

People Jesus Met, part 20 – The Arrogant Rabbis (Humility)

“Fourscore and seven years ago, our forefathers brought forth upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”

“. . . before honor comes humility.” Proverbs 15:33

“One Sabbath, when Jesus went to eat at the house of a prominent rabbi, the guests were watching Him closely.” Luke 14:1

“And behold there was a man there with dropsy.” Luke 14:2

“Jesus asked the rabbis there, ‘Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath or not?’ But they remained silent. So Jesus took hold of the man and healed him.” Luke 14:3, 4

“Then Jesus said to the rabbis, ‘If one of you has a son or an ox that falls into a well on the Sabbath, will you not immediately pull him out?’ But they said nothing.” Luke 14:5, 6

What stands out about these rabbis is their massive arrogance.

“When Jesus noticed how the invited guests had been picking out the places of honor at the table . . .” Luke 14:7

The closer you sat to the host, the higher your standing on the social ladder.

“When someone invites you to a feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited.” Luke 14:8

“And then, the host will come and say to you, ‘Give this man your seat.’ And in disgrace, you will be forced to occupy the lowest seat.” Luke 14:9

“He’d better bring his ‘A’ game is all I’ve got to say.” Kenny Perry

There’s nothing more humiliating than shamelessly promoting yourself and then publicly having to “eat crow.”

“But when you are invited to a feast, go and take the lowest seat, so the host may come to you and say, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ And then you will have honor in the sight of all your fellow guests.” Luke 14:10

“Do not claim honor for yourself in the king’s presence. Do not exalt yourself as though you were a great man. For it is better that it be said to you: ‘Come up higher,’ than for you to be demoted in the presence of all.” Proverbs 25:6, 7

This approach to life demands humility which (Jesus says to these rabbis) is the virtue God promises to bless –not arrogance.

“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.” Luke 14:11

So What?

“A person’s pride will bring them low, but a humble spirit will obtain honor.” Proverbs 29:23

“God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, and He will exalt you in due time.” 1 Peter 5:5b, 6

*“Whoever shall humble himself as a little child, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.”
Mathew 18:4*

#1 – True biblical humility is not self-deprecation or self-degradation.

#2 – True biblical humility is not “acting humble” to camouflage the true condition of our heart.

True biblical humility is a Holy Spirit-produced way of seeing ourselves.

A truly humble person is a person who recognizes that all they have/are/have ever accomplished – is all because of God’s undeserved mercy to them.

“Success in life is often suspended on the narrowest of margins.”

Every bit of success that we have is all an underserved gracious gift to us from God.

“What do you have that you did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as though you did not receive it?” 1 Corinthians 4:7

“I don’t deserve any special treatment for the talents I have.”

I don’t deserve any credit for the success I’ve achieved.”

“God did all this for me so I could use it to serve other people, not exalt myself.”

Humility is all about how we see ourselves in relation to God [as a recipient of undeserved mercy] and in relation to other people [as a servant].

Suggestion #1

Ask God to make us more humble

True biblical humility must be produced in us by the Holy Spirit.

Suggestion #2

Calmly submit to God’s humility process

Nobody ever learned humility from success.

We learn humility in the crucible of suffering.

“Remember how the LORD your God led you in the desert these forty years, to humble you and test you . . .” Deuteronomy 8:2

“He humbled you and let you be hungry and then fed you with manna . . . The LORD your God was disciplining you just as a man disciplines his son.” Deuteronomy 8:3, 5

“Now no discipline seems pleasant at the time it is being administered, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of peace and righteousness for those who have been trained by it.” Hebrews 12:11

“Everybody wants the product but nobody wants the process.”