

**A CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP
SONGS OF ASCENT
MY EYES ARE NOT RAISED - HUMILITY**

Text: Psalm 131

Key Word: Humility

Key Thought: Humility Leads Us on a Valuable Journey

Humility or lowliness is one of the highest attainments in Christian life.

"This Psalm is one of the shortest to read, but one of the longest to learn."

Charles Spurgeon
"Treasury of David VII"
p. 86

It is a short ladder to climb if you count the number of verses, but it reaches great height as it moves from humility to a fixed confidence in God. Some writers believe that this Psalm was made famous as the children of Israel returned from their 70 years of Babylonian captivity. This is both a Psalm **BY** David and a Psalm **OF** David, especially of his early life.

This timid Psalm proceeds the lesson which our Lord taught His disciples. Jesus gave them an answer to a troubling question they had.

"Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

Matthew 18:1

Jesus replied,

"I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

4. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."

Matthew 18:3,4

Why Is Humility One of the Highest Attainments in Our Christian Life?

I. A DESIRABLE CONDITION (Psalm 131:1)

II. A DIFFICULT TASK (Psalm 131:2)

III. A DELIGHTFUL REWARD (Psalm 131:3)

I. A DESIRABLE CONDITION (Psalm 131:1)

"My heart is not proud, O LORD, my eyes are not haughty (arrogant); I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me."

Psalm 131:1

This verse highlights two conditions that we should strive to stay away from - that is a boastful pride and the other is presumption. **The first sin undervalues other people while the other overestimates oneself.**

God's Word deals with both of these problems.

"whoever has haughty eyes and a proud heart, him will I not endure."

Psalm 101:5b

"The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law."

Deuteronomy 29:29

*** If you are into gardening and especially growing roses you realize that you have an annual work to do. You have to do something that an outsider may not understand. When a person doesn't understand how the growth process works they may even think you are mutilating or even ruining the plant.

What I'm referring to of course is called pruning. Anyone who has had a rose bush usually enjoys the first bloom of full and beautiful flowers. But the next year the plant will grow up and even exceed the height of some trellis'.

This is when novice gardeners may think they will have more roses. But the opposite is true. If a rose bush is not pruned early in the year, its blossoms will be small and few to be seen.

The problem is that the branches have grown too far from their roots. ***

Psalm 131 is a message to us not to grow beyond our ability to bear fruit. We need to desire that God keeps us in good growing condition even if it causes us to be humbled.

I. A DESIRABLE CONDITION (Psalm 131:1) (Contd.)

Jesus, speaking of His Father said,

"He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch (or cane or shoot) that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful."

John 15:2

We must be careful that we do not get engulfed with the mind set of this world. We are surrounded by a way of life that we are told that we must expand to become better (huge organization) and that we will become famous by what we acquire. People reach for the top no matter what the top represents. We must beware that Adam lost his place in paradise because of the same temptation.

Pride has its seat in the heart but it is usually expressed through the eye and mouth. Our eyes are the mirror of our soul. The Bible says that the humble publican would not even lift up his eyes when he prayed.

It is difficult to recognize pride as a sin when it is held up on every side as a virtue, urged as profitable, and rewarded as an achievement. It is also difficult to recognize **wayward ambition** as a sin because it takes on the **appearance of aspiration.**

Illus - Our Condominium in Hawaii

We must be careful when we remove God from our ambitions or try to make Him adjust to our dreams. Not everything that is said is right like . . .

"A man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?"

Robert Browning

Some people live under the aspiration of reaching for the skies and grasping everything that is not nailed down.

"Those who yield themselves up to the influence of ambition will soon lose themselves in a labyrinth (maze) of perplexity."

John Calvin

II. A DIFFICULT TASK (Psalm 131:2)

If we are not to be boastfully proud or arrogant, then what is pleasing to God? Are we to walk around practising "worm Theology?" We can make 2 mistakes. **One is to walk around thinking too highly of ourselves while the other is to think to lowly of ourselves.**

"Faith is not some neurotic dependency but childlike trust."

Eugene H. Peterson

There comes a time when we must grow beyond our need for things that we once thought were indispensable.

"But I have stilled and quieted my soul; like a weaned child with its mother, like a weaned child is my soul within me."

Psalm 131:2

A Christian is not like some baby crying out loudly for its mother's breast, but rather like a child that has been weaned and quietly rests under the loving care of the mother.

The transition from a suckling to a weaned, content child is not easy. It is both noisy and stormy at times. **It is not an easy task to quiet oneself. We could probably calm a sea and rule the winds long before quieting our spiritual demands. God weans us ON Him not FROM Him.** Some are babies when they should be children, or even adults. **Remember that no infant weans himself. We must change from MY WILL to THY WILL.**

A pastor once said that he didn't mind feeding his new converts on the bottle but he had a difficult time when he had to part the moustache to get the nipple in.

We must be weaned from self-sufficiency, self-will, and self-seeking. A weaned child still hungers; but it changes its appetite from milk to meat as it matures. A soul that is weaned from the world sets its desire on things above and not on the things below.

Paul learned this lesson and encourage the Church while he was kept in a prison.

"I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances."

Philippians 4:11b

III. A DELIGHTFUL REWARD (Psalm 131:3)

"O Israel, put your hope in the LORD both now and forevermore."

Psalm 131:3

This Psalm ends with the same delightful reward as the previous one - in hope! David walked through the journey from being a suckling to become a great king of Israel. The pathway was not easy because it required a lot of change. David did not usurp the authority of king Saul even after God had rejected Saul for his sin. David was a pilgrim who dwelt in uncomfortable caves when he should have rested in a palace. David left the palace to allow his rebellious son, Absalom to briefly take the position of king. David did not counter attack the words of Shimei who verbally insulted him.

A person with solid hope is a person who has walked the path of maturity in the midsts of adversity. These people display the image of Christ in and through their character.

Psalm 131 aspires us to live a life full of the quality of calm confidence and quiet-like strength that understands the difference between unruly arrogance and faithful aspiration. It knows how to distinguish between an **infantile dependency** and a **child-like trust**. It is a Psalm that leads us to humility which is based upon our hope in the God of Israel.

The past warrants this kind of godly confidence - the present demands such confidence; and the future will justify such confidence.

2279 Cape of Good Hope

*** The southern tip of Africa used to be called the "**Cape of Tempests** ." Its swirling seas and continuous adverse weather conditions has caused sailors great anxiety and taken many lives.

But a certain Portugese, determined to find a safer route through these seas to the renown Land of Cathy, discovered a safer passage around this projection into the water. The area was renamed the "**Cape of Good Hope**." ***

C:\My Documents\WPWin(X7)\Sermons.2016\Psalms\Ascent\Psalm 131.wpd

Date: July 3/16

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30 Am

Song: But I have Trusted in thy Mercy - D

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