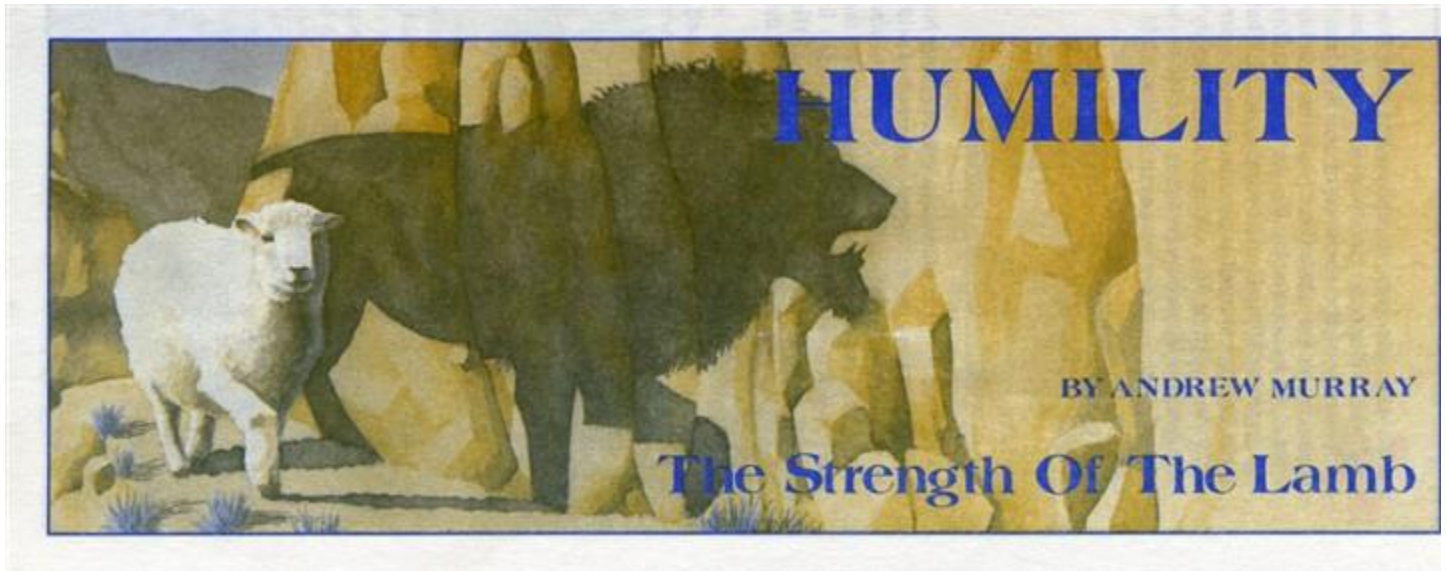


Humility—The Strength of the Lamb

By Andrew Murray



No tree can grow except on the root from which it sprang. And what is the root and essence of the character of our Redeemer? There can be but one answer: it is His humility. What is the Incarnation but His heavenly humility, His emptying Himself and becoming man? What is His life on earth but taking the form of a servant? And what is His atonement but humility? *"He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross."* (Phil. 2:8)

And what is His ascension and His glory but humility exalted to the throne and crowned with glory? *"He humbled Himself.... Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name."* (Phil. 2:8,9) In Heaven (where He was with the Father), in His birth, in His life, in His death, in His sitting on the throne - it is nothing but humility.

Christ is the humility of God embodied in human nature, the Eternal Love humbling itself, clothing itself in meekness and gentleness to win and serve and save us. As the love and humility of God make Him the helper and servant of all, so Jesus was the Incarnate Humility. And so He is still in the midst of the throne, the meek and lowly Lamb of God.

Our First Priority

If this be the root of the tree, its nature must be seen in every branch and leaf and fruit. If humility be the first, the all-inclusive grace of the life of Jesus - if humility be the *secret* of His atonement - then the health and strength of *our* spiritual lives will entirely depend upon our giving this grace first priority in our lives. We need to make humility the chief thing we admire in Him, the chief thing we ask of Him, and the one thing for which we sacrifice all else.

Is it any wonder that the Christian life is so often feeble and fruitless when the very root of Christ's life is neglected - is unknown? We must have a humility in which we rest in nothing less than the end and death of self. A humility which gives up all the honor of men, as Jesus did, to seek the honor that comes from God alone. A humility which absolutely makes and counts itself nothing so that God may be all and the Lord alone may be exalted.

