

The Missing Link of Humility

Pentecost

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We're going to begin the sermon today by examining two identical events, both of which are recorded in the New Testament. One occurred on this very day, the Day of Pentecost, and the second happened a few weeks later. These are recorded in the book of Acts. We will look at these two identical events and we are going to look at the reactions of the people to these two events, because the reactions of the people were diametrically opposite. The same thing occurred, but their reactions were totally opposite because of certain things, and we will explore that today. What we want to do is see what caused the two different reactions. What was it? We will look at that cause and then apply it to ourselves today on this Day of Pentecost.

First event: You know where we're going. This is the Day of Pentecost. We know that a lot happened on the Day of Pentecost, but we're going focus in on a certain aspect.

Acts 2:1. When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place... (NKJV)

That is important. Obviously, they were in one place, but they were in one accord, meaning likeminded.

2) And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting.

3) Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them.

4) And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues ... (NKJV)

The Greek word for "tongues" is "glossa" and it means *languages*.

4b) ... as the Spirit gave them utterance.

5) And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. (NKJV)

Now the subject is changing a bit. This happened to the disciples.

6) Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in his own language. (KJV)

We know that Peter starts to give them a sermon and he concludes his sermon to this diverse crowd of Jews from all over the Middle East that they were responsible for the death of the Messiah. Notice verse 36 from the New King James.

36) "Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." (NKJV)

All these people were coming together. We will see in a bit where they came from, but they came together and Peter is telling them, "You crucified this Jesus Christ."

Notice their reaction.

37) Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart ... (NKJV)

That was their reaction. The Greek word for "cut" (it's "pricked" in the King James) is Strong's 2660, and it's "katanusso" and it means *to pierce through or to stab or agitate violently*. So, when they heard that they were responsible for the death of Jesus Christ, it was like being stabbed in the heart, and they were violently agitated when they heard that news.

37b) ... and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?"

They looked at themselves and said, "How can we remedy this?" This sermon by Peter and the realization that their sins led to the Messiah's death led them to a state of remorse and anxiety because of a certain quality of character that they all had. That's actually the subject of the sermon. They asked, "What can we do to make amends? How can we make this right?" As we know, Peter said, "The answer is to repent and be baptized." Sure enough, they did and three thousand were baptized and added to the body of Christ that very day. Because when they were confronted with their sins, they showed the appropriate response. "What can we do. How can we straighten this out? How can we make it right.?"

Second event: It happened in Acts, chapter 6. This happened a few weeks after Pentecost, and the context is that Stephen, a newly minted deacon, has been set up because the Jewish leadership felt threatened by what was going on, by this new way and what Jesus Christ said and all these disciples. It was just taking Jerusalem by storm, and they were trying to set up Stephen in order to stop this.

Acts 6:8. And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. (NKJV)

God gave him the power to perform miracles to prove that God was behind him.

11) Then they ... (NKJV)

We're going to see that "they" refers to the Sanhedrin, also called "the council."

11b) ... secretly induced men to say, "We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God."

12) And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him [Stephen], and brought him to the council.

15) And all who sat in the council [other translations say Sanhedrin], looking steadfastly at him [notice this], saw his face as the face of an angel. (NKJV)

Meaning, his face was glowing. Jamison, Fausset and Brown Commentary says that Stephen had been given a divine radiance. We know in the study of angels, they can turn the wick up or down, and his face was glowing, and that was evidence to all there that the holy spirit was in him and God was working in him.

It's interesting just to stop here and say, well, did the Sanhedrin see some of the miracles that Stephen had previously done? My guess is they would have had to, at least some of the members would have had to. Otherwise, why would they be against them? So, some of the members sitting in that room had seen miracles from Stephen and now his face is glowing.

Let's go to Acts, chapter 7. Stephen now starts an impassioned sermon much like Peter did in Acts, chapter 2, but this time, as opposed to what Peter's audience was (common Jews), now Stephen is in front of the council, the leadership, the intelligentsia. We'll get into that in detail as we go on. Notice what he says to these high and mighty leaders.

Acts 7:52. *Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One [Christ], of whom [notice this] you now have become the betrayers and murderers, (NKJV)*

It's the same message, "You have killed Christ."

53) *who have received the law by the direction of angels [referring to the Sanhedrin] and have not kept it." (NKJV)*

He's saying, "You say, but you don't do."

54) *When they heard these things ... (NKJV)*

Now notice this reaction. It's a little bit different than Acts, chapter 2.

