

## The Humility of Jesus

Good morning everyone

I was thinking back recently to the time I became a Christian (almost 40 years ago now) it was a turbulent time in my life. I was troubled and searching for answers to the problems I had, without doubt my faith began when someone gave me a Bible. I started to read it for the first time but specifically the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke & John.

It was the defining moment in my journey of faith, reading those words of Jesus, because in those pages I **met the Man Jesus**.

As I read my Bible I realised this was no 'ordinary man' He spoke unfathomable wisdom, He taught penetrating truths that '*cut me to the heart*' but what He said in those pages also moved me to tears.

There is no doubt in my mind, as I look back on that time now, as I read on '*I confessed with my mouth and believed in my heart that Jesus was Lord*' (Romans 10:9) I was '**born again**' I had met **Jesus intimately** through the pages of the gospels and I was never going to be the same again.

The danger for us all however is, as we go on in our faith, as Christians, we easily can get 'sidelined' into all sorts of things, many of them, in of themselves 'good things'

It may be some particular truth from the Bible that we feel we need to become an expert on or a teaching or a belief we emphasise above everything else, like; 'end times' or 'spiritual warfare' or even whether 'a woman should cover her head in church when she prays' !

Or we may get caught up in all the 'busi - ness' of the Christian life, doing all sorts of 'good things' for others, social action, maybe our main focus is to stand against abortion or euthanasia or we believe feeding the poor should be a priority, as I said before in their context these are all worthy causes - but that's just it!

Our faith can easily become a 'cause of some sort' something to focus our attention on and by doing so we can move away from the source of it all, that is the person of Jesus Christ the One our faith is all about.

We have to remember our faith, above everything else is a relationship with Jesus (I have said it before) the most important thing is that we know Him intimately that He is part of everything we do and we include Him in every area of our life.

That is why we were created in the first place 'to know God and to love and glorify Him forever' and this relationship, this intimacy that God wants with us is evident throughout

the scriptures. It started at the very beginning in the Garden of Eden. God's relationship with Adam and Eve. They must have walked and talked together.

You see the same with Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, God had a familiarity and closeness with them, He saw them as 'friends' God even said of David even "he is a man after my own heart" ( Acts 13:22)

So over these next number of weeks I want to look at the life Jesus. I want us to try to see and learn more of the character of Jesus, what He was like as a man, His temperament, His character, anything that may help us to get to know him better.

Our ultimate goal wherever and whenever we can we can, should be that, we shape our own hearts and attitudes after the Lord Jesus Christ.

The first characteristic I want to look at this morning **is His Humility** and the life of Jesus gives such an important lesson about humility. It's so important because above all else I believe it should be the most essential attitude and distinctive feature of any Christian.

I do believe it goes further, our heart attitude and the possession of this humility reveals whether we are in the faith or not and if we really are submitted to God and others at all.

This truth is as well; God spends our lifetime teaching us humility. John Stott said; "pride is your greatest enemy but humility your greatest friend" I think in the very nature of Jesus, His humility is in complete contrast to Satan, whose chief characteristic is pride.

And God leaves no doubt about where he stands in the battle against pride;

*"The fear of the LORD is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate"* (Proverbs 8:13)

So this morning, just very briefly, I want to look at **4 aspects** we can learn from Jesus regarding humility.

Firstly **what can we learn from Jesus coming into our world as He did?**

The Apostle Paul puts it perfectly in Philippians 2:6-7

*"Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!"*

Did you ever ask yourself why Jesus came into our world in such humble circumstances? Born to humble parents, in such meagre surroundings, born in a stable as there was 'no room at the inn'.

For God to entrust His son to a ‘teenage girl’, to be brought up by a ‘tradesman’ who worked with his hands, His home to an insignificant place called Nazareth (the town they nicknamed ‘no – where’s – ville’!)

What a stark contrast to the ‘pomp and ceremony’ of our world of affluence and privilege when a ‘royal baby’ arrives, they have the best hospitals, the best doctors and midwives, the best care that can be provided, no expense is spared. Not so with Jesus.

His very arrival in to our world, the time, the place, the people God chose to care for Him, reveals the character of God - The God who ‘opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble’(James 4:6)

**Secondly the life of Jesus shows that humility is a choice. We often have to choose to take the ‘lower seat’**

Jesus knew who He was but he never used his Power or his authority in the wrong way, we are told that he could have sent for a ‘legion of angels’ to rescue Him from the cross (Matt 26:53)

Humility is not clinging to something that is ‘ours by right’ but rather it’s often deliberately choosing not to ‘take up our rights’ or to force our will upon others when we could to do so, but taking the lower place and considering others better than ourselves.

On my first trip to Japan I learnt the lesson of taking the ‘lower seat’ At the first meeting I went to, not knowing any better, I sat down in a particular seat near our host only to be told I needed to take a seat further down the table as my ‘positional status’ at the time didn’t warrant where I had sat!

They didn’t do it in a unkind way but I learnt the lesson and on my next trip a few years latter I made sure I took the lower seat far away from the chairman, only to be told this time, I could move up as my ‘rank’ had improved due to a recent promotion.

It reminded me what Jesus said

**Luke 14:7-14** “When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honour at the table, he told them this parable: <sup>8</sup>“When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not **take** the place of honour, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, **the** host who invited both of you will come and say to you ‘Give this person your **seat**.’ Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place.

But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be honoured in the presence of all the other guests. <sup>11</sup>For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled and those who humble themselves will be exalted”.

I came across this powerful quote by Charles Spurgeon, **“Every Christian has a choice between being humble or being humbled,”** – what he is saying is ‘ if we can’t or won’t do it God will’!!

### **Thirdly another lesson Jesus teaches us about humility is ‘He came to serve not to be served’**

Jesus took the form of a servant and humbled himself, even to the point of death. *“The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many”* (Mark 10:45)

Humility measures everything it does by whether it serves the good of other people. Am I feeding my own ego or am I feeding the faith of others? **Humility serves.**

Many things are often the opposite way around from the world in Gods kingdom, the ‘higher up you go’ the more of a servant you become.

It's was interesting and sobering to me that when I became an elder here a few years ago to learn that all that really had happened was; I had become a ‘higher servant’!

That is why the disciples found it difficult when Jesus washed their feet. “How can you, our Messiah do this they suggested”? He taught them a key lesson about servant hood and humility.

**CS Lewis said:** *“Humility is not thinking less of yourself its thinking of yourself less”.*

**Finally humility is all about grace – recognising God is the source of all things.**

*“What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?”* (1 Corinthians 4:7)

### **Humility Acknowledges God’s Providence**

*“Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit” — yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes.*

*Instead you ought to say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil. So whoever knows the right thing to do and fails to do it, for him it is sin.* (James 4:13–17)

**Jesus rested in the providence of God. He knew the Father would keep Him and sustain Him through everything He had to endure.**

John Piper said this; (and I will close with this) “Humility agrees and is glad that **God governs** the beating of our hearts and our safe arrival at every destination. If we get there, God got us there. And if we don’t get there, God willed that we not get there. Humility gets down under this sovereign providence and nestles there gladly”

Amen

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