

Christ Community Covenant Church
Unexpected stops on the journey to the cross: Jesus at dinner
Pastor Dave Scherrer - April 6, 2014

In our study where we are unpacking Jesus' unexpected stops on our Holy Week journey to the cross, last week we looked at Jesus' stop at 'church' and the so called cleansing of the Temple where He demonstrated His authority.

The Authority of Christ

Christ the King revealed in no uncertain terms!

Now this week we want to look at another stop and explore the humility of Christ.

The Humility of Christ

We struggle with pride. It takes many forms. Seeking to be famous for fame sake is a form of pride. Being defensive is a form of pride. If when you are confronted with a mistake or offence you respond with a barrage of "Yes but's" this is evidence of pride. Sarcasm is a form of pride. Make up may be a form of pride. Going to the gym may be a form of pride. The pursuit of money as a base of security is often a form of pride. Taking the glory from another is an obvious form of pride.

Let's look at an account that took place just a few days before His death. My opinion is that it is on the journey into Jerusalem and perhaps only a few hours before the Sunday triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

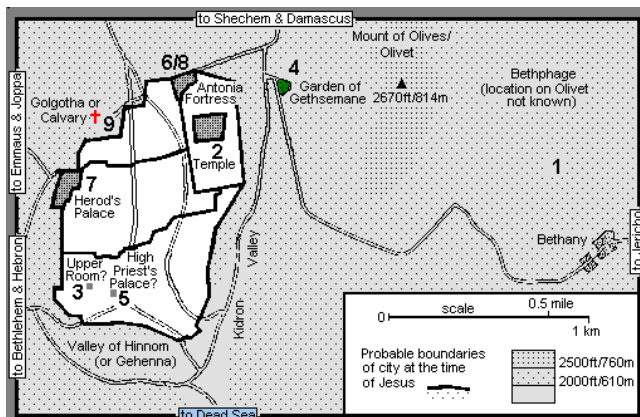
Mark 10:35-45

³⁵ And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came up to him and said to him, "Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we ask of you." ³⁶ And he said to them, "What do you want me to do for you?" ³⁷ And they said to him, "Grant us to sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your glory." ³⁸ Jesus said to them, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?" ³⁹ And they said to him, "We are able." And Jesus said to them, "The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, ⁴⁰ but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared." ⁴¹ And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. ⁴² And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ⁴³ But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

What just happened here?

Christ turned the value system of the world upside down. It is an interesting conversation, because Jesus answers a question that they are not asking. There is a serious communication issue going on in this story. When the disciples ask about the kingdom, they are talking about an earthly estate. Jesus is referring to His heavenly Kingdom. Two very different things.

Let's stop for a moment and get a little historical and geographical perspective:



Now with all this in mind, let's look at this account of Jesus's unexpected stop for dinner in his last week on earth perhaps as late as Wednesday night:

Mark 14:3-9

³ And while he was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he was reclining at table, a woman came with an alabaster flask of ointment of pure nard, very costly, and she broke the flask and poured it over his head. ⁴ There were some who said to themselves indignantly, "Why was the ointment wasted like that?" ⁵ For this ointment could have been sold for more than three hundred denarii and given to the poor." And they scolded her. ⁶ But Jesus said, "Leave her alone. Why do you trouble her? She has done a beautiful thing to me. ⁷ For you always have the poor with you, and whenever you want, you can do good for them. But you will not always have me. ⁸ She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial. ⁹ And truly, I say to you, wherever the gospel is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in memory of her."

What just happened here?



The gift – a year's worth of oil – several lifetimes of saving in a small alabaster jar
 The scandal – not that Jesus was anointed, but the lavishness of the pouring out
 The humility of Christ – the humbleness of receiving an expensive gift

"Behold, your king is coming to you, humble, and mounted on a donkey."

It brings to mind a whole new understanding of humility. In our world we see being humbled as a terrible thing. It traditionally comes with a large meal of crow.

