

Humbling Oneself

by Zac Poonen

To become like Jesus, we must be willing to humble ourselves under God's mighty hand, accepting joyfully all circumstances, and trusting that God will exalt us at the proper time.

Scripture: Psalm 147:6, Proverbs 15:33, Proverbs 22:4, Isaiah 40:31, Isaiah 49:23, Matthew 5:5, Luke 14:11, Philippians 2:8, James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5

Topics: "Humility", "Spiritual Growth"

Description

Zac Poonen preaches on the importance of humility and being willing to humble ourselves under God's mighty hand, as God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Spiritual exaltation comes from humbling ourselves and accepting joyfully the circumstances God sends into our lives. Through the example of Henry Suso, we learn the power of being broken and humble like Jesus, even in the face of misunderstanding, false accusations, and public humiliation.

Transcript

A spiritual person will always be ready to humble himself. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. If we humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God, He will exalt us at the proper time (1Pet.5:5,6). To be exalted does not mean that we become great men in this world or in Christendom and get the honour of men. It refers to spiritual exaltation, where we are given spiritual authority to fulfil all the will of God in our life and ministry. But such exaltation depends on our humbling ourselves. To humble ourselves under God's mighty hand means to accept joyfully all the circumstances that God sends into our lives. We allow those circumstances to humble us, so that we become smaller and God becomes greater. When we become smaller in people's eyes, then they won't live in dependence on us, but on the Lord. Humbling ourselves involves apologizing to all whom we've wronged. As servants of the Lord, we are to be servants of all people and must be willing to go under all of them to bless them. When we make mistakes, we must be quick to acknowledge them and to apologize where necessary. The only one who never makes a mistake is God.

Henry Suso was a man of God who lived in Germany, a few hundred years ago. He was a saintly man and a bachelor. He prayed often that the Lord would make him broken and humble like Jesus Himself was. This was how God answered his prayer. One day Suso heard a knock at his door. When he opened the door, he saw a strange woman standing there with a baby in her arms. He had never seen her before. She was an evil woman who was wanting to get rid of her newborn baby and decided that the best man to

dump it on was Henry Suso. So she told him, in a voice loud enough for everyone in the street to hear, "Here is the fruit of your sin", and left the baby in Suso's arms and walked off. Suso was stunned. His reputation in the town had been shattered in a moment. He took the baby inside, knelt down and told the Lord, "Lord, you know I'm innocent. What must I do now?" The Lord replied, "Do what I did. Suffer for the sins of others". Suso accepted the word of the Lord and never justified himself before anyone. He brought up that child as his own. He was content that God knew the truth and he was willing for everyone else to misunderstand him. Many years later, the woman was convicted of her sin and came back to Suso's house and proclaimed to all the neighbours that Suso was innocent and that she had told a lie. But what had happened in the intervening years? Henry Suso's prayer had been answered. He had become broken and humble like his Master. God had been able to accomplish a work of sanctification in Suso's life, freeing him from man's opinion's so that God's opinion alone mattered to him thereafter.

Are we willing to pay such a price in order to become like Jesus? Or do we still seek the honour of men? God breaks us by allowing us to be misunderstood, misjudged, falsely accused and publicly humiliated. In all such circumstances, we must refuse to see the men who are harassing us. They may be our brothers or our enemies. It doesn't matter. Behind the hand of every Judas Iscariot, is our heavenly Father giving us a cup to drink. If we see the Father's hand in such situations, we'll drink the cup joyfully, however bitter and painful it may be. But if we see only Judas, then we'll take out our sword (as Peter did) and cut off people's ears (or their reputations) or whatever. When we are attacked or falsely accused, God wants us to humble ourselves under His mighty hand. It's easy to do that once we see that it is God's hand there, and not man's.

It is best to leave all matters with God. He knows what He is doing and He's got everything under His control. He's chiseling away at the rock to sculpture the likeness of Jesus in us. Some parts of the rock are very hard and He has to use false accusations and persecution to chisel out those parts. If we submit to His chiselling, we'll come forth in the end as Christlike men with spiritual authority. When Judas betrayed Jesus, Jesus could call him, "Friend", because He saw His Father's hand clearly. If we see the sovereignty of God in all our circumstances, it'll be easy to humble ourselves. And it'll be easy for God to exalt us at the proper time. God knows the right time to lift a pressure from our shoulders and to give us His authority. So let's wait for Him. No-one who waits for Him will ever be disappointed or put to shame (Isaiah 49:23). Let us follow in Jesus' footsteps. Let people say whatever evil they want to, about us. If we honour God, He will one day honour us. If we're serious about following the Lord, we will find that God takes us through many painful experiences. But His purpose in all of them will be to free us from the opinions of men and from the chains that tie us down to earth - so that we can "mount up with wings like eagles" (Isaiah 40:31). God will order our circumstances to so humble us before men, that we finally come to the place where we care only for His opinion. Then our spiritual authority will be really powerful. May it be so for all of us.

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