

The Way Up Is Down

by Roy Hession

The sermon emphasizes the biblical principle that true exaltation comes through humility and repentance, as exemplified by Jesus.

Duration: 49:17

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 23:12, Luke 14:7-11, Luke 15

Topics: "Humility"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses a parable from Luke's Gospel chapter 14 about a wedding feast. The parable illustrates the principle of humility and not seeking the highest position. The speaker emphasizes the importance of recognizing and repenting of our selfishness and sin. The parable also highlights the anticipation and excitement of the guests for the arrival of a guest of honor.

Transcript

I want to turn you to Luke's Gospel, chapter 14. In Luke's Gospel, chapter 14 and chapter 15, there are no less than six parables. We can call it the parable alley of the Bible.

And I want to look at the first of those parables, at verse 7. Luke 14, verse 7, And Jesus put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rulers, saying unto them, When thou bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room, lest a more honorable man than thou be bidden of him. And he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place, and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room.

Make that your first choice. That when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher. Then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meet with thee.

And then having given us the parable, he adds this all important principle. It is announced by him in no less than three places in the New Testament. And here is one place.

And it's added to show that that parable is an illustration of this great principle. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted. That's a great, invariable principle of life.

That he that exalteth himself shall be abased. Be quite certain of that. And he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.

Be quite certain of that. Just as surely as you and I exalt ourselves, we are going to be abased. We see this principle working out in this life.

We can certainly see it working out in history. In the history of our days, of world rulers who have exalted themselves, but they've all been abased. And it's not only in that scene.

Personally, in all sorts of ways, it does work out in life and God sees that it does. He that exalts himself shall be abased. And even if it doesn't seem to work out exactly like that in this life, it certainly will in the next life.

For there's coming a day, we read, when the loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men made low, and the Lord alone shall be exalted. But you don't need to wait for that day. If you choose, you can pre-empt that day.

And you can choose yourself, right now, to humble yourself. And that's a very lovely word, humbling ourselves. You know, it occurs no less than 16 times in the Old Testament.

And the Old Testament uses that phrase as another word for repentance. Indeed, I think I prefer it. Repentance always is humbling ourselves.

And there's some wonderful, touching references in the Old Testament. Wicked men, who exalted themselves against the Lord. But the day came when they humbled themselves.

Seest thou not, said God to Elijah, that Ahab humbleth himself? It is said of Manasseh, who is thought to be the wickedest man in the Bible. Wicked, wicked king, who resisted God, turned away his prophets, and went on in a terrible course of wickedness, and God put his hand upon him. The Babylonians came and took him captive, and he found himself rotting away in a Babylonian dungeon.

But we read, in the day of his distress, he humbled himself before the God of his fathers greatly. What does that mean? That's repentance. And you don't need to wait to that final day, when all men will have to bow.

You can pre-empt that day. You and I can humble ourselves. In other words, it means repentance.

Repentance. And repentance is simply saying and meaning it. Oh God, you're right, and I'm wrong.

And the other people, who are always saying what they did, they were right in their estimate, and I was wrong. I tell you, that's very hard to say sometimes. That's hard on pride, and that is why repentance is, in these places, described as humbling ourselves.

If my people, who are called by my name, shall humble themselves. Yes, that's the Old Testament expression for what repentance is. I'm sorry, it's not one of those words that slips off the tongue.

One of those simple conditions of salvation, repent and believe. I tell you, it always means losing your reputation. Even as it meant for Jesus, when he died for you, laying aside his.

And so, because it's so hard on pride, it is called humbling ourselves. Yes, everyone that exalts himself shall be abased, but thank God, if he chooses to, he can pre-empt that day. He needn't wait for that calamity, or some turn of circumstances, or show things up.

He needn't wait for that final day beyond the grave, he can do it now. But listen, the other side of the coin is equally true. Absolutely true.

