

The Humble

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We're looking at The Beatitudes of Christ in order to cultivate Christian character and gain a sense of the greatness of God. In fact, our church leaders have been praying God would use these truths to stir revival and awaken faith. This morning, "*Blessed are the meek (humble) for they will inherit the earth.*" Let's take a look: 3 Kinds of Pride, 1 True Humility, & Inheriting the whole earth.

3 Kinds of Pride

This going to be a GREAT sermon on humility, so I've created a hashtag for you to tweet all the quotable statements, #jdisahumblepreacher. No one thinks of themselves as proud, so I thought it would be helpful to break pride down—the obstacle to humility—in three ways. First, **strong pride**. Strong pride is a fixation on Self—one's rights, freedoms, and successes. We're prone to think of the sheer arrogance and fame seeking in the *entertainment* industry: Kanye West, Vin Diesel, Tarantino, Beyonce. Or sports: Floyd Mayweather, Shaq. But they're not the only ones seeking fame. In 1976 a survey asked people to list their life goals, fame was #15 out of 16. Today, 51 percent of young people report that being famous is "one of their top personal goals." You don't have to be a star to have strong pride. It may show up in *vanity* or seeking attraction. Tight LuLu lemons, a swing hair, or the perfect outfit, wondering if people in the room find you attractive. Decorous pride shows up in the *marketplace* too, where the more you assert yourself, the more you plan, the more you mobilize your strengths, the more you *get of the world*. Steve Jobs not Bill Gates, Uber not Lyft. Or in social media where we quote ourselves, post selfies, name drop, talk and about our accomplishments. **This person** may be abrasive, inattentive to others, frequently defensive when criticized, prone to complain, last to serve, first in line, and sharp in conflict. St. Peter, a man of great ambition and strength, learned humility the hard way, when he betrayed his best friend by putting himself first. He valued his life over Jesus. But the older, wiser Peter wrote, "*Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."* *Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that in his good time he will lift you up*" (1 Pet 5:5). Strong pride puts you in opposition to God. It insists that others look up in applause instead of dressing itself down in humility. Proud people don't enjoy grace. You know why? We're going in the wrong direction—glory, vanity, fame. If you want to enjoy grace you have to stand downstream, and look up at *God's bejeweled glory*. A second form of pride is **weak pride**. Weak pride also fixates on self but in a negative way. It's the person with poor self-image, prone to self-loathing or false humility. It's the person that says, "I'll never measure up; I'll never make it. I shouldn't even try. I should just quit." There are a lot of I's in there. It's the person that can't take their eyes off of themselves or their past. It *might* be the person trapped by years of verbal abuse. Raised to believe you're worthless and a failure. A waste of time. And you believe it. (And I'm so sorry. You've been sinned against, but be careful what you do with that sin.) The person with weak pride is often silent. You may serve when nobody else does, but you keep track of that. It's the woman who walks into her closet full of clothes and says, "I don't have anything to wear!" Poor you. You should buy you a new outfit so more people will look at you. The person with weak pride

arent looking for applause; they're longing for approval. Instead of looking down; they look up longingly at others to take notice of them. We tend not to see them as proud and may lift them up as examples of humility. **But there's a difference between being humbled and being humble.** [kids, suffering in anger]. But if you're in Christ, that old person is gone and a new creation has come, says St. Paul murder of Christians turned promoter of Christ. And with your new creation identity, you don't have to believe the whispers of the past. Sufjan Stevens sings, "[In a manner of speaking I'm already dead. Jesus I need you, be near me, shield me from the fossils that fall on my head.](#)" What's he saying? Fossils, past actions, sins, failures can come flying back and whack you in the head, but they don't have to drive you into self-loathing or shame. How? Jesus will shield you. How? **He redefines you.** His forgiveness works backwards and forwards, into weak and strong pride. You need only look up, position yourself under the mighty hand of God, and grace will come rushing down. Humility is the mother of grace," St. Augustine. Then there's the third, **lukewarm Pride** or The Humblebrag: Kings of Leon drummer, "Mother of God. Tornado coming. Hide in my wine cellar or my theatre? Or my gym?" / "Geniuses [@amazon](#) just recommended my own book to me. Already read this one, thanks guys!" / "Just a nobody, trying to tell everybody about Somebody." Pastor. To which C.S. Lewis says, "*If you think you are not conceited, then you are very conceited indeed.*" "

1 True Humility

All three forms of pride are distorted views of self. Humility gives us a true view of self. It is not overly impressed by one's self-importance. It navigates between the rocks of strong and weak pride. Here are some examples:

- **Compliments:** Strong pride relishes them. Weak pride refuses them. *But the humble person enjoys them as a gift of the Spirit and moves on.* Paul's letters to the churches frequently include a compliments section at the end. These compliments are meant to encourage people in their faith.
- **Service:** Strong pride refuses to serve; its below them. Weak pride serves frequently but keeps count. *The humble serve when they see a need without keeping score.*
- **Confrontation:** Strong pride defends. Weak pride cowers. *But the humble person looks for where the confronting words stick, not where they don't.* Ian.