But humility in the manner of Christ is a whole new expression. C. J. Mahaney's book *Humility: True Greatness* describes it as Gospel Humility.

Gospel Humility

So I wanted to rest on this subject for a bit. I think perhaps the easiest test that we will all agree on is that humility honors others rather than oneself. That seems easy enough.

Humility Honors

True gospel humility does not seek its own credit, but defers credit and brags about others, considers others more important than themselves. True humility makes sure that God gets the glory and credit. And that is an act of the heart more than the mouth. I've seen people give verbal credit to God in such a manner that the glory still goes to themselves.

1 Corinthians 1:27ff

"God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; 28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 30 And because of him you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 so that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord."

My point here is that humility is other centered and is quick to give honor not to take or usurp honor. Gospel Humility is glad that God gets all the credit for choosing us and calling us according to his purposes, not our merit. And he does this (v. 29) "so that no human being might boast in the presence of God," but that (v. 31) the one who boasts might boast in the Lord. Humility honors and is glad that God acts in a way to take the focus of all boasting away from man and put it on himself. Are you happy about that? Are you glad God does it that way? Humility is glad about that. CS Lewis said in *Mere Christianity*

"Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man... It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition is gone, pride is gone." C S Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

Christ was quick to give glory and honor to His heavenly Father and was quick to show His humility by honoring the Father with His obedience in all matters. So gospel humility honors but it also forgives.

Humility Forgives

One of the evidences of gospel humility is that our willingness to forgive others their offenses. This act is a gift and it releases the sense of power and one up position of being the debt-holder. Forgiveness is rooted in God's forgiveness of us through Jesus. In other words, Christian humility is rooted in the gospel. It is not just copying Jesus in his willingness to die for others; it is enabled by Jesus because he died for us and forgives us. Christ said:

Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

And in only 48 hours, on the cross looking down at his mockers and murderers Christ utters the words of ultimate forgiveness:

Luke 23:34a

"Father, forgive them, they know not what they do"

Humility honors and forgives. And Gospel Humility also serves.

Humility Serves

Perhaps only 24 hours after being washed and anointed by Mary on Wednesday night, on Thursday night, just hours before his betrayal and arrest, Christ removes his outer garment, girds himself with a towel and taking the role of a servant he washes his disciple's feet. Then we read this account:

John 13:12-14

¹² When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you?" ¹³ You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

Humility gets down low and lifts others up. Humility looks to the needs of others and gives time and effort to help with those needs. Jesus took the form of a servant and humbled himself, even to the point of death. "The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" (Mark 10:45). Humility measures everything it does by whether it serves the good of other people. Am I feeding my ego or am I feeding the faith of others? Humility serves. One of my favorite books is by GK Chesterton entitled *Orthodoxy*. In it he writes:

"What we suffer from today is humility in the wrong place. Modesty has moved from the organ of ambition. Modesty has settled upon the organ of conviction; where it was never meant to be. A man was meant to be doubtful about himself, but undoubting about the truth; this has been exactly reversed. Nowadays the part of a man that a man does assert is exactly the part he ought not to assert - himself. The part he doubts is exactly the part he ought not to doubt - the Divine Reason." G K Chesterton, *Orthodoxy*

Christ preaches and teaches on pride over and over in the last 72 hours of his life. It must have been important. His death was the quintessential act of humility. ***God made Him who knew no sin to be made sin on our behalf that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.*** If ever there was a man who deserved honor it was Christ. But remember what the writer of John tells us?

John 1:10-11

He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

He could have rightly demanded to be worshipped. But He did not. And Paul asks us to put on the attitude of humility that Christ put on:

Philippians 2:3-11

³ Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. ⁴ Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ^[a] ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, ^[b] being born in the likeness of men. ⁸ And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. ⁹ Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Do you remember where you were July 20, 1969 when the Apollo 11's LEM, the Eagle, landed at Tranquility base representing the apex of human achievement to that point in human history, at time when personal pride could have consumed a man. Instead something very different happened in space:

Media clip – Buzz Aldrin

Communion