

Message for July 19, 2020

“The humble He guides in justice, and the humble He teaches His way.” --- Psalm 25:9

“The LORD LIFTS UP THE HUMBLE; He casts the wicked down to the ground.” --- Psalm 147:6

“For the LORD TAKES PLEASURE IN HIS PEOPLE; He will beautify the humble with salvation.”--- Psalm 149:4

“God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” --- James 4:6b

The above Scriptures (and there are many more) all speak of the benefits of being humble. To be guided in justice, taught the ways of the Lord, lifted up when we are downtrodden, and beautified with saving grace in all our trials and tribulations are promises worth cherishing by every one of God's children. And who wouldn't want more of His favor (grace) in their lives? These are all desirable things to receive, but none are automatic just because we got saved. There is a prerequisite to receiving them, and that is humility. But what exactly is humility? I'm sure each of us has our own idea, primarily that of being the opposite of pride. (And wasn't that Satan's downfall?) Certainly we must not think more highly of ourselves than we actually are, as Satan did, but we shouldn't go to the other extreme either, putting ourselves down continually and thinking that this is humility. Belittling oneself is a toxic form of *false* humility. It is not edifying in any way.

To be truly humble is to have an accurate and Scriptural understanding of just who we are as God's children, and living accordingly. We don't think more, *or less*, of ourselves than what is true. And what is true is what God tells us about ourselves. Humility is accepting our human state as being less than God (or even the angels), while at the same time being spiritually raised up

and seated in heaven with Christ. It is recognizing and submitting to God's sovereignty over our lives and living dependently on Him, while at the same time exercising and enjoying the freedoms and privileges we have been granted. It is treating each other with love and respect as equals, yet faithfully exercising authority as He has given us according to our gifts and ministries. It recognizes and embraces the fact that apart from Him I can do nothing, yet "I can do all things through Christ". Recognition of truth is in itself not pride, unless we allow ourselves to be puffed up by it. Humility accepts the truth but doesn't go beyond it by pretending or trying to be someone or something we're not. It is just faithfully being who we are, and being content with that. It's that simple.

Here's a little exercise for you. In what ways did Jesus express true humility during His ministry on earth? As you ponder this question, some of the answers may surprise you. I would encourage you to share your thoughts with Donna so that she could include them in her daily postings.

Love to you all,

Pastor Joe

“He has shown you, O man, what is good; and what does the LORD REQUIRE OF YOU but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God?” --- Micah 6:8

“Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.” --- Matthew 18:4

MORE THAN SKIN DEEP

Gratitude, said Martin Luther, is “the basic Christian attitude.” Yet gratitude is much more than a state of mind. Often it’s a decision, and it becomes an act of humility when we recognize our depravity — and our need for a Savior.

The 10 disgraced lepers who beg Jesus for mercy (see Luke 17:11-19) are described as *allogenes*, Greek for “outcast.” (All humans, sick with sin, fit that description!) The leper who returned to give thanks received more than just physical healing, according to Scripture. When Jesus says, “Your faith has made you well,” he uses the Greek that means “Your faith has saved you.” The grateful leper, recognizing his depravity, humbly decides to return and give thanks, knowing — through faith — that his skin and his soul have been healed.

HUMBLED BEFORE GOD

In *A Quiet Place in a Crazy World* (Multnomah), Joni Eareckson Tada writes about approaching God with humility, out of “a place of dust and ashes.” God rewards an attitude of deep humility by lifting us up (see James 4:10 and 1 Peter 5:6).

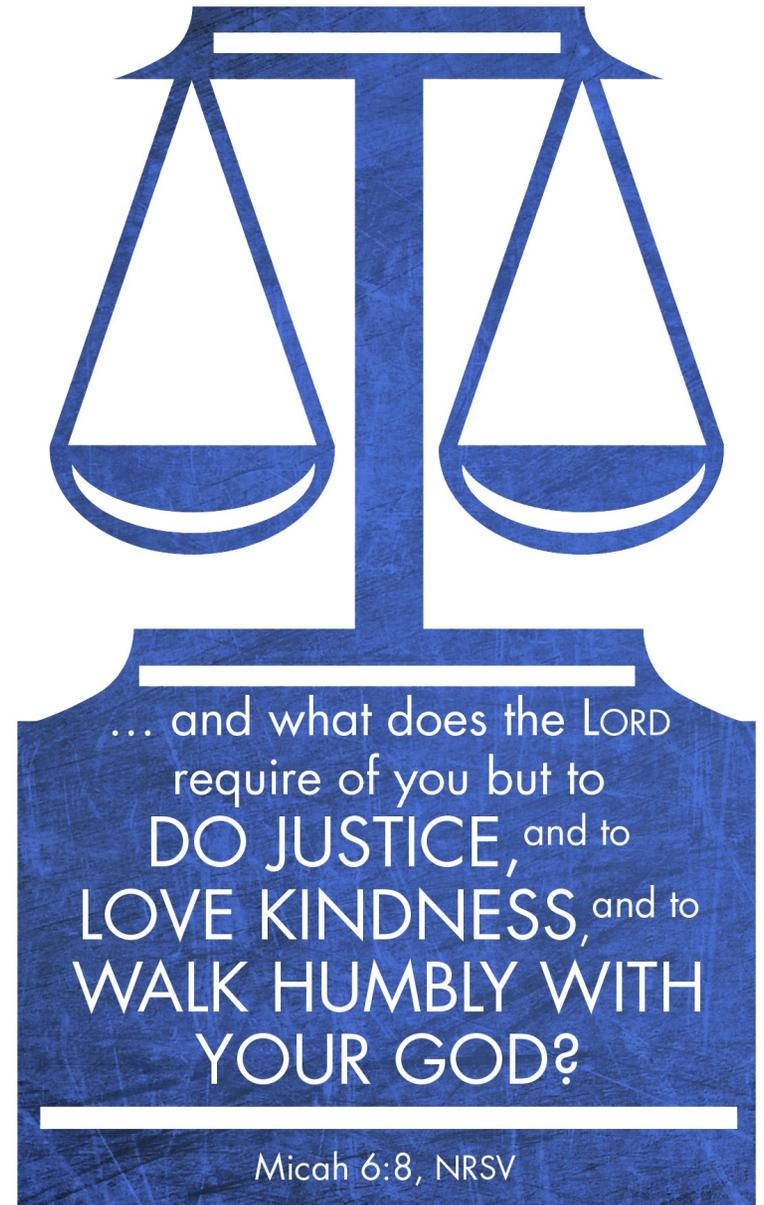
Abraham, for example, boldly approached God in prayer, “though I am nothing but dust and ashes” (Genesis 18:27, NIV). “The lower Abraham humbled himself, the ‘higher’ he must have felt,” Tada writes. “I can imagine that when Abraham spoke to God, he felt as though he were carried up on eagle’s wings to the heights of heaven. It must have awed him to be allowed, of all things, access to God Almighty.”

Such an attitude of humility helps us appreciate God’s real presence with us in prayer, Tada says, because “we will know the assurance of talking to Someone who is really there.”

THOUGHTS ON TRUE HUMILITY

“The Eternal Being, who knows everything and who created the whole universe, became not only a man but (before that) a baby, and before that a fetus inside a woman’s body. If you want to get the hang of it, think how you would like to become a slug or a crab.”

—C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*



“The Little Church That Could”

“Believing is Seeing”