Humble people are attractive. You want to be around them. Partly because they focus on you! Jesus is the supreme example. He said things like: "*The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.*" The word he uses for meekness in this Beatitude shows up a couple other times in Matthew: "[Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle \(meek\) and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls](#)" (Mt 11:29). Humble people relieve burdens. Humility is gentle in that it doesn't foist burdens on others or levy big expectations. Instead, it bears burdens for others and removes expectations. A friend of my wife recently diagnosed with breast cancer. I'd promised to go pray for her. After a long evening, I huffily got into the car to go pray. They lived in like Georgetown. Robie turned to me and said, "Remember what you say, Love is inefficient." I love efficiency and convenience (which is code for saying I love myself). But I want to be humble. **Humility isn't just inviting; it's relieving.** And Jesus is saying you need more than physical relief. You need relief for your soul. Take off the yoke which connects you to self. Stop dragging the cargo of self worth. You can't do it. See, the humble

person has a way of telling us there's no burden to carry, nothing to prove. Just come rest. Like when Allen and Clara Ha let me stay in their home last weekend for a writing getaway. When I got there, I found a basket full of goodies with a note that said, "Have a fun time writing, resting, or just binge watching a bunch of shows." 2 Thoughts. First, that's incredibly gracious. Second, I could never do that. Why?. I expect more of myself. I felt pressure to come out of the weekend having produced something, but they would be okay if I just watched a bunch of TV and rested? Turned out that was what I really needed but struggled to enjoy. Why? Proud people have to prove themselves, sometimes just to themselves. To make something of themselves since no one else ever did. Proud people struggle to enjoy grace; they try to improve upon it or cheapen it by taking it for granted. They insist on pulling the cargo of pride, of proving themselves, being different, questioning everything. Notice that Jesus doesn't say throw off the yoke to enter rest. He says take on *his* yoke to find rest. His yoke is gentle and not burdensome because its connected to his work not ours. Instead of pulling, Jesus is inviting and relieving. But you have to come behind him and get out from behind your ego. Peter, "*Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God.*"

Inheriting the Whole World

So how do we do it—become humble? We need two things: a true view of self and a bigger view of God. Richard Lovelace says personal renewal is preceded by "*A deep awareness of sin and a greater awareness of the holiness and love of God.*" Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God. How do you get a true view of self? Practice the first two Beatitudes: Blessed are the poor in spirit and those who mourn. How do you practice being poor in spirit and mourning sin and evil? By putting ourselves under the mighty hand of God and asking him for poverty of spirit, for a sense of our penniless estate before him. By praying and asking God, quite often, to show you yourself, your true self, and as your sins surface confess them to God and plead for forgiveness and real change. [Lord's Prayer]

Traditionally, Christians have done this in the evenings. Laying on their beds or sitting in their living room or study, our brothers and sisters in the faith would reflect on their sins from the day and take them to the Father. In the morning they would rise to meet him, asking for a greater view of Him. True view of Self; greater view of God. Humility comes awareness of our sin in face of a forgiving Savior. We can't leap over the first two and still arrive at humility. That would be proud. The Beatitudes are progressive in logic but also in difficulty. More of God, less of Self. A bigger vision of God leads to a smaller vision of Self. But the hard thing is getting out of the way. How do you get a bigger vision of God? You look at him. Not glance. Look, stare. When you're attracted to someone you can't take your eyes off of them. Linger over his beauty and greatness in the Scriptures, slow down long enough to take in his glory. We do it for films, bands, and books. We sit there looking at them for hours. Why not do it for God? **Humility follows God like a shadow** but you have to get in the shade, draw near to his presence. Read Job 38-39/40-42. Meditate on Solomon's Prayer (2 Chron. 6). Take in Isaiah 6. Read authors who are taken with God: Augustine, Calvin, Perkins, Watson, Edwards, Packer, Piper. Now why should we do this? **To inherit the world.** Why does this motivate humility? I can see how it would motivate generosity or lack of materialism. I don't have to hoard stuff caus I get it all in the end. But if that's what Jesus is saying, then isn't he replacing God with earth? The meek inheriting the

earth is a promise directly taken from Psalm 37. Jesus read his Bible too. In that psalm, there are five variations of the same earth-inheriting promise (1, 9, 11, 22, 29). In each instance the promise of inheriting the land is in the context of being oppressed and hurt by proud people. See, it's not just obtaining the land, getting your plot of paradise, or inheriting a world where your name is in lights. It's about entering into a certain kind of land, living in world where Christ has left the cross and ascended the throne, where he's deposed evil. In fact the psalm says the wicked and proud will be no more, cut off, judged, with their weapons turned on themselves (9, 10, 13, 15). But the meek will enjoy peace (11), abundance (19) and justice as they dwell in the land. The land of Christ. The meek don't just inherit the earth; they inherit heaven too. A new heaven and a new earth. And the humbler you become, the more you get taste of that land now. The far off country becomes close, *if we humble ourselves under the mighty hand God, he will lift us up in good time*. Pride keeps us from the land. Humility puts you in Christ's shadow.