

THE AUSTRALIAN ANABAPTIST

God's solid foundation stands firm. 2 Tim. 2-19

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Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel,
but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in
the house.

Matthew 5:15

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For A Conservative Mennonite Perspective

From The Editor's Desk

Remembrance, Recollection, Reminiscence.

Recently we were blessed with a message on the wonder of memory and it is true that memories can be both pleasant, unpleasant or somewhere in between those two experiences.

The Scripture does have a lot to say about remembering or memories but one thing that stood out was that firstly God has a memory and being made in the image of God we too have a memory. Furthermore God exercise His memory and we are commanded to do the same,

Many times in Scripture we are told to remember His commandments and many other things that He has done, is doing and will do for His people and also those who refuse to acknowledge Him.

We are exhorted to give thanks at the remembrance of His holiness, Psalm 30:4, 97:12, in fact the psalms are full of reminders as to why we should remember God and His works.

Jesus in the gospels also tells us to remember many things as He unfolds His truth through parables.

The Apostle Paul in his letters to various churches also gives to direction to remember many things that will help us in our Christian walk and relationships with others.

God's people are also instructed not to forget some things, in other words we are to remember so that we can learn from the past.

All this is right and a benefit to our walk with Christ Jesus but once we have learned from the things of the past Paul does give the example that we are to forget those things that are behind and reach forth to that which is before us, Philippians 3:13.

Remembering is a choice for us and God makes it clear it is also a choice for Him when it comes to our lives and one of the clearest reminders of this is in Jesus own words in Matthew 6:14-15 where we are forgiven only to the extent we forgive others and that is a warning we should not ignore if we want to be in eternity with Christ, thus Hebrews 10:17 takes on a greater meaning when we compare our level of forgetting with that of God, do we remember an offense against us and not forgive than that is what God will remember.

Do we forgive and forget such an offense than God will remember that too and treat us accordingly. So let us remember God's forgiveness of our sins, remember His mercy and goodness. May our remembering be holy. *JVL*



From the Pulpit

Clothed With Humility

From a message by Brother Kenneth Dyck

We greet each one here this morning for a meditation this morning I invite you to turn to first Peter chapter 5 verses five and six.

I think as we have worshipped in spirit and in truth already our hearts have been humbled by recognizing that Christ is our all sufficiency and that we can do nothing off ourselves.

1 Peter 5:5-6 says here:

"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. ⁶Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:"

The thought that we would like to focus on this morning is clothed with humility and it will be the title we give the message this morning clothed with humility.

Humility is one of those areas that is a little difficult, it seems like the more we focus on whether we are humble or not the more that it escapes us sometimes and it is something that the Bible does say that we are in need of, we must be a humble people and I am glad for the expression of humility that is among us and I think we all feel the need of growing in humility, to be more humble so that God can work in our lives.

I would like to read some more Scripture yet in Philippians chapter 2, [Philippians 2:1-9](#). "If there be therefore any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, ²Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind. ³Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. ⁴Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. ⁵Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: ⁶Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: ⁷But

made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: ⁸And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. ⁹Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name:"

The thought in first Peter chapter 5 where he says be clothed with humility is the picture of being clothed with a garment where we are totally covered and humility is to be wrapped around and tied to us like a garment, something that we wear. It gives a beautiful word picture; it covers the whole body in the same way that humility touches every area of your life. It is something that affects us in every way.

A few areas that it affects us in are that we need humility in our service, the way we reach out to others and fulfil our God-given responsibilities. We need humility in our interpersonal relationships, we need to get along with each other in our worship and in our lifestyle, it seems like it just touches every area of our lives to be humble.

But we also need humility in thought and in action and we will have room to grow in humility as long as we live. We have the self that is in us and it wants to continually rise up in pride and show itself, draw attention to itself and as long as we have self we will battle with pride and have the need for humility.

To be clothed with humility means that in all areas of life humility needs to dawn on our life and many in our day view humility as a jewel, and beautiful as a sentiment but few are willing to wear it and may we not take that approach to it, but that we view humility as a jewel and that we are willing to put it on and we're glad for the expression that we do see of that.

I'd like to think first of all what humility is.

There are several scriptures that tell us with humility is.

[Acts 20:19](#) it says: Serving the Lord with all humility of mind,

[Colossians 3:12](#) it speaks of humbleness of mind.

