



1 Corinthians 10:12: Some Thoughts on Humility

March 23, 2014

Text: 1 Cor 10:12

- As we've discovered over several weeks, some of the saints at Corinth struggled with some pretty serious pride, as implied by the Apostle Paul (1 Cor 1, 3:18-23, 4:6-8; 5:1-6, 8:1-2).
- I thought it would be good for us to examine again God's call and command for humility in His people.
- Just as idolatry is deceptive and easy to fall into, likewise, so is pride. Pride is sinful for the same reason as idolatry: it places something else above Christ. In a wonderful old book called Humility (1895), Andrew Murray wrote:

And so pride, or the loss of this humility, is the root of every sin and evil. It was when the now fallen angels began to look upon themselves with self-complacency that they were led to disobedience, and were cast down from the light of heaven into outer darkness. Even so it was, when the serpent breathed the poison of his pride, the desire to be as God, into the hearts of our first parents, that they too fell from their high estate into all the wretchedness in which man is now sunk. In heaven and earth, pride, self-exaltation, is the gate and the birth, and the curse, of hell.

And so the life of the saved ones, of the saints, must needs bear this stamp of deliverance from sin, and full restoration to their original state; their whole relation to God and man marked by an all pervading humility. Without this there can be no true abiding in God's presence, or experience of His favor and the power of His Spirit; without this no abiding faith, or love or joy or strength. Humility is the only soil in which the graces root; the lack of humility is the sufficient explanation of every defect and failure. Humility is not so much a grace or virtue along with others; it is the root of all, because it alone takes the right attitude before God, and allows Him as God to do all.

In the life of earnest Christians, of those who pursue and profess holiness, humility ought to be the chief mark of their uprightness.

1 Cor 10:12

1. Some of the Corinthians "thought they stood." What I mean is they felt **confident** and secure in their knowledge and subsequent actions.
2. Paul, after spending several chapters exposing that this is not so, issues this loving caution.
3. And what good advice it is for them and for us. So often when we think we are standing (doing well, in control, "I got this," etc), these are precisely the times when we are most vulnerable to **falling**.
4. Yet, the Christian is daily dependent upon Christ! There isn't a millisecond that goes by where we do not need His love, His mercy, His forgiveness, and His grace!
5. It is the daily outworking of the **Gospel** in us that should drive our humility! Who here can **save** themselves? ☺
6. So thinking "we stand" without due credit to Christ moves us towards a prideful perspective.
7. **The truth is, none of us can "stand" without our King; none of us can live without His say so; none of us can move without His blessing.**

8. The Scriptures are true and plain: *Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.* (Pro 16:18 ESV) And... *Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.* (Pro 8:13b ESV)

Humility and Christ

1. We need look no further for an example of **perfect** humility than our Savior Himself. Peter wrote:
 - a. *1Pe 2:20-25 ESV For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. (21) For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. (22) He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. (23) When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. (24) He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. (25) For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.* (emphasis mine)
 - b. Look at verse 23 again...this attitude is our example! Help Lord!
2. Allow me again to quote Brother Murray:

"Listen to the words in which our Lord speaks of His relation to the Father, and how unceasingly He uses the words not, and nothing, of Himself.

"The Son can do nothing of Himself" (John 5: 19).

"I can of My own self do nothing; My judgment is just, because I seek not My own will" (John 5:30).

"I receive not glory from men" (John 5: 41).

"I am come not to do My own will" (John 6:38).

"My teaching is not Mine" (John 7:16)

"I am not come of Myself" (John 7:28)

"I do nothing of Myself" (John 8:28)

"I have not come of Myself, but He sent Me" (John 8: 42).

"I seek not My own glory" (John 8:50)

"The words that I say, I speak not from Myself" (John 14: 10).

