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Humility. We all know that its something important. As Christians, it is one of, IF NOT, THE MOST important quality that you can have.

In fact, not too long ago, I interviewed a Christian leader... and I asked him, what is the number one quality you look for in training new leaders... and he replied immediately.. HUMILITY... Because, you can have everything else... character, integrity, determination, faithfulness, giftedness, charisma.... BUT if you don't have humility, you will be competing with Jesus for the spotlight and God will be opposing you. cf. God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

So we as Christians know that humility is very important... BUT its not just us.. the world also knows that its important. Modern leadership paradigms are practically built around a servant-leadership model... that finds its root in humility. There is something extremely attractive about a person who is humble...

Mother Teresa is a good example of this. Here is a lady that is praised by believers and non believers alike. She was a missionary... who served the poorest of the poor... running ministries that served orphans, lepers, and people with AIDS... And for her work, she was lavished with 18 international awards ... one of which being the Nobel Peace Price...

And yet, despite being one of the most decorated and celebrated women of all time, she clothed herself with such modesty and humility...

Mother Teresa, if nothing else, was a humble person. And that was attractive. SO attractive in fact, that she - with all those wrinkles and modest dress... was widely considered to be the most beautiful woman who ever lived.

So what is humility?

The Oxford dictionary defines humility as “having a modest or low view of one's own importance”.

That's alright I guess.. but its so shallow. There is so much more to humility than just having a modest view of yourself.

And the Bible has so much to say about humility... so what we are going to do today is look at what humility looks like in our lives.... AND next week, on Easter Sunday, we are going to go to Philippians and I'm going to walk you through a text that has recently blown my mind...

But for now, would you turn with me in your Bibles to Luke 17...

Wait up. If you were paying attention, surely you will have noticed that the word humility never appears in the text. It isn't mentioned once! In any form! But that's what Jesus is talking about here.... Humility.

This is one of the main reasons why I use the ESV Bible.... that way it translates the BIBLE helps us to see MORE CLEARLY the CONNECTIONS... Luke 17 begins with the word AND... other English translations omit it because well, English grammar says its wrong to start a paragraph with and. But its there in the Greek. So what what is this AND connecting too? Its not hard... Its connecting to Luke 16... And if we remember, in Luke 16, Jesus is rebuking and warning the Pharisees...

AND... Luke 17... he turns now to his disciples to say... Don't be like them! And what was the number one thing that Jesus had against the Pharisees? PRIDE! It is the root of all sin... Don't BE PRIDEFUL like the Pharisees...

And so, although the word humility is never used here, thats what Jesus is talking about... the opposite of pride is humility...

So Jesus teaches his disciples here.. and in extension us... 4 essential elements of humility ...

First... humble people

Restrain from offending others.

v. 1-2. "Temptations to SIN are sure to come, but woe to the one through whom they come! Again, the Pharisees burned many people with their LAWS and caused them to SIN... Don't be like them! 2 It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck and he were cast into the sea than that he should cause one of these little ones to sin.

What this means is that HUMBLE people ARE SELF AWARE. Let me say that again. Humble people are self-aware... Not in the sense that they always think about how others perceive them... like the Pharisees did... BUT they are self aware.. in the sense that they don't do OR say things that cause others to stumble. BY the way, in verse 2.. when Jesus says don't cause one of these LITTLE ones to sin... when He says LITTLE ONES... he isn't talking about children. He is talking ABOUT everyone generally.. but God's children specifically... DO NOT cause a brother or sister to stumble... And when someone points it out... it could be your spouse or friend or church members... even your children... if they say that something is causing others to stumble... YOU LISTEN and you TAKE THEIR WORDS TO HEART!

So a humble person refrains from offending others.

Second. A humble person is READY to forgive.  
A humble person is ready to forgive.

v. 3-ff.

Pay attention to yourselves! If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him, 4 and if he sins against you seven times in the day, and turns to you seven times, saying, 'I repent,' you must forgive him."

There it is again... Pay attention to yourselves! Be self-aware... BE READY... to do what? To rebuke your brother and correct him if he sins... SO a humble person isn't EAGER just to keep his brother from SINNING... but he is also EAGER to BRING his brother out of SIN... BUT the emphasis here is CLEARLY on FORGIVING..

If he sins against you SEVEN times in the ONE DAY... and turn to you seven times saying, "I repent" , YOU MUST forgive him. Every single time.

So first, a humble person does not cause others to stumble... and is READY to forgive.

Third... a humble person recognizes need.

v. 5-ff.

5 The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" 6 And the Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it would obey you.