[Philippians 2:3](#), we just read that, it calls it lowliness of mind.

Romans 20:11 says be not high-minded.

I think these point out that it is a state of mind, we need to be humble in our thoughts how we think about life, ourselves and how we think of others, it is something that starts in our minds and thoughts.

I think another thing that humility is in seeing ourselves away God sees us. How does God see us?

David said: "What is man that thou art mindful of him?" [Psalm 8:4](#).

He felt very low in God's sight and he felt what was there about man that God was even thinking about him.

[Psalm 113:5-6](#) "Who is like unto the LORD our God, who dwelleth on high, ⁶Who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth!"

God humbles Himself to look on the earth and to see us here and yet He has an intense interest in each one of us personally but it should help us to see how God sees us, it humbles Him to look at the earth.

I think another thing is that humility is an issue of the heart and mind that should show as practical fruit in our lives it is not just something we can put on the outside like we do clothing something you just put on, but it is something that has to begin on the inside and work itself out in our lives.

Sometimes it is easier to describe what something is not and I'd like to look a little bit at what humility isn't.

Humility is not degrading ourselves.

I think we all have that tendency sometimes to run ourselves down and to say that we are useless, we just can't do anything right, all of us have probably been guilty of saying that already. I think often we would be disappointed if others would agree with us, and we hope that they would say we are not so bad after all and that smells of pride, it is not humility.

[Colossians 2:18](#) speaks of a voluntary humility and that to me speaks of faithful is humility, something that is pretended, it is not for real, trying to act humble when we are really not, it is something that is put on. And

sometimes we may even feel that there is some honour in appearing humble but that too can be a form of pride, it is not the real thing it is put on.

One other thing that humility is not, it is not exaggerating our failures and that is closely related to not degrading ourselves but we need to guard against making our failures appear worse than what they really are. Many times this is only another form of pride, hoping that others will be impressed by how badly we feel about what we did.

Then there does seem to be some difference between humility and humiliation.

I think of humility as lowliness of mind and the other is as a rule is wounded pride. We use expressions like: I was so embarrassed, or I was mortified. And that is not necessarily an expression of humility rather it can be wounded pride.

Why humility is necessary and then how humility is expressed.

Why is humility necessary?

In [1 Peter 5:5](#) he says that God resisteth the proud. And I think that is why humility is necessary, God sets himself against those who are proud, He holds them at a distance.

In [Romans 8:31](#) he says: If God be for us, who can be against us? And yet the opposite is also true that if God is against us who can be for us?

And so humility is necessary for us to feel God's presence near or else we will distance ourselves from Him if we are proud in heart because God cannot work with those who are proud.

I think the second reason why humility is necessary is to experience God's grace. We see that also in verse five he says: He giveth grace to the humble. [1 Peter 5:5](#)

In order for us to experience God's grace we need to have humility.

You might raise the question: What is God's grace?

God's grace is His unmerited favour to us and God is pleased with those who are humble His blessing is on their lives, He looks favourably upon the humble.

God's grace is also His help in time of need.

In [Hebrews 4:16](#) he says: Let us come boldly before the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

And the humble realise their own weakness, they realise their own insufficiency. Our brother pointed out this morning that we don't have answers in ourselves and yet God has the answers and the humble realise that they need God's help to find their way. So the humble realise their own weakness and lean on God for help.

God is eager to help those who are humble, He is wanting to do that if we see our need of Him.

In [2 Corinthians 12:9](#) the Lord said to Paul he said: My grace is sufficient for thee. For my strength is made perfect in weakness.

And the more we see ourselves as weak and small in God's sight the more His grace will become our strength. And may we see ourselves as weak before Him and insufficient without Him.

One other reason in the third place why humility is necessary. It is necessary for God to hear our prayers and we have a few examples of that in the Scripture.

The Ninevites sat in sackcloth and ashes and cried out to God when Jonah came through and told them of the coming judgement they humbled themselves and God heard them and He turned from His judgement, He did not judge them after all. [Jonah 3:5, Jonah 4:11](#).

Another example would be the Pharisee and the publican, they went to the temple to pray and God heard that prayer of the humble publican but he did not hear that prayer of the Pharisee and the Scriptures tell us that the Pharisee prayed thus with himself, his prayer did not reach God. [Luke 18:10-14](#) And so God hears the prayer of the humble.

