

(Radical Jesus) 13 Radical Humility

by Glenn Meldrum

The sermon emphasizes the importance of humility and the dangers of pride, highlighting the need to study Jesus and personally know Him in order to overcome pride and live a surrendered life to God.

Duration: 24:39

Scripture: Proverbs 16:18, Matthew 23:12, Luke 18:14, Romans 12:3, James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5-6, 1 John 3:8

Topics: "Humility"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of recognizing our pride and self-love. He explains that our pride often leads us to redefine sin and resist repentance. The remedy for our pride is found in the meek and lowly Jesus, who exemplifies humility. The preacher argues that humility is not weak or cowardly, but rather it empowers us to love, serve, and demonstrate the power of the Holy Spirit. He warns that our culture promotes pride and self-absorption, and Satan seeks to keep us trapped in these destructive mindsets.

Transcript

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For the last two weeks, we have been studying the radical humility that Jesus lived out when he walked this earth. This is part of our continuing study on the radical Jesus, which is an in-depth examination into the Jesus revealed in scripture. This study comes out of my book titled, The Radical Jesus.

For the Christian, there is no greater example that we should strive to imitate than Jesus himself. And the humility that defined him should be the humility that we endeavor to live out. Last week, we predominantly concentrated upon a phrase that the Apostle Paul used many times, which speaks of the humility and sacrifice that define the life of Christ.

That little phrase is, gave himself, which speaks of how Jesus gave himself away so he could redeem mankind from their slavery to sin. The idea that Jesus gave himself for us is packed full of profound meaning, some of which we examined last week. Today, we are going to look at the radical nature of humility as it relates to true followers of Jesus.

I have touched on the truth that Jesus is not like us many times in this podcast. The greatest way that Jesus is not like us is that he was God incarnate in flesh and blood. I do not think anything could be more radical and unique than that.

Another aspect that demonstrates that Jesus is not like us is that he was perfect, being without sin or defect. When we look at the faultless life of Christ, we see humility in its purest form. The pure humility that Jesus lived out will disturb us if we will take an honest look at the Jesus revealed in the New Testament.

Every human being that has ever been or ever will be, excluding Jesus, of course, has been tainted with the seed of pride in them from birth. As we grow, so does our pride, for it is ingrained in our fallen nature. Pride is like a seed.

When planted in the right soil and given the right environment, we'll produce a plant that will generate even more seed. The pride of man is not only embedded into our sinful nature, but it is fed by the pride of others. When we sow a crop of pride, we must not be shocked when we reap a harvest of consequences.

Pride is so interwoven into our twisted natures that the devil and his malevolent minions have an easy time feeding it in our hearts and minds. Pride is like a coin with two sides. On one side is the common expression of pride that is seen in the strutting man, the egotistical businessman, or the self-centered woman.

There are vast ways that pride of this sort is expressed. It is a sin that crosses all social, racial, religious, and economic barriers. We love to feed our pride, and we love it when others feed it as well.

The other side of the coin of pride is what we call low self-esteem, which is just another face of pride. Low self-esteem may at first glance seem to be the opposite of pride, which it certainly is not, but is really just another example of our natural inclination to self-centeredness and self-absorption. As Christians, our identity should never be in self, but in Christ.

Pride, in all of its various forms, always produces rebellion against God and independence from Him, both of which are acts of defiance against His person and will. In the end, it is irrelevant whether a person has the egotistical sort of pride or the low self-esteem version. The result is the same, which is alienation from God.

Tragically, through the secularization of the Christian faith, a false teaching on low self-esteem has crept into the Church. Because this erroneous teaching sounds good and tickles the ear, it has gained an acceptance and foothold in the Church, even though it is actually contrary to Scripture. What makes this error so dangerous is that the Word of God is manipulated in such a way that this teaching seems biblical and compassionate.

The teaching I am referring to is about how to turn low self-esteem into high self-esteem. Through the manipulation of people's emotions and pain, the preacher, teacher, or author strives to prove how low self-esteem is harmful to your life and that you need to build an attitude of high self-esteem instead. Such teaching only feeds our fallen nature's hunger for more pride by claiming that what we really need to be happy and successful is to have high self-esteem.

This heretical message is especially promoted among women and is often aggressively advanced in women's groups and conferences. It is not hard to move people to tears through such teaching, but totally fail to lead them to genuine victory through Christ. The Lord calls us to crucify every form of pride, whether

we call it low or high, because God resists the proud, which means that He actively fights against the proud of heart.

There is a war that is raging all around us at this very moment. It is not a new war, for it has been raging even before the fall of man. At the head of the enemy's forces stands Satan, in arrogant defiance against Almighty God.

Jesus came into the world to lay a fatal blow to Satan's work of infusing pride and rebellion into mankind. Without the grace of God, there is no way that we can overcome our natural bent towards pride or resist the onslaught of hell that endeavors to keep us in a state of prideful rebellion against God. True humility is foreign to our fallen nature.