Just as surely as you, God says, you're going to be exalted. Do you know that great verse, a revival verse, if ever there was one? In Isaiah 57, verse 15, Thus saith the high and lofty one, that inhabited eternity, I dwell in the high and holy place, with him that is of a humble and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the contrite. And just as surely as you know something about humbling yourself under the mighty hand of God, to confess and admit you're wrong, and God's right.

You're going to be exalted. Both sides are as certain as the other. It's certain that he that exalts himself shall be abased, but it's equally certain, thank God, that he who humbles himself is going to be exalted.

In order that the humbled and the contrite might have their chastened spirits revive. There's a revival text for you. And of course, the first one of whom this was true, was Jesus, being found in fashion as a man.

He humbled himself. Exactly the same expression. He didn't humble himself to confess his own sins, for he had none.

But he did humble himself to identify himself with yours, and confess your sins as his own. He took my sins and my sorrows. He made them his very own.

And he humbled himself. And if it wasn't low enough for him to humble himself unto death, he went even further, to a certain form of death, becoming obedient unto death even. The death of the cross.

There are various forms of death, you know. Death on the bed. Death on the field of battle.

Nothing disgraceful. Nothing hurtful to pride. Indeed, such men are sometimes regarded as national heroes.

But he didn't die that way. He humbled himself to die a form of death which was reserved only for criminals. But he wasn't a criminal.

He was willing to appear so. And he never disabused people. He said, no, look, fellas, do understand.

I'm not here for anything I've done. It's for others. He didn't say that.

He just let them think it. He was in the deepest sense possible, numbered with the transgressors. Wherefore? He refused to.

Wherefore? God hath highly exalted him. Not merely because he was a sovereign lord did God exalt him. He exalted him because first he humbled himself.

Even unto such a death for us. And so this great principle is seen to operate first of all in Jesus. And I want to tell you it's going to operate in you and in me.

And having announced this great principle, he would have us see that the parable, which immediately precedes it, is an illustration of this principle. The parable actually isn't given us with a clear consecutive

storyline as is mostly the case in parables. But it's not difficult to piece together a storyline in this parable.

And I want to do that with you tonight. It's a wedding feast, a very posh affair. There's a dais, a big table there, where the important people apparently are going to sit.

And right down the hall there's table after table with beautiful linen and sparkling silver loaded with many good things. At the moment they've got it all ready, but the guests haven't arrived. But lo and behold the door opens and here's number one, our Mr. Hopeful.

And he looks in, he says, he's thrilled, he's one of the invited ones, yes, that's alright. And he has to decide where he's going to sit. First come, he says, first served.

And the obvious place to sit, if you want a good view of who's coming, and that's one of the interesting things for him, is on the dais. And there's one special seat, rather more plush than any others, where he's going to be much more comfortable, from which stance he can get a beautiful view of all the guests as they come. And so getting there first, he sits down in the highest room.

We stop there for a moment to make our application. That is one of the best pictures of what sin really is, that I could think of. Sin is me sitting down in the highest room.

The central letter of that little word sin is I, putting myself in the centre, putting myself, if I can, in the first place. And this has been the general direction of all our lives since our earliest years. Frankly, friend, you've never thought of doing anything else.

Me, if I can, sitting down in the highest room, being the centre of things, being number one. No, I don't want to be number two. I want to be number one.

It's very interesting to note the names of churches over here. We hear about the second, the First Baptist Church, and so on. Do you often hear about the Second Baptist Church? Well, Dr. Barnhouse's church, to his honour, was called the Fourth Presbyterian Church.

No, if there's another church that's planted, it's given another name. It isn't content normally with the Second Baptist Church. And frankly, that's been the general direction of our lives.

And although we've been converted to God now, it hasn't necessarily changed that general direction. All that's happened is the sphere in which self operates has changed. It operated before in worldly affairs, in my job and in other situations in a world away from God.

Now I'm in another sphere, this Christian sphere, but the same principles operate there. The only change is the sphere in which it operates. And you know, the sphere of Christian service is riddled with self-seeking.

