

Like Christ In His Humility By Andrew Murray

Classic Christian Writings:

Scripture reading: "In lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself. Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death, yea, the death of the cross" (Phil. 2:3-8).

Among the Philippians there was still pride and want of love. It is with the distinct view of setting Christ's example before them, and teaching them to humble themselves as He did, that this portion of inspiration was given: "In lowliness of mind each counting other better than himself. Have this mind in you which was also in Christ Jesus." He who does not study this portion of God's Word with the wish to become lowly as Christ was, has never used it for the one great purpose for which God gave it.

Christ, descending from the throne of God, and seeking His way back there as man through the humiliation of the cross, reveals the only way by which we ever can reach that throne. The faith which accepts His example as well as His atonement, is alone true faith. Each soul that would truly belong to Him must in union with Him have His spirit, His disposition and His image.

We must be like Christ in His self-emptying and self-humiliation. The first great act of self-abnegation, in which He emptied Himself as God of His divine glory and power and laid it aside, was followed up by the no less wondrous humbling of Himself as man, to the death of the cross. This amazing twofold humiliation was the astonishment of the universe and the delight of the Father. Holy Scripture with the utmost simplicity tells us we must, as a matter of course, be like Christ.

Does Paul and do the Scriptures and does God really expect this of us? Why not? Or rather, how can they expect anything else? They know the fearful power of pride and the old Adam in our nature. But they know also that Christ has redeemed us not only from the curse but from the power of sin, and that He gives us His resurrection life and power to enable us to live as He did on earth. They say that He is not only our Surety, but our Example also. We are not only to live through Him, but also live like Him.

And further, He is not only our Example, but also our Head. He lives in us and continues in us the life He once led on earth. With such a Christ and such a plan of redemption, can it be otherwise? The follower of Christ must have the same mind as was in Christ; he must especially be like Him in His humility.

Christ's example teaches us that it is not sin that must humble us. This is what many Christians think. They consider daily falls are necessary to keep us humble. This is not so. There is indeed a humility which consists in the acknowledgment of transgression and shortcomings, that is very lovely, and so of great worth. But that is the beginning of something more. There is a humility which is more heavenly still, even like Christ. It consists, even when grace keeps us from sinning, in the self-abasement that can only wonder that God should bless us, and delights to be as nothing before Him, to whom we owe all.

Grace Makes and Keeps Us Humble

It is grace we need, and not sin, to make and keep us humble. The branches most heavily laden always bow the lowest. The greatest flow of water makes the deepest riverbed. The nearer the soul comes to God, the more His majestic presence makes it feel its littleness. It is this alone that makes it possible for each to count others better than himself. Jesus Christ, the Holy One of God, is our example of humility: knowing that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He was come from God and went to God, He washed the disciples' feet. It is the divine presence, the consciousness of divine life and the divine love in us, that will make us humble.

It appears to many Christians an impossibility to say: I will not think of self; I will esteem others better than myself. They ask grace to overcome the worst outbursts of pride and vainglory, but an entire self-renunciation, such as Christ's, is too difficult and too high for them. Consider Jesus' words: "He who humbles himself shall be exalted" (Matt. 23:12); "He who loses his life for My sake shall find it" (Matt. 10:39). If they only understood the deep truth and blessedness of these words, they would not be satisfied with anything less than entire conformity to their Lord in this. And they would find that there is a way to overcome self and self-exaltation: to see it nailed to Christ's cross, and there keep it crucified continually through the Spirit (Gal. 5:24; Rom. 8:13). He only can grow to such humility who heartily yields himself to live in the fellowship of Christ's death.

To attain this, two things are necessary. The first is a fixed purpose and surrender henceforth to be nothing and seek nothing for oneself, but to live only for God and our neighbor. The other is the faith that appropriates the power of Christ's death in this, also, as our death to sin and our deliverance from its power. This fellowship of Christ's death brings an end to the life where sin is too strong for us; it is the commencement of a life in us where Christ is too strong for sin.

It is only under the teaching and powerful working of the Holy Spirit that one can realize, accept, and keep hold of this truth. But God be thanked, we have the Holy Spirit. Oh, that we may trust ourselves fully to His guidance! He will guide us, for it is His work; He will glorify Christ in us. He will teach us to understand that we are dead to sin and the old self, that Christ's life and humility are ours.

Thus Christ's humility is appropriated in faith. This may take place at once. But the appropriation in experience is gradual. Our thoughts and feelings, our very manners and conversation, have been so long under the dominion of the old self, that it takes time to imbue and permeate and transfigure them with the heavenly light of Christ's humility. At first the conscience is not perfectly enlightened. The spiritual taste and the power of discernment have not yet been exercised. But with each believing renewal of the consecration in the depth of the soul, "I have surrendered myself to be humble like Jesus," power will go out from Him. It will fill the whole being, until in face and voice and action, the sanctification of the Spirit will be observable. The Christian will truly be clothed with humility.

The Divine Beauty of Humility

The blessedness of a Christlike humility is unspeakable. It is of great worth in the sight of God: "He giveth grace to the humble" (Jas. 4:6). In the spiritual life it is the source of rest and joy. To the humble all God does is right and good. Humility is always ready to praise God for the least of His mercies. Humility does not find it difficult to trust. It submits unconditionally to all that God says.

The two whom Jesus praised for their great faith are those who thought least of themselves. The centurion had said, "I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof" (Matt. 8:8). The Syrophenician woman was content to be numbered with the dogs (Mark 7:27). In communion with men humility is the secret of blessing and love. The humble man does not take offence, and is very careful not to give it. He is ever ready to serve his neighbor, because he has learned from Jesus the divine beauty of being a servant. He finds favor with God and man.

Oh, what a glorious calling for the followers of Christ! To be sent into the world by God to prove that there is nothing more divine than self-humiliation. The humble man glorifies God. He leads others to glorify Him, and he will at last be glorified with Him. Who would not be humble like Jesus?

O my beloved Lord, I feel the need of a new, a deeper insight into Thy crucifixion, and my part in it. Reveal to me how my old proud self is crucified with Thee. Show me in the light of Thy Spirit how I, God's regenerate child, am dead to sin and its power, and how in communion with Thee sin is powerless. Lord Jesus, who hast conquered sin, strengthen in me the faith that Thou art my life, and that Thou wilt fill me with Thy humility if I will submit to be filled with Thyself and Thy Holy Spirit.

From Like Christ by Andrew Murray.