"The word which you hear is not Mine" (John 14: 24)

These words open to us the deepest roots of Christ's life and work. They tell us how it was that the Almighty God was able to work His mighty redemptive work through Him. They show what Christ counted the state of heart which became Him as the Son of the Father. They teach us what the essential nature and life is of that redemption which Christ accomplished and now communicates. It is this: He was nothing, that God might be all. He resigned Himself with His will and His powers entirely for the Father to work in Him. Of His own power, His own will, and His own glory, of His whole mission with all His works and His teaching, of all this He said, It is not I; I am nothing; I have given Myself to the Father to work; I am nothing, the Father is all." --Murray

3. Now of course, Christ is NOT nothing; He is God (John 1:1-3; 10:30; Heb 1:1-3)! But it is His humble heart in His **humanity** from which we MUST learn! Jesus, who...
 - a. *...though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, (7) but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of*

- men. (8) And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (9) Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, (10) so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, (11) and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Php 2:6-11 ESV)
- b. "It is in this state of mind, in this spirit and disposition, that the redemption of Christ has its virtue and efficacy. It is to bring us to this disposition that we are made partakers of Christ."
 - c. This is the true self-denial to which our Savior calls us, the acknowledgment that self has **nothing** good in it, except as an empty vessel which God must fill, and that its claim to be or do anything may not for a moment be allowed."
 - d. "It is in this, above and before everything, in which the conformity to Jesus consists, the being and doing nothing of ourselves, that God may be all." --Murray

Humility and Us

1. Looking again at our text in context, some Corinthians pridefully engaging in ungodly conduct and thinking it's ok, may I say that I am deeply challenged?!? How about you? ☺
2. How many of us have so often "thought we stood;" yet it is not we who stand, it is Christ in us. We've so often "took charge," yet we are in charge of **nothing**, for we can do nothing without Christ (John 15:5).
3. So, much of the **unforgiveness**, the arguments, the brokenness, and the bad decisions in so many lives are a result of "thinking we stood."
 - a. "I don't deserve this. I don't have to take this. Don't yall know who I am?" All statements rooted in pride. I've made them. How about you?
4. God declares that He resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. (James 4:6) How much of our difficulties are a result of thinking we are right? That we couldn't possibly be wrong? That we don't have to love and forgive?
5. How could our walk with the Lord improve if we **humbled** ourselves under His mighty hand?
 - a. *1Pe 5:6-7 ESV Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, (7) casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.*
6. The truth is, friends, we are all susceptible into thinking "I **stand**" bringing a "fall" into play.
 - a. "I understand this, they don't. I deserved this. I can do this. I'm humble, they are not!"
 - b. Better to say, "I stand ONLY by His grace and power. I understand ONLY by the mercy of God... and oh, that He might be merciful and continue to teach me! I'm prideful, and need the mercy of His cross daily!"
7. Humility can be a struggle when times are good AND when times are not so good.
 - a. One can result in thinking "I did better!"
 - b. One can result in thinking "I deserve better!"
8. And humility is notoriously hard for another to measure. Those around you can be a great accountability in this area, but can still be fooled! ☺
9. Here are some verses we'd do well to study:
 - a. *Php 2:1-5 ESV So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, (2) complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. (3) Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. (4) Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. (5) Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, (emphasis mine)*
 - b. And another quote:

“True humility comes when, in the light of God, we have seen ourselves to be nothing, have consented to part with and cast away self, to let God be all. The soul that has done this, and can say, So have I lost myself in finding You, no longer compares itself with others. It has given up forever every thought of self in God's presence; it meets its fellow-men as one who is nothing, and seeks nothing for itself; who is a servant of God, and for His sake a servant of all. A faithful servant may be wiser than the master, and yet retain the true spirit and posture of the servant. The humble man looks upon every, the feeblest and unworthiest, child of God, and honors him and prefers him in honor as the son of a King. The spirit of Him who washed the disciples' feet, makes it a joy to us to be indeed the least, to be servants one of another.”

One more quote from Andrew Murray as we close:

Brother, are you clothed with humility? Ask your daily life. Ask Jesus. Ask your friends. Ask the world. And begin to praise God that there is opened up to you in Jesus a heavenly humility of which you have hardly known, and through which a heavenly blessedness you possibly have never yet tasted can come in to you.

I have asked and found myself, again, a prideful sinner in need of constant grace.

Eph 2:4-9 ESV But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, (5) even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ--by grace you have been saved-- (6) and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, (7) so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. (8) For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, (9) not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

May we, as a body of believers, humble ourselves unto Christ, thanking Him for His daily mercy and grace, thanking Him daily for His forgiveness of our sins through His blood, and daily finding our sufficiency only in Him. Then, may we extend that love and grace to others in deep humility.

Amen.

Note: I highly recommend Humility by Andrew Murray. Given how old it is it is legally online for free: http://faculty.gordon.edu/hu/bi/ted_hildebrandt/spiritualformation/texts/murray_humility/murray_humility.pdf