

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of The Gospel According to Luke

Chapter 14- Luke 14:7-14

256- An Examination of Humility

September 21, 2014

Luke 14:7-14

7 And He *began* speaking a parable to the invited guests when He noticed how they had been picking out the places of honor *at the table*, saying to them,

8 "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for someone more distinguished than you may have been invited by him,

9 and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give *your* place to this man,' and then in disgrace you proceed to occupy the last place.

10 "But when you are invited, go and recline at the last place, so that when the one who has invited you comes, he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher'; then you will have honor in the sight of all who are at the table with you.

11 "For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

12 And He also went on to say to the one who had invited Him, "When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, otherwise they may also invite you in return and *that* will be your repayment.

13 "But when you give a reception, invite *the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,*

14 and you will be blessed, since they do not have *the means* to repay you; for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous."

To the Glory of God

Now in the Church of Jesus- there are basically two kinds of people:

1. Those who struggle to know and obey and enjoy Jesus
2. Those who watch the others and critique them

The first group consists of those who are actually on the straight and narrow path and are walking towards the Lord. They are “The Travelers” who- as strangers and pilgrims- do not belong here on the earth- they just don’t fit in with the unregenerate people of the world. These are the ones who actually struggle against the lusts of their flesh by the Power of the Holy Spirit to be in humble and joyful subjection to the Authority of Holy Scripture in their daily lives- all to the Glory of God. The Travelers are the ones who examine their lives according to Scripture and who weep over what they see. They are just passing through- on their way to a City- whose Builder and Maker is God.

And these Travelers travel “light” that is- they seek to live simply and be unencumbered with worldly pleasures as they hunger and thirst after Righteousness and pant after God as the deer pants after the water brooks.

And then there are those who sit atop the balcony of life- who can see the Travelers down below. These “Balconeurs”, as J.I. Packer called them, know about traveling- because they have been around it their whole life- but they would rather sit and watch than struggle so they can see all the mistakes that the Travelers are making.

And the Balconeurs view things differently than do the Travelers. For example- Packer says:

“People sitting on a high front balcony of a Spanish house watching travellers go by on the road below. The ‘balconeurs’ can overhear the travellers’ talk and chat with them; they may comment critically on the way that the travellers walk; or they may discuss questions about the road, how it can exist at all or lead anywhere, what might be seen from different points along it, and so forth; but they are only onlookers, and their problems are theoretical only. The travellers, by contrast, face problems which, though they have their theoretical angle, are essentially practical– problems of the ‘which way to go’ and ‘how to make it’ type, problems which call not merely for comprehension but for decision and action too.

Balconeurs and travellers may think over the same area, yet their problems differ.

Thus, for instance, in relation to evil, the balconeer's problem is to find a theoretical explanation of how evil can consist with God's sovereignty and goodness, but the traveller's problem is how to master evil and bring good out of it.

Or again, in relation to sin, the balconeer asks whether sinfulness and personal perversity are really credible, while the traveller, knowing sin from within, asks what hope there is of deliverance.

Or take the problem of the Godhead; while the balconeer is asking how one God can conceivably be three, what sort of unity three could have, and how three who make one can possibly be persons, the traveller wants to know how to show proper honour, love and trust towards the three persons who are now together at work to bring him out of sin into glory."

This Parable by Jesus here in this Passage is for Travelers. And as the Balconeurs will find these Words of Jesus very tedious and dull-faithful Travelers will thrive in what the Lord of Glory tells us in this Parable.

Now the crux of the matter here is found in verse 11 when the incarnate God says:

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

So it is correct to say that in this Passage- the subject is Humility, and how Humility honors God, and how human arrogance and pride and self-righteousness and self-sufficiency is the most common and the most prevalent manifestation of our "fallenness". And Jesus tells us here that humility will result in you being exalted by God, and human arrogance and the effort to exalt yourself will result in the God of the Universe *resisting* you.

So just what is Humility? What is it and how do we get it? Or better put- how do human beings- who are steeped in sin and whose natural and normal tendency ever since Adam rebelled is to live in self-assurance and self-gratification and self-fulfillment- how are we to put on this humility and walk in it?