In [Psalm 9:12](#) it says that He forgetteth not the cry of the humble. God's ears are open to the humble.

[1 Peter 3:12](#) tells us that:

"For the eyes of the Lord are over the righteous, and his ears are open unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord is against them that do evil."
 That verse is not necessarily speaking of humility but we know that that is definitely a part of it, to those who are humble God's ears are open to their prayers, He will answer them.

I would like to look now at humility expressed and would like to share a different areas but I'm sure you could think of some other ways in which humility is expressed.

Humility is expressed in our submission to God and to each other.

We see that in [1 Peter 5:5](#) it says: Likewise ye younger submit yourselves unto the elder, yea all of you be subject one to another.

And in [James 4:6-7](#) it tells us here: "But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble. ⁷Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you."

It tells us there that we need to submit ourselves to God.

What is submitting ourselves to God?

I think it means that we want God's will above our own will, it means that we give in every area of our life, we don't have any reservation, and pride seeks to take its own way it wants to take its own course but humility seeks to take God's way and not its own way.

Jesus said in the Garden: Not my will but thine be done. Jesus learned submission. [Luke 22:42](#)

[Philippians 2](#) tells us that Jesus humbled Himself and became obedient unto death even the death of the cross.

Jesus yielded His will to God's will and humbled Himself to die on the cross for us. He needed to give up Himself and what He wanted for God's will.

And we need to daily give up our wills to God and believe that His way is best for our lives. It takes faith to believe that whatever God brings in our lives is for our highest good and that He knows what is best and sometimes it even means doing what God's Word says even though we don't understand it and don't understand why.

It takes humility to submit ourselves to God and to just accept His will for our life.

Also humility is expressed in submission to each other, and you notice that in [1 Peter 5:5](#) he says all of you be subject one to another.

Being subject to one another is a voluntary choice that we make as a result of our commitment to God. I think we need to see that we cannot separate the two, submission to God and submission to each other, those two go together. As we submit ourselves to God and we give Him our wills and want what He wants then we also submit to each other.

Church life provides many opportunities for us to be subject to each other, to give and to take from each other, and humble subjection helps us to be gracious in the difficulties of human relationships and those other difficulties of life at times, but as we have an attitude of humble subjection and submission to each other it helps us to be gracious to each other.

We have different backgrounds and different personalities, differing ideas, and humble subjection helps us to be gracious with these things.

In the second place humility is expressed when we value the counsel of others.

Those who are humble realise that they do not have all the answers and as was pointed out this morning by our brother that we realise that we do have questions and we don't always have the answers but God has the answers and we need to see that in ourselves that we don't have all the answers, that we don't know everything. The proud tend to feel that they have more answers than what they actually do but humility helps us not to become individualistic, it helps us to blend ourselves with the group and not just to insist on our own ideas.

It helps us to see how little we know ourselves and how much we need each other. Humility calls us to appreciate the direction of others and we need direction in all areas of life, in church life or whether raising our children, our work, we need the direction of others and humility helps us to value their input even if our viewpoint differs from theirs somewhat we still value their input in our life.

In the third place humility is expressed by being willing to confess our faults.

[James 5:16](#) tells us: "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."

We need to confess our faults. It takes humility to say that I was wrong, and I think all of us have faced that test of humility already where we needed to go and apologise to someone, maybe we said something or we did something that was wrong and we need to go back and apologise and it tests our humility.

Pride comes up with all kinds of excuses why it is not necessary, why we don't have to go back to apologise or to say that we were wrong but humility is willing to do that to say that I was wrong and to make things right.

In the fourth place humility expresses itself in meekness.

This may be closely related to humility but I think meekness has more the thought of being above offence and doing injury, patience and without resentment.

I would just like to read a verse from Numbers chapter 12 about Moses, the Scripture tells us that he was the meekest man, [Numbers 12:3](#) says: "Now the man Moses was very meek, above all the men which were upon the face of the earth."

What was it about Moses that we can know that he was meek?

Well just before this in the same chapter Miriam and Aaron had spoken against Moses and they were accusing him of having an Ethiopian woman and Moses always related to those situations graciously it seems, and God was willing to wipe the whole congregation out at that time and yet Moses pled for the people, he did not resent the people's opposition to him and he was always willing to work with them. And I think that is an expression of meekness, not becoming easily injured but patient and enduring and without resentment.

