongue. And the only way he could keep quiet is if he would physically take hold of his tongue.

And that would be the only way he could keep quiet. And if you'd let go of his tongue, he would continue speaking in tongues again. After three days, he cried out to God.

He said, Oh God, please forgive me. My motive for wanting that gift was because I wanted to be something. I wanted to be looked up to in the church, not that I would be the least.

I can give you so many examples, real examples, and even people that were amongst us, but that went off the way because of pride. And you too, if you are not the least of all, you will follow in their footsteps. You, my prince, oh God, come down, come and work in my life.

And he doesn't come. Why? Because you don't yet see yourself as the least of all. You don't see yourself as the greatest sinner.

You say, well, yes, I'm a sinner, but I'm not as bad as so and so. But the day that you see that you are the worst of sinners and the chief of sinners, that is when the Holy Spirit will come down and start working in your life. The Pharisees said, Lord, I thank you that I'm not as bad as that publican.

I'm not as bad as he is. But the tax collector there at the back in the temple didn't even raise his eyes up to heaven. He didn't feel worthy to do that.

He just beat upon his breast and he said, oh God, have mercy on me, a sinner. He was the least of all, not even counted amongst any. He said, Lord, I thank you that I'm not as bad as he is.

But the day that you see that you are the worst of sinners and the chief of sinners, that is when the Holy Spirit will come down and start working in your life. And he doesn't come. Why? Because you don't yet see yourself as the least of all.

You say, well, yes, I'm a sinner, but I'm not as bad as he is. But the day that you see that you are the worst of sinners and the chief of sinners, And so if you want God to work in your life, don't ask him for many things. Don't tell him to do this or that.

Just pray and say, Lord, teach me and help me to learn from you, to be lowly in heart, to be the least of all, the servant of all, and then God will work. Not even that you say, Lord, work through me that many will get converted. Forget about all of that.

Pray and say, Lord, make me to be the least, the smallest of all. When God created the heavens and the earth, he created it all out of nothing. And if you want God to work in and through you, then I ask the Lord to make you to be nothing.

Let's bow our heads and pray. Lord, work in an amazing and a wonderful way, in our hearts, that we might have lowly and contrite hearts. That each one will see himself as the least of all in the world.

That the bread of life might come forth and that people might be helped.

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