Now in our post-modern American culture- we are bombarded by well-meaning leaders who constantly tell us that what is wrong with us

is all *external* to us and that what is right is all *internal*. The people who supposedly know more about the workings of this life than anybody else- the Humanists and the Sociologists and the Psychologists and the Psychiatrists- who represent the world's clergy- all say the same thing- that what is wrong with people is in their *external environment*- in their lack of money, for example, and in their lack of education and in their lack of opportunity- which is why these same people all promote the same solutions to these problems- massive spending to provide all three missing ingredients:

1. Money
2. Education
3. Opportunity

... which was called by one famous Sociologist as, "The holy trinity of Sociology". And these people all teach that these three things have the power to transform the human vessel from being "bad" and "unproductive" and "unfulfilled" to being "good" and "productive" and "fulfilled".

And these same people also teach that what is "right" about Mankind is all *internal*- in our good heart, and in something that Sigmond Freud- the father of modern Psychology called- "The Basic Goodness of all Humanity".

And this drivell is seen all over the place. Recently a man murdered his five children and he drove them around in his car for two days with them in the back of his car before he dumped their lifeless bodies on the side of the road. And when interviewing this man's father- the one thing that this monster's father wanted everyone to know about his son was that his son was a "good man".

And so the goal of the Humanist and the Sociologist and the Psychologist and the Psychiatrist is to help you and teach you to reach down deep within yourself and to "tap" into that basic inner goodness and to allow that goodness and power to rise and come to the surface- where it will change not only your own life- but will change the world.

And so great amounts of money and time and energy is spent by these people in teaching us how to "build up" something called:

"human self-esteem"

The mantra of all of the social sciences is that what is wrong with the world is "low self-esteem" and what is right with the world is a "high self-esteem". For example- Sociologists tell us that low self-esteem causes women to become prostitutes and allow men to beat them, while a high self-esteem causes people to be happy and productive and prosperous.

Now the word "esteem" comes from the Latin word *aestimare*, which is where we get our English word "estimate" from. So esteem means: *respect; admiration, favor, and reverence*. So to esteem someone is to hold them in high favor or to admire them or to respect them. And so when you add the preface "self" to this word- "self-esteem" means:

To hold oneself in high regard; to admire oneself; or to love and reverence oneself.

And so the social sciences put forth the proposition that Mankind doesn't think enough of itself and that we can stop injustice and murder and rape and war and covetousness and poverty and violence if only we would only admire ourselves more than we already do, and if we would all just think more highly of ourselves than we already do. And, of course, the end result of us building up our "self-esteem" is "self-righteousness".

And so today- Public Schools have "on staff" social workers- who teach children to think highly about themselves and to learn how to love themselves. Major Corporations all have human resource people- whose job it is to show us all how to admire ourselves and to build up the way we treasure and reverence ourselves.

Madison Avenue hasn't missed out on the push towards more and better "self-love", and so we are bombarded with ads that tell us that we "deserve" this, and that we are "entitled" to that, and that if we drink this beer then naked women will adore us, and if we drive that car- everybody will envy us. This is also where the notion that we all need some "Me Time" comes from.

And because we are living in the time of a great falling away, and because so many in the modern Church cannot even endure sound Biblical Doctrine, and because the leaders of the Church are in a mad rush to be "relevant to the culture" rather than be faithful to Jesus- and

because we have bought into the lie that people in the 21st Century already know all the deep and heavy stuff of the Bible- those who rule in the House of God have determined that what we need in Church is lots and lots of surface, silly, and frivolous things that will tickle the ears of unsaved or lukewarm people and satisfy the base and carnal urge to be entertained rather be edified.

And so the best-selling "Christian" authors today and the most popular television preachers today all espouse the very same mantra as the Psychologists and the Psychiatrists and the Sociologists and the Humanists about our great need to develop more and more love and admiration and devotion and enjoyment of ourselves. They teach that Jesus bled and died to provide us with a way to achieve all of our dreams and to fulfill all our longings and to become the better person that we all want to be and to live the good life down here on the earth.

And this is why the Library of Congress doesn't categorize the books written by these modern pied pipers as being "Christian Theology" or "Christian Doctrine", but they list their books under the category of "Psychology" and "Self-Help"- because even they know that these people are not Christians.

