

Humbling Ourselves Before God

I. Begin with a reading of *1 Peter 5:5b-6*

A. I want to draw our attention to this passage because in it, Peter is giving instruction on a theme that runs from start to finish of God's Word:

1. He begins by echoing sentiments from Old Testament passages in the Psalms and Wisdom Literature:

a) *For though the Lord is exalted, Yet He regards the lowly, But the haughty He knows from afar. - Psalm 138: 6*

b) *Though He scoffs at the scoffers, Yet He gives grace to the afflicted. - Proverbs 3:34*

2. And yet this is not something that is isolated only in Poetry and Literature: It is far more than just a vague sentiment or a saying to be remembered: something that sounds good but doesn't really have any real world application:

a) It is an absolute truth about the nature of God and how He interacts with man

II. God's attraction to the humble of heart:

A. In the opening pages of the book of Exodus, God's people have been in Egypt, much time spent in captivity, for over 300 years.

1. They were held by one of the premier world empires of the day: It would be a great task if they were to ever leave that land and make to the land promised to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob:

2. Surely God would seek out a bold, charismatic, handsome speaker with a booming voice that demanded respect!

a) When the time came, God called Moses, who *Numbers 12:3* states as being the meekest man in all the earth!

B. When Solomon first took the throne after his father David's passing, he went to God in prayer: **II Chron. 1:8-13**

1. With his whole reign yet to come, he entered into his time on the throne asking God for direction:

2. God chose to bless him far beyond the other kings of the earth in terms of wealth, not because he asked for it, but because his humility led him to ask for that which was truly needed

C. The Minor prophets: a time of exhortation and rebuke: The prophet Micah spoke at a time when both Kingdoms were still in power:

1. In addressing both of these nations about the wickedness of their hearts he preaches to a stiff necked people and urges them to follow this basic sentiment:

a) He has told you, O man, what is good; And what does the Lord require of you But to do justice, to love kindness, And to walk humbly with your God? Micah 6:8

D. Lastly on this point, consider how many of the beatitudes from Matthew 5 revolve around those who are humble of heart:

1. *Blessed are the **poor in spirit**: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*

2. *Blessed are the **meek**: for they shall inherit the earth.*

3. *Blessed are the **merciful**: for they shall obtain mercy*

4. *Blessed are the **peacemakers**: for they shall be called sons of God*

a) One could say that all of them are based in humility, but at these four at least are practically all synonymous with a humble heart:

E. And so it is in throughout scripture, those who find themselves in the presence of God are those who are not consumed with self

III. And yet the opposite of this is true as well: While God is attracted to the humble, he is completely opposed to those who have hard hearts:

A. But it goes beyond “opposed”: Not merely a communication of disapproval: The ASV renders this in 1 Peter 5:5 as “resisteth”

1. It is a term that means to draw up in battle lines against: Pride is something that calls out the armies of the Lord: This should give fresh meaning to “pride goes before destruction”

2. I believe that scripture teaches that God has no choice in this matter: It is part of His nature, His justice; What makes Him God:

a) If you jump in a river, you will get wet: if you put your hand in the fire, you will get burned: *If you choose to have a prideful heart, you will attract the armies of God*

- B. It will not be a pleasant experience: While it is designed to bring about a realization of our state of foolishness, being brought low is not enjoyable!
1. Look at God's plans for the prideful in ***Micah 2:3***
 - a) In essence: when God gets done with you, you won't even want to think about being prideful! Just the thought of going back to that haughty way of life will give you shivers!
- C. Speaking again of Egypt, look to the following exchange in ***Exodus 5:1-4***:
1. When faced with a message from his creator, Pharaoh mocked and boasted that he knew no such God that should be obeyed:
 2. It is chilling to read the opening verses of chapter 7:
 - a) Out of all the names of God, Lord Sabaoth affects me the most! It is a curious thing to note where it is found:
 - (1) It is found in *Isaiah 1:9*, in the context of God lamenting the state of His people: in **v2**, they have revolted, in **v 5**, they refuse to turn and have no place left to be struck!
 - (2) It is quoted in *Rom. 9:29* in the context of prideful hearts: Paul has just finished his illustration of the clay questioning the potter:
 - (3) It is found again in *Zech. 7:9-12* Where the people are urged to execute true justice: The people are described as having "made their hearts like flint so that they could not hear the law and the words that the Lord had spoken"
 - (4) It is the name by which David would denounce the giant Goliath in *1 Sam. 17*
 - (5) It is again found in *James 5:4*: *Behold, the pay of the laborers who mowed your fields, and which has been withheld by you, cries out against you; and the outcry of those who did the harvesting has reached the ears of the **Lord of Sabaoth.***
 - b) It is a name that has numerous occurrences; and many are found in the context of prideful hearts: It is a name that means *The Lord of Armies*: Think about what we said regarding 1 Peter 5:5: Pride calls forth the Lord of Armies:
 3. In reading Exodus chapter 7, You can hear the sound of armor being put on. Swords entering sheaths, spears striking the ground as they march: ***Exodus 7:1-5***

a) By the time of chapter 12, Pharaoh and all the Egyptians know who the God of Israel is: At midnight, the text says that God struck the first born of Egypt: From those sitting on the throne, to the captive in the dungeon, even among the cattle: v 30 states that there was not a house in Egypt that did not have a dead body inside:

b) The Pride of the Egyptians had called out the Lord of Hosts

D. There are numerous other examples of the prideful heart calling out God's attention and demanding to be brought low:

1. Nebuchadnezzar who boasted of "his" great accomplishments in Daniel chapter 4
2. Uzzah, one of the longest reigning Kings in Judah is described towards the height of his rule as follows: *But when he became strong, his heart was so proud that he acted corruptly, and he was unfaithful to the Lord his God, for he entered the temple of the Lord to burn incense on the altar of incense. II Chron. 26:16*
3. Herod in Acts chapter 12 when he accepted the praise only due to God!
4. Even Moses himself was prevented from entering into the Promised Land when he shouted to Israel "*shall we bring forth water for you out of this rock!*" -Num. 20:10

a) Again: this is an absolute truth: When a heart lifts itself up in pride, it is raising a banner high in the air, declaring that it is in need of being brought low:

IV. And so, Peter knowing all of this about the nature of God, gives the exhortation that he does in 1 Peter 5:6:

A. Knowing what you know about how God deals with man: *Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,*

1. What is the inference of this verse? God is giving us the chance to *humble ourselves: before He does it for us*

B. Peter is saying to us: Christian: you know what kind of heart God wants: make sure that you choose to have it before God has to teach you the hard way:

Conclusion: Micah states that God wants us to walk humbly before Him, because a humble heart is open and ready to obey God in whatever He asks us to do: Much like the greatest command, this is an all inclusive statement: Are you ready to walk humbly?