In the Gospel of John we have the inner life of our Lord laid open to us. Jesus speaks frequently of His relation to the Father, of the motives by which He is guided, and of His consciousness of the power and spirit in which He acts. Though the word "humble" does not occur in the Gospel of John, we shall nowhere else in Scripture see the humility of Jesus so clearly represented.

We have already said that this grace is in truth nothing but the simple consent of the creature to let God be all - surrendering itself to His working alone. In Jesus we shall see how both as the Son of God in heaven, and as a man upon earth, He willingly took an inferior position in order to give God the honor and glory due only to Him.

The Humility Of Jesus

And what Jesus taught His disciples was always true of Himself: *"He who humbles himself shall be exalted."* (Luke 14:11) Listen to the words in which our Lord speaks of His relation to the Father, and see how unceasingly He uses the words *not* - and *nothing* - of Himself. The *not I* in which Paul expresses his relation to Christ is the very spirit of what Christ says of His relation to the Father.

"The Son can do nothing of Himself..." (John 5:19)

"I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me." (John 6:38)

"My teaching is not Mine" (John 7:16)

"I do nothing of Myself" (John 8:28 KJV)

"I have not come of Myself but He sent Me." (John 8:42 KJV)

"I seek not Mine own glory" (John 8:50 KJV)

"The words that I say, I speak not from Myself" (John 14:10 KJV)

These words open to us the deepest roots of Christ's life and work. They tell us how it was that the Almighty God was able to work His mightily redemptive work through Jesus. They teach us what the essential nature of that redemption is which Christ accomplished and still communicates to us. It is this: *He was nothing, that God might be all.*

He resigned Himself, by His will and His powers, entirely for the Father to work in Him. Of His own power, own will, and His own glory, of His whole mission with all His works and His teachings - of all this He said: *It is not I. I am nothing. I have given Myself to the Father to, work and I am nothing. The Father is all.*

Christ found this life of absolute submission and dependence upon the Father's will to be one of perfect peace and joy. He lost nothing by giving all to God. God honored His trust, and did all for Him, and then exalted Him to His own right hand in glory. And because Christ had thus humbled Himself before God, and God was ever before Him, He found it possible to humble Himself before men and become the Servant of all. Jesus' humility was simply the surrender of Himself to God, to allow the Father to do in Him what He pleased - no matter what men said about Him or what they did to Him.

Blessed Are The Meek

We have seen humility in the life of Christ as He laid open His heart to us - now let us listen to His teaching. There we shall hear how He speaks of it and how far He expects men (especially His disciples) to be humble as He was. Let us carefully study the scriptures below to receive the full impression of how often and how earnestly He taught about humility:

- Look at the commencement of His ministry. In the Beatitudes with which the Sermon on the Mount opens, He speaks: *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven. Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth."* (Matt. 5:3,5) The very first words of His proclamation of the Kingdom of heaven reveal the open gate through which we must enter. The poor who *have nothing* in themselves - to them the Kingdom comes, the meek who *seek nothing* in themselves - theirs the earth shall be. The blessings of heaven and earth are for the lowly. For the heavenly and the earthly life, humility is the secret of blessing.
- *"Take My, yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart; and you shall find rest for your souls."* (Matt. 11:29) Jesus offers Himself as Teacher. He tells us what the spirit is which we shall find in Him as Teacher and which we can learn and receive from Him. Meekness and lowliness is the one thing He offers us, for in it we shall find perfect rest of soul. Humility is to be our salvation.
- The disciples had been disputing who would be the greatest in the Kingdom, and had agreed to ask the Master. He set a child in their midst and said, *"Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven."* (Matt. 18:4) Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of heaven? That question is indeed a far-reaching one. What will be the chief distinction in the heavenly Kingdom? The answer - none but Jesus would have given. The chief glory of heaven, the true heavenly-mindedness, the chief of the graces, is humility. *"For he who is least among you, this is the one who is great..."* (Luke 9:48)
- The sons of Zebedee had asked Jesus to sit on His right and left, the highest place in the Kingdom. Jesus said it was not His to give but the Father's who would give it to those for whom it was prepared. They must not look or ask for it. And then He added, *"Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant...just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve..."* (Matt. 20:26-28) Humility, as it is the mark of Christ the heavenly, will be the one standard of glory in heaven - the lowliest is the nearest to God.
- Speaking to the multitude and the disciples of, the Pharisees and their love of the chief seats, Christ said once again: *"But the greatest among you shall be your servant."* (Matt. 23:11) Humility the only ladder to ladder to honor in God's Kingdom.