And this is why you are hearing strange new unbiblical terms to describe these people. We are fast getting to the place where the Biblical labels of "Pastor", "Teacher", and "Evangelist" are going out of style and being replaced with something called "Life Coaches".

But over against the constant drum beat of the world- we hear the Words of Jesus who said:

... everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

And we read difficult and disturbing words from the Biblical writers that are diametrically opposite of what these modern snake oil salesmen say- things like:

Galatians 5:24

Now those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires.

Romans 8:13

for if you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.

1John 2:15-17

15 Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

16 For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.

17 The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts; but the one who does the will of God lives forever.

1 Corinthians 10:13&14

13 No temptation has overtaken you but such as is common to man; and God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will provide the way of escape also, so that you will be able to endure it.

14 Therefore, my beloved, flee from idolatry.

Hebrews 13:4-6

4 Marriage *is to be held* in honor among all, and the *marriage* bed *is to be* undefiled; for fornicators and adulterers God will judge.

5 *Make sure that* your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, "*I WILL NEVER DESERT YOU, NOR WILL I EVER FORSAKE YOU,***"**

6 so that we confidently say, "*THE LORD IS MY HELPER, I WILL NOT BE AFRAID. WHAT WILL MAN DO TO ME?*"

So, let's see if we can summarize. The lost, pagan, and unsaved world-which disbelieves and mocks the Holy Bible as being hopelessly naïve- say that while the Bible might be okay for some people in Church on Sunday- it's really not sufficient to handle the really serious issues of life- the psychological and the emotional traumas that people face.

And these are the ones who say that all we really need is to love and admire ourselves more, and build up the pride and admiration that we have for ourselves. But the inspired, inerrant, and infallible Word of the living God says:

... everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

And I have a very serious question about all this. If these people are correct and a great influx of money and possessions and good health and a very high self-esteem are what we all need- then what do I do with statements like this from Jesus?

Luke 16:13

No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.

So I hope you can see that the Holy Bible does *not* teach what the Sociologists and the Psychiatrists and the Psychologists and the Humanists teach. In fact- the Holy Bible categorically denies and contradicts what the social sciences teach about the origins of evil and why people do what they do.

So we have two different competing voices and philosophies and world views and ways of life that both labor for your affections and your loyalty. One says that the pathway to happiness is in building yourself up and in making much of yourself and in thinking highly about yourself and in loving yourself, and the other one says that the pathway to real and lasting happiness is in abandoning yourself and in denying yourself and in becoming smaller in your own eyes and in focusing all your love and devotion and ambition and love away from yourself and toward the Lord Jesus Christ.

Christianity says that loving self is idolatry, that loving money is idolatry, that becoming materialistic is idolatry, and that genuine and true joy and peace is found only in looking away from yourself to the Cross and in the Bible and towards the hills from where your help comes from. Yet, inexplicably- in spite of all the Biblical evidence to the contrary- the world and many within the modern Church actually promote these sins as being good and noble and even spiritual.

So the Word of God says that what is *wrong* with Mankind is all *internal*- in his fallen nature and in his diseased heart and in his corrupt mind. And the Bible goes on to teach that what is *right* is all *external* to Mankind- in Heaven and in the Bible and on the Cross and

that the only way that fallen and rebellious and sinful Man can ever be forgiven and saved is to do the exact opposite of what the social sciences teach and that is what Jesus said Himself back in **Luke 9:23&24**

23 ...If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.

24 "For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it.

So Jesus tells us that we have to make a choice. We either must follow the teachings of the social sciences or we must believe and trust in the Words of God contained in 66 Books of the Holy Bible- but know this- we cannot do both. Either you will love the one and hate the other, or you will cling to the one and despise the other- but you cannot follow both at the same time. God made the human vessel in such a way that we cannot love and accept and trust in more than one philosophy at a time. So either the word of men or the Word of God orders your life.

Now right about now- the Balconeers are trying to analyze this to see how they can love and admire "self" while being humble at the same time. But the Travelers are simply realizing the predicament we are in and are seeking to fall before Jesus and cry, *"Help me!"*

Now I don't want any of you here today to make a mistake about this. The kind of thinking that promotes a love and admiration for self at the expense of a love and devotion for God didn't just pop up out of the ground and become popular. This teaching is ancient and it originated about 1700 years ago with a man named Pelagius, who perhaps was the single greatest heretic of all time.

