

On Humility

by Thomas Reade

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility as a necessary condition for salvation, and encourages listeners to cultivate humility through a willingness to renounce their own pride and self-exaltation.

Scripture: Psalm 149:4, Proverbs 22:4, Isaiah 57:15, Micah 6:8, Matthew 23:12, Ephesians 4:2, Philippians 2:3, Colossians 3:12, James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5

Topics: "Christian Humility", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Thomas Reade preaches on the importance of humility, emphasizing that pride and vanity cannot coexist with true humility found at the foot of the cross where Jesus sacrificed Himself. He highlights that humility is a work of grace that leads to salvation, contrasting the proud, selfish nature of man with the humble, selfless character of a follower of Christ. Reade encourages believers to cultivate humility by seeking the Spirit's guidance, embracing reproof and suffering, and trusting in the promises of God for the humble souls who find rest and strength in Christ.

Transcript

66. ON HUMILITY

Pride and vanity cannot thrive at the foot of the cross. It is only when we remove from this holy ground, that they shoot out their pestiferous branches in awful luxuriance. True humility loves the sacred mount of Calvary, on which the lowly Savior bowed his head and died! There, repentance sheds the contrite tear. There, faith views with joy the great atonement. There, love glows with fervent desires to the Friend of sinners. Man is naturally a proud, selfish creature. Morality may teach him the badness of such a character, but can never produce in him any principle of renovation.

He tries indeed to appear humble and unselfish, but the monster Pride is easily seen through the thin veil of false humility, which is thrown over its frightful visage; while Self, like another Proteus, assumes a thousand forms to escape detection. It is only when the divine Spirit puts forth his new-creating power, through the instrumentality of the everlasting Gospel, that the proud selfish sinner becomes the lowly follower of the Lamb. He then learns to bear with cheerfulness the burden of a suffering brother, while, with all lowliness of mind, he esteems others better than himself.

Humility is, then, the work of grace. Without it, there can be no salvation; for God resists the proud, and sends the rich empty away. If angels in glory hide their faces with their wings, when standing before the

Lord of hosts; if glorified saints cast their crowns before the throne of their Redeemer; if the humblest believer is the greatest in the Gospel kingdom; what a heaven-born grace is humility! How beautiful is the exhortation of Peter; "Be clothed with humility." Oh that my soul may be arrayed in this lovely grace, the brightest ornament of the Christian character!

We talk of humility. But Oh! bleeding Lamb, what is the humility of a sinful creature, when compared with yours? You, who humbled yourself to behold the things that are in heaven and earth, did stoop in infinite condescension to leave the throne of your glory, to lay aside the robes of your majesty, to be made in the likeness of men, to become the son of a poor virgin, to be made of no reputation, to take upon yourself the form of a servant; and having thus humbled yourself, to become obedient unto death, even the death of the cross!

And why did you thus humble yourself with a humility surpassing all conception? It was, that your humility might atone for my pride; and, by this your infinite abasement, exalt a proud, rebellious, hell-deserving creature to a participation of your felicity, and to a place near your throne! Enter into yourself, Oh my soul, and earnestly entreat the quickening Spirit of your Lord to search and try you. Can you dare be proud, while viewing the deep humiliation of the Son of God?

Where would you have been, if Jesus had not died? And where will you be, if, through pride, you reject this great salvation? Are you willing to be nothing in your own estimation; yes, less than nothing in the sight of infinite perfection? Can you renounce your own fancied righteousness, as filthy rags? Do you throw yourself with absolute entireness upon the infinite mercies of a crucified Savior? Can you delight in the praise and prosperity of others, even when, through their superior luster, you are cast into the shade?

Do you feel no envious risings when others are made much of in your presence, and yourself studiously overlooked? Are there no workings of mortified pride within, when the conversation of others is anxiously listened to, and yours altogether disregarded? Is the glory of God the only object of your wishes? and the good of souls your only desire? Are you willing to be esteemed a fool for Christ's sake; and glad to lose the present good-will of your friends, so that you may win Christ, and be found in him?

If it be your heart-felt prayer to be delivered from pride, and, like your lowly Savior, to be clothed with humility; then your graces are the graces of the Spirit; your conversion is sound; your state is safe; and your eternal habitation shall be with the once abased, but now exalted Jesus. Cultivate, Oh my soul, this lovely grace of humility. Bless God sincerely for every occasion which tends to mortify your pride, and crucify your vain-glory. Do not be angry with those who slight you; who treat you with contempt and scorn.

Rather receive it as a "needs be;" as a corrosive to eat out your overweening love of self; as one of those things which form a touchstone to try your inward state, and which, through the power of the Spirit, shall be overruled for the advancement of your spiritual good. Be thankful for reproof, whether conveyed with the smoothness of Christian meekness, or the keenness of satirical asperity. Remember that God's people are a tried people; that all who will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution; that they who are not of the world, must expect the world's hatred.

Let no contempt or suffering be allowed to abate your fervor, or slacken your speed; since the trial of your faith is much more precious than of gold that perishes, though it be tried with fire; and shall before long be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ. What rich promises are made in the Gospel to humble souls! Jesus pronounced his first blessing on the poor in spirit. The Lord gives grace unto the humble. He fills the hungry with good things.

He condescends to dwell in the lowly heart. He beautifies the meek with salvation. The scriptures abound with beautiful descriptions of the privileges and blessings which are the portion of every humble believer in Jesus. All who are truly convinced of sin by the powerful application of the law to their consciences; all who are led to see their awful state by nature, and to feel their need of Jesus as their only Savior; all who are enabled by the Spirit of truth to apprehend Christ by faith in all his offices and covenant relations, are clothed with humility.

Weaned from self-righteous dependencies, they trust in Christ alone for pardon and acceptance; and find rest unto their souls. Receiving a new taste and a spiritual appetite, they live upon Christ by faith, and derive daily strength and comfort from him. The love of Christ constrains them to obedience; and the language of their heart is; "whom have we in heaven but you, and there is none upon earth we desire beside you." To these humble souls the promises belong. They are the very members of Christ's mystical body; and it is their Father's good pleasure to give them the kingdom.

The world frowns upon them, but God shines into their hearts. The carnal mind hates them, but Jesus loves them with an everlasting love. The devil sets himself in battle array against them; but the Holy Spirit lifts up a standard against him, and compasses them about as with a shield. Though weak in themselves, they are strong in the Lord; though unable of themselves to overcome the least temptation, they become, through Christ, even more than conquerors. Oh! Spirit of holiness, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy, open my blind eyes to see the wonders of your grace.

Quicken my dead soul to feel its sacred influence. Make me truly humble in heart, emptied of every self-exalting thought, which would oppose the freeness of your love. Mold my whole soul into the lowliness and meekness of Jesus. Preserve me from the subtle influence of pride and vain-glory. Keep me ever low in my own eyes. Root out every sinful, selfish principle; and give me a single eye which aims at nothing but your glory. Shed abroad your love in my heart; then will my understanding, will, and affections be light in the Lord, and each unite their powers in loving and obeying you.

Oh dear, anointed Jesus, All my hopes are fixed on thee; In your tender, sweet compassion, Cast a smile of love on me. Come in all your full salvation, Deign within my heart to dwell; Then, with all your ransomed people, Of unbounded love I'll tell. Fill my soul with heavenly graces, Gently falling from above; Meekness, patience, pure affection, Sweet humility and love. Come, Oh blest anointed Savior, To your earthly temple come; Until the hour of death remove me To my everlasting home.

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