

JESUS' BEGINNING LIFE IN HUMBLE SURROUNDINGS

(GOD'S EXAMPLE FOR EACH ONE OF US TO FOLLOW)

S394R 1218 24W

The life of 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 take careful notice that Jesus' earthly life began in humble surroundings, because He did instruct us to "*Come, follow Me,*" (Matt.19:21).

The shepherds (after *they* 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 an 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 constantly seeks 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 (the Pastor said). If we truly commit our life to God, then we can be used by God to be a witness for Christ. when at 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.

When Jesus selected twelve men who were to assist Him, and to carry out His work after His departure, 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 tasks and 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 vitaly important! They would not have been selected or chosen by the world, because the world judges by very 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, humble backgrounds, and humility of spirit. They had God with them to give them all the divine knowledge, wisdom, ability, or strength that would be needed. Following that divine order will prevent boasting in the flesh.

Victories in the Christian life are not acquired via 'self' but are divinely acquired. One must be made ready by God to be prepared for Christian service, and if that plan is followed, self is left out. (MAIN POINT) **The less there is of self, the more there is of God.**

The one (and 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 virtue, and, actually, brings more blessing and manifestations of God's power than any other thing.

Our greatest example of humility is Jesus (of course), and since He is to be our standard of what it means to be humble in spirit, we must understand the principles in which that is rooted. We need to find that common ground on which we can stand with Him. We 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 are to 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) Jesus was teaching us that there is nothing so Scriptural (and approved by His Father) as doing a servant's job and helping others. The faithful servant finds great pleasure in serving the needs of his master.

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

(MAIN POINT) **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 vital in following 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 object 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 in daily circumstances of 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 that of absolute dependence on Him. As truly as God created all things, so truly He must supply all things. We only have to look to the origin of everything, 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 with His divine Spirit.

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

To have a proud heart, is to have the foundation root of every sin and evil action. It was when the fallen angels began to look upon themselves with conceit and self-satisfaction that 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 leading directly to the Lake of Fire.

Pride can degrade and change the highest of angels into a devil. Humility can raise fallen flesh to the highest heaven. That is God's plan to raise a new creation from 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. In knowing that, we can be made to understand a great truth--that no evil can have a beginning... but, from pride, and no end... but, from humility. Pride must die 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 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 ourselves 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.(which 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, it will change us. In Heaven, 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. All too often that humility of spirit is lacking in our heart.

(Phil.2:8 says), *"He humbled himself and became obedient to death."* Christ's humility gave His death on the cross, its value, and via this He became our redemption! Jesus is offering to us His life, and 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, Matthew 11:29).

His humility became redemption for us, as Jesus 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 by the suffering of another (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 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 meekness 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 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. Lowliness of heart and mind is 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 the often repeated instructions Jesus gave His disciples on this 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 stated (1 Pet.5:5), *"Clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, because 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'" Being "Clothed with humility" means* having it around us like a jacket. We should have a humble attitude always, 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 (He opposes 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.'

(Vs. 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 temptation to Eve, his words carried the curse of Gehenna.

When Eve listened (and yielded) to the thought 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 the trouble this world has experienced has its origin in that deadly pride. All wars among nations, all selfishness, suffering, ambition, and jealousies, begin with pride. All the troubles, unhappiness, and terrible crimes in the world, are the result of this same wicked pride of heart.

Pride has its very root in the Lake of Fire. We must admit that, 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 free of it because we could not be free of it (in our own strength), but God can enable us to eliminate that deadly enemy.

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 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 have our 'new life' in and through Christ, just as in the past, we had our 'old life' from the devil.

(Col. 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." (In summary, a humble heart will be a thankful heart).

(Vs. 18-19 then warns of some people who are proud of their '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 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 wonderfully splendid example, for everyone to understand and follow.**

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