

# God Gives Grace To The Humble

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Preacher: Rev. John Davidson

[ 0 : 00 ] If you would turn back with me please to that portion of scripture that we read in 1 Peter chapter 5, 1 Peter chapter 5 and the second half of verse 5, 1 Peter chapter 5 and the second half of verse 5.

Clothe yourselves all of you with humility toward one another for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

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The last time I was here a number of weeks ago I am so long winded sometimes when I'm preaching that I only got halfway through a sermon so I thought I would do the second half today. And what happened here was this is a sermon I wrote a number of years ago and what happened was I came across an old sermon by a fellow called Ebenezer Erskine and he was one of the Marrow men.

[ 1 : 14 ] He was around in the early 1700s. He was a friend of a chap called Thomas Boston who you might have heard of and he had a great heritage and a great ministry and he wrote a sermon in 1729 called The Humble Soul, the peculiar favourite of heaven and it was a communion service and what they did back then, most of the ministers what they did back then was they would ask questions of the Bible, they would set out a question and answer in their sermons like the Catechism, they would ask questions and then they would go to the Bible and they would answer the questions.

Now what I did was I took Erskine's six points that he had, yes six points I think we only reached number two the last time so maybe three and four today and he got six points and he asked the Bible six questions and the six points were this, he says what is a humble soul?

What is a humble soul? Number two we asked the question why is the humble person a peculiar favourite of heaven and can I prove this from the Bible?

Number three why does God appreciate the humble? Number four what are the marks of a humble soul? What does it look like in a Christian?

Number five, number five unimportantly why should we seek a humble spirit? And number six, number six how do we attain a humble spirit?

[ 2 : 53 ] These were the questions that Erskine asked of the Bible now of course I haven't plagiarised it I've taken some of his points and I've put in my own application and my own illustrations and redone it and it was a real, it was one of these you know when you come to a book or you come to a sermon and you read a sermon or you hear a sermon and it just bang, it just house you straight into your heart so that never happened to you.

Have you ever been sitting under the word of God or reading a book or reading the scripture and the Lord comes to you bang and it's like whoa now that is the Lord definitely speaking to me now that's what happened to me when I read that because there is nothing like the word of God to make each and every one of us look inward there is nothing like the word of God that makes us look at our lives and look at our beliefs and look at everything about us and I remember one minister saying once when we come to read the word of God very often we find that it is reading us, it is reading us and of course pride we all suffer with pride with sin comes pride with sin comes pride now there is only one thing that can do anything about my pride or anyone else's pride and that is the gospel of Jesus Christ because the opposite of pride the opposite of sin the opposite of all that is anti God is Jesus hanging on a cross and dying for your sin and for mine the one Paul tells us in Philippians the one who humbled himself even to the point of death even death on a cross that's what it took in order for you and I to be rescued from our sin it took the holy blameless Lamb of God

Jesus Christ to be crucified on a cross to take your sin and my sin and the punishment that we deserve that's how strong sin is that's how strong pride is but grace is stronger God's love is more powerful the gospel is more powerful and when we look at the Bible and when we read our own hearts we know and we are commanded by the word of God for all of us to humble ourselves and to let this Jesus take the reins of our lives when we say to the Lord Jesus Lord Jesus you know better than I do

I have been sinning against you for years for decades and I have been going my own way Lord help me to humble myself at the foot of the cross and deal with my sin because there is nothing I can do about it so that is what the word of God teaches us concerning pride and concerning humility and when the Lord enters into your heart and into my heart that's what he does he takes away this hard heart that we have and he moulds it and he recreates it and he softens it and you know that sometimes it takes hard providences in your experience and in my experience for that to happen there are times in our lives where the Lord will really will put us on our knees because he is God and we must let God be God clothe yourselves all of you with humility toward one another for God opposes the proud that gives grace to the humble and the story is told of Cassius Clay does anyone remember