Normally, I find myself ministering more or less on my own with my wife all over the place. But once a year, a bunch of us as a whole team run a month-long conference in England. I need that time.

It's good for my soul. I'm amazed what I discover in my life when we're choosing who's going to speak, who's going to be the one to do this, that and the other. And I want to tell you, we wouldn't stay together a week but for the fact we're each learning to die.

Each learning to defer to what may be God's will, which means deferring to the other. Even so, I may appear to defer but there's sometimes a murmur in my heart, why am I not out front more? I've been known even to count the number of times in the month that I've spoken compared with the number of times the others have spoken. You know, I need that experience.

I'm given a chance to die, which I desperately need. Oh, yes, sitting down in the highest room. Standard procedure so often in our churches and in our church organisations and the cause of so much that grieves God and drives the revival that could have been ours away from our congregation.

Sitting down, each wanting to, in the highest room. And it's not only the general direction of our lives but it's the character of our individual sins. All our infringements of the divine law are due to the fact that I'm sitting down in the highest room.

Why shouldn't I not indulge provided I can do that without me getting found out or suffering too much trouble. At bottom, it's me sitting down in the highest room. And the wrongs we perpetrate against other people are all due to me being in that highest room.

I want something, something to my advantage, in position or perhaps in money in some other way. And I see the possibility of achieving that. And I don't care who else goes to the war.

I'm not going to be too much bothered whose rights I trample on. And you little know what battles you've given to other people as you pursued your sort of way sitting down in the highest room. You don't know very often what wrongs you've inflicted on others more matter in larger matters by this basic attitude.

And our reactions to other people are all due to the same reason. The reaction of resentment. Someone does something which hurts you.

But if a man's sitting down in the highest room he mustn't be hurt. Doesn't he know that's not right? Man, who are you anyway? If Jesus bore the cross why shouldn't you have one too? If his will was crossed by the Father what about yours being? Oh no, no. I'm in the highest room.

And while that's so you cannot but be an easy prey to bitterness and resentment and unforgiveness to the wrongs that have been done against you. You want to be. I want to be.

I speak of myself as much as anybody else. I do, as a matter of fact judge other people by myself. They say you mustn't do it.

It's a very good thing. And I know what you go through because I go through those same things. Jealousy.

Jealousy, you know, is the only sin that gives no pleasure. Right? And it's only because I'm in the highest room or want to be and somebody else has got there before me. Somebody else is being praised more than me.

Somebody else is being appreciated. You know, there's a funny thing about jealousy. You don't usually have any chance to choose.

The standard idea about sin and temptation is here's a temptation. Then there's a time lag. Will I or won't I? And then I decide.

When it comes to jealousy there doesn't seem to be a time lag. Someone says something good about another person and immediately you have a jealous reaction in your heart. But you see, I never had a chance.

No. You don't get a chance before but God says I'm going to give you a chance afterwards to repent. Oh, and I did it right the first time because it's such a humbling thing to have to repent afterwards.

But I'm learning to be willing to do it afterwards. If these things come almost involuntary not the end of the story. I can take this God-given action about it.

And then we're largely unconscious of doing this. You hardly realise it. In your affairs at home with husband, wife or children we don't realise how much we're doing it.

And we're quite unaware that in doing it we're doing anything wrong. Doesn't seem always to have a bad reaction to somebody else but on we do. And we don't see the heinous wrong of this basic attitude of sin and so.

Until the Holy Spirit really convicts us of it. And that's what this story gives us a picture of next. It gives us an amazing picture of what conviction of sin is.

Let's go back to our story. All the seats have filled up and they're all waiting in anticipation not only for the bride and bridegroom but it's whispered round there's a guest of honour coming. And his name is whispered round.

Oh, he says is he coming? That's fine. I've only seen him on television. I'm going to see him in real life.

And so our Mr Hopeful sitting up there and sure enough the host comes in leading by the hand one of the most noted citizens of that place. A man who's gained what honour he has by costly service for the community. Loved and honoured by everybody as a result.

