

## BETWEEN THE DREAMING AND THE COMING TRUE

### Cultivating Humility

*Two humble ducks and a proud frog lived together in the pond. But one day the pond dried up. This was no problem to the ducks for they could fly, but it was serious for the frog. Then the ducks had an idea. We'll hold a stick in our bills, you stand between us and cling on to it with your mouth, and we'll fly to a new pond. As they soared away, high in the sky, the farmer saw them and yelled, what a clever idea! Who thought of it? The proud frog couldn't resist, he shouted down, 'I did' Oh dear.*

How are we going with the issue of pride? Do we struggle with it, or do we not give it a second thought? If we are not proud, then what are we? The opposite to Pride or "arrogance" can be described as "humility". Are we happy to walk humbly with the Lord? To bend to his will in our life.

We have the simple choice each and every day; to let go and trust God or to live in a halfway house trying to do things our way, in our pride not asking for help and not fully trusting God and each other.

Pride can also be described as the opposite of love, pride is esteeming self above others, while divine love calls us to love our neighbour as ourselves.

#### Psalm 131

My heart is not proud, O Lord my eyes are not haughty  
I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me  
But I have stilled and quietened my soul;  
Like a weaned child with its mother,  
like a weaned child is my soul within me.  
O Israel, put your hope in the Lord both now and forever more.

If I am honest, I am not sure I would be bold enough to write this Psalm, I am not sure my heart is not proud or my eyes are not haughty.

The message puts the Psalm like this:

GOD, I'm not trying to rule the roost,  
I don't want to be king of the mountain.

I haven't meddled where I have no business  
or fantasized grandiose plans.

<sup>2</sup> I've kept my feet on the ground,  
I've cultivated a quiet heart.

Like a baby content in its mother's arms,  
my soul is a baby content.

<sup>3</sup> Wait, Israel, for GOD. Wait with hope.  
Hope now; hope always!

So many times, in my life I want to rule the roost, do things my way, on my terms and my timing and not to humbly accept God's kingdom purposes for my life. Even though God has been at the job a lot longer than me. So, here's a few pointers on whether pride is something we may need to deal with:

Do we really listen when others are speaking to us, or are we itching to share our important thoughts?

Do we enjoy being noticed?

Do we Pray? In other words, feel the need of God, or do we just hang on in our strength not wanting to be seen as having needs; Phil reminded us climbing in the Himalaya's last week its ok to call out to God or come forward for prayer.

Do we have time for people whom others perceive as nobodies?

Do we have close friends? Someone said, if you want acquaintances tell them your successes, but if you want friends tell them your fears.

A couple of weeks ago Seidal challenged us on the need for holiness and it's a challenge we need to take away and think about as individuals. However, there is also a collective holiness, we are one body and even if we are sorted and there is someone within us who is struggling, collectively our call to holiness is affected. Holiness is not about being perfect but acting with integrity, being open to deal with issues affecting us like the new Kintsugi Hope group is addressing.

If we are to Love Without Limit, then we all need to build one another up, encourage one another, but it takes openness and humility for some of us to share our fears so that God can heal us. To put our pride aside. God can heal physically but God loves to heal our spirits and inner hurts. However, I would suggest we can't just be loving all the time, otherwise it becomes a bit wishy washy, lovey dovey.

Our love should all ways be balanced with truth, the truth of God's Word at its heart and foundation. But if we are all about sticking to the letter of the law and do not have love, we are a resounding gong. We need to love with a purpose.

Coming back to pride - Do we enjoy the success of others?  
Does some else's pride really bother us?  
Are we willing allow others to take the praise?

Ronald Ragan had plaque in the white office which read: "There is no limit to what a man can do if he doesn't mind who gets the credit"

I get the impression this psalm was written when David was in a difficult situation, struggling with life, in the midst of his troubles David had learnt to still and quietened his soul to rest in God's presence. When we come to the end of who we are, our self-reliance our self-resilience, we come to the point that the only certainty in life is God's love and God's provision for us, but are we willingly to sway with God, desperate for God to act.