Pride taints every part of human life and thought and is most odious when it thrives in the realm of religion. Nobody will ever overcome pride by hiding away in a monastery or by abusing themselves. False humility is nothing other than a person being proud of how humble he or she is.

Pride is so evil that it cannot be remodeled or turned into something that is good. Therefore, it is impossible to turn pride into humility. Pride must be crucified.

It must die in the heart and mind of a true follower of Christ. We must not strive to coddle pride or redefine it by turning it into a noble virtue because it is rotten to the core. The Apostle John gives us yet another reason why Jesus came into the world, and this is found in his first epistle in the third chapter.

He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sitting from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work. Jesus did not come into the world to die upon the cross as the Lamb of God so the devil could freely continue his loathsome work of filling humanity with damnable pride.

Jesus did not appear so he could gently deal with our sin through some version of positive confession or motivational teaching. Jesus is not trying to wound our pride. He's out to kill it.

I have dealt in these podcasts that the first sin ever committed was pride, and that Satan was the perpetrator of that crime. Now he is the propagator of pride in the hearts and minds of mankind. Jesus went to Calvary to destroy the devil's work in our lives in all of its various forms.

Pride is one of the primary evils God is aiming to destroy in our lives. Just as pride separated Adam and Eve from the Lord in the beginning, so pride does the same thing today in us. Jesus put at the disposal of his disciples the infinite power that he possesses as God so that we can overcome pride and obtain the blessings and power that comes through humility.

God never commands us to do something or to be something that he will not empower us to fulfill. Christ humbled himself to become our atoning sacrifice so we could obtain the grace needed to die to our pride and obtain the virtue of true humility. The battlefield for the spiritual war I am talking about rages within us and all around us.

Most of our American culture is a weapon in the hands of the devil to feed our natural propensity to pride and self-absorption. Satan is tirelessly laboring to keep the flames of pride burning hot in our hearts and minds. Why does he do this? What does he gain from it? Because Satan thoroughly hates God.

He wants to hurt God by filling humanity with the same pride that defines him. He wants to fill us with pride so we rebel against God like he did, like he tempted Eve to act out. The devil wants to fill us with pride so that we will not repent of our sin and turn to God for salvation.

He does not want us to repent because he wants our sin to inflict as much pain and suffering as is possible upon ourselves and all those who are in our lives. If he can keep us from repenting of our sin because we are too proud to repent, then he can drag us down to hell with him. He also wants to keep us proud enough so we will not surrender our heart, mind, and will to the Lord.

People will only obtain salvation when they grow humble enough to repent of their sin and surrender their lives to Christ. The devil knows that if he can fill Christians with pride, they will not live surrendered lives to Christ, and as a result, they will not be a threat to his kingdom in this world. The devil wants to fill us with so much pride that we will not walk before the Lord in loving obedience.

Pride always feeds rebellion. It always feeds it. If the hordes of hell can fill our hearts and minds with pride, they know that we will be infused with a rebellious spirit that will cause us to walk in disobedience towards the Lord.

This will put us at odds with God, where we will find ourselves on the receiving end of his discipline and not of his power. Satan also knows that if we live in pride, we will make ourselves enemies of God, which is how he became an enemy of God himself. By default, we will then become an ally of Satan, fighting against God and his kingdom with the hordes of hell as our comrades.

Pride is at the heart of all our rebellion against the Lord Jesus because pride makes us want to rule ourselves even when we are ruining our lives in the process. There's another reason why the devil wants to fill people with pride, especially Christians, because it will keep the move of the Holy Spirit out of the church and therefore out of the world. Pride is the principal sin that holds back the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in a person, church, community, or nation.

Pride literally keeps the fires of revival from burning in our hearts and transforming our land. In 2 Chronicles 7:14, we find God's conditional promise of revival, which reads, Before the church can move into a posture that could see genuine revival, she must first humble herself before God and man. Pride is so thoroughly loathsome to the Holy Spirit that it keeps revival from coming to a people or stops it dead in its tracks.

We will not pray for revival until we will humble ourselves enough before God to see our great and urgent need of revival. We will not seek the face of God, which is all about deep and abiding fellowship with the Lord, until we humble ourselves and pray. Repentance is at the end of the list because we will not truly repent until we will humble ourselves before God, cry out in prayer over our desperate condition, and then want His nearness enough that we will turn from our wicked ways.

When genuine revival is unleashed in a land through the church, the devil's kingdom suffers greatly, so the devil does all he can to keep us from revival. That is why he so aggressively strives to keep Christians filled with pride and contention, because then they will be so self-absorbed that they will never yearn for a divine visitation or desire enough to do anything about its coming. Pride makes us ugly on the inside, while humility makes us beautiful to God.

