

CLOTHED WITH HUMILITY

1 Peter 5:5-7

INTRODUCTION

- In today's world, the sin of pride is regarded as a virtue
- There is the pride of power and prestige that exalts self and its achievements
- There is the pride of intellectualism, where human knowledge is deemed to be the infallible authority, (Romans 1:22; 1 Corinthians 1:19-20; 3:18-19)
- There is moral pride, that rejects any objective moral standard, and exults and celebrates all manner of depravity (Philippians 3:19; Zephaniah 3:5)
- There is spiritual pride that imagines our human efforts of righteousness could make us accepted before God
- Yet human pride is nothing new – the philosopher, Aristotle (350 BC) described pride as the “crown of the virtues”
- It was the first sin ever committed (Isaiah 14:13-14) and was at the root of our parents original sin that brought about the fall of man (Genesis 3)
- God particularly hates pride as it is thoroughly contrary to his holy character, and is the greatest obstacle to man being reconciled to his Creator (Proverbs 6:16; 16:5)
- The only known antidote to the sin of pride is the gospel – every other religion or philosophy of this world *increases* pride in the heart of man
- Human pride cannot be seen for the evil it is unless there is first a knowledge of the true God and his holy nature, and then a knowledge of our own sinful depravity before him, and only the gospel can do that
- As the apostle Peter prepares to bring this epistle to a close, he exhorts the brethren to a holy walk in relation to one another in the church

- In 5:1-4 he encouraged to elders to be faithful in their duty to lead and feed the flock of God, knowing that they must give account to Christ for their ministry
- Here in vv.5-7 he turns to the rest of the flock and exhorts them to have a spirit of humility both towards God and towards one another

I. ASSUME THE PLACE OF SUBMISSION (5)

A. The younger submit to the elder

1. This principle of respect and honour of young to elders is found throughout the Scriptures (Leviticus 19:32; Job 32:4)
2. This should be particularly the case among the people of God in the church
 - a. The older believers should have the honour of the younger, not merely because of age, but because of their spiritual maturity
 - b. Satan has effectively divided many churches in our day by exploiting the “generation gap”, pitting the youth against the aged, and transforming once Biblical churches into contemporary entertainment venues
 - c. Rehoboam shows the folly of rejecting the wise counsel of the elders and following the foolish counsel of the young (1 Kings 12:8)
3. Peter’s repeated use of the word “elder” (*presbuterois*) as in v.1 indicates that he may have in mind the office of elder/pastor in the church
4. In this case, the “younger” (*neoteroi*) broadly refers to those under the leadership of the aforementioned elders
 - a. As in Galatians 6:6 there are two groups: “him that is taught” (the younger), and “him that teacheth” (the elder)
 - b. The same term (*neoteroi*) is used in Acts 5:6 where the “young men” of the church performed tasks on behalf of the elders, which would later become the office of deacon

5. God is a God of order and requires has ordained authority in the various human institutions he has established
 - a. He wants order in the society, and he has given us civil authorities to maintain that
 - b. He wants order in the home, and he has given the husband and father to maintain that
 - c. He wants order in the church, and he has given the elders to maintain that
6. The word “submit” (hupotasso) means literally to place under in an orderly fashion, as troops under the command of their leader, and therefore to voluntarily acquiesce, yield, cooperate in subordination to another
7. As the elders are given their responsibilities to the flock in vv.1-4, so the flock has corresponding responsibilities
 - a. As the elder is responsible to feed the church, those under him are to attend and receive of his teaching
 - b. As the elder is responsible to take the oversight of the church, those under him are to follow his leadership
 - c. As the elder is to be an example to the flock, those under him are to emulate his example

B. All believers are to be subject one to another

1. Note that this command to be subject to one another is omitted in modern Bible versions
2. Every Christian is to have an attitude of mutual submission to his brethren, always putting others and their needs before self (Ephesians 5:21; Philippians 2:3)
3. This theme of Christian submission runs throughout 1 Peter (2:13,18; 3:1-5; 3:22)

II. ADORN THE GARMENT OF HUMILITY (5-6)

A. Humility

1. This word (*tapeinophrosune*) is a combination of two words that mean to “lay low” and “think”, therefore it is to think lowly of ourselves, to have a humble, modest attitude; unpretentious
2. It is to see and think of ourselves in a proper view – as sinners with no inherent goodness, who deserve nothing but divine judgment
3. Humility is utterly foreign to the to the philosophy of this wicked world
 - a. The world is fixated with self-esteem, self-love, self-worth
4. So abhorrent was the concept of humility to the Greeks and Romans that they did not even have words in their languages to define it
5. Only Christ and the gospel have elevated this despised humility to become the “gem casket of all the virtues”
6. True humility is impossible outside of Christianity
 - a. The so-called humility of this world is at best a pretence, a mere show, while at its heart is a self-adulating pride
 - b. Only through the transforming power of Christ can a man be purged of his naturally proud heart and given a humble heart after the image of Christ

