

Blessed are the Humble

Introduction:

As ironic, maybe even awkward, as it seemed to pastor Nate that Providence would have him assigned to teach "marriage" and "relationship" messages as a "single," so I feel about today's topic--humility.

I certainly concur with everyone who treats this subject that I don't preach it without a sense of unworthiness. So let's get this out the way..."I make no claim to be a humble person" though I pray and pursue Christ for it. As I mount the sacred desk I am reminded of the words of Charles Spurgeon...

"...every Christian... has a choice between being humble and being humbled."

The story is told ...

One of Spurgeon's students went into a pulpit with every expression of confidence but he had an extremely difficult time. He came down distressed, almost brokenhearted, and he went to Spurgeon about it. The words of Spurgeon to him were these, "If you had gone up as you came down, you would have come down as you went up."

I am well acquainted with being humbled. With such a topic today I have an even greater motivation to cast myself on the One who can even though often we can't. The Bible makes some potent and precious promises to "the humble" and I have both in mind as I approach this message:

The humble get **God's gaze** (as C.J. Mahaney noted in *Humility*)

Is. 66:2

"But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word."

The humble get **God's grace**

Jm 4:6; 1Pt 5:5

"God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble."

These NT verses reinforce something known and revealed in the book of Proverbs, and **I am banking on this truth during this sermon**. You should bank on them in your life as well. They make it clear that truly "blessed are the humble!"

The humble get God's grace.

In Proverbs and elsewhere in Scripture, God He has a special relationship with the humble, and the humble have a special relationship with him.

When you see a humble person, think not that they are humble of their own accord...they've received something...grace.

Humility is a virtue!

Luther - "...humility is the highest of all virtues ..."

MacArthur - "Humility is arguably the most essential, all-encompassing virtue of the Christian life.

As with any virtue, any godly behavior, the humble are what they are and do what they do because they have received something...."God's favor"--GRACE.

Proverbs 3:34

32 for the devious person is an abomination to the LORD, but the upright are in his confidence.

33 The LORD's curse is on the house of the wicked, but he blesses the dwelling of the righteous.

34 Toward the scorers he is scornful, but to the humble he gives favor.

35 The wise will inherit honor, but fools get disgrace.

The humble are often acquainted with unsavory circumstance but even this too can be a grace.

Ps 119:67 - Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word.

Ps 119:71 - It is good for me that I was afflicted, that I might learn your statutes.

The humble are cast in a favorable light,

They are called "the upright" (v. 32)

They are called "the righteous" (v. 33)

They are called "the humble" (v. 34)

They are called "the wise" (v. 35)

This is in contrast to...

"the devious person" (v. 32)

"the the wicked" (v.33)

"the scorers" (v.34)

"the fool" (v.35)

The humble enjoy a favorable status with God,

"friends of God" (in His confidence)

"God-blessed dwelling"

"favor from God"

In contrast to...
"an abomination to God"
"God-cursed house"
"scorned by God"

The humble will have a favorable outcome (v.35)

The humble "will inherit honor"
The contrast "will get disgraced"

The humble get God, Self, and Others right.

What does it mean to be humble?
How do we become humble
What is the essence of humility?

It is marked by a posture.

It is fueled by a perspective

It is most understood in contrast to its polar opposite.

The Posture of the Humble (in Proverbs)

- *"to be bowed down" "made low"*
- *those with diminished capacity, power and worth. (Not the in-crowd)*
- *the modest, restrained. (Can't "ball so hard!"; no floss; not extravagant)*
- *the poor and oppressed; economically distressed, needy, exploited*
- *lowly, lowly in spirit*

The humble are people of low estate, people of inadequate means, people who are vulnerable to exploitation, and they know it!

Spiritually there are No exceptions, physically there are few which is why Jesus said

it is easier to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich (sufficient) man to enter the kingdom of heaven.

They have come to see themselves based on this reality, and it has convinced them that their only hope is one who is exalted, one who is adequate and all-sufficient, one who does not exploit the lowly but blesses them.

The Perspective of the Humble

Humility begins with a certain perspective.

Stott says, "Christian humility begins as, 'lowliness of mind.' It has to do with how we think, both in relation to others...and in relation to God (see Phil 2:3,4; 1 Ptr. 5:5) (see Mic 6:5). The humble mind is neither closed nor

***uncritical, but it acknowledges its limitations (Ps 131), (see also Ps 139:6)...
apart from his self-disclosure we could never know him, and that the
foolishness of God is wiser than men (Cor. 1:25)... [His] judgments are
unsearchable and his ways inscrutable. (Rom 11:33)..."***

--Between Two Worlds

The Polar Opposite of the Humble--Pride

Pride - also known as "lifted up", "arrogance" and "haughty eyes"
Conveys the idea of being exalted, and lifted up. "

The root word for pride is used of God's majesty and Israel's glory.
Also refers to human pride.

