

(Radical Jesus) 11 Radical Humility

by Glenn Meldrum

Jesus' radical humility is a powerful example of how to live a life of obedience, submission, and compassion, and it is a key aspect of his ministry and message.

Duration: 20:11

Scripture: Isaiah 14:12, Matthew 6:33, Luke 2:40

Topics: "Humility"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher uses a parable called the Deformed Man to illustrate the perfect nature of Jesus and the sinful nature of humanity. The Deformed Man represents Jesus, while the village people represent sinful humanity. The preacher also discusses the concept of reincarnation and imagines what it would be like to be born as a cow after living a wicked life. The sermon then shifts to the humility of Jesus, who left the glories of heaven to be born into a poor family in ancient Israel. The preacher emphasizes that Jesus became a servant to the people who should have been serving and adoring him, even though they had rebelled against him.

Transcript

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In today's podcast, we are beginning a new section in our continuing study on the Radical Jesus. For the last few weeks, we have been digging into the radical nature of the truth. We touched on such topics as the victorious nature of truth, that truth is under attack, and that the truth is revolutionary.

We also examined the ultimate revelation of truth, which is Jesus, the word and wisdom of God made flesh. Today, I want to begin delving into the subject of radical humility. Roy Hessen once said, The usual thing with pride is that you are quite unaware of it until the Holy Spirit shows you.

Then you see that you are full of it. Pride was the creation of angels, not of men. Something so diabolical, so destructive, so evil, could not have been created by mere mortals.

In the beginning, God created mankind with the majesty of innocence and purity. In their original state, the Lord imparted to them the beauty of His holiness, so that there could be meaningful fellowship between God and men. He also gave them a free will, so that they could make real decisions.

That way, love would be genuine. The same is true with angels as well. God did not create pride, because that would be contrary to His good and holy nature.

Nor does He propagate it. There is a mystery to evil, suffering, and sin that we can only know in part while living in this fallen world. Now, that is not a statement trying to avoid answering the difficult question of where evil came from.

It is just an honest confession of the limitedness and frailty of my humanity. There is not a single human being that witnessed Satan's rebellion against God except Jesus. The only eyewitnesses of Adam and Eve's temptation and sin was God, Satan, and the perpetrators of the crime.

The only information we have on the origins of evil comes from God Himself, and He has told us only what we need to know. We may not like that, because we want rhyme and reason for all the suffering in this world. But nobody will ever comprehend the mystery of evil except God.

Pride is so hideously evil, so potently destructive, that it took a beautiful archangel and mutated him into the prince of devils. And pride turned glorious angels and twisted them into malevolent devils bent solely on evil. I would venture to say that most of my listeners know the Genesis account of God creating the human race in His own image.

The Scriptures do not tell us if God gave any other rational creatures this phenomenal privilege. The ultimate reason why we are created in God's image is so we could have authentic fellowship with Him. We can gather from Scripture that angels, seraphim, and cherubim were created in such a way as to have fellowship with God as well.

We do not know how that relationship works other than what the Word of God reveals to us. The first sin ever committed is not clearly revealed to us in Scripture. In Isaiah 14 we find a prophecy about the king of Babylon, who was Nebuchadnezzar.

This prophecy could have possibly had a secondary meaning referring to Satan, but we cannot be sure of this. Verse 12 reads in the King James Version, Many commentators and theologians do not think this verse has any reference to Satan, while others think it does. Some even think that its secondary meaning has to do with the Antichrist.

The Hebrew word the King James translated as Lucifer is used only one time in the Old Testament, which literally means morning star. It is in verses 13-15 that we find an idea of what might have been Satan's fall from grace. There are some statements in these verses that are impossible to apply to mere mortals unless they are extreme hyperbole, but they could truthfully apply to the devil.

It is interesting that Jesus declared that he literally saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. How Satan became a reprobate angel, we do not know for sure. But we do know that he forsook his first estate through rebellion that had to be rooted in the sin of pride.

