

3. From Humility to Glory:  
Humility Does Not Look Down on the Hurting  
Luke 13:1-9

This is the third Sunday of Lent. During this Lenten season our theme is “From Humility to Glory.” We were created for glory. On Easter Sunday, Christ was resurrected to glory. In his resurrection, we see our future. We will also be raised to glory, if—and this is the big if—if we don’t fall into the trap of trying to raise ourselves to glory. We are to recognize the glory of God and humble ourselves before our Lord.

We’ve talked about how true humility is not self-abasement. True humility is not thinking putting yourself down and believing that you are terrible or insignificant person. It is simply recognizing that you’re not God. True humility is not being more than you really are or less than you really are.

False pride and false humility both have a couple of things in common. Both cause us to focus our attention on ourselves, rather than on God. And both are unrealistic. None of us are gloriously wonderful, and none of us are hopelessly awful. We are just ordinary human beings. We all have our strengths and our weaknesses. We all have our moments of success and our times of failure. True humility is simply to be who we really are—to be our best selves, certainly, but to be who we really are, no more and no less. And that’s not hard to do, if we keep our eyes focused on God and God’s will.

Humility never looks down on others. This week we will talk about how humility doesn’t look down on those who are down. Next week we will talk about how humility doesn’t look down on those who are up.

A group of Jesus’ followers came to him with the news that a tower had fallen on some people and killed them. Evidently they were wondering what these people had done to deserve such a terrible and unexpected tragedy. Jesus told them that these people were not any more deserving of a tragic death than anyone else. Nor were the people who were executed by Pilate while they were offering their sacrifices in the Temple.

Jesus was rejecting a false idea that comes up over and over again. It is the belief that people get what they deserve. One whole book of the Bible was written to say that isn’t so. It’s the Book of Job.

Job was a righteous man who suffered great tragedies in his life. In the midst of his grief and pain, his friends came to him to give him comfort and to fix his problems. They were certain that God was punishing him for some sin. If he would just confess his sin and straighten out his life, God would remove the curse and bless him again. But Job insisted that he was not being punished for wrongdoing. At the end a long conversation, God spoke to Job and his friends and declared that Job was not being punished, that human beings lack the knowledge to understand what God is doing in the world and in our lives. God severely scolded Job’s friends for adding to his misery by saying it was Job’s own fault he was suffering.

The Book of Job should have put an end to the belief that we get what we deserve in life—that those who are healthy and prosperous earned their health and prosperity and those who are poor and sick deserve their misery.

It is true that our decisions have some affect on the quality of our lives. However, circumstances beyond our control have greater affect on our lives than our choices.

The truth is that we all have more blessings than we deserve. As Jesus said, God makes the sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous.

We are all like the fig tree that did not produce. It is because of God's grace that we are fertilized with the goodness of life. And we receive God's blessings in order that we might give blessings to others. That is the production God desires of us.

Don't look down on those who are down. Don't ever say to those who are hurting, "You got what you deserved." That is not your judgment to make. If you're enjoying a prosperous, healthy life, don't take credit for it. Humbly give thanks to God for your blessings and work to create better circumstances for those who are less fortunate.

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