And he's going to be the guest of honour. And he's being led up to the dais and our Mr Hopeful thrills. I'm really getting a wonderful sight of him.

That's fine. He's coming right up to me. And then he sees the host approach him and tap him on the shoulder and say give this man.

And the appalling thing breaks in upon him that in choosing for himself the highest room he's taken the very place that was reserved for this worthy guest of honour. What he had done until he heard those ominous words give this man. And we in blissfully taking the highest room for ourselves in situation after situation have taken the very place that God has appointed for his beloved son.

He intended that he should have the first place in every situation. The first place in every heart and in every home. And it's his not merely because he's the sovereign lord but because he's won the right to it by blood sweat toil and tears as we've seen.

And because God for that reason has highly exalted him and given him the highest place that heaven and earth afford. But you but me in habituality sitting down in the highest place have taken his place. I thought of this if we sang that great chorus worship majesty.

And we saw in that lovely chorus Jesus exalted. And man the truth is that in taking the highest place you've taken his place. Who in the world are you? You've not won the right to that first place by blood sweat toil and tears.

You haven't done anything much for anybody perhaps. He has. And you've taken his place.

And you know it is a word of conviction from the Holy Spirit when he comes and taps you on the shoulder points you to Jesus and says give this man place. Maybe you've had a bit of an argument on the telephone and you've put down the telephone and a little voice says give this man place. You were in the first place had it not been so you wouldn't have answered in the way that you did to that man.

And after situation after situation did we but hear it. And I can get death and loss I can. But he's saying it the Holy Spirit give this man place.

And I have got to see that sin is always taking his place. Now you may say well I don't see that. I'll agree with you.

I may well have had a wrong attitude to other people. It could conceivably be said that in this place and that place I took the other persons place. But I'm not taking the place of Jesus.

Why am I not a preacher? Am I not in the church? I wouldn't take his place. But Jesus says in as much as you did it to that other man you've done it to me. I cannot emphasize this too strongly.

This has been a tremendous help. There are things when I've had jealousy and other things I don't know how to repent of it. But God showed me.

It isn't a matter between you and that other person. In wanting to be thirsty for God to me. And basically it isn't a matter you've got to sit right between you and that other person.

It's something between you and Jesus. He insists on saying in as much as you did it to him or to her you have done it and have been doing it habitually with regard to me. It isn't really their place you've taken.

It's mine. You little tin-pot person. We worship his majesty and we even as believers all too often have been taking his place.

It's a tremendous conviction. It can break your heart. God's really getting down to things.

When you say against thee the only have I sinned and done this wickedness in thy sight. This wickedness in thy sight. Oh, so wonderful thing when you get to the place of calling it wickedness.

I remember years ago I was taking an evangelistic campaign in a British city. It was on quite a large scale. They had taken the town hall for the meetings and we'd come to the final meeting and I was upstairs in the bedroom having some time of final preparation for my message and my wife came in and she said you know the time's getting on Roy, we ought to be going.

And I was so tense about this message that I spoke sharply to her. Don't worry me. Don't worry me.

I must finish off. And we came down. I came down in a few minutes later and we drove off.

We got to the hall. I was jumpy. I was tense.

And there was no penitence about all that in my heart at all. And I got out of the car and I slammed the door behind me to go into the hall. And I caught my wife's hand, her fingers, in the door.

And there they were bruised, bleeding, and she was to play the piano in the hall that night. Well, of course, I said how sorry I was with an accident. Please, oh, darling, I'm so sorry, etc.

And someone else had to play and we went in. It was a very hard night's preaching, I can assure you. But I said, you know, things happen.

After all, that's only an accident, I never intended to do it. But a week later, I was in a pastor's conference, and I could see the sitting room in which the bunch of us were gathered. There wasn't a seat for everybody, I could see myself sitting on the floor.

