

HUMILITY

Text: Matthew 23:12

INTRO: Throughout the Scriptures are many warnings against pride & many admonitions in favor of humility. In this lesson we will emphasize the need of true humility coupled with healthy self-respect.

I. JESUS ON AT LEAST 3 OCCASIONS USED THE PROVERBIAL STATEMENT OF OUR TEXT.

A. Religious titles. Matt. 23:5-12.

1. A life of service is the road to greatness in God's kingdom, vs 11.
2. The reason one should not be elevated to a place of prominence: "You are brethren" vs 8
3. Titles, honors, etc. that would set one faithful Christian above another violates the principle of this passage, eg. Reverend, Doctor, Pastor, Elder, Most worshipful Master, etc. Even Brother (when used as a title.)

B. Social status.

Luke 14: 1, 7-14, Now it happened, as He went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath, that they watched Him closely... So He told a parable to those

who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; & he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' & then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." Then He also said to him who invited Him, "When you give a dinner or a supper, do not ask your friends, your brothers, your relatives, nor rich neighbors, lest they also invite you back, and you be repaid. But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind. And you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you; for you shall be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

1. This passage shows the humility principle to be valid even in this world. Self-exaltation often leads to humiliation. Humility often paves the way to exaltation.

2. The guests needed the lesson on humility, vs 7.

3. The host also needed the lesson, vs. 12-14.

C. Private devotions.

Luke 18:9-14, He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, & despised others: Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee & the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men--extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

1. These were private prayers, expressing the attitudes of the hearts of those who prayed. The Pharisee would never have said those words in a public prayer.

2. It is not the purpose of prayer to tell God how good we are. Whatever good traits we have do not go unnoticed by Him—but in speaking to Him in prayer, we should humble ourselves & recognize our sins & weaknesses.

3. This parable was spoken to those who needed to learn humility, v 9

II. BUT WE ALSO MUST GUARD AGAINST WHAT PAUL CALLED A "FALSE HUMILITY."

Col 2:18, Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility...

A. Satan would like to defraud us of our reward, persuading us to disobey God thru a false & improper humility.

B. Note that Moses was almost too humble to obey God, Exodus 3:1 through 4:18.

C. True humility leads us to submit to God's will. Many of our attempts to avoid certain responsibilities are not based on true humility.

1. Not old enough. Too old.
2. I don't have a good education.
3. I don't have time. Too busy.
(Doing what? Watching TV, going to ball games...)

III. TRUE HUMILITY RECOGNIZES OUR PROPER PLACE IN GOD'S PLANS.

A. I am not God.

1. Wear religious titles.
2. Seek praise of men.
3. Make & bind religious laws of my own choosing.

B. But I am of value.

1. Made in God's image.
2. Have a soul of more value than gold.
3. A child in the family of God., Gal. 3:26-29
4. Have abilities that can & must be used in God's service.

CONCLUSION: James 4:6-10, But He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble." Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.

La Porte, TX, November 27, 1983

Exton, PA, May 15, 1988

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, January 16, 1994

Susquehanna, Marietta, PA, October 7, 2001