In [Matthew 11:29](#) it tells us: "Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

It is speaking of Jesus being meek and lowly, He is an example of that. The Scripture [1 Peter 2:23](#) tell us that when He was reviled He reviled not again.

Jesus faced much opposition and injustice and yet He did not revile, He still loved all men and even on the cross when they had nailed Him there He said: Father forgive them for they know not what they do. [Luke 23:34](#).

Jesus was meek and He tells us to learn of Him to be meek and lowly.

[Proverbs 13:10](#) says: "Only by pride cometh contention: but with the well advised is wisdom."

I think that verse helps us to conclude that when there is contention, whenever we don't get along pride is at the root of it and we need to crucify that. Humility brings rest rather than unrest.

In the fifth place humility is expressed in joyful service without being noticed.

Much of the Lord's work is accomplished behind the scenes where individuals may be don't even notice that we are doing something but the humble person is not hurt even though he receives little recognition, he is not serving to be seen of men but rather he is serving for love of Christ.

Jesus said if you do things to be seen of men ye have your reward and you will not receive a reward of God. [Matthew 6:5](#).

Humility is also essential for effective service. If we want to serve in an effective way we need to be humble.

Jesus was our example of service. In [Luke 22:7](#) Jesus said: But I am among you as He that serveth.

In [Philippians 2:7](#) we read about Jesus taking upon Himself the form of a servant, He did not come to be served even though He would have been worthy of that, yet He came to be a servant and to serve others.

And that is an example of humility.

In the sixth place humility is expressed by esteeming others better than ourselves.

In [Philippians 2:3](#) he tells us to esteem others better than ourselves.

In [Romans 12:10](#) he says in honour preferring one another.

It is how we view others how we think of other people. How much do we value our opinions, do we value them all or do we value others opinions more?

I think we need to view others as better than ourselves to view their opinions better than our own.

Humility helps us to rejoice in the successes of others. Can we rejoice when others are succeeding? Humility wants to see others gain ground.

In the seventh place humility expresses itself in simplicity.

This is evident in different ways it can even be evident in our countenance how we appear. Sometimes we can see it in individuals how they tend to feel about themselves, it is also evident in our dress, in our vehicles, the way we live, our lifestyle, and it shows up in so many ways whether we are living simply.

The Bible warns us in [Proverbs 6:17](#) that the Lord hates a proud look. It lists seven different things in there and the first one is a proud look.

And we do well to ask ourselves: Why am I doing, what I am doing? Sometimes we are tempted to make a change or maybe put something on our vehicles or something and we need to ask ourselves: Why am I doing what I am? Is it pride or is it humility, what is motivating my life?

Humility is also necessary in the eighth place and is expressed by crucifying self.

Isn't this what is laying in the way of humility, the big I?

We probably all read that it is significant that the centre letter of pride is I and it seems to be that the centre of pride is the focus on me and myself and humility and pride, humility and self are not compatible they don't go together. We need to crucify self in order to be humble.

To be humble souls must be dethroned and Jesus put on the throne of our life.

Many view humility as destroying their self, their self-image they look at it like you become useless and there have been a lot of books and seminars and things that are available to try and help people to have a better self-image and yet I think we do well to ask ourselves whether these things help people to focus less on themselves or more on themselves?

The Bible doesn't really tell us how to build our self-image. There is a proper way to view ourselves, the Bible does tell us to think not more highly of ourselves than we ought to think. [Romans 12:3](#), indicating that there

is a proper way to view ourselves but the Bible rather tells us to devote our lives to Christ not how to build our self-image.

[Matthew 16:24-25](#), the Scriptures are actually very hard on the self-life, Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. ²⁵For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it."

It says here that we need to crucify self; we are to deny ourselves in order to follow Christ. When we focus on Christ rather than on ourselves the important questions are not: What do people think of me? Or Do I have a healthy self-image? Who am I? and focusing on ourselves.

But rather the question becomes then: Is Christ having His way in my life? That needs to be the real question. Are others seeing Christ in me or what do others think of Jesus when they look at my life?

These are important questions and they help us to have rather more of a Christ focus rather than a self-focus when we have kept Him on the throne of our life.

That doesn't mean that Christians don't think about themselves at all, that they just become haphazard about themselves but it means that we are no longer absorbed in ourselves but rather that we are wrapped up in Christ. He wants to live His life in us, to change us from the inside out to be more like Him.

