

HUMBLE BEGINNING OF JESUS' LIFE

(MEANT TO BE EVERYBODY'S EXAMPLE)

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The life that Jesus began here on earth, began most humbly .. and that was the example intended for all on earth to see. However, the 'heavenly host of angels' glorified Him when they appeared to the shepherds, singing "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests," (Luke 2:14).

Jesus said (and taught His followers, Matt.11:29), that He was "gentle and humble in heart," and, that we could 'learn from Him' if we would accept Him, follow, and obey Him in 'humility of heart.' We should carefully take notice that Jesus' earthly life began in humble surroundings, because He instructed us to "Come, follow Me." (Matt.19)

After the shepherds had seen *him*, they spread the word about what had been told them about this (newborn) child, and all who heard (their words) were amazed at what the shepherds said to them, (Luke 2:17-18).

How many people today (if they had not yet heard the story about Jesus' humble birth), would be amazed if they were told that the greatest King of kings did not begin life in a palace, but in a rude wooden structure surrounded by straw and animals? Our blessed Savior Whom we could not praise loudly nor often enough, had a very humble beginning as example for everyone.

(Phil.2:3-4) "When you do things, do not let selfishness or pride be your guide. Instead, be humble and give more honor to others than to yourselves. Do not be interested only in your own life but be interested in the lives of others."

God is constantly seeking to bring all those who will accept His beloved Son in true humility, to the place of great blessing, victory, and divine protection in everything.

It is God's desire to use us as an instrument to bring the Gospel Light to others. If we truly commit our life to God, then we can be used by God to be a witness for Christ. When at our work, at play, around the home, and with everyone near us ... ?are they seeing Jesus in us? We should ask ourselves that question every day, and often.

Jesus selected twelve men who would assist Him, and who would carry out His work after His departure, and He chose unschooled and poor fishermen, who worked at humble employment. They did not have college titles nor any social standing to speak of. Jesus (Who looks at one's heart) was looking for humility of heart, first, and before, and ahead of everything else.

God used those men in remarkable ways to be a blessing to many other people. God can do that with anyone, if they will allow Him to change them to 'be like Jesus.' So, the disciples became humble workers in going about each day, and in earning a living.

Jesus did not select them because of their education or their financial position. They were men who did lowly, manual labor, but they were humble and teachable .. which was extremely important! They would not have been selected nor chosen by the world, because the

world judges by much different standards. The world does not look for the uneducated and poor, but for the college-trained and the rich. As it was with David, the world saw a shepherd, but God saw a king.

What is perceived by the world to be a drawback, actually was the greatest asset for those to become Apostles, from humble backgrounds and humility of spirit. However, they had God with them to give them all the divine knowledge, wisdom, ability, and strength that they would need. To follow that divine order, will prevent boasting in the flesh.

Victories in the Christian life are not acquired via self, but they are divinely received. One must be made ready by God to be prepared for Christian service, . and when that plan is followed, self is left out. The less there is of self, the more there is of God.

The one greatest asset which allows God to teach someone to be a blessing to others, is for them to have an attitude of true humility. That meekness of spirit is an outstanding quality and will bring more blessing and manifestations of God's power than any other thing.

Of course, our greatest example of humility is Jesus, and since He is to be our standard of what it means to be humble in spirit, we need to understand the principles that it is rooted in. We need to find that common ground by which we can stand with Him. We both want and need to be truly humble, not only before God, but toward everyone else. If humility is to be our way of life, we should see that (not as a feeling of shame, nor because of some sin in our life), but as a feeling of gratitude for what Jesus gave for us ..His life, for our life. 'Genuine humility' is the meekness of our Gentle Shepherd.

We need to see true humility in the same way as Jesus saw humility. It was a pleasure for Him to do the work of a servant, "The greatest among you will be your servant", He said, (Matt.23:11), and Jesus was teaching us that there is nothing so Scriptural (and approved by His Father) as doing a servant's job and helping others. A faithful servant will find great pleasure in serving the needs of his master.

When we realize that true humility goes beyond repentance, we will also realize that it really is putting on Christ in our relationship toward everyone. Also, with our every response and circumstance we meet. That is the attitude that God wants us to have. "Clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ" (we are told Romans 13:14). So, to be a servant of all, is the highest calling we could receive.

Humility is the only root from which all other virtuous qualities can grow .. such as: compassion, mercy, sympathy, and divine love! Without humility we could not walk beside Jesus. Lowliness of heart is vitally important for us to follow our Savior the lowly Lamb of God.