When we examine the serpent's temptation of Eve, we have to ask, why would Satan want to cause her to sin? What would he gain from it? Without taking much time to expound upon this thought, I will simply say

that Satan hates God. That hatred is a byproduct of his pride that was the root cause of his rebellion against God. Since Satan was and is powerless to overthrow Almighty God, he decided to try and hurt the heart of God instead.

Satan's ambition to cause Eve to sin was an effort to harm God by harming God's creation. The rebellion Satan began, he was endeavoring to perpetuate in and through mankind. Satan wanted to take that which was made in God's image and remake it in his own.

Since he is a God-hater, he wanted to turn those who were God-lovers into God-haters. All this goes back to his narcissistic ambition to be worshipped as God. The result of Adam's fall was that mankind became little devils filled with the same pride that made big devils.

Satan knew that the pride which ruined him would ruin Adam and Eve and the entire human race. His desire to have Adam and Eve question God and learn the knowledge of good and evil was not done out of benevolent desires, but malevolent ones. Ever since Adam's rebellion, pride has defined the human race to a lesser or greater degree depending on the personality of the individual and their spiritual condition.

When we look at Jesus, we see someone that was not like us, even though he was like us. Jesus was like us in that he was fully human and was tempted just like we are. He is not like us in that he was the infinite holy God that emptied himself so he could be truly human and thus become the Lamb of God to take away the sins of the world.

One of the things that makes Jesus so infinitely unique is his humility. When I look at Christ's humility, it disturbs me because by looking at Jesus, I begin to see the reality of the pride that defines my heart and mine. It exposes what I am on the inside.

If you were with me in the opening chapters of this study, then you heard me give the parable I made up about the deformed man. The deformed man represents the perfect Jesus. The village people correspond to the world of sinful humanity.

The secluded mountain valley where they lived coincides with the human race. The village people thought the deformed man was grossly deformed because he was so thoroughly not like them. The perfections of the deformed man reproved the people of their deformities and they hated him for that.

Until the deformed man came into their world, they did not have a point of reference of what it meant to be normal according to God's standard. This is a situation we find ourselves in when we look at the subject of humility. We have a faint idea of what humility is, but it is so perverted that we cannot grasp the real thing.

Even our humility is laced with pride. When the meek and lowly Jesus came into this world, his humility reproved us of our pride. Jesus was not branded with the hellish mark of pride that defined Satan, demons, and depraved mankind.

Yet if someone ever had the right to be proud, it was Jesus. He was the only God-man who ever existed. That's rather unique, I would say.

He is the only human being that had pre-existence because he's always been. Do you know anyone that has ever boasted that he or she breathed stars into existence? No, I don't think so. We may have drawn stars with crayons as little children, but we certainly did not create them.

Think for a moment of the complexity of organic life. Could you have imagined and designed such a thing as a cute little puppy or a majestic eagle in flight? How about the wonders of the seeing eye or the blood that flows through our veins? Yet Jesus imagined all that exists before anything existed, and then he created them and all the laws that govern this marvelous creation. When Jesus walked this planet, he was the righteous and holy God that justly decreed the judgment of a worldwide flood on a world that had forsaken him.

He was the same God that called down fire and brimstone on Sodom and Gomorrah because their evil had reached the depths of depravity. The accomplishments of Jesus are infinite beyond human comprehension, yet he never boasted of them because he was the meek and lowly Savior that came to seek and to save what was lost. Here is a strange question.

What is so special about being human? Compared to a fly, mosquito, or gnat, we are rather superior, I would say. If we contrast ourselves to an angel or archangel, I would say that we fall rather short. Then if we compare ourselves to God, we find ourselves infinitely inferior.

So being special has a lot to do with our point of reference. I certainly do not believe in reincarnation, and to my mind it is an illogical, hopeless belief. Just think of it.