I think of the Scripture in [2 Corinthian 3](#) it says: "We all with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord."

God was to change our lives and as we look into the mirror of God's Word we see ourselves in the light of becoming more like Christ it will help us to have a proper view of ourselves and I think that takes care of us focusing on our self-image when we try to focus on being like Christ.

Last of all I would like to look at how we become humble.

[1 Peter 5:6](#) tells us to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.

I raise the question: Well how do we do that?

I think that one of the ways we humble ourselves by sin God for whom He is. We need to see Him for how holy He is.

[Isaiah 6:1-5](#), I'm just going to read those verses, Isaiah had a vision of God and it helped him to have a proper perspective of himself,

"In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. ²Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. ³And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. ⁴And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

⁵Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD of hosts."

When Isaiah saw the Lord he saw His Holiness, he saw how great God was and his own un-doneness, he realised that he himself was unclean and he needed God's help to clean up his life.

And that will help us to be humble when we see God's Holiness when we see ourselves.

[Job 42:5-6](#) says when Job saw God he abhorred himself and he felt unworthy to in God's presence and I think that is how we need to see ourselves as well.

When we truly see God we see our own insufficiency and un-doneness.

I also think we become humble when we worship in spirit and in truth, we need to see God for whom He is and realise how needy we are and that without Him we really are nothing.

The third place I think we become humble by having the mind of Christ. I just like to draw our attention again to [Philippians 2:5](#), it says: "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."

What was the mind of Christ?

Well the mind of Christ was to come and serve others, He did not make Himself of any reputation, He took upon Himself the form of a servant. [Philippians 2:7](#). He came to give His life not to make a name for Himself.

We need to think like Christ, it is important for us to think: How would Christ think? and try to have that same kind of mind so that we would think like Christ thought and I think the more we become like our Lord the more humble we will become the more we become like Christ.

May we focus on being like Christ so that we can be humble the way God wants us to be humble.

May the Lord bless us to that end.



SPIRITUAL VERSUS CARNAL

When a sinner is brought to the realization of his sinfulness, he is conscious that he stands justly condemned before the Judge of all the earth. With this revelation comes the realization that he has no merits and that he is wholly dependent on the mercy of God for forgiveness and reconciliation.

As he looks to the Lamb of God and by faith accepts the atoning blood, the peace of God floods his soul. He now finds that Christ is all he needs. "But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption" 1 Corinthians 1:30. "But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ" 2 Peter 3:18.

Often, when someone first comes to know the Lord, the understanding of God and His Word is very limited. As the new believer has a desire to become better acquainted with the Christian walk, he is soon aware that not all who profess to be Christians hold the same views. There are so many varied confessions and practices among Christian professors that it can be very confusing.

God has made provisions for the babes in Christ in the New Testament church. Here a body of believers has been brought together under the headship of Christ and, therefore, is united in understanding and application of doctrine. It is within the structure of this body that a young Christian can

establish a firm foundation for his personal faith.

Our world is rife with false doctrine. Without the safety of the sheepfold, the danger of being deceived and ultimately destroyed is much greater. No one Christian is complete of himself, but he is only one member of the whole body. It takes the supply of the many gifts and the contribution of many members to make a structure that can withstand the onslaught of the enemy. "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive" Ephesians 4:14.

The deceitfulness of pride.

As a Christian explores the broader dimensions of the faith, he makes new discoveries. This could be compared with the growth of an adolescent boy or girl. However, as their knowledge increases and they make new discoveries, they might think that Dad or Mother might not know what they now know. This is a sign of their immaturity and also is evidence of the pride of their heart.

Something similar can take place with the growing Christian. As he gains understanding and new light dawns upon him, he is subject to the subtle spirit of pride, which would cause him to think too highly of himself. If this spirit is left to grow, it will begin to question the light of the elders and, eventually, even the church.

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Free thinking.

This condition is one where the individual feels that new discoveries are likely, and therefore existing boundaries need not be fully honoured. In our physical world, the free thinker has been successful in making new discoveries. But in the Christian realm, the faith has been clearly established and is unchangeable.

Because pride is the motivating factor in the free thinker, it opens the door for the prince of this world to give a little twist to the meaning of scriptures. When self motivates one the Scriptures seem to lend themselves in support of light that differs with the longstanding doctrine of the New Testament church.

