



THE ISSUE OF HUMILITY

A worldwide move of the Holy Spirit has begun, a renewal that may well lead to the greatest revival in church history.

A great harvest of souls will close this age of grace, the magnitude of which one can hardly imagine.¹ As the glory of God rises upon the church, multitudes will come to her light (Isaiah 60:1-3). Much of the harvest will come from the poor and dysfunctional in society. The gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed in mercy and compassion with attesting signs and wonders. The church will be marked by unity, grace and the love of God.

It will be a time of intense spiritual warfare, for darkness will cover the earth, a deep darkness of spiritual deception. Great shakings in the heavens and on earth will bring

1 Dale Rumble, THE GLORIOUS HARVEST, Tract, Fountain of Life Publications, 71 Old Kings Highway, Lake Katrine, NY 12449

distress and calamities among nations. Believers will face persecution, and tribulation and martyrdom.

The church is not prepared for what lies ahead. For that reason God is sovereignly arising in renewal power. He is manifesting His presence as a refiner's fire and as the promised latter rain; He is performing heart surgery to renew and prepare His church. I wonder if we truly realize how very important these things are in the purpose of God?

It is important to recognize this day of visitation and not miss what He is doing. However, some are critical of what is taking place since the renewal is accompanied by many physical and spiritual manifestations. Strange things, reminiscent of the "Great Awakening," often occur when the Holy Spirit touches the hearts of men, women and children. Laughter, weeping, physical shaking and falling to the floor are some examples. Such things are outside the experiential comfort zone or theological boundaries of some Christians; they discount what is taking place, ascribing it to emotions, bad theology, or even demonic deception. While we must judge any manifestation by the fruit that follows, the real issue is often simply our heart attitude.

During the Pentecostal revival in the early days of this century, many Evangelical Christians discredited what was taking place and referred to these believers as "holy-rollers." Physical and spiritual manifestations, including spiritual gifts, became cerebral stumbling blocks that exposed the heart of these critics. The real issue was heart attitude more than theology, for God reveals Himself and His ways to all who are humble and lowly of heart (Isaiah 57:15).

He leads the humble in justice, and He teaches the humble His ways. (Psalm 25:9)

It is no different today, which is why the Lord is focusing on the hearts of His people. Pride will keep one from seeing his need and recognizing what God is doing. Renewal and revival require a change of heart, and we don't recognize the state of our heart unless He opens our eyes (Jeremiah 17:9-10).

Confidence in what we can accomplish by traditional, controlled, predictable, "business-as-usual" meetings have to

be replaced by humble recognition that only the anointing of God will be sufficient for what lies ahead. The Lord is raising up an army which is clothed in humility. Change is coming!

To truly love God is to hate sin. Thus, if one is to fully grasp the importance that God places on humility, one must realize how deeply He hates pride. In Proverbs the Lord identifies seven things that He hates; the first one on His list is “haughty eyes” (Proverbs 6:16-19).

To fear God is to hate pride, since it inevitably leads to destruction.

The fear of the Lord is to hate evil; pride and arrogance and the evil way and the perverted mouth I hate. (Proverbs 8:13)

Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before stumbling. (Proverbs 16:18)

Let us examine salvation, grace, unity and authority to understand why humility is absolutely essential for renewal and revival in the church.

SALVATION AND HUMILITY

It all began a very long time ago. Sin came into God's kingdom. Lucifer sought to exalt himself above the stars of God, to ascend above the heights of the clouds and make himself like the Most High (Isaiah 14:13-14). For the first time, one of God's creatures rose up against His will and government. Sin, which is rebellion against God, was conceived through pride.

Satan then succeeded in tempting our forefather, Adam, to disobey God. As a result, all mankind since then has been infected with sin. We are rebels by nature, born with a mindset of “going our own way.” Pride has brought us low!

God could simply have destroyed all who sinned against Him and then brought forth a new creation of beings to serve Him. He did neither; because of His great love for man who had been created in His image, *God humbled Himself*. This was the first step in salvation! He left the bastions of glory to behold the need of man (Psalm 113:4-9). He came to person-

ally experience our humanity and to then forgive our sins in divine compassion and love. He laid down His life in death on the cross that we might gain eternal life (Philippians 2:5-6). This act of humility by God is the *greatest* miracle of the bible. It is the foundation for every truth in the church.

