

Lessons on Humility

Mark 9:30-41

August 4, 2013

Introduction

Humility is foreign to every human. It is foreign in our culture and all cultures. In every human heart, there is a relentless worship of self. Pride dominates all humans. Our American culture is obsessed with self-esteem. Our culture is all about glorifying self. We want to be recognized for everything we do and say. We want glory and accolades shower down around us. Today every school is about promoting self-esteem, and we are warned against bruising such self-esteem. Again, self-esteem is all about building up and glorifying self. Those with low self-esteem are bemoaning the fact that no one is paying them any attention.

Humility is essentially the bottom line of what it means to be a Christian. God looks for humble people.

Micah 6:8 *He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

James 4:6, 10 *But He gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

Humility is hard to learn. We cannot learn humility on our own. Once we learn humility, we cannot tell people that we are humble because we'd be revealing that we are proud of our own humility! Our Lord Jesus knows the struggles we have being humble. He teaches us through the disciples who had a hard time in grasping humility. He gives us an example and teaches us a lesson on humility.

I. Jesus' Example of Himself (30-32)

30 *Then they departed from there and passed through Galilee, and He did not want anyone to know it.*

- "departed there"—from Caesarea Philippi (or the region)
- Private lessons with disciples
- Public ministry is finished—in Galilee (again an indictment of judgment against the unbelieving Jews)
- Jesus is on His way to Jerusalem to the cross

31 *For He taught His disciples and said to them, "The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day."*

- He is again telling (and teaching) them of His upcoming death

Luke 9:44 *Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men.*

- He is about to be betrayed—be delivered up (NASB / KJV)
 - Betrayal—delivered up is a technical word
 - Means to turn over a guilty criminal for judgment
 - They treated Jesus as a guilty criminal to be put to death

32 *But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him.*

- The disciples had a hard time accepting it

- They were afraid
 - **Matthew 17:23**—They were sorrowful; grieved
- They could not comprehend a dying Messiah
- Dying Messiah was a stumbling block to them

1 Corinthians 1:23 *but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling block*

- They struggled with His rising part
 - Who could raise up Jesus who raises people from the dead?
- Jesus' death is THE model of humility
- It is His death that the disciples learned true humility

Mark 10:45 *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.*

II. Jesus' Teaching to Disciples (33-41)

33 *Then He came to Capernaum. And when He was in the house He asked them, "What was it you disputed among yourselves on the road?"* **34** *But they kept silent, for on the road they had disputed among themselves who would be the greatest.*

- They are in some house in Capernaum—no mention of whose house
- What were you talking about?

Luke 9:47 *And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart,*

- Jesus knew what was in their heart
- Note that thought and heart are singular—means that it was on all 12 disciples' mind
- Ugly discussion
 - Which disciple would be next in line for command under Jesus—who is first?
 - Self-glorification
 - What prompted this?

Mark 8:33 *But when He had turned around and looked at His disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, "Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men."*

- When Jesus calls Peter Satan—it seemed to have opened the door in their minds
- Peter was the leader of this group—very dominating personality
- they thought him discredited
- They kept silent
 - They were ashamed of their conduct
 - Nobody does this—especially openly
 - Very prideful
- They were not in unity
 - They were going against each other—battle to the top

1 Corinthians 3:3-4 *for you are still carnal. For where there are envy, strife, and divisions among you, are you not carnal and behaving like mere men? 4* *For when one says, "I am of Paul," and another, "I am of Apollos," are you not carnal?*

James 4:1 *Where do wars and fights come from among you? Do they not come from your desires for pleasure that war in your members?*

- We cannot impact the world with the gospel with this kind of disunity
- Competitive spirit = destruction of the church

35 *And He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all."*

- You want honor? You want to be first?
 - Humble yourselves, deny yourselves kill self
 - Become a servant
 - Pride is when you want everyone serving you
 - Humility is when you serve everyone

36 *Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, **37** "Whoever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me."*

- Disciples are still fixated on who is the greatest
- Little child—small enough for Jesus to pick up and hold him
- Receiving the little one
 - Jesus is talking about how we treat His children
 - How we treat believers—how we treat each other in church
 - You mistreat His children, then you mistreat Christ
 - Inseparable relationship to Christ **AND** to the Father **AND** to the Holy Spirit
- Foundational relationship in the church

1 Corinthians 6:17 *But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit with Him.*

- We are joined to Christ when we believe by faith
- This can never be severed
- We better be careful in how we treat one another
- Jesus commands us to love one another (**John 13:34**)
- Disciples learned that lesson well

1 Peter 4:8 *Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins.*

38 *Now John answered Him, saying, "Teacher, we saw someone who does not follow us casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow us."*

- John feels guilty
- They have been forbidding another person from doing ministry—a true ministry
- They forbid him because he was not part of their group

Confession: I struggle with this many times—they are not dotting the l's and crossing the t's in the way I want them to. To fight this...I have to place what Jesus says in my mind and heart—so I will not sin against Him.

39 *But Jesus said, "Do not forbid him, for no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me. **40** "For he who is not against us is on our side.*

- Jesus said that this man was a believer and was effective in doing His work
- Christ is being preached
- If they are for us, then they are doing His work as well

- Paul has this attitude

Philippians 1:15-18 *It is true that some preach Christ out of envy and rivalry, but others out of goodwill. 16 The latter do so in love, knowing that I am put here for the defense of the gospel. 17 The former preach Christ out of selfish ambition, not sincerely, supposing that they can stir up trouble for me while I am in chains. 18 But what does it matter? The important thing is that in every way, whether from false motives or true, Christ is preached. And because of this I rejoice. Yes, and I will continue to rejoice,*

- There is NO competition among believers

Note The foundational doctrines must not be jeopardized. If any of the foundational doctrines are off, then it is false teaching. If they stray from any of the foundational teaching, then we must expose every falsehood. We should never be tolerant of lies and falsity.

41 *For whoever gives you a cup of water to drink in My name, because you belong to Christ, assuredly, I say to you, he will by no means lose his reward.*

- Jesus promises that when we serve—humble ourselves, then we shall be rewarded
- Jesus is not talking about how we feel
 - If we say that we feel humble, then we are prideful
- Jesus is talking about kind, sacrificial giving

Philippians 2:1-4 *If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from His love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being likeminded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. 4 Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.*

- Don't think yourself better than others, but serve others
- Jesus is the supreme model that we follow

Philippians 2:5-9 *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, 7 but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! 9 Therefore God exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him the name that is above every name.*

James 4:6, 10 *But He gives us more grace. That is why Scripture says: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 10 Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will lift you up.*