Pelagius, and the heresy that he created called "Pelagianism", which has come to be known as "Secular Humanism", is the greatest threat to Biblical Christianity that the Church has ever known. And even though this false teaching was confronted and defeated by the Church 17 Centuries ago- it is alive and well today and is more popular and has more followers today than ever before.

Pelagianism teaches that Man can obey God simply by putting forth human effort- without Grace and without mercy and without even Jesus dying on the Cross. And so to a Pelagian- Salvation is not a Sovereign Work of God's Grace and Mercy as the Bible teaches- but to a Pelagian- Salvation is simply us making up our minds to do what God

has told us to do and through the exercise of so-called "human free will" and the implementation of human energy and determination- we can reach the stars.

This is where the concept that is so popular today that "we can do anything that we make our minds up to do"- comes from.

Pelagianism denies several very important Biblical Truths that without- no one can be saved such as:

- ✓ The Doctrine of Original Sin
- ✓ Justification by Grace alone through Faith alone in the finished Work of Jesus Christ alone

And it is very easy today to hear very popular television preachers on the Hay, Wood, and Stubble Television Network promote pure Pelagianism in their sermons, and you can read it in their books-as they tell you that you can have your best life now, and that Jesus died on the Cross to deliver you out of that lousy job and that low bank account and that lousy marriage, and Jesus screamed out in agony to set you free from having to live in a run-down neighborhood and from having to shop at K-Mart. These modern Pelagians teach that all you need to do to overcome the low status of your life is to psyche yourself up and call things into existence.

Now the hero of the battle against Pelagianism 1,700 years ago was a man named Aurelius Augustine- who was the Bishop of northern Africa. And God raised up Augustine to confront and utterly defeat the heresy of Pelagianism with Scripture and Scripture alone.

Now there is a lot that we could say about Pelagianism- but suffice it to say that the net result of this ancient heresy is the admiration and love of self to the detriment of a love and admiration of God. And so Augustine defeated Pelagian and his false teaching by promoting the Biblical concept of Humility. And that is the only way we can defeat it in our day as well.

So again- I ask the question:

What is Humility and how can we obtain it?

And to answer that question requires that we understand that we have become confused about the difference between humility and human arrogance- so much so- that we see these words defined as:

Humility= Doubt in Biblical Truth

Arrogance= Conviction of Biblical Truth

Now back in 1908- the British writer G. K. Chesterton described the embryo of today's full-grown narcissistic culture called "post-modernism". And one mark of what Michael Novak calls "its vulgar relativism" is the hijacking of the word "arrogance" to refer to conviction and "humility" to refer to doubt. Chesterton saw it coming and he said:

“What we suffer from today is humility in the wrong place. Modesty has moved from the organ of ambition. Modesty has settled upon the organ of conviction; where it was never meant to be. A man was meant to be doubtful about *himself*, but undoubting about the Truth- and this has been exactly reversed. Nowadays the part of a man that a man does assert is exactly the part he ought not to assert - himself. The part he doubts is exactly the part he ought not to doubt - the Divine Reason. . . . The new skeptic is so humble that he doubts if he can even learn Truth at all. . . . There is a real humility typical of our time; but it so happens that it's practically a more poisonous humility than the wildest prostrations of the ascetic. . . . The old humility made a man doubtful about his own efforts, which might make him work harder. But the new humility makes a man doubtful about his aims- which makes him stop working altogether. . . . We are on the road to producing a race of man too mentally modest to believe in the multiplication tables.”
(*Orthodoxy* [Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Co., 1957], pp. 31-32)

We have seen it most recently in the resentment over Christians expressing the Biblical Conviction that homosexual marriages are a contradiction of terms. And the most common response to this Conviction is that Christians are arrogant and filled with hate, and these learned people say that "humility" would be for us to ignore what the Bible teaches about both human sexuality and Marriage and simply acquiesce to the ways of the world.

And based on that kind of warped logic- I would have to say that people who espouse to this modern-day version of "humility" would

never be able to cry "*Fire!*" since the smoke they are choking on might only be vapor from the clothes drier.

