

Sunday September 25^h 2011 – Humility – The path to Blessing

Psalm 25:9

**⁹ He leads the humble in justice,
And He teaches the humble His way. (NASB)**

Beloved in Christ,

Through the great prophet Isaiah God speaks to us and says:

**“My thoughts are not your thoughts,
Nor are your ways My ways,” declares the LORD.**

**⁹ “For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth,
So are My ways higher than your ways
And My thoughts than your thoughts. (Is.55:8-9)**

The earlier in life we comprehend these words the better off we are. Problems arise in our lives when we follow our thoughts, our ways. Outside of a relationship with our Heavenly Father through Jesus Christ, our thoughts and ways are worldly and not in tune with God and His ways. By nature we are rebels, who constantly rebel against God and His ways. That is why it is of utmost importance to wake up to this fact, and accept that God knows better and His ways are perfect, and then submit all to Him in faith. Precisely for this reason Paul writes in letter to the Romans, words that I remind you of often:

“Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, *which is* your spiritual service of worship. ² And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.” Rom.12:1-2

When our lives are surrendered to God as a living and holy sacrifice, then we are where we should be. Then our lives follow God’s will. Our thinking is transformed from worldly to Godly, from soulish to spiritual. We are no longer reflectors of the world and it’s ways but we reflect God’s love and glory, His Kingdom.

Worldly thinking and living leads to death, Godly thinking and living to life eternal. Jesus came and died on the cross, bearing our sins so that through His perfect sacrifice we may be children of God. Jesus’ blood opened the pathway to a living relationship and fellowship with Almighty God our Heavenly Father. This is the path of Holiness and purity, a life that honours God and brings Him glory. This life reflects His kingdom, the kingdom of love and mercy.

What is the main barrier, the thing that prohibits us from living a Godly life? What is it that separates us from having a close relationship with Him, from kingdom living? Pride! Ego! Self centeredness! A person things – I don’t need God. I know better. I will do it my way, the

way I please. I will shape God to fit into my image, according to my will and standards. If He doesn't conform, I will not believe in Him and will not serve Him!

Pride, love of self is at the core of all sin. God's created Cherub – Lucifer suffered from pride. He was gifted, very beautiful, he had a lot of power, but his heart grew proud. In Ezekiel 28 we read about him:

“Thus says the Lord GOD,

“You had the seal of perfection, Full of wisdom and perfect in beauty.

¹³ “You were in Eden, the garden of God; Every precious stone was your covering:

The ruby, the topaz and the diamond; The beryl, the onyx and the jasper;

The lapis lazuli, the turquoise and the emerald;

And the gold, the workmanship of your settings and sockets,

Was in you. On the day that you were created They were prepared.

¹⁴ “You were the anointed cherub who covers, And I placed you there.

You were on the holy mountain of God; You walked in the midst of the stones of fire.

¹⁵ “You were blameless in your ways From the day you were created

Until unrighteousness was found in you.

¹⁶ “By the abundance of your trade You were internally filled with violence,

And you sinned; Therefore I have cast you as profane

From the mountain of God. And I have destroyed you, O covering cherub,

From the midst of the stones of fire.

¹⁷ “Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; You corrupted your wisdom by reason of your splendour. I cast you to the ground; (Ezek.28:12-17)

Lucifer's fall came about because his heart was lifted up. He got carried away with his beauty and splendour, with his wisdom and knowledge, forgetting that these were not of his own doing, but God's gifts given to him. His eyes were no longer on his Creator but on himself, and because of that he fell, and great was the fall.

The prophet Isaiah gives us a different perspective on Lucifer's pride and fall, and shows us why God cast him out of His presence and he became God's enemy Satan.

“How you have fallen from heaven, O star of the morning, son of the dawn!

You have been cut down to the earth, You who have weakened the nations!

¹³ “But you said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to heaven;

I will raise my throne above the stars of God, And I will sit on the mount of assembly

In the recesses of the north.

¹⁴ ‘I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’

¹⁵ “Nevertheless you will be thrust down to Sheol, To the recesses of the pit. (Isaiah 14:12-15)

In the Vulgate (the Latin translation of the Bible star of the morning is rendered Lucifer)

In hoping and attempting to be like God, to usurp His throne, Lucifer was cast down to the pit and he will spend eternity in the lake of fire. We read in Revelation 20:7

“And the devil who deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet are also; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.”

This fate is a result of his pride.

Let us now make a comparison with Jesus, who will spend eternity in the highest exalted position, ruling and reigning with the Father, as King of Kings and Lord of Lords. What is the difference? Jesus humbled Himself. We read in Philippians 2:5-11

“Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ For this reason also, God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus EVERY KNEE WILL BOW, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and that every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.”

What characterised Jesus? HUMILITY! What characterised Lucifer? PRIDE!

Where is Jesus? Exalted at the right hand of Almighty God the Father with a name above every name.

Where is Lucifer? In hell, in the pit and eternally in the lake of fire and brimstone.

What do we learn from this? James tells us in his letter 4:6 ***“GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE.”***

This is why Paul exhorts us to have the same mind as Christ Jesus our Lord. Do you want to be the recipient of God’s grace or do you want Him to oppose you? The choice is yours. If you want His grace then humble yourself.

We return to our foundation text:

⁹ He leads the humble in justice, And He teaches the humble His way.

¹⁰ All the paths of the LORD are loving-kindness and truth To those who keep His covenant and His testimonies.

A little further on we read in verse 14:

¹⁴ The secret of the LORD is for those who fear Him, And He will make them know His covenant. ¹⁵ My eyes are continually toward the LORD, “

Did you get that? The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him. Other translations say the friendship of the Lord. Friends are let into the inner circle and share secrets. God wants to share secrets with us as friends. That is astounding. Yes He will always be Lord and Master, but He also desires our friendship and offers His!

When we are close to Him then we are blessed indeed. He shows us more of His ways and reveals His secrets. What could be greater in life than to live in friendship with God, sharing His secrets?

Jesus said to His disciples: (John 15:9ff):

Just as the Father has loved Me, I have also loved you; abide in My love. ¹⁰ If you keep My commandments, you will abide in My love; just as I have kept My Father's commandments and abide in His love. ¹¹ These things I have spoken to you so that My joy may be in you, and that your joy may be made full. ¹² "This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. ¹³ Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends. ¹⁴ You are My friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, for all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. "

Jesus said: You are My friends if you do what I command you. What does He command us to do? To keep the great commandment: ***" YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND. ' ³⁸ This is the great and foremost commandment. ³⁹ The second is like it, 'YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF. ' ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."*** (Matthew 22:37-40)

To fulfil this commandment what must we do? We must humble ourselves. We must place God and His Kingdom above all else, Do you see how beautifully all this ties together? How simple it really is?

Humble yourself, put God first and He will lift you up to the place where you are not only His child, but also His friend!

We return to where we began. When we submit to God's ways and His thoughts, when we surrender ourselves to Him as a living sacrifice, then He moulds us and shapes us and leads us along the path of blessing.

⁹ He leads the humble in justice, And He teaches the humble His way.

Let us humble ourselves and allow Him to lead us along His path, according to His will and we will be blessed. Amen.

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.