Cassius Clay the boxer Muhammad Ali he was a young man and at this time he was a rising star of boxing and he was actually on his way to becoming champion of the world and he was on his way to a big fight and he was going on to the plane with his entourage and all his friends and he was feeling good was Cassius Clay he was feeling good he was feeling confident there was nobody like him in the whole world or so he thought and he was laughing and joking with the entourage as the plane was getting ready to take off and the stewardess walked up the aisle making sure everyone's seat belts were fastened and she noticed that Cassius Clay's seat belt wasn't fastened and she said Mr Clay will you please fasten your seat belt and he completely ignored her so she asked him again will you please fasten your seat belts and he ignored her again and the third time she leaned in and she issued an order and she says fasten your seat belt now now that got his attention the boxer looked up and he says Superman don't need no seat belt she turned around and she says Superman don't need no plane. Pride, pride, pride. Six questions Erskine asked what is a humble soul why is the humble person a peculiar favorite of heaven and why does God appreciate the humble and I'm going to quickly go through points one and two for those that were in

Tia and to remind ourselves now what is a humble spirit well a humble spirit the first thing Erskine says was we must look at ourselves we must look at ourselves and it's a very it's to have a very sensible and low view of ourselves and you remember Jacob saying to the Lord I am not worthy of the least of all the deeds of steadfast love that you have shown me we are never to think that we are the greatest thing in the world and that we come from such and such a family or we do such and such a job the Lord makes little account of all of these things and I told you the story about Charles Spurgeon who was at the door after preaching at the Tabernacle and he was shaking hands with the congregation as they were leaving and there was a young man that came up to him and this young man he had never seen before in church the young man just couldn't wait to tell the great preacher who he was and what great family he came from in London and all about himself and Spurgeon just listened and when the young man stopped the preacher turned around to him and says young man I care not where you came from I don't care where you've come from I am more interested in where you are going that is what I am interested in we are to have a low and a sensible view of ourselves now there's nothing like the word of God that will help us do this there's nothing like the word of God that makes us look at ourselves and realize who we are now concerning others a humble spirit will put others before themselves and of course that is all over the pages of scripture Christ himself came not to be served but to serve and likewise we as Christians are to be of the same mindset have the same mind of Christ Paul says in Philippians they have the same mind of Christ and then thirdly concerning God the humble spirit will have a high view of God a humble spirit will have a holy fear of God not a slavish fear but a love for God knowing that God is God and that we are sinners saved by grace we are sinners saved by grace listen to Erskine on this point he says in a word the humble and lowly believer is content to be nothing that Christ may be all and all unto him the humble spirit is content to be a fool that

[11:20] Christ may be his only wisdom content to be as he really sees himself a guilty condemned criminal that is Erskine's view of it so we're to have a very sensible view of who we are because sin and pride I don't know about you guys but my heart I am full of sin and I am full of pride and I need the Lord to check me every step of the way and every Christian to and if there are any

here who are yet strangers to grace well you're commanded to humble yourself before the cross of Jesus and to put your faith and trust in him and as John Calvin used to say every time the gospel is preached it's as if Jesus Christ is there behind us with his arms open welcoming sinners unto himself the great John Calvin said that every time you hear the gospel it's an invitation into the bosom of Jesus who's the only one who can deal with all our issues and with all our baggage and with all our sin and with all our worry it's only Jesus that can do that but we must humble ourselves before him in order for him to do that and you know the great thing about the gospel it's the Lord's spirit that enters into your heart that enables you to do that it's the Lord's spirit the second thing that Erskine asked why is the humble person a peculiar favorite of heaven and Erskine actually used the example of the the centurion who had a sixth servant do you remember in Matthew chapter 8 the centurion now the centurion wasn't a Jew he wasn't part of the people of God the centurion comes and he humbles himself at the feet of Jesus in front of all the Jews and in front of every and this was a great man he was a centurion and he comes and he says Lord I am not worthy to have you come under my roof but Lord only you only have to say the word you only have to say the word and my servant will be healed and do you remember the response of Jesus truly I tell you with no one in Israel have