And the pastor was speaking, and he said with great brokenness, how God had shown him a deep selfishness in his heart. His wife, he told us, had asked him for the money with which to buy a new pair of shoes. But he said, I can't, my dear, we can't afford it.

But he said, only a few days before I'd spent a lot of money on a motor mower for the lawn. Of course, that was my sphere of operations, must have a motor mower. And God had broken his heart.

And as he gave that testimony, I, so to speak, saw my wife's hand. She wasn't in this particular conference, but in my mind's eye, it went back to that incident of a week before. A hand there, bleeding fingers, and I saw that they were the hands of Jesus, that I had wounded.

Had I been right with God, had I got things straight with him, with regard to that tense, jumpy attitude, I wouldn't have slammed that door like that. And in as much as I did it to her, that hour, sitting on the floor, I saw I'd done it to Jesus. And you know, in front of my brothers, I wept like a child.

And just as soon as possible, I got to the telephone and I called my wife to tell her what God had shown me, how God had convicted me, and to beg her forgiveness as I had first begged the Lord's. Conviction. I think it's an amazing picture.

And dear ones, we need to see sin in that light if we're really going to get into liberty. You know, something of what grace can do in reviving our whole spiritual condition. But then conviction has to be followed by our willing repentance.

And here too we've got an astonishing illustration of what true repentance is. And you begin with shame to take the lowest room. What a sight.

Give this man place. All eyes are upon him. And with his face red, he has to stand up and with shame begin to take the lowest place.

There's one last seat. By the door, he who put himself in the highest place had then to begin with shame to take the lowest place. And I call that an apt illustration of what it means.

To repent means reversing that whole process by which you sat in the highest place. It means confessing to God, oh God, you're right, I'm wrong. And I want to tell you a man will do anything if he can to avoid doing that.

You really do lose your reputation. Especially in some cases where other people are involved. And the repentance is something that cannot be done as a quietness in the corner.

Of course if it's only against God, you don't need to go around to anybody else but so many of the things we're involved in. Others have got involved. And if you're going to be honest with God you might well have to share the same honest words with another.

And you have to say brother, I was wrong. And you begin with shame to take the lowest room. Your confession of course is first and foremost to the Lord Himself whose place you've taken and whom we have wronged before anybody else.

Years ago I went on a visit to East Africa where I had many friends. It was from them that the testimony of revival came to Britain and I was one of those who were helped. And a bunch of us went out to visit them and have a fellowship with them and see for ourselves how it was.

And in one particular station there was a little hut where they had the daily fellowship meeting for the brethren and the sisters too. And there was one woman, she was hardly literate but you know she used to come out with real pearls as she'd learnt to walk with Jesus. And she said I've had new light on jealousy.

She said when I'm jealous I want to be at the head of the line. But when I repent of jealousy I quite voluntarily go to the end of the line. You begin with shame.

To take the lowest room you agree with God. And that is hard on our pride. And that is why the Old Testament loves to use this word for repentance.

That's what it is, it is dungeon. He began with shame to take the lowest room. For they had to.

That's what the Israel of old had to do if they wanted to have their land healed. They had to humble themselves. They had to begin with shame to take the lowest room and agree with.

But the lowest room is the very place that Jesus took. It's in the lowest room that the old rugged cross was planted on which he died. And when you and I consent over whatever matter it is to take that lowest room, you always find Jesus there.

Somehow or other he contrives to be in two places at the same time. Here in the highest room and there waiting for you in the lowest room. And I want to tell you, humbling, painful as it may be, you have the amazing comfort of joy in finding Jesus there.

He says, this is the place I took for you. And you'll find after the first shock, it's quite comfortable down here. It's a shock.

And if you lose your reputation, you certainly gain Jesus. That's what Paul said. Yea, doubtless I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord.

He counted everything loss. He lost his reputation. He was dropped from polite society.

No longer asked here and asked there. But whereas he lost his reputation, he gained Jesus. And the man who gains Jesus is no loser.