As strange as it may sound desperation is a really good thing in the spiritual life, says author Ruth Hayley Burton; desperation causes us to be open to radical solutions, willing to take all manner of risks in order to find what we are looking for, desperate ones seek with an all-consuming intensity, for they know that their life depends on it. Once we are in that seeking place, we can start to understand how David could write this Psalm.

David says: 'I do not concern myself with great matters or things too wonderful for me.' David here is not hiding away and not playing his part in his role as king, but I would suggest that he has realised some things are beyond his control and understanding, and he has simply learnt to trust in God's sovereignty.

Just as in Job chapters 39-40. Like Job, David must have been left speechless at God's ways and majesty, Job had learnt the hard way to be content with God and so did Paul when he said I have learnt to be content in all things Philippians 4 v 12-13. If we are to know God's love in a deeper way, then we need to humble ourselves before the King of Kings and Lord of Lords and seek his kingdom first, sink our roots deep into God's love.

It comes down, ultimately, to our view of God and can God be trusted to be loving and good? Will God meet us in our moment of need now and every

day? That's something each of us must work out with God alone. Humility is described as not thinking less of yourself, its thinking of yourself less, to give space to love others and see their needs. And we do this well as a church, as shown by the numerous community awards recently won.

It you take one thing away today, it's that this Psalm is about David's journey of humility towards God, which brought him to a place of knowing Gods own heart. However, we are all in a different place to David. We have certainty in the fact that Jesus died on the cross and rose again, to give each one of us the gift of eternal life. Then we can be confident in Jesus everlasting love and that nothing can separate us from that love we have in Christ Jesus, we are his beloved children.

Jesus loved us whilst we were still far from God, God loves us here and now despite our thoughts and struggles, and loves us into eternity, in other words loves us without limit. The challenge is quieting our souls and to humbly trust and listen to God. Like a weaned child with his mother. Like a weaned child is my soul within me. And an un-weaned child it totally dependent on their mother for everything – food, drink, nappy changing, you name it. However, a weaned child has independence from their mother, but still needs the reassurance that they are close by, continually showing unconditional love willing to step in if trouble arises.

I think David wants us to capture this concepts that we all live in God bigger and better picture, however difficult life is, and it does get tough - we are safe in Gods hands in his presence, God is close by. Going up to pilgrimage to Jerusalem it was not a walk in the park there were very real dangers, but equally they trusted that God was with them and they were safe in God's presence. They had to start their journey, their pilgrimage of faith, to experience God provision. It is said of faith, faith is only faith when you are hanging on by your finger nails.

If God is sovereign; if God Loves us; if God will never leave us; if we can cast all our anxieties onto him; if we trust that God is prepared; God works for us; and if we believe we can do all things through him - how that gives us strength! Then should we not also be like David and be like a weaned child at peace?

On my good days yes, in the difficult times I am not so sure, which is why we need each other, we need our friends to pick us up whilst when we are down, we need those more mature in their faith to lead us and guide us. We need

those father figures or motherly figures in our lives to give us wisdom. The morning prayer meeting for me, is about prayer and it is a great opportunity to interceded for situations and others. As Watchman Nee wrote: "Our Prayers lay the track down which Gods power can move. Like a mighty locomotive, his power is irresistible, but it cannot reach us without rails. And God has answered many prayers. However, for me morning prayers are about learning from God, humbly learning from one another and being a community together.

David finishes with: O Israel put your hope in the Lord both now and forevermore. God Always gives us hope

In 1 Peter. 'Therefore, prepare your minds for action, be self-controlled, set your hope fully on the grace to be given to you when Jesus Christ is to be revealed. As obedient children, do not conform to the evil desires you had when you lived in ignorance, but just as he who called you is Holy, so be holy in all you do, for it is written 'Be holy because I am holy' "

Charles Spurgeon said this is one of the shortest psalms to read but one of the longest to obey. God call us to walk humbly with him, hope in Gods unconditional love and grace - that God has done it all. Our part is let go - not like the Frog who knew it all; but with open hearts ready to be guided by the Holy Spirit to reach our full potential; as we humbly trust in God rather than our own resources and strength.

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