Pride turns us into twisted monsters that perpetuate Satan's rebellion. Humility transforms us into victorious saints that assault hell and take as the spoils of war the souls of men, women, and children that have suffered under the tyranny of hell. Until we grasp the depths and ugliness of pride that is deeply entrenched into our heart, mind, and culture, we will not pursue the beauty of humility and the freedom that comes through repentance.

Our pride makes us insane. It causes us to act and think like madmen. We can be ruining our lives through our prideful rebellion, suffering under the devilish cruelty of hell, enslaved to the passions and lusts that leave us empty, destitute, and hurting, yet refuse to repent because we refuse to humble ourselves before God.

Look at the fruit of pride, and you will see a little more clearly how evil it really is. Pride is at the root of all of our strife, contention, and gossip. It tears families apart and ruins the lives of children.

It tears nations apart with violence. Pride is at the core of all war, jihad, anarchy, and coup d'etats. When you look at strife in the church, you will always find that pride is at the center of it.

All church splits are the result of pride in one way or another. The gossip that devastates churches flow out of devil-inspired pride. Contentious people are always filled to overflowing with pride and rebellion.

They are so full of self, they want everyone else to get their fill of their pride as well. Through pride, people will attack their pastor, divide and destroy their church, ruin the families and children that attend that church, all because they are oozing with the ugliness of pride, plagued with the spiritual disease of Phariseism, and refuse to repent. Look at what we do with pride.

We glamorize and celebrate it as if it was a good and noble thing. All our movie and music stars reek with it. Our politicians are saturated with it.

Our heroes are filled to overflowing with it, especially the ones of our own creation. We flaunt pride as a means of sexual enhancement. We claim that it is necessary if we want to be macho.

Pride is a criterion of becoming one of the rich and famous. If you want to be successful according to the world's definition, then pride must identify every part of you. And if you want power, pride must emanate from your very pores.

The world is in love with pride, fascinated with it, intoxicated by its allurements, and possessed by its hellish power. With such a perverted view of pride, is it any wonder that mankind has become so obsessed with it? In all of this, the Church is not substantially different from the world. Let's look a little more closely at the ugliness of pride that has gotten such a firm hold on the Church.

Pride can lie undetected in a Christian's heart like a man with a hunchback, unseen to himself but obvious to everyone that knows him. Far too many of our spiritual endeavors are contaminated with prideful motivations. Pastors want their churches to grow so they will feel like their ministry has value.

They strive to work their way up the corporate church ladder until they pastor a large church so they can become somebody in the religious world. Others, out of sheer pride, desire to rise in denominational power. When you look at the competition between churches and ministers, you will find that it is all rooted in pride.

Some people want to be involved in worship for their own glory, not God's. To them, it is all about musical perfection or the praise of men. Many times people want to sing specials in church because they like the applause of people.

It makes them feel important. People can want their church to do certain ministries because it makes the church look good to the community, but does it make them look good to God? There are countless ways that pride creeps into the very fabric of ministry and strips it of divine power. People can sacrificially give of their time or finances so long as they receive personal gain or praise from people.

You know how the lie goes. Give your seed faith money so you can get your hundredfold return. This is nothing other than pride and greed that is aggressively propagated by a vast number of preachers and churches.

We have taken some of the proudest, most arrogant people and made them the superstars of the church. We put them on platforms like idols of old so we can adore them and sing their praise. These are just a few of the prideful motivations that can define the 21st century church in America.

It is far too easy for us to be like actors performing before adoring audiences. Do you realize that the ancient definition of a hypocrite is an actor that wears various masks so he or she can play a different role? In the church we have turned pride into a positive spiritual attribute in spite of God's explicit hatred of it. Proverbs 8.13 informs us, Remember the story I gave of the village people that were deformed but they did not comprehend that fact? We have a natural propensity to be blind to our corrupt character, especially to our pride.

It is far too easy for us to be oblivious to our low spiritual condition while thinking we are wonderful Christians. We can even think that some of the things that God condemns are actually advantageous to a fulfilling life. Just as the village people were deceived by their pride, so we are deceived by ours.

And like the village people, we can want to hide behind the lies and illusions of our own making rather than longing for the transformation that can only come from God. When the village people were confronted with the realities of their deformities, they became enraged and took their anger out at the source of their disconcerting revelation, which was a deformed man. If you remember, the deformed man in my parable was a representation of the perfect Jesus.

When we look at the faultless Savior, we will begin to see the ugliness of our pride and self-love. We will see that our pride has caused us to redefine sin as something other than the diabolical thing that it actually is. At times we even grow angry with Jesus when he exposes the pride and sin in our hearts because we love our sin and do not want to repent of it.

But it is only when we look at the perfect radical Jesus that we will see the remedy for our sin-sick souls and corrupt characters. So what is the remedy to our hellish pride? The answer is simple to state. It is the meek and lowly Jesus.