54b) *... they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. (NKJV)*

The Greek word for "cut" here is a different Greek word than in Acts, chapter 2. This is Strong's 1282. In Acts, chapter 2, it was 2660. This Greek word is "diaprio." It's a completely different word. Zodiates, in his Complete Word Study Dictionary of the

New Testament says this word means *to be enraged, to be moved with anger*. They were so enraged and so filled with anger, looked what happened.

57) Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears ... (NKJV)

Meaning they didn't want to hear what he was saying.

57b) ... and ran at him with one accord;

58) and they cast him out of the city and stoned him ... (NKJV)

They murdered Stephen.

So here we have two identical events. We have sermons by two men of God that basically say the same thing, "You were responsible for the death of Christ because of your sins. Christ had to die because of what you have done." These two men of God gave an identical sermon to two different groups of Jews culminating in a statement that they killed Jesus Christ. While the sermons were basically identical and the conclusions were basically identical that "you killed the Messiah," these two group's reactions were diametrically opposite. One reaction was, "What can we do?" It led to repentance and baptism and it led to the coming of the holy spirit on this day. But the other group's reaction led to murder. It led to death.

What we're going to do now is compare these two groups and see their makeup. We'll see who these people were, because that will help us figure out why their reactions were different. What was the difference between these two groups?

Let's look at the group in Acts, chapter 2.

Acts 2:5. *And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews ... (NKJV)*

Notice the next two words.

5b) ... devout men, from every nation under heaven. (NKJV)

Zodhiates and the NIV translate the word "devout" as *God fearing*. They worshipped God and they loved God. They didn't want to disappoint God. They wanted to be obedient to God. Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary says about "devout," *full of reverence before God*. Let's see how this word is used in Luke 2:25. This gives an idea of when Luke uses the word "devout" here in Acts, what it actually means and maybe what he had in mind.

Luke 2:25. *And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout [same Greek word], waiting for the Consolation of Israel [Jesus Christ], and the Holy Spirit was upon him. (NKJV)*

He was being motivated and moved by the holy spirit. Obviously, this occurred because of his devoutness, because of his reverence. The holy spirit was with him.

26) And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

27) So, he came by the Spirit ... (NKJV)

Meaning God's spirit was moving and leading him.

27b) ... into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law,

28) he [Simeon] took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

29) "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word;

30) For my eyes have seen Your salvation

31) Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,

32) A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel." (NKJV)

Notice his reward. He could go to his death in peace, and the reason he was so favored was because of his devoutness and his reverence for God. That same word.

With that in mind, let's go back to Acts, chapter 2 when talking about the crowd that was in front of the disciples and that heard Peter's sermon, it's obvious that the crowd had that same kind of devoutness and that same kind of reverence.

Acts 2:6. *And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them [the disciples] speak in his own language.*

7) Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, "Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? (NKJV)

They knew that. They knew of their particular accents.

8) And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? (NKJV)

They were witnessing a miracle right there on this day. Here is the diversity of the group.

9) Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia,

10) Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes,

11) Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God." (NKJV)

So, we see here that this large group were devout pilgrims. They had to travel hundreds and hundreds of miles to be there on this day. They came to worship God and they were full of reverence for God. Notice their reaction as a result of their devotion and their reverence and their worship of God, their reaction when they were told that they had killed the Messiah. Their reaction was that they wanted to make it right. "What do we do? How can we remedy this? How can we have our sins forgiven?"

38) Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

39) For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off ... (NKJV)

That includes us today.

39b) ... as many as the Lord our God will call." (NKJV)

The world doesn't understand this, that God isn't calling everybody, but this blessing will happen to whom God will call.

40) And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." (NKJV)

Oh, how that applies today, this perverse generation.

41) Then those who gladly received ... (NKJV)

The Greek can also mean joyfully.

41b) ... his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. (NKJV)

After Peter told them that they were responsible for Christ's death, what did they do? Did they get mad? Did they get in a snit? Did they turn around and walk away? They joyfully received the news of how to remedy it. Repentance led to baptism, baptism led to the gift of the holy spirit. It allowed them to overcome their guilt and as a result, they were full of joy. A wonderful day that we celebrate today.

Now let's contrast this with the makeup of the second group in Acts, chapter 6. Who were these men that comprised the council in verse 15? Who were these men? Their roots go back to the time of Moses, and as you remember, Moses got into a bad situation when people were coming to Moses for decisions because of conflicts and upsets. He would sit in a chair and they would line up from dawn to dark and he would spend every day dealing with each conflict that came along. He had to make a ruling or a judgment. It was, as we're going to see, just wearing everybody out. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, is speaking.

Exodus 18:18. *Both you [Moses] and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out ... (NKJV)*

Because they were standing from dawn until dark and not making a lot of progress.

18b) ... For this thing is too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself.

19) Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God.

20) And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and the work they must do. (NKJV)

You should give them the overall picture and set the general guidelines and the directions as guided by God. Notice this now.

21) Moreover, you shall select from all the people ... (NKJV)

The following men with these four qualifications.

21b) ... able men ... (NKJV)

Meaning men who have talent.

21 continued) ... such as fear God ... (NKJV)

Devout, God fearing, reverent men.

21 continued) ... men of truth ... (NKJV)

They don't lie and they don't put up with lies.

21 continued) ... hating covetousness ... (NKJV)

If you're going to set up men to judge other men, the last thing you want is somebody who is covetous because, guess what, a little money under the table, a little gift or something like that and justice is perverted. We see that today in our government wholesale.

21 continued) ... and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens.

22) And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be that every great matter ... (NKJV)

When they can't decide or it's beyond their capabilities or understanding.

22b) ... they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So, it will be easier for you, for they will bear the burden with you. (NKJV)

Notice the qualifications of these men:

Able
God fearing
Men of truth
Men who hate covetousness

This is how this council began. This is how that tradition started way back in the time of Moses.

Now let's see what the Jewish Encyclopedia (the Jews' own words) say about the council, the Sanhedrin, at the time of Jesus Christ. I'm going to quote from the Jewish Encyclopedia, and it is astonishing.

Members of the Sanhedrin were required to possess the following qualifications:
Scholarship (that's understandable)
Modesty (understandable)
Popularity among their fellow men (Well, maybe, maybe not. We see too many politicians already)
Only such were eligible moreover as had filled three offices of gradually increasing dignity, namely, those of a local judge, a member successively of magistrates at Jerusalem.

So, they had to have two magistrates and be a judge. The encyclopedia goes on to say:

A third century Jewish scholar enumerates the qualifications of the members of the Sanhedrin as follows:

Now notice the change from what Moses said.

They must be tall, of imposing appearance, of advanced age, they must be learned and must understand foreign languages.

That, obviously, in the time of Christ was to appease the Romans. Going on.

As well as (listen to this) some of the arts of a necromancer.

We don't use that term very much today. The Hebrew word for "necromancer" means *one who calls up the dead*. The Oxford American College Dictionary says of a necromancer, *the practice of communicating with the dead, especially in order to predict the future*. So now one of the qualifications of the Sanhedrin is to have some ability in this area of sorcery and witchcraft. Going on.

It (the Sanhedrin) had supervision over the temple service.

Notice the increasing power. In Moses' day, this group was to help Moses and to help the people. Moses was the ultimate authority, yet God was obviously above Moses and would tell Moses what He wanted done. Notice the change.

It (the Sanhedrin) had supervision over the temple services which was required to be conducted in conformity with the law and according to Pharisaic interpretation.

Now the Pharisees enter the picture.

It decided which priests should perform the temple service.

Well, guess who is going to suck up to the body if that's the case.

It supervised especially important ritual acts such as the service on the Day of Atonement. It had also to decide as to the harvest tithes.

How much and who paid.

It sat in judgment of women suspected of adultery and sentenced them to drink the bitter water.

I think most of us heard about that and how that worked.

In general, (this is the key) it decided all questions relating to the religious law.

They were the ultimate authority. They were in charge. So, the Sanhedrin, In Christ's day was in charge of everything. They administered the law, they oversaw all worship services functioning at the temple, decided about tithes. They were at the pinnacle of power. They were the elite of the Jewish leadership.

So, you compare that with the office that was founded in the day of Moses, which was a service to the people, and was instituted so they wouldn't have to stand in line from dawn to dark and Moses wouldn't have to sit there and judge them all day long and wear himself out, and it was supposedly staffed by righteous men to what we just read. But look at what it turned into at the time of Christ. They were men who had an impressive appearance, men who were popular, men who had a familiarity with witchcraft and sorcery. My, how things changed.

This is the group that's in front of Stephen, and when your power and authority is threatened and you're filled with pride, guess what's going to happen? Stephen had a group in front of him that was concerned about power and control over the people with the maintaining of their elevated status and lifestyle rather than a group that reverently worshipped God. It doesn't take a genius to see these two groups of people, so different, are going to have a totally different reaction to the same message, "You murdered Jesus Christ."

Now we want to investigate the underlying cause of these different reactions. There's one characteristic that caused one group to look at themselves and say, "We need some help. What can we do? How can we make it right?" The other group was so angry that they even chewed on Stephen's arms and stoned him to death. What was that characteristic? It's also time to apply things to ourselves. When one group was told that they were responsible for Christ's death and they lashed out and found somebody else to blame, namely Stephen, that is human nature in the raw, because sometimes when we're confronted with a fact that we sinned, it's a natural carnal reaction to blame others. The narcissistic personality blames everyone but themselves.