And yet humility is a big deal and very important. And so if true humility is not compliance with the relativism of sophomoric skepticism, what is it? Well, the Bible says in **1Peter 5:5-7**:

5 You younger men, likewise, be subject to *your* elders; and all of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another, for *GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.*

6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time,

7 casting all your anxiety on Him, because He cares for you.

So the Apostle Peter was moved upon by God the Holy Spirit to pen down these words which tell us that:

... GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.

And Peter was quoting here from **Proverbs 3:34**. And the word that was translated into English here as "**opposed**" originally came from a Hebrew word which means: *to war against or resist*. And so God Himself *wars against* us when we are prideful. God *resists* our efforts and our actions, and God Himself *fights against* us when we walk in human arrogance and pride.

And so the very *worst* thing that any of us could ever do is to engage in activity and trust in teachings and value thoughts and intents that promote our flesh and that elevate us above the place where God Himself put us- and that is- humbled at His Feet- totally dependent on Him for our provision and our protection and our livelihood and our eternity and our heartbeat and our next breath.

So the arrogance in view here is not what happens when we do a good job and feel good about it. The arrogance and pride that we are warned against here is not what drives us to excel or to be able to buy a dining room table or drive a nicer car or provide for our families.

No, this arrogance is the attitude that our ways are better than God's Ways and that our thoughts are higher than His. This arrogance is living in a Universe that God created and sucking air that God made

and having the audacity to try to enjoy life and be happy and safe and content and satisfied- without God and without bowing before Him and submitting to His Word.

American and sadly the American Church have put forth the wrong notion that the strong spiritual man is the one who has it all together and the one who needs no one and the one who is always on top and always strong and always secure and always vibrant and always ready.

But the Bible says that the strong man is the one who has been graced by God to know that no good thing dwells inside him and that is what Jesus meant when He said that if anyone desires to come after Him- we must:

“deny ourselves”

If we are to be saved and delivered from our own inherent wretchedness- God must first empower us to understand that we are not good at all- that we are inherently evil and wicked to the core- and that all we deserve is eternal damnation. Truly the only thing that we contribute to our own Salvation is the sin that made it necessary.

And that is denying yourself. And so the arrogance and the self-righteousness that God resists then is the notion that deep down- you really are a good person and don't really need Grace and Mercy.

The Bible teaches that spiritual strength only comes forth from human weakness and spiritual power only flows from humility. And so any time we are building up human arrogance- we are very weak, spiritually. And so we must know that the spiritual arrogance that is being promoted in the modern Church is no more sanctified than any other kind of arrogance- it is all flesh and it is the very worst of what it means to be fallen and depraved. And that is why Jesus said in **Luke 14:11:**

For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

Now God has told us at least five things about humility. And while the Balconeers will spend their time analyzing these things- the

Travelers will simply begin by God's Grace to apply them to their lives. Here is what God says about humility:

1. Humility begins with a sense of subordination to God in Christ.

Matthew 10:24

A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a slave above his master

1 Peter 5:6

Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God

2. Humility does not feel a right to better treatment than Jesus received.

Matthew 10:25

If they have called the head of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign the members of his household!

Therefore humility does not return evil for evil. It is not life based on its perceived rights.

1 Peter 2:21-23

Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps. . . . While suffering, He uttered no threats, but handed [his cause] over to Him who judges righteously

3. Humility asserts Truth- not to bolster ego with control or with triumphs in debate, but as service to Christ and love to the adversary.

1 Corinthians 13:6

Love rejoices in the truth

Matthew 10:27&28

What I [Jesus] tell you in the darkness, speak in the light. . . . Do not fear

2 Corinthians 4:5

We do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake

4. Humility knows it is dependent on grace for all knowing and believing.

1 Corinthians 4:7

What do you have that you did not receive? And if you did receive it, why do you boast as if you had not received it?

James 1:21

In humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls

5. Humility knows it is fallible, and so considers criticism and learns from it, but also knows that God has made provision for human conviction and that he calls us to persuade others.

1 Corinthians 13:12

We see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face; now I know in part, but then I will know fully just as I also have been fully known

Proverbs 12:15

A wise man is he who listens to counsel

2 Corinthians 5:11

Therefore, knowing the terror of the Lord, we persuade men

May God bless us all as we travel towards humility for the Glory of God.

Amen. Let's pray