(Reve.4:10-11) "The twenty-four elders fall down before him who sits on the throne, and worship him who lives for ever and ever. They lay their crowns before the throne and say: 'You are worthy, our Lord

and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.'"

God created the universe, and it was with the objective of making us perfect in our faith and trust. God wanted us to represent Him, by acting in humility, meekness, and gratitude (at all times and with daily circumstances of our life).

Since God is the ever-living, ever-present, ever-acting One who upholds all things by His all-powerful Word, then the relationship of human beings to God could only be one of absolute dependence on Him. As truly as God created all things, so He also must truly supply all things. We only need to look to the origin of every thing, for us to realize that we owe God everything!

Our primary responsibility today (and until Jesus returns), is to present ourselves to God as an 'empty vessel', one in which He can abide and fill us with His divine Spirit.

True humility is being in a position of total dependence on God. To have very little of this world's possessions, can automatically make us humble and dependent on God...day-by-day.

To have a proud heart, is to have the foundation root for every sin and evil action. When the fallen angels began to look upon themselves with conceit and self-satisfaction, that is when they were led into disobedience, and were cast down from Heaven.

When the serpent offered his 'poison of pride' to the first people on earth, they also fell from their secure position, into a sinful attitude of which all humanity has fallen. Pride and self are the two roads that lead directly to the Lake of Fire.

Pride can degrade and change the highest of angels into a devil, but humility can raise fallen flesh to highest heaven. That is God's plan...to raise a new creation out of a fallen race of proud people.

It is (actually) a war between the pride of the world, and the humility of the Lamb of God. When we know that, we can be made to understand a great truth—that no evil can have a beginning .. except from pride, and no end but, from humility. Pride must die from within us, before Christ can live in us. We need to ask God each day in prayer, to give us the humble spirit of His Son.

Pride should not be considered simply as something we have a little of, and humility considered as something we need more of. The one is death, and the other is life! The one is of the Pit, and the other is all about Paradise!

How much pride we have in us, is how much self we still have in our heart. How much true humility we have, is how much of the Spirit of Christ we have (that can also be seen for others to follow).

Jesus came to bring a spirit of humility to earth, and to make us partakers of that. If we can accept humility in our life, we will be changed by that. (In Heaven) Jesus Christ humbled Himself to become a man. The humility that we see in Him, brought Him to earth to begin

life in a stable with a feeding trough as a crib. It is too often that 'humility of spirit' is lacking in our heart.

(Phil. 2:8 explains) "He humbled Himself and became obedient to death." Jesus Christ's humility, gave His death on the cross its value, and via this He became redemption for us! Jesus is offering to us His life, and His Spirit and disposition, if we will only accept it.

"Accept my teachings and learn from me, because I am gentle and humble in spirit, and you will find rest for your lives," (Jesus told us, Matt.11:29).

His humility became soul-saving redemption for us, as Jesus the Christ took our place at Calvary and paid our debt in full. Our debtor's certificate is stamped 'Paid in Full' (via Jesus' shed Blood).

The life of a redeemed person will reveal that humble attitude within, because, it knows how far they have come via the suffering of another 'One' (Jesus Christ). We have been delivered, changed, and fully restored to an original position of humility, faith, trust, and dependence (on God alone).

Our entire relationship to God (and to everyone else), is to be a relationship based on 'humility of spirit'. Without that, one cannot truly abide in God's presence, nor walk with the Savior, and have no manifestations of the Spirit's power.

Since humility is the only soil in which other virtues can grow, then the lack of humility is the root cause of defeat and failure in the Christian life. It is only through mekness of attitude that one can have a right relationship with God.

Humility is not something that we bring to God, rather, it is something God gives to us (when we accept His Son and follow His life in true obedience). If we have Christ in our heart, we will realize that God is everything, and that we are nothing.

We need to see humility as a simple acknowledgment of the truth of our position as a sinner. By us knowing that, we will then give God His rightful place in our life. In the life of the true Christian, humility is the only attitude, with lowliness of heart and mind being the distinguishing feature of a genuine disciple of Christ... just as it was of Christ Himself.

However, humility does not come naturally, it must be received through prayer, faith, and believing in Christ's work on the Cross. As we study God's Word, we will read often-repeated instructions that Jesus gave His disciples on that attitude of humility... because they seemed slow to understand it.

