

# Never So High

Never, had he seen such a sight! Oh, Jon, the king's son, had fought many battles, and the people had often lauded his achievements. Indeed, he was next in line for the throne; but this, this was something that truly gripped his heart and brought a whole new perspective.

Before him, stood a lad with a ruddy complexion. His face was familiar of course for the young man had entertained his father with the harp before the war, before the present tribulation. But now, at his side dangled the huge bloody head of the once dominating Goliath. Even as it swung, its grotesque savage face made him sick.

"Who are you?!" his forgetful father Saul had queried, likewise amazed at what he'd witnessed. This boy, David, had just single-handedly taken out the greatest enemy of the nation – a display of faith and courage unparalleled in history. Without a doubt, it was the Hand of God for the antagonizing monster had towered nearly ten feet tall – at least twice the size of the boy.

David answered, "the son of your servant Jesse."

Ka-boom! It was at this point that something happened in Jonathon's heart – as amazing as David's display of courage and faith had been, his heart-attitude afterward was even more so. There was no chest-pounding, no pretense or feigned posturing, no assertion of the king's obligation. But rather, what Jon witnessed was an attitude of pure humility and it somehow prompted his own heart to respond.

And now, inwardly, It was something he just let happen – his soul became knit with David's. The Master Weaver

entwined the very fabric of his heart with that of the humble giant-slayer before him. And because he loved him as his own soul, they made a covenant – a holy, unbreakable promise to one another.

And responsively, Jon did something that although absolutely appropriate, may have left those watching aghast. He took his princely robe, his armor, sword, bow and belt and gave them to David. It was completely voluntary – he stripped himself so to speak.

And thus is presented in scripture a lesson (in type) for us. In like manner, there stood the largest and ugliest – the most rotten of creatures – Satan. Like Goliath with Israel, he taunted and bullied all of us with sin and death. And everyone of us were fearful of his gigantic threats – even those of us upon the 'throne' (who, when you think about it is each one of us for we have sat upon the throne of our own lives).

Then appeared the Shepherd, who came as a servant. He spoke of faith and the greatness of His God. And with a single stone, one rock, one noble act – the cross – He forever destroyed the destroyer.

Like the king's son, Jonathon, we may have seen Him before but regarded Him as a mere distraction, an entertainment perhaps, someone there just for our selfish benefit. But when we recognize His meekness, His humility, His strength so completely under God's control, we likewise are compelled to strip our own 'regal' coverings, to lay at His feet the 'armor' we've hid behind -- our sword and bow (that which we've used in hand-to-hand fighting or at a distance to inflict others). And there we lay our 'belt' – that which has previously 'held it all together' for us.

## ***This is when our heart is knit with the Son of David – Jesus.***

For although the greatness of David's deed was unparalleled, it was the humility, the character of his heart that was overwhelmingly attractive. So it is with Christ, the Son of David, and consequently it 're-wires our circuits'. Our surrender to Him is a heart-changing response to His own humble surrender unto God the Father. His deed was, is and always will be indescribably awesome, but His character is even more so. The deed illustrated it for all of us to see.

Oh, the awesomeness of true humility! Not merely the occasional outward self abasement we can use to flatter ourselves with but the holy heart and mind clean of the filth and fantasy of unwarranted pride.

### ***This is the 'stuff' of heaven.***

There are no 'proud-sters' in heaven – no one looking for flatteries or temporal esteem. ***You might say heaven's air is love and heaven's fragrance is humility.***

There, we will know endless, fulfilling relationships, perfect joy and explosive grandeur amidst this beautiful scent. There, we'll fully realize that it is our omnipotent King who is the source of this perfume.

As high as the heavens are above the earth, so high are God's ways above ours (see Isaiah 55). Yet, the 'high' way is, in deed and character, the 'low' way. That is, when the Creator looked upon our desperate, self-destructive world, the One who is all powerful, all knowing and all present, He decided to come to us; not only so, but also to empty Himself of His divine powers. He bridged the infinite gap between us to become a single cell, an embryo, a fetus, a baby, a toddler, a child, a teen, a man.

And as amazing as this is and truly incomprehensible, we need to understand that it was NOT out of character. It was an act that expressed and expresses who He is – purest love and purest humility. (Ps 45:4).

Now, humility is scorned here in the Shadowlands. It is usually associated with weakness. Consequently, in its sincere form it is rarer than diamonds for every thought of mortal man opposes or disdains it.

Humility is not the attribute of simply being less prideful or less self consumed; rather it is the absolute absence of these sin-motivated characteristics. And contrary to the world's inclination, the Lord instructs us to seek it out (Zeph 2:3) and to put it on (Col 3:12). But why? Of what benefit is humility? And why is it so dismissed in this world?

Among the many blessed promises for the humble, the Bible tells us:

- that God guides and teaches the humble (Ps 25:9)
- for they are glad in heart when they sense His pleasure (Ps 69:30-32).
- Thus, God is pleased with them and beautifies them with salvation (Ps 149:4)
- and unmerited favor (Jam 4:6, Pro 3:34).
- The humble have wisdom (Pro 11:2)
- and honor (Pro 29:23)
- and increasing joy (Isa 29:19).
- In addition, God dwells with the humble in a high and holy place, heaven. (Isa 57:15)
- He revives them (Isa 57:15)
- and lifts them up (Jam 4:10).

As a matter of fact, the words for "humble" in both testaments means to be "low". In other words, ***God's way up is down.***

Before us, upon the pages of scripture, we have the beautiful sample

of Jesus' earthly life – from His humble beginning there in the feed trough in Bethlehem's stable to the washing of His friends' feet in the upper room – all that we purview is a grand display of humility.