Personal causes.

There is a strong desire in the carnal man to want to make an identity for

himself. It is a marvel what measures men and women employ for that purpose.

So likewise, in the Christian realm, this carnal desire can be manifested. One can begin to promote a certain doctrine or issue as being all-important. Yet he or she may be inconsistent in other areas. The zeal that manifests itself sets a man apart, and he becomes identified with what he is promoting. This becomes a personal cause in a very subtle way. Deception is also involved in a personal cause. What makes it deceptive is that the importance of the issue, as perceived by the individual, does have some validity. How can a good thing be wrong? When the emphasis comes from self, it subtracts from the value the issue might have.

Free thinking and personal causes are divisive. Since no provisions have been made for the flesh in man's relationship with God, anything that is motivated by the flesh (self) is foreign to the Spirit of Christ. It causes discomfort to the body of believers. When the spiritual body is healthy, it begins to reach out to the infected member in various ways. If the affected member responds, God be praised, but if the affected member does not respond, the infection becomes more acute. Admonition either moves the erring member God-ward or causes hardening of the heart.

Humility keeps us within safe boundaries. "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith" Romans 12:3.

The humble person is also one who holds a simple faith. Being childlike is compared to humility. Children are trusting. They do not need answers for everything but are willing to accept what their parents and others whom they trust tell them. Simple trust is possible for the humble, because they believe what God says and they also have confidence that God is leading the church. They willingly accept the light of the body.

The proud person finds it difficult to accept the light of the body unless it harmonizes with his own understanding.

The humble person does seek to better understand the mysteries of the gospel, but always within the perimeter of the united view of the body. To the carnal man, such confines are unacceptable, but they serve as security to the spiritual man.

The spiritual man has a benchmark herein to check his thinking. If he finds that he has deviated somewhat, he will question his own thinking ra-

ther than what is already established. This is his safety, and he will not soon fall into deception.

To the carnal man, "freedom" is the liberty to chart the course of his life as seems right to him. To the spiritual man, "freedom" is to be crucified with Christ and to no longer live after the flesh but after the Spirit. "For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" Romans 8:6.

Brother Milton



THE GLORY OF HIS GRACE

The Apostle Paul tells us that God wants His children to live "to the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved" Ephesians 1:5-6. The fulfilling of this purpose should be quite "natural," or spontaneous, for believers. Partaking of the divine nature 2 Peter 1:4, they live such a life in the Spirit that the grace of the Lord Jesus is magnified. A circumspect and holy life speaks of the glorious grace flowing from Golgotha's hill and redounds to the honour and praise of the Lamb slain for the sin of the world. We do well to let our minds ponder the wonder of His great grace.

The Apostle Peter says we should be "good stewards of the manifold grace of God" 1 Peter 4:10. Other translations render "manifold grace" as "multi-formed" or "multi-faceted grace." Here we want to consider a facet of grace to which we, likely, do not give sufficient recognition. This working of grace may be highlighted with a question: How much more lamentable would our present state be were it not for the preserving grace of God?

The above question implies a discouraging condition, but it refers to a tendency in our spirits. With some exceptions, it appears to be our nature to focus on the disappointing and negative things in life. We talk with anxiousness about that which should be different. This aspect of human nature can easily perpetuate a mind-set that overlooks the positive things. As is

sometimes said, we fail to "see the roses" along the pathway of life. People who are caught in such a frame of mind are miserable and become unbalanced in their view of life.

If this only pertained to the natural side of life, it would be sad and tragic enough. But it acquires another dimension when we fail to see the beauty of God's grace in our individual lives, in our congregations, and in the church, despite the things that should be different. Certainly, grace is the power of Calvary to remedy what needs to be different. Knowing that, we tend to be frustrated when those things do not change like they should. But let us remember that there is that divine favour that has kept us back from even more drift and spiritual loss than we possibly realize. Here is a mighty working of grace that is worthy of praise.

The point here is not to minimize or ignore any needs that are among us. On the contrary the truth is that when we acknowledge the positive things due to God's grace, it surely is His pleasure to pour out more grace upon us. James speaks of God giving "more grace" James 4:6. If the grace and power of His dear Son is gratefully and truthfully acknowledged, why would He not be pleased to grant the needed additional grace to obtain our desired revival?

