

Humbly We Receive Him  
Luke 2:8-20; Philippians 2:5-11  
December 26, 2010

That can-do spirit that's installed in each of us – that over-developed sense of pride in personal accomplishment – the idea that we don't need anybody's help – all of that can do us in when it comes to our spiritual life.

What's the antidote? Humility. Humility is the key. If you are looking for a watch-word for the New Year coming up, perhaps the word *humility* would be a good one for all of us. Humility is not only an essential ingredient in our relationship with our God, it sets the tone for all of our relationships to be God-honoring.

Christ is our example of humility. The Son of God humbled himself by leaving the throne of heaven and being born as a human being and laid in a feed trough. He humbled himself by riding into Jerusalem on a donkey. And maybe most importantly, he humbled himself by allowing himself to be put to death on a cross. Listen to how the Apostle Paul put it:

*You must have the same attitude that Christ Jesus had.*

*Though he was God,*

*he did not think of equality with God*

*as something to cling to.*

*Instead, he gave up his divine privileges;*

*he took the humble position of a slave*

*and was born as a human being.*

*When he appeared in human form,*

*he humbled himself in obedience to God*

*and died a criminal's death on a cross.*

*Therefore, God elevated him to the place of highest honor*

*and gave him the name above all other names,  
that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2:5-11)*

John the Baptist knew who he was in relation to Jesus as we hear John saying, "He must become greater; I must become less."

Humility is key? Can we recognize Jesus without a proper understanding of our place...without humility? We may know of Him and talk about Him and call Him by name, but without humility do we fail to recognize His place because we are too concerned about ours? Without humility do we have trouble hearing, receiving, much less worshipping, the Savior who comes to us?

Jesus was teaching us the same truth when He grabbed a little child and said, "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven." We cannot receive the coming Savior and His kingdom, we will never enter the Kingdom, apart from humility. Apart from recognition that we weren't given the task of being the Christ, of saving ourselves, we will not allow the Christ to birth us into a new creation.

One day a father looked out of the kitchen window and saw his son playing in the back yard sandbox. As he watched, he noticed the boy digging. Pretty soon he had uncovered a large rock. The boy was successful at dislodging it from the hole it was in, but after trying repeatedly to lift the rock over the side and out of the sandbox, the boy sat down and began to cry.

The father walked out and said, "What's the matter?"

The boy told him about trying to lift the rock, but he just couldn't do it. So the father said, "Why didn't you use everything you had?" To which the boy replied that he had.

Then the father looked at him and said, "No you didn't. You didn't ask me to help you."

Humility – some interpret the virtue as a weakness. "Christianity is only for people who need a crutch," naysayers deride. They are right you know. Christianity is only for people who need a

crutch. Humility recognizes everyone needs crutches, and it is about time we stop trying to build our own pair out of our glorified toothpicks of sufficiency and pride, and receive the gift the Savior brings. It is time to stop fighting for our rights and influence and survival, and allow the Lord to give us our place and heal our wounds. It is time we acknowledge the "God-shaped hole in all of us" and allow the Savior who comes to fill us with himself until He is exalted in our lives.

John the Baptist obviously knew. But what about you and me? What is to be said of us?

As I think about humility and the Christmas event, I can't help but picture the shepherds approaching the manger ever so tentatively, and kneeling before the Prince of Peace.

I want to close with a verse out of the hymn, "O Little Town of Bethlehem," by Phillips Brooks.

How silently, how silently, the wondrous Gift is giv'n;  
So God imparts to human hearts the blessings of His Heav'n.  
No ear may hear His coming, but in this world of sin,  
Where meek souls will receive Him still, the dear Christ enters in.

The celebration of Christmas is in full gear. The promise of hope fills our hearts. God is imparting the blessings of His heaven to human hearts. The Savior is here.

Are there any meek souls, who recognize their place, how needy and dependent they are?

Are there any meek souls who recognize His place, how we exist to lift Him up?

I invite you to join the shepherds in kneeling before the manger...before the One who has come to save you from yourself.

The promise of God is in Jesus, the Savior of the world, and for those who will humble themselves before Him, He never fails to enter in.

Merry Christmas.