

Jesus: The Humble Servant

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The story is told of a lawyer who had successfully handled a difficult law case for a wealthy friend. Following the happy outcome of the case, the friend and client called on the lawyer, expressed his appreciation for his work, and handed him a new Moroccan leather wallet. The lawyer looked at the wallet in astonishment and handed it back with a sharp reminder that a wallet could not possibly compensate him for his services. "My fee for that work," acidly snapped the attorney, "is five hundred dollars." The friend opened the wallet to reveal ten crisp hundred-dollar bills, removed five of them, and handed it back to the lawyer with a smile.

We all know arrogance when we see it. A friend is too sure of himself; a coworker only likes to talk about herself, never listening to what you have to say. Arrogance is all the more insufferable when an acquaintance constantly brags on himself and his accomplishments when it is clearly seen that he is not all that great. It makes matters even worse when he won't admit a fault or flaw unless it's to fabricate an appearance of self-awareness and ward off accusers.

We also know humility when we see it, but humility is a little harder to describe. We find it easy to think of examples of arrogance, but how do we imagine a humble person? Typically we think of people we know who are humble, but what is it that makes them that way?

Jesus is the perfect example of the humble servant. Jesus showed His humility when He entered Jerusalem the week of His crucifixion. The people praised Him by laying down coats and tree branches and shouting, "Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest" (Matt. 21:8-9). But Jesus' entrance into the city was not like you would expect for a king, much less the King of kings. Where were the chariots and trumpets? Where was the great procession? Jesus could have had whatever entrance He wanted. Even though He is the greatest King, He chose to enter Jerusalem in a humble way: on a donkey. When we find ourselves in positions of authority in various roles in the church, home, or at work, let us follow the Christ's example of carrying that power with humility.

Jesus also showed His humility when He washed the apostles' feet. He knew that He had all authority (Jn. 13:3). Still He decided to take a towel and basin of water and wash the feet of His apostles (Jn. 13:4-5). He took the lowest of jobs to teach the disciples that they should serve one another (Jn. 13:13-15). Our friends and brethren need to know our love for them through our service, not just our words. Jesus told the disciples, "This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends" (Jn. 15:12-13). Jesus showed His humility when He emptied Himself and took on the form of a servant (Phil. 2:7-8). Could anyone argue that Jesus was not humble when He left heaven to die for sinful man?

Jesus showed His humility when preaching boldly. Jesus boldly warned His disciples about the hypocrisy of the Scribes and Pharisees. He described them as children of hell and "blind guides" (Matt. 23:15-16). Some might confuse this boldness with arrogance, thinking that humility should require the Christian to avoid offending others by speaking out against sin. But Jesus was a perfect example of preaching and rebuking

error. It was not arrogant for Jesus to know who He was while preaching on the earth, or to be confident in what He was doing. He had the authority to speak the truth and would say only what the Father commanded (Jn. 8:28-29). Jesus said that He was eternal God, a claim so bold and controversial they sought to kill Him (Jn. 8:58-59). Those who would confuse truth for arrogance have forgotten much of Jesus' preaching. When we speak the truth in love today, we are following the example of the humblest servant, Christ!

We know humility when we see it and we certainly see humility in the man Christ Jesus. In a time of abundant arrogance it is refreshing and convicting to read about the humility of the Great I Am.