One must admit that there is nothing so natural to the sinful nature, nothing so hidden from the sinful mind, and nothing so dangerous to a Christian, as 'pride of heart'. Only God can reveal to a person if they lack humility, and only God can enable a person to recognize pride and be free from that pride.

The value of having meekness of heart is given (1 Peter 5:5), "Clothe yourselves 'with humility' toward one another, because God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." 'Clothed with humility' means to wear it like a jacket. We should have a humble attitude at all times, in all circumstances, and, toward all people.

"God resists the proud." If we have any other attitude but a humble attitude, God is against us (and it is not a good thing to have God against us). That does not mean that God is angry with us, but we cannot receive His divine blessings if we have pride in our heart.

"He gives 'grace' to the humble." His 'grace' means that God gives 'special blessings' or 'favours,' or that He 'manifests His power in every way for them' .

Verses 7-9 "He made Himself of no reputation, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross. Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave Him the Name that is above every name."

No tree can grow except by the root from which it started. It can only live by the life that was in the seed that gave it life. When the serpent (who had been cast out from Heaven because of pride), offered his temptation to Eve, his words carried the curse of Gehenna.

When Eve listened (and yielded) to the prospect of being able to control her own life (via the pride of self), that poisonous pride entered her heart. It destroyed forever, the blessed humility and dependence on God, which would have been her (and our) happiness.

Instead of this, . her life, Adam's life (and the life of everyone after them), began with a sinful nature, which has pride at the very root. All trouble this world has experienced, has its origin in deadly pride. All wars among nations, all selfishness, suffering, ambition, and jealousies, begin with pride. All the unhappiness, troubles, and terrible crimes in the world, are result of that same wicked pride of heart.

Pride has its very root in the Lake of Fire. We must admit that we must know where it is from, confess it, repent of it, (and with God's help, get rid of it). We could despair of ever being freed from it, because we could not be free from it (in our own strength), but God can enable us to have that deadly enemy eliminated from our life.

The struggle against self and pride within us, may seem to be a more serious struggle, when we think of the devil's power in that area. But we will eventually realize the divine power that is available from the Holy Spirit, to overcome that enemy.

We must look at the first Adam (and his disobedience to God's Word), then we can see and know of the power of the devil which can control us. And, we must look closely at the Second Adam, Jesus Christ, and we can realize His power to give us a truly humble spirit. We need to understand that we have our 'new life' in and through Christ, just as in the past we had that 'old life' from the devil.

(Colos.2:6-7 says) "As you have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, rooted and built up in Him, and established in 'the faith' as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving." (A 'humble heart' will be a 'thankful heart').

(Vs.18-19 then warns about some people who are proud of their 'human way of thinking') "Let no one defraud you of your prize, priding himself on his humility and on his worship of the angels, and taking his stand on the visions he has seen, and idly puffed up with his unspiritual thoughts. Such a one does not keep his hold upon Christ, the Head, from whom the Body, in all its parts nourished and strengthened by its points of contact and its connections, grows with a divine growth."

As we take a humble position of lowliness, God is then able to "Lift us up in due time." (1 Pet.5:6). If we have the 'garments of humility' around us (and we maintain that attitude of humility), there will come a time when God will shower upon us every 'divine blessing'.

'Humility of spirit', and 'lowliness of heart', ...is a true sign of a true 'disciple of Christ'. (Luke 2:12) "You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." A humble beginning, and a wonderfully great example, for everyone to understand and follow.

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Some main points of the message "HUMBLE BEGINNING OF JESUS' LIFE":

1.. The lowly humble surroundings in which Jesus was born on this earth, was a prelude to the kind of life that He would portray, thereafter, for each person who would follow Him in obedient faith. Each one who would seek to know and understand, and to also portray the humility that Jesus chose to endure, (and so, to be a truly humble example that can lead us to God's blessings) ,.. should also then seek to have God instill that same nature and mind of Christ that will lead us to also receive God's blessings in this life and hereafter.

2.. Jesus then chose men of no estate, and lowly and humble, to be His disciples and apostles to help Him spread His 'message of humility' for all others to come to know and to accept just as He did for us.

3.. The message emphasizes that for us to have that life-saving nature of true humility (which is the only root from which all other good qualities can grow), we must be willing to allow God to remove every trace of 'self-pride' from our heart, (for that is the only way 'true humility' can take its place in our heart.

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