What is the reason that one group examined themselves and the other did not? That reason is a missing link to becoming the bride of Jesus Christ, and that missing link (I think you know what it is) is humility. It's plain and simple humility, because humility allowed the one group to look inside and say, "What have I done wrong? Where do I not measure up? I'm at fault. It's my fault. What can I do about it?"

The Expositor's Bible Commentary states the following referring to the term "cut to the heart" in Acts 2:37 regarding these devout Jews. I'm quoting now.

Luke uses the verb "cut to the heart" to describe their feelings. It connotes a sharp pain associated with anxiety and remorse. Those who have been cut to the heart or those who are the humble of heart because they realize their need and are open to God's working.

Those that realized what they had done had a humble heart and they looked and saw their lack compared to God. They saw God's law and their lack and they asked for help. Whereas the other group blamed somebody else and murdered Stephen. So, the underlining cause is the title of the sermon.

The Missing Link of Humility

We're going to spend the rest of the sermon looking at what is true humility and what it isn't and how we can develop it and make it stronger in us. How can we develop true humility?

1. What humility is not.

There is great confusion about humility and sometimes people equate humility with weakness, and that is not the case as we're going to see. I'm going to read from a fourteenth century English clergyman. He was a writer. His name is Walter Hilton. He wrote a book titled Stairway to Perfection and he talks about humility. This is the common view of humility. It's erroneous, but I want to read it because it's the common view. This was written to the clergy back in the 1300s.

First of all, this is how you must practice meekness. You must judge yourself in your will and in your feelings, if you can manage it, to be unable to dwell among men and unworthy to serve God in conversation with His servants. Further, you must consider yourself unprofitable in your fellow Christians, lacking both in intelligence and strength to perform the good works of the active life and help your fellow Christians as other men and women do. You shall judge yourself more foul and more wretched than any creature alive so that you will hardly be able to put up with yourself for the greatness in number of your sins and the filth that you will experience in yourself.

That's kind of the worldly view of humility. You see this guy stooped over and his knuckles drag on the ground and he won't look at anyone or talk with anybody. He's just not worthy to do anything. Now, there is a problem with this view because it causes people to compare themselves to other human beings. That's the problem. He says you judge yourself less worthy than the guy standing next to you, and in doing so, you're comparing yourself with other human beings. If we compare ourselves to other human beings, we can look at somebody and say, "I'm better than they are." So, we're happy. We're elevated. If we compare ourselves to somebody else and say, "They're better than I am," we feel down and we're dragging our knuckles on the ground and all of that. That is fruitless. It has nothing to do with humility. This is a human centered way of looking at things and we can't fall into that trap.

Remember the Pharisee and the publican in Luke, chapter 18. Guess what, the Pharisee was comparing himself to the publican. The publican is a guy that takes taxes. The Pharisee says, "I fast twice a week. This guy doesn't fast at all. I do this and I pay tithes and I do all of these things and this poor slob over here doesn't measure up." He was elevating himself by comparing himself to another human being. Whereas the tax collector wouldn't even look up. He beat his chest and said, "God, I'm a sinner." The publican was comparing himself to God. No, he didn't measure up to God. That's for sure, but he wasn't comparing himself to the Pharisee. The Pharisee was comparing himself to another human being and thereby elevating himself, and he was condemned for that.

So this first point is talking about what humility is not. It's not inferiority, it's not weakness, or comparing ourselves to other human beings.

2 Corinthians 10:12. *For we dare not make ourselves of the number [those people who do this], or compare ourselves with some that commend themselves: [like the Pharisee] but they measuring themselves by themselves [measuring one human against another], and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise. (KJV)*

The point is we cannot confuse feelings of weakness and inferiority to other human beings with humility. It has nothing to do with true humility. We will always be weaker than someone and we'll always be stronger than someone, but that has nothing to do with humility.

The reality is that we are all equal in God's eyes. Remember Romans 3:23.

Romans 3:23. For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; (KJV)

All of us have sinned, so we're all in that same bucket. Peter tells us once in Acts and then in his epistles, I think three times, that God is no respecter of persons. So, no human being has any more value to God than any other human being. We're all in the same boat in that regard.

The reality is, referring to humility, it takes strength to take the lowest room. It takes strength to turn the other cheek, not weakness, strength. It takes strength to allow someone else to go in line in front of you. This is the hardest one, not to exalt the self. That takes strength.

