

Recap: Abiding in Jesus

Abiding in Jesus means remaining in Him, as the Lord tells us in John 15.

- He is the Vine, we are the branches. We abide in Him, His Word, and His love.
- The Father is the Gardener who prunes us, so we can bear more fruit.

The Great Contrast

There are two lifestyles or pathways. One is built around ***the self***.

In the last days, selfishness will go into overdrive. Review the Parable of the Wheat and the Tares in Matthew 13: both crops, the righteous and the unrighteous, will continue to grow up together until harvest time.

Where are ***we*** on the spectrum of humility and pride? See Paul's sobering description:

But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: for men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godliness but denying its power. And from such people turn away! (2 Timothy 3:1-5)

The great contrast is between the proud and the **humble**.

Humility in the Beatitudes

Jesus is building a kingdom where humility is the primary virtue.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven....
Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth.
(Matthew 5:3, 5)

To be poor in spirit means to recognize that we lack grace.

- It means knowing that we're spiritually insufficient.
- "What do you have that you did not receive?" (1 Corinthians 4:7).
- It is "to be humble and lowly in our own eyes.... it is to be as little children in our opinion of ourselves... to value others and undervalue ourselves in comparison of them.... It is to acknowledge that God is great... and to humble ourselves before him, and under his mighty hand" (Matthew Henry).
- The kingdom of heaven **belongs** to such people.

What is meekness?

- It's not something undesirable – Jesus described **Himself** as being meek.
- "Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls" (Matthew 11:29).
- "Meek and lowly in heart" is the only description that Jesus gives of Himself in the Gospels.

This word means “the positive moral quality of dealing with people in a kind manner, with humility and consideration” (William Mounce).

- Meekness is strength under control, like a tamed animal.
- It is our life and our strength that we have allowed God to harness – strength God can use because it has been submitted to Him in humility.

There’s a great contrast between pride and exalting yourself on the one hand, and humility and letting **God** exalt you on the other hand.

The Willfulness of Satan and the Humility of Christ

How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer [Day Star], son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: “I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will also sit on the mount of the congregation on the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.” Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol, to the lowest depths of the Pit. (Isaiah 14:12-15)

He wished to exalt himself with his five “I wills,” but instead he will be cast down five times: (1) deprived of his position in Heaven; (2) deprived of his authority at the Cross; (3) thrown down to Earth near the end of the age; (4) thrown into the abyss when Jesus returns; (5) finally, thrown into the Lake of Fire after the final rebellion.

“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up” (James 4:10).

- “...everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (Luke 18:14b).
- “...exaltation comes neither from the east nor from the west nor from the south. But God is the Judge: He puts down one, and exalts another” (Psalms 75:6-7).
- Pride corrupts our thinking, but humility does the opposite.
 - Humility gives us a **right estimate** of who we are.
 - When we are humble, we recognize that we are only creatures.

Jesus is the ultimate example of humility!

1 Therefore if there is any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and mercy, 2 fulfill my joy by being like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. 3 Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. 9 Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, 10 that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, 11 and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:1-11)

The Hymn of Christ the King

This is a song about Jesus the King, but with a special emphasis on how He poured Himself out for our salvation.

1. The nature of Christ shows us His equality with God.

Verse 6: "...he [Christ] was in the form of God..." Jesus has always been God, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit.

2. The humility of Christ shows us the heart of God.

"[He] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped." Notice that Jesus refused to hold onto His glorious privileges.

"...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 Corinthians 8:9).

Jesus emptied Himself: "taking the form of a bondservant, being born in the likeness of men." Jesus didn't lay aside His Divinity, but He emptied Himself by taking the form of a servant. He laid aside the glories and privileges of His Divinity. Read this hymn and you can see Him going lower and lower, all the way to the Cross.

3. The exaltation of Christ shows us the faithfulness of God.

His exaltation proves that God gives grace to the humble. The exaltation of Jesus by the Father is the greatest example of God vindicating the humble and lifting them up.

“Therefore [in other words, because of what Jesus did] God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:9-11).

Just as Jesus **descended**, now God would cause Him to **ascend** to the heights of glory. “I... overcame and sat down with My Father on His Throne” (Revelation 3:21).

“...the Father... has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Whoever does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him” (John 5:22-23).

4. The attitude of Christ releases the love of God.

Paul tells us why he shared the Hymn in the first place. “Have this mind among yourselves, which was also in Christ Jesus...” (Philippians 2:5).

This is the key: let this mind be in you, this **attitude** that was in Christ Jesus.

- Paul’s pun: Do nothing for empty glory but be like Christ who emptied himself.
- “...whoever would be great among you must be your servant, and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:42-45).

Walking in the Attitude of Jesus

Meditate on the downward steps that Jesus took, and that led to His exaltation:

1. Be careful not to grasp what you possess.

Just like Jesus, be willing to release it for the sake of others.

2. Let's learn to empty ourselves.

Be willing to expend yourself. If we serve others, it is because we have come to place **their** concerns above our own.

3. Take the form of a servant.

Some of us don't mind helping as long as we can stay in charge, or as long as everybody knows how awesome it is that we're helping. Let's serve from the heart.

4. Jesus humbled himself by becoming obedient.

Christ was willing to obey the Father. Can we humble ourselves in our dealings with people? Or are we too proud to obey and be placed outside of the spotlight?

Jesus invites us to be students in His school of humility. He says, *"Take **my** yoke upon you, and **learn** of me; for I am meek and **lowly** in heart..."*

Our question for self-examination: *"Lord Jesus, where, and how, and towards whom do I need to more fully reflect Your humility, and Your servant heart?"*

How to pray:

- Let's be praying for the humility of Jesus, the meekness of Jesus, the gentleness of Jesus.
- Emphasize again some of the "forgotten fruit of the Spirit," such as longsuffering (which today we call "patience"), kindness, gentleness.
- Peter's beautiful advice: "...all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble'" (1 Peter 5:5).

Homework:

For homework this week, keep reading Philippians 2:1-11. Read it prayerfully, once in the morning and once in the evening if possible.
