

God Stooped Still Lower



Pride vs Humility (Part 5)
by Derek Prince

All this week we've been studying the outworking of the eternal, universal law stated by Jesus in Matthew 23:12:

> "For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." (NIV)

First of all, we saw this law demonstrated before human history began in the fall of Lucifer. Lucifer, a created cherub, very wise, very beautiful, sought a position of equality with God, exalted himself and was humiliated. Then we saw the law demonstrated again at the outset of human history in the fall of Adam. In each case, the cause of the fall was the same—self-exalting pride. Satan used the same motivation that had brought about his own fall to bring about the fall of Adam. He had said himself, "I will make myself like the Most High." When he came to Adam and Eve, he said, "If you eat of this fruit, you'll be like God Himself." The same motivation: the creature reaching up for equality with the Creator.

Well, what was God's response to Adam's fall? He had responded to the fall of Satan by creating Adam. In so doing, He Himself had stooped to the dust. How would God now respond to the fall of Adam? In my talk today I'll show you the answer, God stooped still lower. Let me sum it up this way: The passage or the transition from creation to redemption. The next great act of God was redemption. In creating man, God stooped to the dust, but in redeeming man, God stooped still lower. You see, God's answer to pride is always humility. The more God encountered pride, the more He Himself displayed humility. Man had fallen. He was alienated, a rebel. God did not abandon him. Thank God for that. In the person of Christ, God stooped to the lowest. He identified Himself with the fallen race and expiated its guilt. Then, to crown it all, He exalted these fallen, but redeemed creatures to the highest place in the universe, continually demonstrating this principle: "The way up is down."

Let's look at some Scriptures that speak first of all, about how Christ identified Himself with the human race and expiated its guilt. In Hebrews 2:14 and 15:

> "Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death; that is, the devil, and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death." (NIV)

You remember, I pointed out that when Adam rebelled, instead of being a king, he became a slave, a slave of Satan, a slave of death, a slave of corruption. He was no longer free. But in order to deliver him from that slavery, Jesus took upon Himself the Adamic nature, the form of humanity. He shared in the humanity. He took upon Himself the same flesh and blood that you and I have so that by His death, He might destroy the one who holds the power of death; that is, the devil, and free all those of us, who all our lives were held in slavery by our fear of death. It was a total identification. Jesus took upon Himself the nature of man, the fallen creature.

This is stated too, in 1 Peter 2:24:

> "He Himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed." (NIV)

That's total identification. On the cross He became totally identified with our sin, our guilt. He Himself became the last great guilt offering that took away the sin and guilt of the human race. He bore our sin. He bore our punishment. Our wounds became His wounds and He died our death. He expiated that guilt of rebellion as our representative, the last Adam, hanging there on the cross, shedding His life blood, giving Himself totally to redeem us.

And then the simple statement, again, in 1 Peter 3:18:

> "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God." (NIV)

That's total identification. The righteous took the place of the unrighteous, took the place of the rebel, the alien, the one who turned against God. He died the death that was our due, to deliver us from the fear of death and to bring us back to God, to reconcile us to God.

And then, we look further, not beyond identification of Christ with us we find that in turn, through faith and repentance, we can be identified with Christ, identified not only in His death, but in His subsequent exaltation. This is the great mystery of identification, first, Christ with us, then we, through faith, with Christ. Stated in Ephesians 2:4–6:

> "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions: it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus." (NIV)

You see, that's the other side of the coin, the opposite side of identification. First Jesus identified Himself with us, the fallen race. He took our place. He paid our penalty. He died our death. He expiated our guilt. Then, seeing that, and identifying ourselves in turn with Him in faith, we are identified with Him in all that follows His death. See what it says there in that passage in Ephesians 2, three great steps of our identification with Jesus. God made us alive with Christ. God raised us up, He resurrected us with Christ—and it doesn't stop there. God seated us with Him in the heavenly realm. Christ is seated on a throne. God seated us with Him. He enthroned us in Christ. Notice those three upward steps of our identification with Jesus: made alive with Him, resurrected with Him, and enthroned with Him. The same principle: the way up is down. It's from the lowest that we go to the highest.

Finally, God will make these redeemed creatures, who were fallen and raised up, His eternal demonstration to the whole universe that God exalts the lowest to the highest. I want you to see the principle that runs through all this. It's not just a matter of history but it's the matter of the outworking of a universal law: Whoever humbles himself will be exalted. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled.

Notice what God says in the epistle to the Ephesians in three passages about the function of the redeemed throughout the rest of the history of the universe. They have a special place, a special function. In Ephesians 1:11 and 12, we read this:

> "In him [Christ] we were also chosen, having been predestined according to the plan of him who works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will in order that we, who were the first to hope in Christ, might be for the praise of his glory." (NIV)

We, in a special way, the fallen but redeemed, lifted from the lowest to the highest, are to be the demonstration that will be for the praise of God's glory.

And then, going back to Ephesians 2:6 and 7, looking at that passage which speaks of our identification with Him, made alive with Him, resurrected with Him, enthroned with Him;

let's see the purpose. Just looking again, Ephesians 2:6 and 7:

> "God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus [enthroned us with Christ], in order that [now this is the purpose] in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus." (NIV)

Notice, these fallen but redeemed creatures are to be the eternal demonstration of the principle that God takes the lowest and lifts it to the highest.

And one final Scripture in Ephesians 3:10:

> "His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms." (NIV)

Through us, God is going to demonstrate His manifold wisdom to the entire creation, to the heavenly and to the earthly realms, for all remaining ages, always the principle being that God exalts the lowest. He who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Let me sum that up in three statements which I believe bring out the very heart of the truth that we've been looking at, the truth of redemption. The farthest became the nearest. The lowest became the highest. The disgrace is changed to the glory. What's God's ultimate purpose in all that? To leave no room for pride in any created being.

Radio Program

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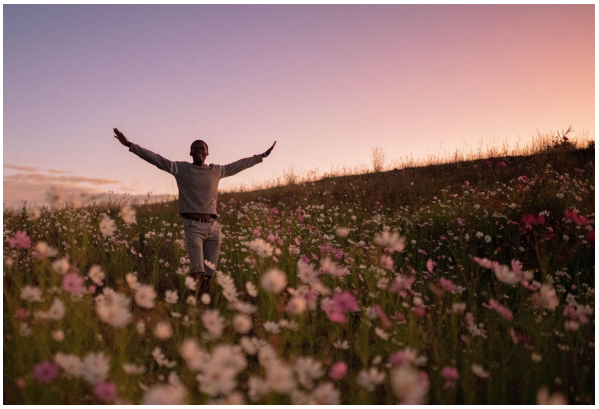

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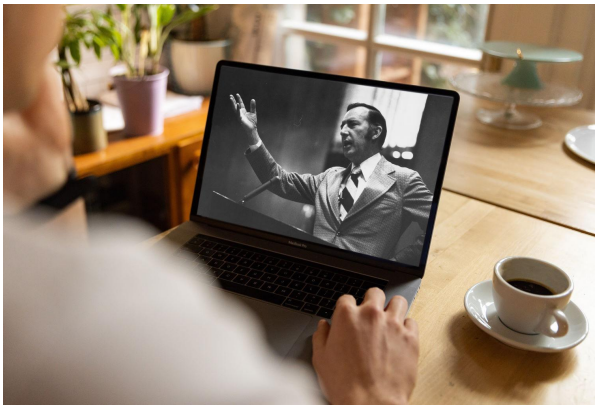

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