For one to be saved, the first step is clearly defined by the gospel, it is “to repent” (Matthew 3:2, 4:17; Luke 13:3; Acts 2:38, 11:18, 17:30, 26:20; 2 Peter 3:9). Humility is implicit in true repentance! To repent means to change our mind-set or way of thinking about ourselves and be willing to change our conduct. If there is not humility, there is no repentance!

(If) my people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray, and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin, and will heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:14)

In the process of salvation, every step we take forward after the new birth requires humility. Whether it is a new commitment we make in response to His love, or a crisis experience where He becomes more central in our life, or when we simply learn to trust Him more and increase our dependence upon Him; in every instance, it means taking a lower place and allowing Him to more properly fill His rightful place as our Lord. Humility is the highway of salvation, just as pride is door to destruction (Proverbs 18:12).

GRACE AND HUMILITY

The end of the age will witness the greatest ever demonstration of God’s grace to lost mankind. By comparison, all previous revivals have been gentle rains. A mighty deluge of the latter rain that was promised for the feast of tabernacles is coming! It will prepare the final great harvest of souls; one that even now is beginning.

The Lord is going to arise and shake both heaven and earth. He will sovereignly reveal new measures of mercy and compassion as He reaches out in love to all nations. Our eyes and hope are to be fixed on His grace for these days (1 Peter 1:5, 13).

Why is grace so important? It is the bridge God has provided into His fullness, glory, power, holiness, love and purpose (John 1:16; 1 Corinthians 1:4-7). By His grace, all things come to us through the Lord Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:3-6).

The gospel is a proclamation of God's grace which shall be preached in the whole world for a witness to all nations before the end comes (Matthew 24:14). All believers will be needed to gather in the great harvest. Grace is extended to each member according to their unique gift or ministry in the Spirit (Romans 12:6; Ephesians 4:7; 2 Timothy 1:9). Ministry in the church is a stewardship of grace as members use their gifts to serve one another (1 Peter 4:10). Words and deeds carry His grace to others (Ephesians 4:29; Colossians 4:6). What we become, or attain to, in His body is altogether because of His grace (1 Corinthians 15:10). Human weakness is not necessarily a disadvantage; it can become a great personal strength when one draws upon His grace (2 Corinthians 12:9; Hebrews 4:15-16). God never leads us into difficult situations, or calls us to do something great without providing the necessary grace. Finally, if we sin or fail, when our eyes are fixed on Jesus, we will discover that there is always more grace than sin in the situation (Romans 5:20). We just can't lose; all because of grace! We are exhorted to be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus (2 Timothy 2:1). Furthermore, we are commanded to see that no brother or sister ever comes short of His grace (Hebrews 12:15).

In conclusion, we are saved by grace, we stand by grace, we grow in grace, we minister by grace, and grace is God's bridge of love to the lost. Given these truths, what is the bottom line? Why is humility so important?

. . . God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. (James 4:6)

It is very simple; without humility there will be no grace!

UNITY AND HUMILITY

God is going to answer the prayer of His Son.

. . . **that they may be one**; even as Thou Father, art in Me, and I in Thee, that they also may be in Us; that the world may believe that Thou didst send Me I in them and Thou in Me, **that they may be perfected in unity** . . . (John 17:21, 23)

He is not raising up a regiment of super-powered “lone-rangers;” the Lord is preparing His body to display to the world a fullness of His power that flows out of the gentle tenderness of His love, mercy and compassion.

Judgment begins at the house of God. For that reason, we can expect to see walls brought down that divide His people. Sectarianism, pride and human agendas that, however unintentionally, have divided believers will be judged firmly but in love. There will be no glory visible upon the church until this unity that Jesus prayed for comes to pass.