Back in the 1970s, in the days of Worldwide, a good friend of mine in the ministry, who recently retired, he and another man were considered for regional pastor. It was a big responsibility over a half dozen states in the southeast. There started to be some politics there and he wrote to Pasadena and said, "Let the guy have it. I don't want it anymore. Let him have it. He would be better anyway." It took strength to write that letter and let somebody else have the glory or the title or promotion or the bigger salary or whatever it might be. It takes strength.

The fact is, humility is not weakness, humility is not inferiority. It is not. In fact, another horrible thing about humility is that it can be an act, and we've all seen it. A seventh century religious writer wrote this, and this is really true, and I quote,

Humility is often only a pretended submission, a stratagem of pride which is a basis itself in order to exalt itself. Although pride is found in a thousand different forms, it is never better disguised and more capable of deception than when it hides itself under the guise of humility.

Boy, is that ever true. We see false humility all around us. You see it in worldly churches. I'm not picking on any particular group, but there are some groups that wear these robes and the hoods and they walk around with their hands clasped in a very humble outward appearance. We've seen it in God's church, where those who used false humility to gain position or to gain a promotion. So, let's understand that humility is not weakness. Humility is not inferiority. It is not, especially when one compares himself to somebody else.

2. We need to realize who we are relative to who God is.

That's the key. Once we understand who God is, and then we look at ourselves, there is no comparison. When you do that honestly, then we know we are nothing. We are nothing compared to God. I'm not talking about other human beings. That's irrelevant. David, king of Israel, on a human level, could strut around and say, "Look what I've done. Look at what God has given me. Look at all of my soldiers. Look at all of my

crops, vineyards, the houses, my wives.” He could do that. Notice how he kept balanced and centered.

Psalm 8:3. *When I consider thy heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have ordained [not any human];*
4) *What is man, that you are mindful of him? and the son of man, that you visit him? (KJV)*

Who are we? We’re just amazed that You even hear us and have anything to do with us. This is our reality. Compare this to God.

Psalm 103:15. *As for man, his days are as grass: as a flower of the field, so he flourishes. (KJV)*

Yes, when we’re in our teens we’re flourishing and growing and jumping and hopping and lifting weights and playing sports and doing all this kind of stuff. Yes, we flourish for a time. I’m here to tell you that it doesn’t last very long. It really doesn’t.

16) *For the wind passes over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more. (KJV)*

Human beings have come and gone for thousands of years, and you look at the end result after they’ve come and gone, nobody even knows they were there. It’s like taking a glass of water and it’s smooth, and you dip your finger in. That’s our presence in the world. Pull your finger out, and we die. You look at the water and it’s just the way it was before you stuck your finger in it. It’s no different at all. We are nothing compared to God and apart from God (this is the scary part) we can be deceived. If we don’t look to God and realize who God is versus who we are, we can be deceived. We know that.

Jeremiah 17:9. *The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it? (KJV)*

If we have that humility by comparing us to God, we should acknowledge the fact that we can be deceived. All of us have been deceived. I’ve been deceived and you’ve been deceived. For sure the council in Acts, chapter 6 was deceived. They were deceived by Satan to the point that they committed murder. Therefore, you see, humility is absolutely essential for us to be the Bride of Christ. Humility is essential for us to understand who we are relative to God Almighty. Once we understand that and know we are nothing compared to God, what that does is helps us to rely on Him, therefore we’re not looking at ourselves. We give God the chance to fight our battles for us, as we will see in a minute.

3. We must never ever seek to aggrandize ourselves.

It is so easy to do, and that human nature is always there and it’s so easy to want to be in the spotlight. That’s human nature, but the more we’re in the church, I think we all

realize if the spotlight is shining here, I'm going over in the corner because I don't want any part of being in that spotlight, because the results are not good.

Here Peter is giving advice to the brethren in his day, and by extension, to us today. These are words from God. He's giving advice to the younger folks in the church at the time.

1 Peter 5:5. Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder ... (KJV)

To those who have had experience and have been around the block a few times.

5b) ... Yea, all of you be subject one to another ... (KJV)

It means to consider one another, where they're coming from, what their experience has been, and understand their background.

5 continued) ... and be clothed ... (KJV)

The word "clothed" in Greek can mean *wear*, like you would put on a jacket or a coat or cloak. He says:

5 continued) ... be clothed with humility ... (KJV)

If you put on a cloak, it covers every aspect of your body, all parts of it. He says to make humility everything about you; clothe it with humility.

5 continued) ... for God resists the proud, and gives grace [who does He give grace to?] to the humble. (KJV)

Just like those in Acts, chapter 2. They said, "What do we do? How can we absolve ourselves from this?" Peter said, "Repent and be baptized." They did, and they received grace because of their humility.

6) Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: (KJV)

You see, the reality is if we humble ourselves, God will take care of the aggrandizing. God will take care of the exaltation. We want Him to do that. We don't want to do that, because who are we to exalt ourselves? This is the thing that just blows my mind when people stand up and say, "I'm an apostle. I'm a prophet. I'm one of the two witnesses." We just had another two that announced their presence a couple of weeks ago. This is totally un-Biblical. Let God do the aggrandizing. When the spotlights come, just run away from it, because it only means trouble. Is God going to have someone in His kingdom who wants preeminence?

Look at the example of Saul. In 1 Samuel 15, Samuel was not happy with Saul. He told Saul, "When you were little in your own sight, weren't you made head of the tribes of

Israel. Weren't you made king of Israel when you were little in your own sight.?" Later Saul was rejected by God because he forgot his humility that he started with. He lost it somewhere along the way.

I have seen ministers in God's church start groups. They started off humble. They were going to do this and that, and then after a period of time when people would whisper in their ear, "You're the only true minister of God, you're the only one who understands prophecy, you're the only one that God is dealing with at this time. You're going to lead us to the place of safety, you're going to lead us to the Kingdom of God." These whispers go on in the ear year after year, and then all of a sudden, things change. It can happen to us. It doesn't make any difference who we are, it can happen to us and we have to be very careful about not aggrandizing ourselves.

You see, true humility is shown when we are given some degree of power and we've all seen it. Perhaps on the job, someone gets a promotion and then all of a sudden, they walk in with jack boots and a swagger stick. They're going to enforce rigor and you're going to know it. Abigail Van Buren, you know Dear Abby, I think she is dead now, but she said this very great quote: "The best index of a person's character is, (a) how he treats people who can't do him any good, and (b) how he treats people who can't fight back." What she is saying is, if somebody is truly humble, they won't take advantage of people who cannot fight back. They'll help them. They will come to their aid. They treat people and do good to people who can never repay, because of their humility. We've seen many in and out of the church who sought the preeminence. We've seen ministers within the church who have hurt God's people and possibly have lost their own salvation as a result. You see, true humility is putting another person ahead of ourselves, of thinking about somebody's interests ahead of our interests.

This scripture should be at the forefront of our minds every day of our lives. One reason we started Pacific is to be at peace, and we all came not wanting fighting and politics and all of that.

Philippians 2:3. *Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. (NKJ)*

That is true humility, and that frankly is true love, because we love our neighbor as ourselves and we love God more than all.

4. We have to be able to accept criticism and correction without getting our back up, without fighting back and without blaming others.

If you want to see how not to do it, look at our current presidential race and the fighting that goes on. Nobody accepts responsibility for anything anymore. The reality, as I've said, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. We have all sinned. So, nobody can say, "I'm perfect." Nobody can say that.

Let's go to one of my favorite scriptures. This is something we have to remember, because humanly we don't measure up to God. We can't even come up to the sand underneath God's shoes, if we're going to use a metaphor. Jeremiah says:

Jeremiah 10:23. *O LORD, I know that the way of man [the way man should go] is not in himself ... (KJV)*

He doesn't have it inside him to know how to put one foot in front of another.

*23b) ... it is not in man that walks to direct his steps.
24) O LORD, correct me ... (KJV)*

Because if we don't know where to walk or how to walk, we have to be corrected. God has to guide our course for us.

24b) ... but with judgment; not in thine anger, lest you bring me to nothing. (KJV)

Jeremiah is saying, "I know who you are and I know your power and you could just blow me to smithereens, so I do need correction, but please be merciful and gentle with me. Of course, we need to take that to heart in our daily lives.

Let's go to 2 Samuel 7. We're going to look at how David took correction from God. I'll paraphrase until we jump into the direct scripture. In the first three verses, God had blessed David and it was David's idea in his mind that he wanted to build a house for God to dwell in. His heart was right in the sense that God had done all this for him, the least he could do is build a house for God to dwell in. He was telling this to Nathan and Nathan said, "Do whatever you want, do whatever is on your mind." Then in verses 4 through 9, God went to Nathan and said, "This isn't going to happen. This is a very bad idea, because this is not what I want." So, Nathan went back to David and Nathan had the job of telling David, "You can't do what you want to do." In verse 12, God is speaking and Nathan is the mouthpiece.

2 Samuel 7:12. *And when thy days be fulfilled [talking to David], and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee [referring to Solomon], which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. (KJV)*

Here's the news.

13) He shall build a house for my name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever.

...

17) According to all these words, and according to all this vision, so did Nathan speak unto David. (KJV)

Now notice David's reaction.