Satan has tactics suited for every Christian. He subtly distracts many sincere believers' look to Calvary's merit by causing them to focus on their track record. Of course, when we look at what we are or have done, we see nothing good. There is no assurance here. In truth, should one begin to derive a sense of security from his record, he or she would be in real peril Galatians 5:4. The truth is that there is no justifying merit or genuine assurance in good works and virtues.

Some who are caught in this misguided introspection need help to again tear their eyes off their dismal record and look to Jesus' all-sufficient merit for comfort and assurance. While we are unworthy sinners by nature, there is a time to praise the "glory of his grace" in our lives instead of wallowing in despondency. The fact is that the grace in Christ Jesus, not our strength of will or good character, has kept us from many of the all-too-common sins known to man. This isn't boasting in ourselves and results in humility

and brokenness with thanksgiving. It is not the attitude of the Pharisee praying with himself in the temple Luke 18:10-12. We are only giving due credit to the Lord for what He has done and is doing for us despite our failings.

We may take the above familiar situation and apply it to the Church also. Today she is fighting a very real battle against the forces of evil. We are troubled by the needs among us. The tendency might be to hang our harps on the willows, Psalm 137:2 and default on singing the songs of Zion. But let us remember that, unlike the Israelites in Babylon, we are not captives in an alien land but ambassadors of that Heavenly country. We have reason to, and must, sing the songs of Zion relating to the abundant grace bestowed upon the church.

In our endeavour to draw close to the Lord and keep the faith, we long, as a church, to be a more perfect representation of our spiritual homeland. And we are, by the grace of God, taking seriously the urgent pleading of the Spirit to make amends. We cannot rest at ease, nor stick our heads in the sand. However, it might be a question how our mission as representatives of heaven and "workers on a building rare" is best served. Is it by seeing only the needs and decay, or by also recognizing God's grace for the much that remains, Revelation 3:2? One thing can be said without qualification: When God knows that the "glory of his grace" will receive the honour and praise, no credit reserved for ourselves, He is unhindered in giving abounding grace.

We know the account of the remnant of Israelites who, under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, began to rebuild the wasted temple in Jerusalem. That was a time of spiritual restoration and recovery. But it was accomplished with mixed emotions. They saw the destruction and desolation. No doubt they were grieved. But they sang songs of praise and gave thanks unto the Lord, "for his mercy endureth forever towards Israel." Then we read these words, "But many of the priests and Levites and chief of the fathers, who were ancient men, that had seen the first house, when the foundation of this house was laid before their eyes, wept with a loud voice; and many shouted aloud for joy: So that the people could not discern the noise of the shout of joy from the noise of the weeping of the people: for the

people shouted with a loud shout, and the noise was heard afar off' Ezra 3:12-13.

In our concern and efforts today, we also labour with mixed emotions. We can encourage ourselves, and give the Lord honour and praise, by noting the bulwarks and towers of Zion that stand steadfast and true despite the onslaughts of Satan. Where would we go for a safer haven of refuge from sin? Where would one go for a more careful watching over his or her soul and for reliable direction as to the way of salvation? We thank God and praise the glory of His grace for preserving such a blessing for us. Let us seek such a heart that leaves our Lord unhindered to pour out the needed measure of grace for our help in time of need, Hebrews 4:16.

Brother Isaac



CHASTISEMENT NOT PUNISHMENT

God is love. His love is so great towards us that He sent Jesus to this world to make a way whereby man can be saved. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son" John 3:16. He is "not willing that any should perish" 2 Peter 3:9.

The thought of this writing is to encourage a proper way to accept tribulations and afflictions that come our way. We want to receive the benefit God has intended for us in these things. "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten" Revelation 3:19. "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord nor faint when thou art rebuked of him" Hebrews 12:5.

Punish and chastise are the words used to bring the object of this article. Punish implies the infliction of some penalty on a wrong doer and generally denotes retribution rather than correction. Chasten implies the infliction of tribulation in order to make obedient, meek, etc. and is used especially in biblical terms. Punishment was used in the Old Testament.

The governments of our countries use punishment for transgressors. Some have adopted a rehabilitation program for lesser transgressors. These types

of programs would imply chastisement where the transgressors are taught to live right and be proper citizens.

Godly child training would be considered chastisement rather than punishment. A parent may at times demand a youngster to use of his own money to pay for wilful damage done, which could be an example of punishment. However, the desired goal would be that of training and moulding of character. "As a man chasteneth his son, so the Lord thy God chasteneth thee" Deuteronomy 8:5.