And as a believer, this is a sort of thing that happens. Yes, in more than one occasion, perhaps it will happen, and perhaps more often than you thought it would, you've got the choice. Are you going to retain your reputation and keep your position intact and not let on that you're what you are? Or do you want Jesus afresh? Because somewhere along the line you slipped his hand.

How much do I want to find that hand again and It will have to be at the cost of our reputation. Not because it's salvation by works, but it's built in. If it's him I want, I've got to find him as the wrong one.

Me as the wrong one. Me as the sinner. He's the sinner's friend.

If you want to face friendship, you've got to take a sinner's place. And that can be of this order, humbly. But oh, you know, this is not the end of the story.

I come to the last part which is illustrated here. And I want to say this is the most important part. We haven't got to revival yet.

It's only in the last episode you have something that pictures revival, the whole revival of our spiritual lives. When all things come new again, it illustrates that part of the principle which is just as surely as you humble yourself, you're going to be exalted. Absolutely sure.

Humbling yourself and getting to the foot of the cross isn't the end of the story. Listen to what happened. When you're bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room.

That when he that bade thee come, if he may say unto thee, friend, go up. And we can incorporate that into our story with, I think, a little bit of permissible imagination. Let's imagine all eyes have seen that man taking the lowest room, including the guest of honour.

And he's followed with great concern and sympathy. That man going that long way back to the end to take the lowest room. And I like to think he very soon after follows him there.

The man of our story is sitting there with bowed head. He can't look up. He's ashamed of himself.

And he feels a little tap on his shoulder. Well, that's where he felt the tap before. And that first word with him, but now there's a second word going to be said to him.

Friend, go up higher. Who's he saying that to? Must be the fellow there. No? He sees who it is.

Me? Me? Me! Go up higher. But I've just committed this heinous thing of taking your place. I know, I know, says the guest of honour, but you'll find you've had an extra seat put up there next to mine.

I want you to come and sit there with me. Friend, go up higher. And that's what happens when I have been willing to take the lowest place in penitence.

Go up higher. Thus saith the high and lofty one, that in habit of eternity, I dwell in the high and holy place with him also, that is of a humbled and contrite spirit, to revive the spirit of the humbled and to revive the contrite one. And every time he would have you, having gone there, go up with him, to sit with him in the holy of holies.

Now, how can a sinner such as you have seen yourself to be, go and sit in the holy of holies, in that heavenly days with Jesus? Only by one way, by the blood of Jesus. Hebrews 10 says, Having therefore

brethren boldness to enter the holiest, how? By the blood of Jesus, which means it's sanctified and made available to flops and failures and people like ourselves. That's what the blood tells you.

It makes it yours. Do you know, friend, can you believe that because there's power and value in the blood of Jesus to God, you can walk into the holy of holies as if the place belongs to you, which it does. It's made yours, that place of utter proximity to God and Jesus.

By the blood it says so. Having therefore brethren boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus. You go down by repentance, but you come up by the blood.

And you must come up. He doesn't want you staying all penitent only. Having got to the foot of the cross, having taken that place, grace always exhorts you and gives you what you didn't deserve.

Oh, you may not be given number one place, you're not interested in that now, but oh, to be near Jesus, that's worth anything. And that's what's made available to you. Yes, we get in by the blood.

Did you know that's the way by which Jesus got in? He entered into the holy place. Not even he could go back there, apart from his blood. Because he'd taken the world's sins on his shoulders.

He'd identified them. He took my sins and my sorrows. He made them his very own.

How can such a one get into the holy place? He can, indeed. It says in Hebrews nine, he entered into that holy place not made with hands, by his own blood. And if the blood of Jesus was enough for Jesus, it's certainly enough for you.

For he carried more sins than you've ever carried. The most a man can carry are his own. He had the world's.

What can make him whole again? What can raise him from the dead? What can get him access? Nothing but the blood of Jesus, nothing but his own holy blood. And if it was enough for him, it's certainly enough for me. My dear friends, this is ever the blessed result of humbling yourself to take that lowest place again.