18) Then went king David in, and sat before the LORD, and he said, who am I, O Lord GOD? and what is my house, that thou hast brought me hitherto [to this point]? (KJV)

He was looking back and saying, “God, look at what You have done for me. I was a sheep herder. I was the youngest of all the kids, and You dragged me out of herding the sheep and You made me king of Israel. Look what You’ve given me.” He was focusing on that rather than what he wanted to do that God said he couldn’t do. He didn’t get his tail in a knot over it. He had a humble attitude.

So, we have to ask the question, is God going to allow somebody in the place of safety who refuses to be corrected? Can you imagine the chaos that would cause and the upset? Here we are, supposed to be worshipping God and learning about God, and God training people who are in the place of safety and someone there is not going to accept any correction, going to do it his way or the highway? Can you imagine that? God will not have that. Will God have somebody in the kingdom who insists on their own way, someone made an eternal being that just wants his own way? Is God going to allow that? Well, we know the answer when we look at Satan’s future, because Satan did the same thing. “It’s my way. I’m better than you. I know more than you.” You look at Satan’s future, and we don’t want to go there. God wants people who are humble. Why? Because they are teachable, and if we know who God is and who we are and we see the chasm, the canyon that is between us and God and we say to God, “You can’t teach me a thing. I know it all. You’re up there and I’m down here, but You can’t teach me a thing.” No, God wants people who say, “God, I want to be like You. I want to be like Jesus Christ. Teach me so that I can get up close to You and be like You and be in harmony with You.”

Okay, that leads us to the last point.

5. True humility is having total confidence in God and not ourselves.

With that in mind, let’s go to 1 Chronicles 29, and that is the parallel account of when David heard that he couldn’t build the temple. He wouldn’t be allowed to do that, and rather than getting in a snit or pouting or putting his tail between his legs and saying, “Life isn’t fair and God is not fair with me,” notice what happens here. He found out and this is what he said.

1 Chronicles 29:10. Wherefore David blessed the LORD before all the congregation [gave God all the credit]: and David said, blessed be thou, LORD God of Israel our father, for ever and ever. (KJV)

Notice this. Notice where his mind is and the credit he gives to God.

11) Thine, O LORD is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the victory, and the majesty: for all that is in the heaven and in the earth is thine [not mine]; thine is the kingdom [not Israel’s or David’s], O LORD, and thou art exalted as head above all.

12) Both riches and honor come of thee, and thou reign over all; and in thine hand is power and might; and in thine hand it is to make great, and to give strength unto all. (KJV)

By that, he is saying, "I've been king, I've defeated all my enemies and it's because of you, not because of me."

*13) Now therefore, our God, we thank thee, and praise thy glorious name.
14) But who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly after this sort? ... (KJV)*

God said, "You can offer the materials, the gold, the cedar, the stones, the jewels. You're not going to build it, but you can offer it to be ready when your son builds it. So, he was thankful that they could give this offering.

14b) ... for all things come of thee, and of thine own have we given thee. (KJV)

This tells us what David was saying. We are absolutely nothing compared to God. Therefore, we need to place our confidence in God, because we are going to fail if we place our confidence in ourselves or if we place our confidence in another human being, because human beings are imperfect and human beings will fail us. Let's turn to Psalm 27:1. We need to place confidence in God and not on the self. David learned this lesson. He suffered a lot, but he learned this lesson.

Psalm 27:1. The LORD is my light and my salvation ... (KJV)

He lights my path and He will save me.

1b) ... whom shall I fear [if that's the case]? the LORD is the strength of my life [not my strength, His strength]; of whom shall I be afraid? (KJV)

When tough times come, we need to remember this. God is stronger than anything, and if we are humble before Him and we obey Him and look to Him, God will take care of us no matter what. Now let's go to chapter 143. David is making an appeal.

Psalm 143:8. Cause me to hear thy lovingkindness in the morning ... (KJV)

When he wakes up. "Help me remember that, how kind and good You are to me."

8b) ... for in thee do I trust [not a human being]: cause me to know the way wherein I should walk ... (KJV)

Just like Jeremiah said. Show me how to put one foot in front of the other.

8 continued) ... for I lift up my soul [life] unto thee. (KJV)

Then in the New Testament, let's go to Philippians 4:13. This is something that people who face the death sentence in sickness or have the government against them or some impossible situation. We can't forget this, because if we use the power of God, anything is possible.