The Lord will reaffirm in hearts the following four truths which are the proper basis for biblical unity²:

1. The Holy Spirit has made believers into one body in Christ (Romans 12:5; 1 Corinthians 12:13, 17). Despite shortcomings and obvious deficiencies, all believers have been immersed by the Holy Spirit into one body, for each has partaken of the same Spirit.
2. All believers have been given a common identity by name.
*Holy Father, keep them in Thy name, the name which Thou hast given Me, **that they may be one**, even as we are. (John 17:11)*
3. The Lord Jesus has been made the *one and only Head* over all things to the church (Ephesians 1:21-22). A living organism can only have one head; the church does not have Jesus and a lot of little heads as well.
4. The glory of God has been given to each believer as the *one and only nature* that can make us become like Him, uniting us in character, purpose and values (Exodus 33:18-19, 34:6-7; Hebrews 1:3).

2 Dale Rumble, THAT THEY MAY ALL BE ONE, Tract, Fountain of life Publication, 71 Old Kings Highway, Lake Katrine, NY 12449.

*And the glory which Thou hast given Me I have given to them; **that they may be one**, just as We are one. (John 17:22)*

Traditionally, the body of Christ is a term usually thought to mean an amorphous blob of diverse believers without any structure, which must be institutionally organized around doctrine and a ministry agenda in order to serve God.

That is not how the Lord views His people. He sees assemblies as local expressions of His body, each with a divine relational structure that grows and develops out of His life and by His handiwork. In His purpose for the last days, the Lord has a unique plan and call for each assembly just as He does for individual believers. The person of Jesus and His purpose must always have center stage. The five ministries of Ephesians 4, verse 11 are given to the church to equip believers for service in this divine organism.

The essential place of humility for life-flow and unity in the body of Christ is expressed by the following scriptures:

*Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, **but with humility of mind** let each of you regard one another as more important than himself. (Philippians 2:3)*

*And so, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience; bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. And beyond all these things put on love, **which is the perfect bond of unity**. (Colossians 3:12-18)*

Humility brings unity, and unity leads to glory!

AUTHORITY AND HUMILITY

Contemporary American Christianity apparently believes a church must have a ministry program that will draw people if it is to be successful. Attendance is the key measure of success. A good organization is needed under a strong

leader, ideally one with charisma who will be able to control the agenda and run the show. A spiritual C.E.O.! It would also help if he was a good singer. The program must be biblical and well supported by promotional literature to help raise finances. The music must be both scriptural and entertaining. And there has to be prayer, “Lord, bless our efforts to build you kingdom.”

As Dr. Michael Brown states in his excellent book, *THE END OF THE AMERICAN GOSPEL ENTERPRISE*³, “What began as a movement in Jerusalem became a philosophy in Greece, and institution in Rome, a culture in Europe, and an enterprise in America.”

Church institutions are often more like business enterprises of the world than expressions of the body of Christ. And such an environment does not represent humility. But this will change as the Lord restores His church in the days ahead.

The Greek word for minister, “diakoneo,” also means “servant.” Thus, a call to leadership is a call to the humility of servanthood. Jesus made this abundantly clear to the first apostles.

. . . . you know that rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men exercise authority over them. It is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many. (Matthew 20:25-28)

Each believer is called to serve in a place prepared for them in the body of Christ since before the world was created (2 Timothy 1:9). Together all believers comprise an organic body in the Spirit; it is wrong to separate them into two classes: performers (clergy) and spectators (laity). Each one is called by the Lord to find and fulfill his (or her) place of service.

3 Michael L. Brown, *THE END OF THE AMERICAN GOSPEL ENTERPRISE*, Destiny Image, P.O. Box 351, Shippensburg, PA 17257; 1989

Pride will only produce a graceless ministry. Thus, ministers must equip the saints to serve with hearts of humility, for humility is what qualifies one's authority to minister (Ephesians 4:11-16; Romans 12:3-8).

The issue is never whether or not we have been given sufficient authority for our calling in God; rather, it is how well our authority is recognized and accepted. It has no value if it is not recognized.

Consider our Lord. He emptied Himself, becoming a bondservant made in our likeness. As a man He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death on a cross. Because of His humility and obedience He was given a name that is above every name in heaven and earth and the authority associated with it.

Why should we submit to His authority? He gave up His life for us, loving us while we were yet in our sins and rebellion; He endured the judgment for all of our transgressions. In addition, He freely offers us all we will need to live an overcoming, righteous life. Such overwhelming love, humility and personal sacrifice is the most convincing basis why one would gladly submit to His authority.