Then the culmination – we learn of His beating, His utter degradation, His rejection -- Isaiah described it prophetically, "He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before its shearers is silent, so He opened not His mouth." (Isa 53:7) This is humility.

In Hebrews 12:2, it says that He despised the shame of the cross but this was not because of pride. We must understand that this word translated despise or despising means to "think little of" and that is its connotation elsewhere in the New Testament. So, of course Christ 'thought little of' the shame compared to the eternal joy that awaited.

Oh, but you might think, 'Yes, but this humble behavior was because He was 'found as a man and emptied of His divine powers'(Phil 2:5). You might be linking His humility to His humanity. And, of course, there was a 'positional' humility or 'low-ness' therein. However, it is missing the mark to view Christ's humble character solely as the result of His human condition, as something otherwise uncharacteristic of Him as our risen Lord of All.

Consider His appearances to the disciples after His resurrection. There were no bands playing (on earth), no pomp, no General MacArthur-like "I have returned." But rather, He was mistaken for a gardener, an out-of-touch traveler, a stranger on the beach. In fact, in John 21, when the disciples came ashore, He even had a breakfast cooking for them. Does this sound like the behavior of the King of Heaven and

Earth? Not to our carnal minds, it doesn't!

We give lip service to the concept of a 'noble humility' and will even go so far as to appear humble now and then (especially in church) but all the while, we know that our hearts scream inside for accolades, attention and gratefulness from people and God. We've been infected with Satan's poisonous attitude. He said, "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High." (Isa 14:14)

Ponder this -- our sin-filled minds think 'up' is up, that greatness comes by mastery. We even miss the fact that the although the 'church' held mastery over the western world for hundreds of years, it never brought in the Kingdom of God, but rather a good deal of death and cruel domination.

We don't recognize that sin has warped us 180 degrees. In God's 'economy' we discover the eternal reality – 'up' is 'down'. The 'highway' of holiness is the 'lowway' of humility. Jesus, knowing our hearts, said, "If anyone desires to be first, he shall be last of all and servant of all." Then He took a little child and set him in the midst of them. And when He had taken him in His arms, He said to them, "Who ever receives one of these little children in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me." (Mark 9:35, 36)

That's perfect for the best approximation we have of humility in this life is our children. Jesus was saying that entrance to and enjoyment of heaven is immersed in humility – not just an outward appearance but a character trait running through and through. In that humble moment of receiving Him by faith, you are most

like Him in character and thus a relationship begins.

Now, you may say, "John, you're going overboard. You're making too much of this. Even God commands reverence and worship. We're made in His image. Why shouldn't we deserve a little respect? After all, humility will never get me anywhere in the here and now. People will just walk all over me."

First of all, when God commands us to worship, it is because He knows who He is and who He's dealing with – like the one who has to slap a hysterical person to get some sane attention – our sin-natures are so out-of-touch we frankly need to be commanded at times. Second, He doesn't do it for His own sake – He doesn't need it. He does it for our sake. We do!

Next, you may be right about the outcome of humility in this world – at least some of the time. But God's instruction in the attributes of a heavenly character are not really designed to feather your earthly temporal nest so to speak. Rather, He wants to prepare you and me for life in eternity. It is for our eternal benefit. Your acceptance of this lesson is based upon what you value most – the entopic treasures of this life or the enduring ones of heaven.

So where does this true humility come from? If it's not just a matter of outward deeds but of character, where can we buy "Humility for Dummies"? Is there a Humility 101?

Jesus said, "Take my yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly (humble) in heart..."(Matt 11:29). In referring to the practice of yoking a young ox to one who thoroughly understood the work at hand and thus teaching the youngster 'the ropes', Jesus was clearly saying that His gentle, humble character is

imparted as we 'plow with Him' – walk with Him, work with Him. And at times, this will be humbling. Yet, a very wise pastor of mine, speaking of men, once said, "There is no humility without humiliation."

Yes, His yoke is easy and His burden is light (Mat 11:30). But with it will undoubtedly come some much needed low-ering. So when it comes, and it will (cause you're no prima donna, nor am I!) recognize it for what it is – God's loving hand. He's crafting not a life designed to bring you merely the respect of men but the rewards of heaven.

When our dear boy went home to be with the Lord, one kind man, a vice-principal who had known him at school, sent us the following note: "I saw something that showed me yet another side of Gabe. One of the ladies in the attendance office got pretty mean with him when he brought a note to the office. She ended up ridiculing Gabe's voice doubting he was being honest, etc." (He had a raspy voice because of congenital vocal chord deformity.) "But Gabe was very calm and seemed to take no offense at all. He gently explained that he really did talk this way. I saw the patience of Christ's love that day..."

I mention this only to point out that people notice our 'walk'. They recognize when someone has been yoked with Jesus for a while. (Incidentally, it takes oxen a long time to learn how to plow right, sometimes years. Likewise, it can take a LONG time for some of us to begin walking like our Yokefellow, Jesus.)

Thus, a 'low'ering, a humiliation, can work in us to bring about the more Christ-like character we long for inwardly and which those who are headed for heaven appreciate.

Therefore, let no humbling circumstance drag you down. Rather go

with it – go willingly God's way and discover the peaceful joy of His humble heart. There, you'll find why His yoke is light. There, you'll be higher than the heavens. There, you'll find the awesome fellowship of humility with the Most High.