

The Humility of God

I. THE UNIQUENESS OF GOD'S HUMILITY

- A. The concept of a humble God is unique to our faith. The only character trait Jesus proclaimed about Himself was His humility (*lowliness of heart*). His love and humility are twin virtues that are expressed together. He called His disciples to learn humility from Him.

²⁹*Take My yoke...learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart [humble]... (Mt. 11:29)*

- B. In John 13, God showed us who He is in His core identity when Jesus took off His robe and girded Himself with a towel and knelt before sinful men to wash their dirty feet (Jn. 13). The world religions seek “gods of power,” but *Jesus revealed the “kneeling God.”* We can only understand the truth about God as we see Him “kneeling as a servant” before His broken people.

⁵*He...began to wash the disciples’ feet...⁷Jesus answered and said to him, “What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this.” (Jn. 13:5-7)*

- C. God’s humility is so foreign to our minds because our nature is so different from God’s nature. Jesus told Peter that he would not understand what Jesus was doing until later (Jn. 13:7). Man’s humility is based on our weakness and our gratitude for God’s kindness to us in our failure. God’s humility is based on His greatness. He is so kind because of His great love and power.

- D. Understanding God’s humility produces admiration with gratitude, confidence, and inspiration. It causes us to trust His leadership. We have confidence to relate to Him because He is so easy to relate to. We are inspired to embrace humility in a deeper way and with more consistency.

- E. In the “Daniel 7 Son of Man prophecy” of the Messiah’s world dominion, Jesus connected His world government (dominion) to serving people with humility in this age and in the age to come.

²⁸*The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve... (Mt. 20:28)*

- F. The nations will see Jesus’ humility in His victorious triumph at His second coming. Majesty is a display of power in gaining victory over all the nations. He will do this without a trace of pride. He will take over all the nations from a heart of humility in order to promote humility in others.

⁴*In your majesty ride forth victoriously in behalf of truth, humility and righteousness... (Ps. 45:4, NIV)*

- G. Even in the millennial kingdom, Jesus will serve those who lived a life of humility and watching.

³⁷*Blessed are those servants whom the Master, when He comes, will find watching...He will gird himself and have them sit down to eat, and will come and serve them. (Lk. 12:37)*

- H. God’s goal is to fill the earth with voluntary love and humility that will continue forever. He will govern the earth through people who choose to live this way. The meek inherit the leadership of the earth in part in this age and in fullness in the Millennium (Mt. 5:5).

⁵*Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit [rule] the earth. (Mt. 5:5)*

II. HUMILITY OPENLY EXPRESSED IN THE INCARNATION (PHIL. 2:6-9)

- A. Jesus is the premier expression of God's humility on the earth. His greatest expression of humility was in becoming a man and dying on the cross. This gives us insight into how He carries His heart and what kind of personality He has.

⁶Who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery [something to be grasped, NIV] to be equal with God, ⁷but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men...⁸He humbled Himself...to the point of death. (Phil. 2:6-8)

- B. **Robbery**: Jesus did not consider it robbery to be equal to God in privilege and honor. He did not claim His privileges as something that He had to grasp forcibly (robbery). Most scholars agree that *robbery* is not the best word because it confuses Paul's point. Jesus did not insist or forcibly grasp His rights to live free from rejection, pain, and humiliation. Why should the Creator ever be hungry or rejected? In denying Himself His rightful privileges by living as a human in the form of a bondservant, ***He did not deny His true identity***, but was being true to Himself.
- C. **No reputation**: Jesus emptied Himself of His reputation in the eyes of man (v. 7). He did not insist on being honored, understood, or viewed rightly. He embraced a life in which everyone underestimated Him and His abilities. People never knew how superior His abilities were. When they saw Him, they saw nothing to distinguish Him. He was content to be seen as an ordinary man without any special form (status) or comeliness (attractiveness) and without seeking esteem.
- ²He has no form or comeliness...there is no beauty that we should desire Him. (Isa. 53:2)*
- D. Consider the analogy of being the wealthiest person on earth with billions of dollars, without ever mentioning it or using it for yourself. We would naturally want a few people to know about it because it would change the way they related to us. Jesus related to people as a humble servant instead of as a powerful and influential man who was very rich.
- E. Jesus expressed the glory of the Father in His weak humanity. He didn't lose His identity as God by becoming a servant in human form, but He expressed the truth about the nature of God.
- F. God's humility is seen in His relational style in that He is gracious and slow to anger (Ex. 34:6)
- ⁶The LORD passed before him [Moses] and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abounding in goodness..." (Ex. 34:6)*
- G. The revelation of His glory includes seeing One **so high** (transcendence) who went **so low** (immanence) to bring us **so near** (redemption) because we are **so dear** (Bride). The Most High God went so low out of His great desire for partnership with us.
- H. The very fact that God loves us and so zealously wants our love expresses His deep humility.
- ²⁴Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am... (Jn. 17:24)*

²¹To him who overcomes I will grant to sit with Me on My throne... (Rev. 3:21)

- I. God's humility is expressed in all He does, especially in exalting weak humans to rule with Him.
⁵Who is like the LORD our God, Who dwells on high, ⁶Who humbles Himself to behold the things that are in the heavens and in the earth? ⁷He raises the poor out of the dust, and lifts the needy out of the ash heap, ⁸that He may seat him with princes... (Ps. 113:5-8)
⁸He raises the poor from the dust and lifts the beggar from the ash heap, to set them among princes and make them inherit the throne of glory. (1 Sam. 2:8)
²⁸In the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. (Mt. 19:28)
- J. He already possessed great riches and all authority before the incarnation, but He did not have us with Him (Jn. 17:24). He was rich but became poor, that we might become rich with Him.
⁹For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich. (2 Cor. 8:9)
- K. If Jesus' core identity had been in showing His power, then His incarnation would have been a denial of His true self. He did not serve to prove anything, but to express the truth about Himself. It is precisely because Jesus is God that He served and gave freely to ungrateful men (Lk. 6:35). There was nothing un-Godlike about washing the disciples' feet. He was at home doing this.
- L. Jesus is not out to just prove how powerful He is, but to win our hearts for love. He did not come as the God of jasper-like glory (Rev. 4:3), but as a Man who expressed it through the mystery of humility. He wants more than to just dazzle us with His greatness, He wants relationship with us. He can amaze us with a show of power, but cannot have relationship with us without humility.
³And He who sat there was like a jasper and a sardius stone in appearance... (Rev. 4:3)
- M. A servant is the greatest of all in terms of virtue, position of authority, and intimacy with God.
¹¹But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. (Mt. 23:11)
- N. In Western culture, little and humble is seen as negative. When Jesus came to us on earth, He came in hiddenness (Isa. 49:2), as an unknown carpenter in a small town. Humility is not just an admirable character trait, it is who God is and the way He chooses to bring transformation to the nations. Many believers see only the God of power who reigns, without seeing that He reigns by power flowing from humility. Thus, they only seek to grow in power to reign more instead of growing in humility to reign like Jesus.
- O. To use only a show of power is far too weak a method to change the nations. The nations will only be permanently transformed by a multitude of humans in relationship with Jesus in deep humility. Only the "power" of God's humility can produce this. Many ask why God doesn't speak more and show more of His power. God's hiddenness is part of the message that unveils the true nature of His kingdom. In this hour, God listens more than He speaks to His people, and waits to be invited by our love more than He hurries to take over the nations by a show of power.