C. We are to be clothed with humility

1. The term for clothed (*egkomboomai*) was used of a slave girding on his outer apron that would keep his inner clothes clean
2. Peter may well have had in mind that striking and unforgettable scene at the Last Supper when the Lord Jesus, to the amazement of his disciples, “laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself” (John 13:4) just as a slave would, and began to wash their feet
3. Christ demonstrated that he came in humility, to serve, and he requires his disciples to do likewise (John 13:14-15)

4. To be clothed with humility requires more than mere will-power, but a work of divine grace in the soul, crucifying our proud hearts, and creating in us a humble, Christ-like spirit that directs our every thought, word and deed (Philippians 2:3-5)
5. We are to be *fully* clothed with humility not half-clothed as the hypocrites who make a “show of humility” (Colossians 2:23) while proudly seeking the praise of men (Colossians 2:23)
6. We are to be *firmly* clothed with humility, as a loose clothing will soon be stripped by our enemies of the world the flesh and the devil

D. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble

1. Peter quotes Proverbs 3:34, as did James in James 4:6
2. So hateful is pride in the sight of God that he “resists”, he sets himself in array, ready to go to war against those who harbour it in their lives
3. But those who humble themselves before God will receive his grace
 - a. This shows that that the single greatest obstacle to sinners receiving God’s grace in salvation is their pride
 - b. It shows us that submission and humility towards others can only be realised by first submitting and humbling ourselves to God
 - c. He gives grace to enable us to do what we could never do in our own strength

E. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God

1. God’s hand is Almighty, infinitely more powerful than anything in his creation
2. All of us are under his mighty hand
 - a. Some are against his hand, and therefore under his judgment

- b. Others are yielded in submission to his hand and under his grace
 - 3. To humble ourselves under his hand is to acknowledge that we are his creatures, he is our Maker; we are his servants, he is our Lord
 - 4. We may then joyfully receive from his hand whatever he ordains for us, including suffering for his sake
 - 5. As I submit to God's authority, I am able to submit to man's authority (cf. Ephesians 5:22)
 - 6. There is great comfort in placing ourselves under God's hand, knowing that he has sovereign control of all things, working all things after the counsel of his own will (Ephesians 1:11), and will work all things together for good to them that love him (Romans 8:28)
- F. He will exalt in due time (cf. Matthew 23:12)
- 1. The exaltation this world seeks is small and momentary
 - 2. The exaltation that God gives is great and eternal
 - 3. The "due time" is the coming of Christ, the judgment seat of Christ and his kingdom
 - 4. Peter throughout this epistle has instructed these suffering believers to look beyond the present sufferings to the future glory that awaited them (1:3-5; 4:7,13)
 - 5. This little phrase, "in due time" is the balm that soothes every trial we face in this life, no matter how bitter, as it reminds us that it will soon be over and we will be forever with the Lord in glory

III. APPLY YOUR CARES TO GOD (7)

- A. Cast all your care on God
 - 1. "Casting" (*epirrhipto*) is to throw (cf. Luke 19:35) and is in the aorist tense which denotes an act once for all, throwing the whole life with its care on him

2. "Care" (*merimna*) literally means to "draw apart in different directions" and describes anxiety, worry, stress
3. There is no escaping cares in this life in this fallen world (Job 5:7) – the critical question is what shall we do with those cares?
 - a. We can attempt to carry our cares, which, for a time may work, but eventually there will be cares too great for us to bear ourselves and they will crush us
 - b. We can attempt to ignore our cares, pretending they don't exist, but reality will eventually hit us
 - c. We can attempt to flee our cares, by changing location, or by diversions, or by intoxicating substances, yet they remain with us
 - d. We can attempt to fight our cares through our grit and determination, but ultimately the arm of flesh will fail
4. The only real solution to our troubles is to surrender them to the only one who can truly deal with them – God (Psalm 55:22; Matthew 6:25-34; Philippians 4:6-7)
5. While this verse is often quoted in isolation, it is connected and conditional upon the previous verse
 - a. The proud would never run to God with their cares as they trust in themselves to deal with them
 - b. Only the humble will confess that the trials we face, the burdens we bear, the cares we carry are too great for such feeble creatures, and that we require the almighty hand of God to carry them for us

B. He careth for you

1. What a profound truth that lies beyond our comprehension!
2. The Almighty Creator, Lord of heaven and earth, the the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy – this same God cares for us!

3. The gods of the heathen are either indifferent to the affairs of men or their interest in humanity is not of love or grace but cruel manipulation
4. Yet the true God has a love and concern for his creation, even the smallest sparrow (Matthew 10:29-30)
5. God's tender mercies are over all his works (Psalm 145:9), as a Father he pities his children (Psalm 103:13) and his thoughts toward us are precious (Psalm 139:17-18)

CONCLUSION

1. Proud, self-love is our greatest obstacle to being reconciled to God and enjoying fellowship with the brethren
2. Do you recognise this abominable sin in your own heart, and do you repent of it?
3. We cannot ever hope to be humble in our own strength
4. The key to humility is to look to the example of Christ who is "meek and lowly in heart" (Matthew 11:29) and to have his same mind in us (Philippians 2:5-8)
5. We criticise the doubting disciples for questioning Christ's care for them (Mark 4:38), yet every time we choose to carry our own worries instead of casting them upon him we are doing the same
6. What cares are you carrying that you need to cast upon the Lord today?