You blow it in this life, so you have to come back to this world as a cow, pig, or fly on the wall. Talk about degrading. Just for the sake of making an illustration, imagine what it would be like to have lived a wicked life and then die, and the next moment you are reincarnated as a cow.

That would be scary. Now just imagine that you as a cow could remember your life as a human. Would you think this was an improvement? First you'd want to know what country you live in, because that would change your attitude.

If you are in America, then you may end up as a Big Mac. If in India, you would be a sacred cow. Very skinny, but still sacred.

Either way, it would be a humongous leap downward. Now try to imagine what it would be like to be God, and then leave all the glories and wonders of heaven to be born into this world, to a poor family in ancient Israel, at a time when people did not have electricity, running water, or cell phones. Talk about primitive and degrading.

Because we cannot comprehend what it would be like to be God, we cannot fathom the great act of divine condescension that Jesus did for us. We cannot grasp the tremendous love exerted to bring about the incarnation. For God to lay aside the dignity and majesty necessary to be clothed in human flesh would be humiliating and demeaning beyond anything we could even envision.

But that is exactly what Jesus did for us. Paul clearly told us in Philippians 2 that Jesus was God. Then he declares in the 7th verse that God emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

Jesus did not instantly appear to the world in adult form, or we would have claimed that he was not truly human and rejected his claims as Messiah. Instead, the Lord humbled himself to such a degree that through the Spirit, Jesus was conceived in a virgin's womb, so he could fully be both God and man. For God to become fully human, he emptied himself of the right to operate in his divine right as God.

This means that even though Jesus was fully God, he voluntarily lived the full life of a human. Christ's radical humility is seen even more clearly by the fact that he humbled himself to the point of becoming a bondservant to serve the creatures he created. Let's take this a little further.

Jesus became a bondservant to the people that should have been serving and adoring him, that should have been in loving submission to their benevolent Creator. Not just that, the world Jesus came to rescue had rebelled against him and did not want rescuing. They were in willful, deliberate anarchy against their rightful ruler.

As we will soon see, Christ's earthly life began with profound humility, and this radical humility defined every phase of his human life. Look at the miraculous conception of Christ. He was not placed in the womb of a great and famous woman, but in the womb of a peasant woman unknown to the world.

It is true that Mary was of royal blood from the line of King David, but that was no longer a noble distinction since Herod ruled Israel and Rome ruled Herod. When it was time for Christ's birth, the Heavenly Father orchestrated the events that caused his son to be born in Bethlehem, the ancestral village of David. The miracle of the Star of Bethlehem revealed the wonder that a Savior was born, but few took note of the event.

Jesus was not born in a palace fitting his rank and position, but into the stable of a peasant's home. Think of his first crib. It was not hand-carved and overlaid with gold, but a manger designed to hold animal food.

His first bedroom was not filled with cute stuffed animals, but with real cows, sheep, and chickens. The Savior did not awaken into a world filled with the sweet aroma of incense, but with the pungent odor of manure, urine-soaked straw, and smelly animals. Could there be a more self-effacing way for the King of Kings to be born? Yet by being born in such a way, he could be the Savior of all men, of the rich and the poor alike.

If Jesus had been born in a palace, then he would have been a Savior for the rich, powerful and famous, but not ones for the masses of humanity struggling in poverty, squalor, and need. Christ's radical humility is wonderfully seen in his birth. When we look at those in-between years, spanning from Christ's birth to the commencement of his ministry, we get a brief glimpse of the humility that defined him.

There is very little recorded about those in-between years, and those accounts outside of Scripture are just not true. They did not record history back then like we do today. They focused on the principle and important events of a person's life, not the in-between events.

But we live in a Facebook culture where people share all the meaningless trivialities of life, such as what they ate for breakfast or what they wore to work or school. It's way too much information. One thing that can be seen in those in-between years is the silence and obscurity in which Jesus lived.