Considering God's love towards us, chastening gives us a better understanding of God's moulding work in our lives. God loves so much that He will not impose unnecessary hardship and affliction upon us as a means of punishment. He wants to prepare us for an unselfish and constructive life. He wants to do all He can so He can take us to heaven for all eternity.

Afflictions, tribulations, and disappointments that come our way may be God-sent. "Behold, happy is the man whom God correcteth: therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty" Job 5:17. These things may also be a result of the natural and physical setting in which we live. Our physical bodies are prone to sickness, disease, and death. The earth we live on is subject to storms, adverse elements, and disasters, which have a direct effect on the human race. Accidents may happen as a result of mistakes and human error. "Yet man is born unto trouble, as the sparks fly upward" Job 5:7.

When misfortunes and afflictions happen to us, our minds are often turned to questioning: "Why has this happened to me? When God was watching over me, why did He allow this to come my way?" Often these questions come to us because the afflictions are beyond our control. Then we must look to God, who is the master of all these things. The promise of God in 2 Corinthians 10:13 comforts us. He will not allow anything to happen to us that we cannot bear.

We should not let Satan confuse the chastisement of God with punishment. Satan would like to intervene and gain an advantage of us. He suggests that God is punishing us and perhaps does not love us. We may even

be tempted to think that we are being picked on and treated unfairly. We then wonder what we have done wrong or what can we do so it will not happen again. We may even endeavour to live so correctly so as to prevent tribulation and affliction. Yet it comes again in an unexpected way or time. This may lead to confusion, because we have tried to live faithfully and seemingly can't find a reason for a "punishment" for things beyond our control. Satan is trying to undermine our faith and complete trust in God.

Sometimes we observe tribulation and afflictions happening to others. Thinking that they are being punished usually does not help us to be understanding and compassionate of them. Thinking in terms of chastisement would tend to help us be considerate towards them, and we would be in a better position to reach out in love and caring.

There may be times when we experience injury or setback because of carelessness or sinful living. We should not consider this a punishment but rather a reaping for our sowing. In that way we can allow it to teach us a lesson. Isaiah 53:3-6 prophesies of Jesus' sufferings for our transgressions and iniquities. Jesus made the payment for our sins, shortcomings, and failures. Redemption is a free gift to mankind. God does not expect us to make payment by way of being punished in any way. We do not pay our way to heaven or gain merit by works, sufferings, or sacrifice, "lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect" 1 Corinthians 1:17. "For by grace are ye saved ..." Ephesians 2:8-9. To experience that free gift each one who wants to be saved needs to acknowledge his sins before the cross of Christ and accept the gift of God.

When trials come our way, we should look to God as being loving, gracious, and merciful towards us. God may have some good in mind for us. What does God want to teach me? Which area of my life needs refining? We need to give ourselves to Him to reshape us as clay in the potter's hand Jeremiah 18:1-6. We need to realize that the harder knocks in life, like tragedy and sudden death, are hard to bear. This realization helps us hold still and hold to God's unchanging, almighty hand. We need to let the lovingkindness of God comfort us at these trying times.

A lot of reasoning and trying to figure out why this happened may be con-

fusing. Here we need to allow our faith to accept that God knows what is good for us, even if we do not understand at the time. The sooner we can submit and resign ourselves to the trial, the sooner God can bestow His refining work on us and make us more fit for the Master's use. "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ" 1 Peter 1:7.

The discipline and chastisement that godly parents give their children is a good thing. They are preparing their children for life. Children need to learn to share and be unselfish, to take responsibility, to work, and to be kind, useful, constructive citizens. So God also chastens us with afflictions and trials to further sanctify and prepare us for service. Godly parents discipline with an eternal love at heart. They realize that a disciplined child has an advantage when God calls them to get converted, thereby preparing themselves for that heavenly home.

God has an eternal goal in mind for us. It is His good pleasure to give us a dwelling in heaven for all eternity. The disappointments we go through need only hinder our earthly life; however, they are a great advantage to our spiritual life. "For which cause we faint not; but though our outward man perish, yet the inward man is renewed day by day" 2 Corinthians 4:16.

May we conclude with Job that "the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed by the name of the Lord" Job 1:21.

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