Humility is the polar opposite of Pride.

- Pride comes from a root word that means "to be high" "to be raised up"
- Pride is pictured as a "raised eye" or "raised nose" or "raised head."

It is so human to be prideful that we don't recognize its pride.

It's the Adamic instinct to want Self in the most noticeable position.

Exaltation of Self

We inherited this from our parents Adam and Eve. We are into our selves.

ILLUST. When Ray Ortlund produced his commentary on Proverbs back in 2012 he referenced doing a search on self-esteem and got 14,879 hits. Well it isn't slowing up...I did the same search, it's just a little over 2 years later, and got 34,757 hits. Selfism is always "in style" among man.

Even more telling is that a breakdown revealed that over 7000 of the books fell under the "self esteem" category, over 22,000 fell under the "self-help" category. People believe and want to know how to help themselves.

Self- Exaltation (king of Babylon in Is 14:14)

The first temptation (Eve, you will be like God)

Exaggeration of Self Importance

ILLUST.
Shaq's recent interview:

On Googling himself: "I have Google Alerts, so every time my name comes up, I always see it."

On what happens when you die: "Hopefully, my wish is to have one of those big mausoleums, on the inside, it would be stadium seating, and as soon as you close the door, all my highlights would come on and the door locks, so you have to watch 20 minutes of who I was."

Self Saturation

- "The Selfie"
- "You tube" - You are the center of the universe
- Face book - Your face everywhere

Self-Promotion/ Acknowledgment.

Or it's just that internal tendency to want credit

Story of the Frog Who Opened His Mouth

In a certain pond on one of the farms in the East were two ducks and frog. Now these neighbors were the best of friends; all day long they used to play together. But as the hot summer days came, the pond began to dry up and soon there was such a little bit of water that they all realized that they would have to move. Now the ducks could easily fly to another place, but what about their friend the frog? Finally it was decided that they would put a stick in the bill of each duck, and then the frog would hang onto the stick with his mouth and they would fly him to another pond. And so they did.

As they were flying, a farmer out in his field looked up and saw them and said, "Well, isn't that a clever idea! I wonder who thought of it!"

The frog said, "I did ..."

Even our humility is infected with pride

As Matthew Henry so aptly put it,

"Pride is at the bottom of a great many errors and corruptions, and even of many evil practices, which have a great show and appearance of humility.

---Matthew Henry

Pride Kills!

- God detests it (6:17; 8:13)
- He will judge it (16:5)

Mahaney - "pride is our greatest enemy and humility is our greatest friend

Humility is NOT

- Seeing or speaking about yourself negatively.
- Seeing or speaking about yourself falsely.

Humility is It is seeing or speaking about yourself rightly, soberly, and wholistically.

Rm 12:3 - For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

The Humble Get God Right

Proverbs 15:33

The fear of the LORD is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor.

Proverbs 22:4

The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honor and life.

In Proverbs "the fear of the Lord" is foundational to wisdom.

He is to be revered (not self esteem)

He is to be worshiped (not reason, creatures, or self)

He is to be enjoyed (not exploitations)

He is to be heeded (not own our understanding)

The Humble Get Self Right

A right view of God will reveal that God is God, and you are NOT.

We are significant (Ps. 8) but sinful, and prone to selfishness **therefore...**

- you're special but not supreme.

- we deny ourselves and discipline ourselves

We are blessed but still dependent; majestic creatures but creatures none the less -- Created and not self-made (Ps 100) **therefore....**

- it's all of God and all of grace

We are insufficient but in process (Phil 3:12), therefore....

- we can be and will be wrong

- we must receive and not resist instruction and correction.

ILLUST. Mega Mind

Servants of God and servants of man

- we should come not to be served but to serve (Mt 20:28)

Graciously Sustained and not Self-Self sustained

- in him we live, move and have being (Acts 17).
- in whose life is you breath (Dan 5. Belshazzar).

You are good with money BUT it is He who graciously empowered and enabled (Dt 8:18)

You make wise decisions and have "street smarts" BUT He preserves (if it hadn't been for the Lord on our side (Ps 124:1)

Your life is good BUT it is a vapor (Ps 39:5)

I'm good with numbers, I'm organized, and my entrepreneurial skill are off the chain BUT (if The Lord wills I'll go do business).