Humble people realize their NEED... and HUMBLE Christians SPECIFICALLY RECOGNIZE their LACK of faith... BUT here is what is striking... whenever we cry out FOR more faith, our Lord Jesus replies... if you had faith like a TINY grain of mustard seed, you can move these trees and these mountains!!!! What Jesus is saying here is that it is not the GREATNESS of our faith that counts... its the GREATNESS of the one who we put our faith in that really matters! Even if you have a tiny faith in God, that is enough... TINY FAITH in a BIG GOD is POWERFUL.

I really want you to notice how Jesus' diagnosis our need ... in this case a LACK OF FAITH,,, The apostles cry out - LORD, INCREASE our FAITH... and Jesus replies... Its not the quantity or intensity of your faith that counts... but the object of your faith...

THEREFORE, a humble person will NEVER ever ever BOAST in their FAITH. If you find a Christian or a pastor that boasts in their faith and how their faith can move mountains... that person is a de-facto PROUD

person. RATHER, a TRUE Christian WILL ALWAYS BOAST IN WHOM THEY HAVE PUT THEIR FAITH IN - NAMELY GOD. Humility causes us to BOAST IN GOD, NOT IN OUR FAITH.

So to summarize what we have so far... - 4 essentials of humility .

1. A humble person is restrained. He restrains from offending others
  2. A humble person is ready... Ready to do what? ready to forgive?
  3. A humble person recognizes his or her need...
- And lastly, number 4- a humble person returns honour to whom honour is due.

Humble people return honour.

v. 10 -ff.

7 “Will any one of you who has a servant<sup>[c]</sup> plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and recline at table’? 8 Will he not rather say to him, ‘Prepare supper for me, and dress properly,<sup>[d]</sup> and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink’? 9 Does he thank the servant because he did what was commanded? 10 So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants;<sup>[e]</sup> we have only done what was our duty.’”

Just like how a servant does the work without expecting praise and honour, so we are to do our work faithfully..

BUT here is the twist... The Word of God talks many times about praise honour and glory... toward God yes... but ALSO toward us... in heaven, we will receive honour praise and glory... That much is clear... But here is where JOYFUL humility kicks in. And I must EMPHASIZE JOYFUL... because this is not a FORCED humility... IT IS A WILLING, JOYFUL humility...

Look with me at Revelations 4:10...

the twenty-four elders will fall down before Him who sits on the throne, and will worship Him who lives forever and ever, and will cast their crowns before the throne, saying, 11 "Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power! And it goes on to say in chapter 5 - "Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation!

Let me explain this vision for you. The crowns SYMBOLIZE... honour and glory.... WE ARE GETTING REWARDS IN HEAVEN!!!... and what are we going to do with it? We are going to CAST it at the feet of the LAMB who was slain!

This is what it means to lay down our crowns... The picture we are given in heaven is of all the SAINTS UTTERLY humble.... To be sure, they are given honour and praise and glory... GIVEN CROWNS... BUT the amazing part is WHAT the saints DO with their crowns...

They cast their crowns...at the feet of the king of kings! EVERY SINGLE one of them... What this shows us is that heaven is going to be FULL OF HUMBLE PEOPLE... BUT not just ANY HUMBLE people.. Heaven is going to be a place FULL OF JOYFUL humility! A kingdom where its people FIND their greatest JOY IN GIVING ALL GLORY to GOD! This does not mean that there is no real honour or glory in it for us - oh boy oh boy - there is. And its coming... We are getting the kingdom... But even then, when we have it ALL... when we RECEIVE our ETERNAL inheritance... we will USE EVERYTHING to give honour to whom ALL honour is due. We keep none to ourselves... we give it all back to God...

At the end of the day, it is enough for us to be partakers... of God's work and His glory. But it is not our own doing. Jesus has shown us what our response ought to be... v.10 "we are but unworthy servants..."

I'll end by pointing us to a beautiful promise... and the implications of it are STAGGERING....

1 Peter 5:1 Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another.... HERE is the REASON why we ought to clothe ourselves with

HUMILITY.... FOR ... “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

If you are proud, God will oppose you. But if you are humble... He will give you His grace...

And oh what marvellous grace it is... Here is ONE picture of what that GRACE is going to look like... Luke 12:37 - Truly, I say to you, the master will dress himself for service and have them recline at table, and he will come and serve them.

Be humble... Because GRACE IS COMING!!! And Our KING will seat us at His table and SERVE US...

It has been said that Mother Teresa was the most beautiful woman who ever lived... And no wonder! There is a supernatural beauty in humility.... In the same way... one of the reasons why Heaven will be SO BEAUTIFUL is... because the humility of its people will be reflecting the humility of their King FOR ALL ETERNITY. And we can begin living that life NOW - by reflecting the humility of Christ as we carry our crosses daily.

Lets pray.