I found such faith and he says to the centurion you go you go centurion and it will be done just as you said nowhere in Israel have I found such faith why because he came and he humbled himself at the feet of Jesus and he wasn't even a Jew faith faith pleases God without faith we cannot please God and it's quite ironic when when we look at the centurion and we see what the Lord has done for me as he has healed his servant he's converted and he's given him the faith that he needs and and all the rest and we see James and John the ones who are with Jesus for three years and what do they say Lord will you let me sit at your right hand and maybe he can sit on your left hand and we can rule with you and glory and the Lord Jesus says listen you have no idea what you are asking can you drink the cup that I'm going to drink but did he give up on James and John no James and John had to learn the hard way they had to learn the hard way and eventually they too would be persecuted and Peter himself as history tells us was crucified also history tells us whether it's true or no we don't know it's not in the Bible that he was crucified upside down because he thought of himself as not worthy enough to be crucified the way that

Christ was crucified the humble soul faith pleases God number three so that's where we reached last time and I've only got ten minutes I'm not doing very well am I number three why does God appreciate the humble well the reason that the Lord God appreciates the humble is it glorifies his son Jesus that is what we do as Christians in this world we are here to glorify Jesus and to tell the world that it's all of free grace that we have not done anything for ourselves but the Lord has come into our lives and into our experiences and he has done it all for us we are to glorify his free grace question and answer number one from the Heidelberg catechism what is your only comfort in life and in death how would you answer that what is your only comfort in life and in death I am not my own is the answer I am not my own but I belong with body and soul both in life and in death to my faithful Savior Jesus Christ he has fully paid for all of my sins with his precious blood and he has set me free from all the power of the devil he also preserves me in such a way the catechism says that without the will of my heavenly Father not a hair can fall from my head indeed all things must work together for my salvation therefore by his Holy Spirit he also assures me of eternal life and he makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for him what an answer that is he makes me heartily willing and ready from now on to live for him can each and every one of us in this sanctuary today answer that question by saying the Lord is making me heartily willing and ready to live for him God appreciates the humble spirit can it be proved from the scriptures absolutely yes it can faith pleases God and with faith comes humility and it's the only thing that can do anything with our sin and with our pride because why because we're looking at the author and the perfecter of our faith Jesus and when we keep our eyes firmly fixed on him we should have a sensible view of ourselves and a sensible view of who we are and all that we are in God knowing that we are a blessed people knowing that we are a blessed people have you ever been to a funeral and you've sat in the pew at the funeral and have you ever wondered to yourself why on earth is the Lord sparing me why on earth is the Lord sparing me all my sin and all my pride faith and humility please the Lord number four and very quickly what are the marks of a humble soul and this is a time of introspection this is when we look at our own hearts the story is told of an old man and the old man was a tour guide and he was a tour guide in the Grand Canyon and he had been there for