Luke 2, verse 40 gives us an overview of those days, and the child grew and became strong. He was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him. This verse gives us a glimpse of his physical health, intellectual capacity, and spiritual vigor.

We are talking about the great I Am in flesh and blood, growing up in obscurity, yet filled with divine purpose. We see from Scripture that Jesus obeyed his earthly parents, even though he created them. That's an interesting idea, isn't it? He learned to trade like other peasant class boys did, and it would have been the trade of his adopted earthly father Joseph, who was a carpenter.

Think about how ironic this is. The one who created stone and wood out of his infinite genius and power became a carpenter fashioning those elements with human hands and crude tools. To create everything that is, all Jesus had to do was speak a word, and it came into existence.

Yet it was through the toil and sweat of manual labor that he built primitive buildings, furniture, and tools. Day after day, he served people in obscurity while no one knew or understood who he was. We are told in 1 Peter 1.12 that even angels longed to look into the events of salvation history, and especially into those events when Jesus walked this planet.

Angels and seraphim looked down upon this God-man, awed by each act and word he spoke. They knew who he was. They worshipped him for who he was and adored him for his wondrous deeds.

They longed to understand the mystery of salvation that was unfolding before their eyes. Yet day by day, people walked past their Savior God, never knowing who he was nor giving him the homage he rightly deserved. He lived in obscurity until the day of his revealing to Israel.

We are not told when Jesus came to know who he was. My guess is that he had the highest IQ anyone ever had, yet he never flaunted it. Think of it.

He was God in flesh and blood. No mediocrity here, that's for sure. The family he grew up with was devout, so they went up to Jerusalem every year for Passover.

Jesus was now 12 years old, which is the age Israelite males are considered to enter manhood. When the Passover was finished, the family left Jerusalem to go back to Nazareth, their hometown. Neither Mary nor Joseph realized that Jesus was not with the family clan heading back home.

When they finally realized this, they rushed back to Jerusalem, seeking him out. Luke 2, verse 46 tells us the story. After three days, Joseph and Mary found Jesus in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them, asking them questions.

Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. This reveals the genius of Jesus. But listen to what comes next.

When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you. The reason why his parents were astonished is that Jesus was a perfect child that grew up to be a perfect man.

Never did they have to deal with rebellion in Jesus. So when this event happened, they were absolutely shocked. Jesus responded to them with perfect innocence.

Why were you searching for me? Didn't you know I had to be in my father's house? Jesus was not rebelling against his earthly parents, but submitting to his heavenly Father. We are told that his parents did not understand what he was saying to them. What did Jesus do next? Verse 51 tells us, Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them.

Jesus clearly knew at this point who he was and that he had a mission to fulfill. Yet he humbly submitted to his earthly parents because he first submitted to his heavenly Father's command to honor your father and mother. Let me address one more point concerning the radical humility of Jesus before I close today.

Think of Jesus through those in-between years as the knowledge of who he was and of what he came to do grew clearer and clearer day by day. Imagine the day he came to understand the infinite power that he possessed and that he was the remedy to a hurting, dying world. As he looked at people suffering the ravages of disease and the agonies of sin, he knew he was the answer to those problems.

I imagine that a burning desire was in him to heal hurting bodies and anguished minds and wounded souls. But he was not proud. He was not self-willed.

He was fully submitted to his heavenly Father. So he held himself back and did not heal one person or do a single miracle until the day his ministry began. We are never told in Scripture the death of Joseph, but it is reasonable to assume that he was dead when Jesus began his ministry.

He could have healed Joseph, but it was not his time, and so the meek and lowly Jesus submitted to the Father's will even in this. How can there be true compassion without true humility? Jesus proved this to be true. Through absolute obedience to the Father and radical humility, Jesus operated in perfect compassion to hold back his divine power to heal people until the day of his appearing had arrived.

Then heaven was unleashed upon a rebel planet suffering under the oppression of hell. What a day that was!

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