- In relating the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, Christ explained, "*For everyone who exalts himself shall be humbled, but he who humbles himself shall be exalted.*" (Luke 18:14) In the temple and presence and worship of God, everything is worthless that is not pervaded by deep, true humility toward God and men.
- After washing the disciples' feet, Jesus said, "*If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.*" (John 13:14) By His own words it is clear that Jesus considered humility to be one of the first and most essential elements of discipleship.
- At the Last Supper table, the disciples still disputed who should be the greatest. Jesus said, "*Let him who is the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as the servant.*" (Luke 22:26) The pain in which Jesus walked, and the power and spirit in which He accomplished our salvation, is ever the humility that makes me the servant of all.

How little this is preached! How little it is practiced! How little the lack of it is felt or confessed! I do not say how few **attain** to some measure of likeness to Jesus in His humility - but rather how few ever even **think** of making humility the distinct object of their continual desire or prayer! How little the world has seen it! How little has it been seen even in the inner circle of the Church.

Yield Yourself To God

"Whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant." (Matt. 20:26) We all know what the character of a faithful servant or slave implies: devotion to the master's interests, thoughtful study and care to please him, delight in his prosperity and honor and happiness. There have been servants on earth in whom these qualities have been seen, and for these men and women the name of "servant" has never been anything but a glory.

To how many of us has it not been a new joy in the Christian life to know that we may yield ourselves as servants, as slaves to God, and to find that His service is our highest liberty - indeed, the liberty from sin and self? We need now to learn another lesson, and that is that *Jesus calls us to be servants of one another*. And as we come to accept it wholeheartedly, this service too will be a most blessed one, a new and fuller liberty from sin and self.

At first it may appear hard, but this is only because of the pride which still counts itself something of importance. If once we learn that to be nothing before God is the glory of the creature, the spirit of Jesus, the joy of Heaven - then we shall welcome with our whole heart the discipline we may have in serving even those who try to trouble us. When our own heart is set upon this, *the true sanctification*, we shall study the words that Jesus spoke on "humbling oneself" with new eagerness. Then no place will be too inferior, and no stooping too deep, and no service too lowly or too long continued, if we may but share and prove the fellowship with Him who said, "*I am among you as the one who serves.*" (Luke 22:27)

Seek The Higher Love

Brethren, here is the path to the higher life. Down, lower down! This was what Jesus said to the disciples who were thinking of being great in the Kingdom. *Seek not, ask not for exaltation - that is God's work*. Look to it that you consistently lower and humble yourselves, and take no place before God or man but that of a servant. That is your work, and let that be your one purpose and prayer.

God is faithful. Just as water ever seeks and fills the lowest place, so the moment God finds the creature humbled and empty, His glory and power flow in to exalt and to bless. He that humbles himself - *that must be our one care* - shall be exalted. The rest is God's concern, and by His mighty power and in His great love - *He will do it*.

Men sometimes speak as if humility and meekness would rob us of what is noble and bold and manlike. Oh, that we would believe that to be humble is the nobility of the Kingdom of heaven - that this is the royal spirit that the King of heaven Himself displayed! That to humble oneself and to become the servant of all is God-like! This is the path to the gladness and the glory of Christ's presence ever in us, His power ever resting on us.

Jesus, the meek and lowly One, calls us to learn of Him the path to God. Let us study the words we have been reading until our heart is filled with the thought: *My one need is humility*.

And let us believe that what Jesus shows, He gives. And what He is, He imparts to us. As the meek and lowly One, He will come and indwell every human heart that is longing for Him.

I will give you here an infallible piece of advice. With all the strength of your heart, stand all this month, as continually as you can, in the following form of prayer to God: *Ask Him to make known to you, and take from your heart, every form and degree of pride - whether it be from evil spirits or from your own corrupt nature. Pray that He would awaken in you the deepest depth and truth of that humility which can make you capable of His light and Holy Spirit*.

And when the Lamb of God has brought forth a real birth of His own meekness, humility, and full resignation to God in

your soul - then it will be the birthday of the Spirit of love within you. Then your soul will be filled with great peace and joy in God - and this *new life* will blot out even the memory of what you felt to be peace and joy before.

ANDREW MURRAY was born in 1828 in South Africa, the son of a Scottish minister. Educated in Scotland and Holland, Murray returned to Capetown in 1864 to become a well-known pastor, evangelist, teacher, and author. Although he died in 1917, his many books on prayer and discipleship have lived on to become Christian classics.

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