

My journey in humility  
Pray

I. Intro

A. Where we are

1. Headlines and thoughts

- a. Ministers today seem more concerned with political power in society than spiritual fervency in the church, while pop culture contributed to the moral decay among the youth.
  - b. While marked by an increasing ethnic diversity and various religious beliefs, the nation's established religious groups - particularly Protestants - demonstrate a sterile spirituality. One pastor bemoans the obsession with gambling and rudeness, while churches are attended at convenience.
  - c. College campuses teem with students chasing after the latest philosophies, the more unbiblical the better. The more educated a person you find, the less likely you are to discover a Christian. Meanwhile, churches are filled with people who listen to pastors preach then contradict the sermon by the way they live.
2. You may be thinking that these descriptions came from a blog of a believer commenting on our time and nation.
- a. The first one came from Great Britain just before the preaching of John and Charles Wesley, George Whitfield, and others who were used by God to lead a great revival.
  - b. The second from the colonies prior to the First Great Awakening in America.
  - c. The last one came around 1800, with college campuses in the newly formed United States influenced by Voltaire, Rousseau, and others, at the dawn of the Second Great Awakening.

B. Historic, biblical revivals

1. Always begin with humility
  - a. 2 Chronicles 7:14

“if My people who are called by My name humble themselves, and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from Heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”

- b. Humility is the linchpin - all fails in the absence of humility.
- 2. Humility
  - a. In order to pray biblically
  - b. In order to seek God's face
  - c. In order to turn from sin

\*\*God is calling us first and foremost to be a particular kind of people—people characterized by humility.

### C. Beatitudes

- 1. The Sermon on the Mount is descriptive before it is prescriptive.
- 2. It describes what the believer is before what the believer should do. The statement of our condition precedes the demands of our discipleship.
- 3. To be blessed is to relate to God in a particular way rather than the way the world defines blessing.

\*\*The message of Jesus in the Beatitudes is a call to humility so that He can use us for His glory and kingdom. Otherwise, we are ineffective and of no use.

## II. Matthew 5:3 - The Cradle of Humility

### A. There is no one in the kingdom of God who is not poor in spirit.

- 1. What it doesn't mean
  - a. Nervousness, weak or a lack of courage
  - b. Pretentiousness - either positive or negative
  - c. Suspension of our personality
- 2. What it does mean - humility
  - a. My attitude toward myself
    - 1) An attitude where I feel my need and admit it
    - 2) A deep recognition of my insufficiency
    - 3) It is felt deep where I crave satisfaction - can't get no ...
  - b. A willing emptying of me so that God can fill me with that of eternal value and significance
  - c. It is the absolute reliance on God.
    - 1) Constant attention and focus on God

"It is not sin that humbles, but grace. It is the soul occupied with God in His wonderful glory as Creator and Redeemer."

- 2) Using, with gratitude, the gifts and abilities He has given me. Humility is not a void but an active, passionate dependence.

\*\*The point of humility is not to feel bad about how unworthy you are but to recognize how deeply God loves you in spite of it.

B. Is Christianity/humility for the weak? A crutch for those who are incompetent?

1. Jesus

a. Mark 2:17

"And when Jesus heard it, He said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners."

b. The only people who will ever come to get what Jesus has to give are sick people, people who know that they are spiritually and morally and very often physically crippled.

2. What is the motivation behind "Christianity is a crutch"?

a. The human confidence that we are not cripples and that real joy and fulfillment in life are found in the pursuit of self-reliance, self-confidence, self-determination, and self-esteem

b. Jesus offers to replace all that with childlike God-reliance, submissive God-confidence, sovereign grace, and undeserved mercy for the unworthy. Jesus threatens what we believe about ourselves.

3. What is the biblical solution for guilt, unworthiness, or uselessness?

a. God and Moses

1) Stop putting yourself down. You are somebody. You are eloquent.

2) Stop looking at your own unworthiness and uselessness and look to me. I made your mouth. I will be with you. I will help you. I will teach you what to say. Look to me and live!

b. The biblical answer to our lack of confidence or low self-esteem/worth/value is not **better** self-esteem/worth/value but God's sovereign grace.

c. Isaiah 41:14

"Fear not, you worm Jacob, you men of Israel! I am the One Who helps you, declares the Lord; your Redeemer is the Holy One of Israel."

God's way of freeing and mobilizing people who see themselves as worthless is not telling them you're good enough, you're smart enough, and doggone it, people like you, but rather to say, "I will help you. I am your redeemer. Go to Egypt now and I will be with you."

C. What is poor in spirit then?

1. A sense of powerlessness in myself
2. A sense of spiritual bankruptcy and helplessness before God
3. A sense of moral uncleanness before God
4. A sense of personal unworthiness before God
5. A sense that if there is to be any life or joy or usefulness, it will have to be all of God and all of grace.

\*\*The reason I began each of those statements with "a sense" is that everybody, whether they sense it or not, is powerless without God and bankrupt and helpless and unclean and unworthy before God. But, not everybody is blessed - only those who recognize their neediness.

D. Humility vs. Pride

1. Humility is the place of entire dependence on God.
2. Therefore, pride, the loss of humility, is the root of every sin and evil.
3. "Humility is the only soil which virtue takes root; a lack of humility is the explanation of every defect and failure."

III. Talk is cheap

A. Humility and Me

1. Vulnerability
  - a. The church has traditionally cared more deeply about morality than honesty.
  - b. This is why many pastors put up a front that is dressed up at best and downright deceptive at worst.
  - c. I have a conviction from Scripture that vulnerability is a significant catalyst for growth in Christ. Vulnerability requires humility as the foundation of my character. I'm not there yet, but if you've been here for any amount of time, you know that I try to be vulnerable.
2. Humility from me
  - a. Personally
  - b. Occupationally

\*\*If I really want God to work, then I will be honest about who and where I am - negative or positive.

B. God's heart is not moved by my desire to make a better life for myself.

God's heart is moved when I surrender and desire to bring greater glory to Him.

1. Why? Because He is the only One Who can be trusted with the good of all people.
2. You and I will inevitably deteriorate into tyranny.
  - a. We will place our needs and wants over anyone not us.
  - b. We will measure ourselves by ourselves which tells us nothing and leaves us blind.

IV. Finish

Your experience in life is determined by who you depend on.

1. You or \_\_\_\_\_
2. God

\*\*You don't even have to think about the answer. Your level of humility determines who you depend on.