

Humble Yourself

The Christian life is one of freedom for the sons of God who are to '*Reign in life by one Christ Jesus*'. The Lord Jesus told us "*If the Son shall make you free you will be free indeed*". But God's concept of freedom is very different to that of the world. Our Lord Jesus found that His greatest freedom was to be able to lay His life down in His Father's will and to take it up again to be the Saviour of the world.

Jesus said "*Therefore does my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man takes it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father*". This is real freedom, the yielding up of a life to the will of Almighty God knowing that the Father loves us when we do so. Not that God does not love us all the time, He always has and always will but here is the practical knowledge of that love and being in that love as the life is laid down.

Paul in his letter to the Philippians talks of the Lord Jesus who 'in the form of a human being' humbling Himself and becoming obedient unto death even the death on the cross. The preparation for Jesus for the death on the cross was a humbling of Himself. He had already taken on Himself the 'form of a servant' and that was in heaven before coming to the earth. Jesus was then made in the 'likeness of men'. The word for 'form' means an inward form or shape so within Jesus was spiritually in the form of a servant. Jesus was a servant in His heart when He came to the earth. 'Made in the likeness' means an outward shape. The outward shape of a human being. Jesus was God manifest in the flesh and in the likeness of human beings. "*Great is the mystery of godliness God was manifest in the flesh*" and "*In Him (Our Lord Jesus) was all the fullness of Godhead bodily (in a body)*". But even for this wonderful person on the earth He had to **humble** Himself under the mighty hand of God. Yes, God highly exalted Him but the humility was the key.

We read this in Isaiah chapter 57 "*For thus says the high and lofty One that inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and **humble** spirit, to revive the spirit of the **humble**, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones*". The dwelling of eternal God is with humble and contrite people. So, God was able to dwell in our Lord Jesus as He was of a humble and contrite spirit. Jesus said that we should learn of Him for '*I am meek and lowly in heart*' (Matthew chapter 11). We then find rest for our souls and that is part of the freedom for the Christian as there is no longer a need to be ambitious and push ourselves forward. We find rest for the soul and our lives are fulfilled in the will of God. We learn of the Lord Jesus and find ourselves free from being conformed to this world and its ways. Rather, in the transformation which comes from the renewing, finding a new and different way of thinking, of our minds, we live free. Therefore "*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*". It is His mind, Jesus' mind. His way of thinking which led Him to humble Himself and become obedient unto the death on the cross and, as we have seen, be free to lay His life down and free to take it up again. He received a commandment from His Father, He was obedient, and the obedience was His freedom.

Peter in His first letter and chapter 5 says "*And be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud and gives grace to the humble. **Humble** yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon him; for He cares for you*". James says, "*Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord*". The instructions are the same for us

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as for the Lord Jesus. *"If anyone will come after me let Him take up His cross" and "He that says He abides in Him should walk even as He walked"*. Same walk, same life. We of course will never be required to lay down our lives for the sins of the world or to take it up again to justify all human beings, but we are to be living sacrifices where the principle of the cross works in us and we are daily delivered unto death for Jesus' sake. As we do so the power of His resurrection works and raises us up to walk in newness of life. So, humble yourselves. It is our responsibility to do so, Jesus did, and we must follow Him. This comes from the recognition as did King David that *"For I acknowledge my transgressions and my sin is ever before me"* Behold, I was shaped in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me, and with the apostle Paul *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing"*. Here we are totally dependent on God's mercy. King David again *"Have mercy upon me, O God, according to your lovingkindness: according unto the multitude of your tender mercies blot out my transgressions"*. So, we humble ourselves with an honest declaration of the almighty nature of God, His mercy and His righteousness; totally yielded to the mercy and love of God. *"Trust in the Lord with all your heart"*. We yield all our lives to Him. Peter then says to *"Cast **all** your care on Him as He cares for you"*. The casting, which means to throw with all our strength, is part of the humbling. "Here you are **Lord**, here is all my care, what would you have me do?". There is the sense that we can only cast all our care once humbled. The casting of care and the humbling, at least Biblically, are not 2 separate things.

So many in desperation, often when it is too late, cast all their cares or at least try to. They fail as they still find problems in their thinking and life and no freedom. Why? They have never humbled themselves and recognised their need of the Lord Jesus. They are still independent and have their own will and call on the Lord to fit in with their own plans and ways and life. They are asking God to help them with their own agenda. Things may have gone wrong so "Help me God". Lots of 'Christians are in that sort of mind or attitude. Sometimes God is very gracious and hears the cry, but often people wonder why they have not been heard or at least seem not to have been heard. The reason? they have never humbled themselves and at the same time cast all their care on the Lord Jesus. It is a challenging thing to do, to abandon all our cares to someone else, to pass over the responsibility of and for our whole lives to Him and say, "Nevertheless Lord not my will but your will be done". Here is true humility. Here is the bowing down and yielding all. Jesus did so on the cross. He committed His Spirit to His Father, believing that God would raise Him up. *"Glorify me with the glory I had with you before the world was:" Jesus requested"*. This is real believing.

For the Christian here is the challenge. Humble yourself and cast all you care on Him. That is when Jesus meets our every need as we have given Him full responsibility, recognising that 'He can', and 'we can't'. It is humbling to know we can't. We definitely cannot save ourselves from our own sin and we definitely can't give ourselves eternal life, so let's be honest we cannot direct and control our own lives in our independence and hardness of heart. Israel were a stiff-necked people, they took a long time to humble themselves. Are we stiff-necked and want to do our own thing and live our own life and be wise in our own eyes? Or will we humble ourselves before Almighty God and cast all our cares on Him? He really does care for us. Will we take up our cross and lay down our lives and find freedom as Jesus found

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freedom? He said *"Learn of me for I am meek and lowly in heart and you will find rest for your souls"*; no more care for ourselves. We may see others seeming to do well and prosper in this world. David did just that if we read Psalm 73. Please read it. But when David went into the presence of God, he saw the end of those who have not humbled themselves before God. David knew all He had in heaven and the earth was the Lord, Almighty God. That is also our situation in eternal terms. Humble yourself, God gives grace to the humble and you will find Jesus has care for you and as you follow Him His yoke is easy, and His burden is light.

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