something like 60 years in the Grand Canyon showing people around the canyon and there's nothing this man didn't know about the Grand Canyon and he was about to retire so they made a wee documentary on him and the Canyon and the reporter turns round to the man and says so what's changed in the last 60 years you've been here 60 years you've seen them come and you've seen them go what's changed and the old man thought to himself and to reminisce him for a wee minute and he contemplated and he says well you know there's something funny going on these days he says he says back in the day they used to come off the buses with their cameras and they used to take photos of the canyon and they didn't take more photos off the canyon I say but today they come and they take photos of themselves with a little bit of the canyon behind them and he says I don't understand that he says that's what's changed of course there's nothing wrong with self pieces there was a self from my daughter that self piece when we were out for a hot chocolate the other day and sent it to the mum but if you were at the Grand Canyon would it be pictures of yourself or would it be pictures of the canyon so what are the marks of a humble soul well our former text in Philippians 28 tells us that Christ humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death even death on a cross and when you look at the scriptures you can see many a story of those that have been saved by the grace of Jesus and even in some of Jesus's parables you remember the one of the tax collector who stood afar off and he would not and the tax collector he would not even look up to heaven and he beat his breast and do you remember his words God be merciful to me as sinner God be merciful to me as sinner and he was the complete opposite of the far as he was over in the other corner who thanked God that he didn't make him like the tax collector over there and you remember the response of Jesus I tell you that that tax collector he is justified he is justified and the other man is not God be merciful to me as sinner it's a prayer it's the prayer of every Christian it is what we do when we come to the foot of the cross and we say Lord I am I am undeserving of all of your grace and all of your love be merciful to me as sinner I'm at my wit's end here Lord and you must do something with me Lord save me you are justified you are justified Jesus said you know the humble soul loves Christ because they know that Christ has not only died for them but Christ has lived for them also that Christ has kept that law perfectly the one that we cannot keep he kept that law absolutely perfectly because you and I cannot because of our sin and because of our pride how are you righteous before God how would you answer that question how are you righteous before God listen to this answer only by true faith in Jesus Christ although my conscience accuses me that I have grievously sinned against all of God's commandments and I have never kept any of them and I am still inclined toward all evil yet God yet God without any merit of my own out of mere grace he imputes to me the perfect satisfaction righteousness and holiness of Christ and he grants all of these things to me as if I had nor committed any sin and as if I myself had accomplished all the obedience which Christ has rendered for me if only I accept this gift with a believing heart so do you accept this gift with a believing heart because he grants these things to me as if I had never sinned nor committed any sin when the Lord God looks upon his people when he looks upon his people he looks at his people through a lens and do you know what that lens is that lens is his own perfect son Jesus because that is what happens to us we are clothed in his righteousness we are clothed in his holiness we are clothed in everything of Christ and he sees Christ and that is the lens that the Lord God looks upon his people through Jesus and through all that Jesus has done but the question I have for you today is do you believe this do you accept this gift with a believing heart that is the question the word of God is asking you here today it's the question that is asked I am asked every time I come to the word of God do we believe this with a believing heart or are we still

[ 25 : 21 ] clothed in our sin are we still clothed in our own sin and heading for a lost eternity the word of God says why would you die I have life for you I have life eternal for you do you believe do you accept this gift with a believing heart and in order for us to say yes Lord Jesus I do you must humble ourselves before God and the book of Philippians tells us that he who began a good work in you will see it through to completion at the day of Jesus Christ another word from the Lord enters into your heart he will never let you go no matter how much more you sin he will never ever ever let you go you know why because his honor is at stake his honor is at stake if he never took all his people and seen them through to the promised life then his honor would be at stake number five and I'm only going to speak very very briefly on this why should we seek a humble spirit air skin asked well he says and very briefly humble spirit what does it do it joins our soul to Christ it joins our soul to Christ we are in union with Christ we are united with Christ and his love is so strong that we can never become ununited if only we believe Calvin called it the perseverance of the saints or as I

like to say the perseverance of God with his saints you have a communion season God willing coming up in a few days and if there are any in here today you have never sat at that table where you are commanded to sit at I urge you I urge you to listen to what the Lord is saying here today he is there and he is not silent and once again he commands us and he invites us to be at that table not only united to Christ but united to all the brothers and sisters in this century there's nothing like sitting at the table that will unite a congregation together united to Christ and united together why would you die let us pray eternal God we indeed are indeed thank you for your word we thank you for your spirit who is working in conjunction with this word and Lord there is nothing like your word to make us look at our own hearts and to see ourselves in the light of that word you have the words of eternal life and

we have nowhere else to take refuge oh God and our prayer this day one with another is that each and every person in this place from the youngest to the oldest would accept this wonderful gift of salvation here today as it's been offered once again and Lord may your spirit be at work and may each and every one of us who are Christians glorify you every day of our lives even in our weakness and even in our fragility Lord we sin against you every day but you take us by our right hand and you guide us through this world with all its pain with all its sorrow with all its joys with all its ups and downs Lord would you be at work and Lord we pray that your name has been honoured and glorified this day and if there anything has been said that has been said I miss please forgive me and go before us now and pardon us for Christ's sake amen