And he doesn't want you, I say again, to be staying down. Revival is not merely the saints being convicted of sin. Revival is not merely the saints who repenting of sin.

It's the saints having been convicted and having repented, lifted up. And made to rejoice again and have absolute unassailable fellowship with God again by the power of that blood, where the anger of God against human sin was finally and fully exhausted. I tell you, that's wonderful.

Oh, you say, look, everybody's weeping, everybody's getting right with God, they're all going to pay me. No, that's not revival. It's having gone there.

They emerge praising and rejoicing. They can't keep their joy in. And Jesus is precious to them in a way he's never been before perhaps.

I mean, he will be there, I say perhaps, because I don't know what your previous experiences may be. You may have had this experience way back, but it's all gone dim. Things have gone wrong.

It can gloriously be restored. I remember one of the early visits I paid to California. And I tell you, the early visits a man, an Englishman pays to the United States are very special.

His eyes pop in all directions. The pity is, when you keep coming, you lose something of a sense of surprise and wonder. Now, on this occasion I was with another brother, the two of us travelled up and down the West Coast.

And the thing that fascinated us were those oil wells. Now, I mean, you live with the things, at least over there they do. Don't mean a thing to us.

We hadn't ever seen one before. And we were so fascinated. That sort of long thing, it looked like a neck.

And at the end that looked like a head. And there it was, bowing and coming up. Bowing and coming up.

And as it bowed and came up, the black gold from beneath was brought to the surface. And, you know, I've got a whole selection of slides of those oil wells. Some of them down.

Some of them up. And, of course, two creatures together, we saw the meaning. Here was a man with a stiff neck.

But he's seen Jesus on the cross and he's bowing. But he doesn't stay down, he comes up, praising for the blood. Rejoicing again.

But then something else may happen. Down that stiff neck goes. And up he comes again.

Praising, washed, pens, made free again. And on one occasion we turned in a turning in the road and there was a whole field of these pumps. Masses of them, all bowing.

I said, Stanley, look, there's a revival in progress. But we noticed something that's interesting. I've got some lovely pictures of this.

And really, we aren't the only ones who saw that bowing head as a picture of the human form. On some of them they had actually painted eyes and whiskers just for fun. Anyway, what amused us all, impressed us once, we saw there was one pump that was standing up and it was stuck up.

The others were going down and up, but this one wasn't, it was just stuck up. And we looked at one another knowingly. We knew there were times when our necks were stiff, when we weren't willing to bow.

But then we saw others that were stuck down. They weren't coming up. And they were just as much out of action as the one that wouldn't come down.

It's not enough to learn to bow your stiff neck at Calgary, you must learn to come up. And by the power of the blood. And so we have this lovely picture.

Go up higher. You can now. Oh no, you may not be given all that special place of honour, but you're going to have the infinite joy of proximity to Jesus in the holy of holies.

You're glad to lose your reputation. He lost his for me. If I gain Christ, and be found in him, not having mine own righteousness which is of the law, but that which is credited to me from Calgary.

And much else, that whole list of beautiful gains, we get. I was singing that chorus at our conference, a few weeks ago. And I began to make a mistake.

I wasn't leading the meeting, I was just in the congregation. For some reason, I didn't sing, that's why I love him, but that's how I love him. I said, my, that's truer than I thought.

That's how you love him. By willing to bend your neck, and lose your reputation as well. And so here's our lovely picture.

Thank God for our angel. And this is a sweet one. Sitting down in the highest place, the person in charge of the cassettes came to me before the service and said, now what title shall we give to your message? And I said, I don't quite know how to express it, I know, put this down.

The way up is down. Or did I say the other way? The way down is up. It's both true.

I want to say we ought not to be living the up and down Christian life, but we ought to be living the down and up life. The down and up life. And be sure it comes up.

Be sure you see the blood. Before, be sure you get the blessed assurance again. Let us pray.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/22/SID22277.mp3>

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