I get my hair done, my eyes are pretty, I workout, I budget BUT - no one is righteous no not one!

The humble/lowly sees themselves in light of the true standard. not themselves as the standard.

If you're going to boast, boast that you know God by His grace.

The Humble Get Others Right

- The humble do not put self up on a pedestal or in priority
 - ex. ...Jesus gave his life a ransom
 - ex. consider others interest not just your own
- The humble do not put self first.
 - therefore...We "do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves."
- The humble do not put others down

The humble get God's good.

The honor, advantage, money, glory---everything the proud seeks and pursues God gives in his good time.

W/o sorrow and shame. (Madoff and Lance Armstrong)

The humble do not often look like they have it good in this life. They do not look as though they are blessed. They do look "poor in spirit" and sometimes "poor in pocket!"

The humble get the good of...

- **God as their strength - He protects and sustains the lowly.**

Proverbs 15:25

The LORD tears down the house of the proud but maintains the widow's boundaries.

- **God is their source - He is where the humble find their hope and stability.**

Proverbs 18:12

10 The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous man runs into it and is safe.

11 A rich man's wealth is his strong city, and like a high wall in his imagination.

12 Before destruction a man's heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor.

- **God trumps their circumstances - Better "a little" with Jesus than "much" without.**

Proverbs 16:18-19

18 Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.

19 It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud.

Preferring Jesus and His People (he humble)

Heb 11:24-26

24 By faith Moses, when he was grown up, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter,

25 choosing rather to be mistreated with the people of God than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin.

26 He considered the reproach of Christ greater wealth than the treasures of Egypt, for he was looking to the reward.

- **God is their satisfier**

Proverbs 11:2

When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom.

Pride brings disgrace humility brings honor (w/ God and men).

ILLUST. Floyd Mayweather gets booed

**ILLUST. Kanye West - Taylor Swift
Kanye West - Runaway**

Proverbs 29:23

One's pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor.

Pride always backfires with God and man but humility obtains what pride seeks.
Pride sees one self as worthy of an elevated position and acts on it only to be humiliated.

Luke 14:7-11 (Don't call shotgun. You may be put in the back,).

7 Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them,

8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him,

9 and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this person,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place.

10 But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you.

11 For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Sometimes it doesn't seem like God's people get it good in this life. Like Asaph in Ps 37 we need to trust that our Lord is faithful to lavish us with his good.

Quote:

"The tallest saints of God will often be those who walk in the deepest , despised or overlooked by man." --H. Bushell

Human insufficiency leads to trust in God's all-sufficiency

Human lack make's room for divine provision.

Human weakness makes room for divine strength.

Human inadequacy becomes a backdrop for divine adequacy.

The humble get glory.

Proverbs 22:4

The reward for humility and fear of the LORD is riches and honor and life.

Proverbs 15:33

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The Bible teaches that glory comes through a cross, not without one.

- *First the cross then the crown.*
- *First suffering then reigning*
- *First humble yourselves then "I will exalt you."*

Jesus models this in Phil 2

He humbled himself...therefore God exalted Him and gave him the name about every name.

Conclusion

"God is the God of the humble, the miserable, the afflicted, the oppressed, and those who are reduced to absolute nothing. His way is to exalt the humble, to feed the hungry, to give sight to the blind, to comfort the miserable and the afflicted, to justify sinners, to give life to the dead, and to save the desperate and the damned."

---Luther

Is 57:15

For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite.

The cross is the great leveler; not a single possession will advantage any human being before God, not brilliance, not clout, not money, not prestige, not achievement.

--Gordon Fee

Taken from *Humility: True Greatness* by C.J. Mahaney)

How to weaken pride and cultivate humility:

A list of suggestions

- 1. Always reflect on the wonders of the cross of Christ.***
- 2. As each day begin:
Begin your day by acknowledging your dependence on God and your need for God.***
- 3. Begin your day expressing gratefulness to God.***
- 4. Practice the spiritual disciplines--prayer, study of God's word, worship. Do this consistently each day and at the day's outset, if possible.***
- 5. Seize your commute time to memorize and meditate on Scripture.***
- 6. Cast your cares upon Him, for he cares for you.***
- 7. At the end of the day, transfer of the glory to God.***
- 8. Before going to sleep, receive this gift of sleep from God and acknowledge his purpose for sleep.***
- 9. Work hard, play hard, laugh! (I adapted and made a slight change)***
- 10. Identify evidences of grace in others.***
- 11. Encourage and serve others each and every day.***
- 12. Invite and pursue correction.***
- 13. Respond humbly to trials.***