He is the only remedy that works. This is why we need to study the Word of God so we can learn about the wonderful Savior and what he demands from us. By studying Christ and personally knowing him, we can understand the true nature of humility.

If all we do is look at ourselves and compare ourselves one to another, then we will only perpetuate the same pride that has defined us from the beginning. True humility is otherworldly, so we do not know it by

looking at those of this world. Over the centuries we have had many wonderful examples of saints that walk more humbly than the mass of humanity, but none of them compare to Jesus.

He was the only perfectly humble person this world has ever known or ever will know. We need to look at Jesus, who is the light, and not focus upon those that are only finite reflections of the infinitely perfect Lord. By studying Jesus, we will not only learn what true humility looks like, we will also come to the disturbing reality of how pride has deeply rooted itself into our very being.

With this knowledge comes great hope. Though such knowledge may hurt for a time, if we allow it to do its work like a skilled surgeon, it is sure to bring genuine healing to us. We will not run to Jesus to obtain victory over our pride until we see the depths of it in our hearts and minds.

We have to see that we are helpless to save ourselves from the sin and pride we tenaciously cling to. Most importantly, we need to see Jesus, who alone can rescue us from ourselves. But what does Jesus really want from us? Is humility the thing He desires most from us? No, that's not what He's really after.

If you really grasp what I'm going to say here, it has the potential to overwhelm you and to revolutionize your faith. Jesus wants you. You are the prize He seeks.

He did not die on the cross to get your sins, but to get you. He wants us, and our sin and pride are the obstacles to the prize of all prizes, which is fellowship with the living God. So He must expose and confront our pride if there is any hope that we will repent and be transformed.

If we are willing and obedient, the Lord will infuse into our very being the essence of humility so we can know the depth and height and width of His love that passes human understanding. One major evidence that humility is beginning to grace our lives is that we begin to repent of our sins and turn to Jesus. It is a biblical fact that one of God's greatest gifts to mankind is the gift of repentance.

Just look at the cross and you will see what I'm talking about. Repentance inherently contains within it the seed of humility, because to repent we must humble ourselves before God and people. People will not repent of their sin until there is enough humility in them that they will acknowledge that God is right, that they have sinned, and that they are willing to repent.

The beginning stages of humility helps us see our sin and repent of it. If we will not repent, then it is because we are proud, self-willed, and rebellious. And if we cannot see our sin, it is because sin has blinded us to its reality in our life.

This is a very dangerous place to be in. As we walk the path of repentance, humility will define us more and more, and the reward that awaits us is that we come to know Christ in a richer, deeper way. Another important proof that humility is beginning to grace our lives is that we are learning the joy that is found by surrender of our will and life to Jesus.

Surrender is one of the hardest things we will ever have to do because it is contrary to our fallen nature. People may know they are sinners yet never repent of that sin. Enough humility must come into our lives so that we repent of our sin and turn towards God.

Repentance is an act of surrender to God where we confess that we have sinned against Him and are in desperate need of His forgiveness and transforming power. In Romans 2-4 we are given the wonderful fact that God's kindness leads us to repentance. Within the convicting work of the Spirit is the revelation

that God loves us enough to confront us.

The Lord does not want to damn anyone to hell. If you need proof of this, then take a look at the cross and you will see how Jesus made the way that anyone could be saved. But here is the sticky point.

Though salvation is offered to everyone, it is only available to those who will humble themselves before God, repent of their sin, and surrender their life to Christ. One final point before I come to my conclusion. When we look at the humility that defined the radical Jesus, we do not see humility as something that is weak, wimpy, or cowardly.

We see that humility makes people strong, bold, loving, and compassionate. It grants us power to give ourselves away like Jesus gave Himself away for us. Look at the miracles Jesus performed.

There is no weakness there. It is humility that opens the door for Pentecostal power to flow through people for the glory of God. When there is real Holy Spirit power in the church, the world will see the power of humility working in and through saints that are full of faith and full of the Holy Ghost.

But pride is a plague to Pentecost. It strips people of the Spirit's power and makes the church impotent. Here is the conclusion of this section on radical humility.

Christ's humility is radical because it is contrary to the entire human race, and it is contrary to much of what is in the church today. The good news is that the meek and lowly Jesus takes twisted people and revolutionizes them from the inside out. He can take proud, self-absorbed people and infuse into their character His glorious humility.

It is Christ's likeness that makes people true radicals like Jesus. Through the Spirit's transforming work, we grow in Christ's likeness, which is what God originally created us to be. God's original intent for mankind was not for them to be proud, rebellious people, but to be like Jesus so they could know sweet fellowship with the living God.

This is why humility and repentance makes us beautiful to the Lord. They are God-given gifts that transform us from being little devils into what we are created to be, conformed to the likeness of Christ.

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