Consider also how Paul conducted himself so that churches would submit to his apostolic authority. His first epistle to Thessalonca provides insight (1 Thessalonians 2:1-13). He avoided all acts or appearances of greed; he did not seek personal glory because of his apostolic ministry; he was gentle with people, much as a nursing mother would care for her baby; he gave his secular as well as his spiritual life in ministry to them, working with his hands to support himself both night and day as necessary, often with hardship, so that he would not be a financial burden to anyone; he lived a devout, blameless, exemplary life before them as he taught the people; he exhorted, encouraged and implored them as a father would his own children. Because of his humble, total commitment to serve people, Paul thanked God that they received his word for what it was: an apostolic word from God! The Lord is preparing many young apostles and prophets today for the church of tomorrow. These ministries will be known for their humility, for He can only use broken men.

God chose Moses to deliver Israel from the land of Egypt because he was the most humble man on the face of the earth (Numbers 12:3).

These three examples reveal how vital humility is to prove and demonstrate the authority of God in ministry. The following scripture endorses this truth:

. . . whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 18:4)

The following two scriptures address the significance of humility and authority in the age to come.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3)

Blessed are the meek (humble, gentle), for they shall inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5)

In the coming revival that will sweep the earth, there will be great demonstrations of the love, power and authority of Christ through the church. However, this will only be true for those whose life and ministry are clothed with humility.

*. . . all of you, **clothe yourselves with humility** toward one another, for God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble. (1 Peter 5:5)*

CONCLUSION

We are living in a time of transition, an era that is intricately woven into God's purpose for the last days. We are on the threshold of a great revival that will touch every region on earth and bring in a mighty harvest of souls to close this age of grace.

In her present state the church is not ready for what lies ahead, neither for the glory, nor the darkness that is deepening on earth.

For this reason, God is sovereignly arising to prepare His church, to renew and revive His people. He is deeply touching hearts of men, women and children, revealing how very much He loves us. Much of what was theory before concerning our relationship with Him is now becoming very real.

The first step in renewal must concern our relationship with Him. He is calling us to humble ourselves as little children, to draw near Him. As we respond, He will deal with idols in our lives such as pride, personal goals, worldly pleasures, religious agendas, hidden sins, etc. These idols have replaced Him in our hearts, and He will not tolerate them, for they prevent the intimacy that He seeks with us. At the same time, He will expose things that have brought division between churches and between believers. He is going to shake what the arm of flesh has brought into the church. Everything which is not from Him that His people trust in for success, safety, identity, or comfort will fall.

As God moves in renewal power, each one of us will face the challenge of humility. For example:

- It requires humility to accept what is outside of our religious comfort zone and sometimes outside our theological definitions.
- It requires humility to lay down “business-as-usual” religious programs, and give the Lord back His church.
- It requires humility for a father to ask forgiveness from his family for past failures.
- It requires humility for married couples to seek forgiveness from one another for mistakes that have injured their relationship.
- It requires humility to forgive those who have offended or hurt us in the past.
- It requires humility to be accountable to those who give oversight in the church.
- It requires humility for leaders to give up their control and allow Jesus to functionally be head of His church.
- It requires humility to lay down traditional worship and allow the Holy Spirit to lead us as priests of God.
- It requires humility to become open and honest with one another so that there is reality in our relationships

- It requires humility to keep our hands off the glory. This is going to become an essential requirement in the days ahead when great power and authority rests upon the church. All will face the following test:

The crucible is for silver and the furnace for gold, but a man is tested by the praise accorded to him. (Proverbs 27:21)

Finally, as the Lord restores and equips the church, and as His bride makes herself ready, the word of the Lord calls out to us:

*Take My yoke upon you, and learn from Me, for I am **gentle and humble** in heart; and you will find rest for your souls. (Matthew 11:2)*

*. . . but to this one I will look, to him who is **humble and contrite of spirit**, and who trembles at My word. (Isaiah 66:2)*

Lord, come and manifest Your presence among us. Revive our hearts; prepare us for Yourself and Your purpose in the earth. Amen.



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