Philippians 4:13. *I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.*

Consider the shipwrecks and the beatings and nakedness and hunger and thirst and everything Paul went through, which we haven't even come close to. He looked to God to get him through. He looked to Jesus Christ, his older brother, to get him through, and that's exactly what happened. So, when life is hard, and as we go forward, life is going to be unfair to Christians. Life is going to be unfair to Sabbath keepers and holy day keepers. There are movements afoot. The safest place to be in the United States is to be a Muslim, because nobody comes against Muslims. We just don't do that, but to be a Sabbath keeping, holy day keeping Christian, you're kind of weird. So, my guess is a time is going to come when we are going to be falsely accused, unfairly treated and have been for years, especially in jobs, not working on the Sabbath or the holy days.

You see, once you've been through something like that, you realize it isn't our fight, it's God's fight. I'm keeping His law, so God is going to fight my battles. I don't have to fight. I don't have to use my strength because I don't have any strength. God can work behind the scenes and move those chess pieces on the board in ways we cannot understand or even comprehend, and God will work it all out. He will fight our battles for us, but we have to rely as we are told here, on the power of God. All things through Jesus Christ.

Let's go to James 4:10. When we humble ourselves, this is what happens. This is the ultimate result. The Apostle James says,

James 4:10. *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord [in God's eyes] ... (KJV)*

And guess what's going to happen.

10b) ... and he shall lift you up. (KJV)

He will lift you up. He will overcome your problems. He will overcome your adversaries. He will exalt you in His own good time. Maybe that good time will be only the Kingdom of God, but that's the ultimate goal anyway, isn't it? What is our ultimate confidence? Our ultimate confidence is in our great God, that He will never do anything for our harm. God will never do anything to harm us, but rather to help us along the path to be the bride of Jesus Christ. That is our ultimate confidence.

Okay, let's close. True humility comes from the heart. It's not a pretend thing, it's not a tool to use to temporarily advance ourselves or impress other people. It has to come from the heart.

Let's look at the simplicity of this entire subject, this entire affair. It is so simple. There is a simplicity in Jesus Christ. Let's go to Micha 6:6. We'll start there and read verses 6 through 8. You know where we're going with this. Micha is asking a question. "How can I stand before God? What do I have to do to stand before God?"

Micha 6:6. *Wherewith shall I come before the LORD, and bow myself before the high God? ... (KJV)*

How do I get in His presence? How do I stand before His throne?

6b) ... shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old?

7) Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?

8) He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the LORD require of thee... (KJV)

To do three things.

8b) ... but to do justly ... (KJV)

That means to be fair.

8 continued) ... and to love mercy ... (KJV)

To love, to forgive and forget and not hold grudges and not be angry about the past.

8 continued) ... and to walk humbly with thy God? (KJV)

It is so simple. Realize who God is, compare ourselves to God and, therefore, we see who we are. We're little grasshoppers, as the Bible says. We're little ants running around the earth, but yet God loves us and takes care of us and looks after us and listens to our prayers and acts when we ask, if it's good for us.

This is the closing scripture, they're called the Beatitudes. I'm going to read this out of the New Living Translation because it's very interesting. I think it adds a bit of a dimension here.

Matthew 5:3. *"God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him ... (NLT)*

The King James and the New King James translate that as *poor in spirit*.

3b) ... for the kingdom of Heaven is theirs. (NLT)

If we realize we are nothing without God, if God is not involved in our lives, it is useless, it is vanity.

4) *God blesses those who mourn ... (NLT)*

The Greek means *to grieve*. To grieve about the state of this world, to grieve about the ungodliness of this world and the lawlessness and the pain and suffering people are going through, in or out of the church.

4b) *... for they will be comforted.*

5) *God blesses those who are gentle and lowly (NLT)*

The King James and New King James say meek. Gentle and lowly, don't put on airs and don't exalt the self.

5b) *... for they will inherit the whole earth. (NLT)*

Those who are gentle and those who are lowly.

So, let's understand, going back to these two events, two men of God gave virtually two identical sermons and the conclusion of both were identical, you killed Jesus Christ. You caused Him to suffer and die. But each had a different outcome. If we look at it carefully, what was the reason?

There were people who tried to exalt themselves who were interested in power and aggrandizement and they murdered the man who spoke, they murdered the messenger.

Yet the second group were devout men and devout women who traveled hundreds if not thousands of miles to keep the Day of Pentecost, this very day, and they came and they were reverent and they were God fearing, and as a result, they had humility that allowed them to look at themselves and say, "Yes, you are right. It's our fault. What can we do? How can we make amends? How can we make this right?" As a result, three thousand people repented, were baptized and received God's holy spirit that day. That's a huge lesson for us. So, what we need to do is make this missing link, humility, a core of our very lives every minute of every day so that we may become the Bride of Christ.