

“The Humiliation & Exaltation of Christ”

A Walk Through the Old Testament - Special Edition

Philippians 2:5-6; 1 Peter 5:6

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Ted: Lord Jesus Christ, in the reciting of the needs and the hurts and the humblings this morning from prayer we are reminded of our own humiliation, reflecting Your own humiliation. And we pray that we may begin to see our difficulties and our pains and our failings as reflecting Your own hurts and humblings. And we pray this in Your name. Amen.

Brave Men: Amen.

Ted: If you want a Scripture verse, I'm going to be taking it from Philippians the second chapter and the fourth verse. Let me see. No, the fifth verse.

Philippians 2:5 ff. *“Have this mind among yourselves which is yours in Christ Jesus. Although He was in the form of God, He did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.”*

And also following that would be a verse from 1 Peter the fifth chapter, the fifth verse. *“Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.’ Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time He may exalt you.”* This is the word of the Lord.

Brave Men: Thanks be to God.

Ted: I was asked to teach today. And I was provoked by some opening comments that Jeff made last Friday. And he told that story about the fellow that met with him. And you can correct me in the remembering of the story. The fellow said, “I prayed and it just didn't work.” And a lot of us experience that. And we ask for God's help and nothing seems to happen.

But Jeff went on to talk about that this was our living into or experiencing the humiliation and exaltation of Christ. And I began to study this whole subject. Usually when I pray I am not looking for the humiliation of Christ; I'm looking for the exaltation.

So we heard lots of humiliation today in our prayer requests. But I wonder if we're also seeing the exaltation. But today I'm only going to be talking about *the humiliation*. That's part 1. Exaltation comes later. Also the outline that you were given is going to move around.

This is the way I work. I take the thing that provokes me, and I run it around in my brain like a Rubik's cube, twisting it and turning it. I find that when I study God I'm really finding out about myself. That's how you find out about yourself. You don't study yourself; you study God and His mighty works. And that begins to reveal who you are.

So that's what I've been doing. And in that process I'm out on the road meeting with clients, having to be 100% on the spot, if you know what it means to sit in front of clients and produce and present and deliver. And so the big hand is not constant. And I come back to it often in the evening. I try to wrestle with this teaching and my mind is very

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tired. And so I just get it out and try to catch it in the morning. But then I’m faced with a morning meeting. So you know what it’s like; it’s not consistent. So things change. And they were even changing this morning as I was thinking. So I’m going to abandon part of that outline. So if you’re kind of flipping the page back and forth, it’s a work in process, in progress.

And as I study the humiliation of Christ I’m really studying about my own humiliation. Christ’s humbling, His humiliation, my humbling and my humiliation. And that Greek word for *humble* means *to be cast down, to be brought low, to be lowly esteemed, to be debased*. And the opposite of that Greek word is the word *huperephanos*,--*huper* “over,” and *ephanos*, like *epiphany*,--a light shining. And the opposite of the humbling is *to shine your light on yourself*. That’s pride; it’s translated in Greek as *proud, arrogant, disdain*.

Shining the light on me is the opposite of what Jesus talked about when He said, *“When you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret,”* “so that your praying may be in secret” in another place, *“so that your fasting may be in secret”* in another place. *“And your Father, who sees in secret, will reward you.”*

So this is the opposite of shining the light on me. These are the things I don’t want the light shone on—the humbling, the humiliation in my life.

Well, where did all this humiliation begin for Jesus? It began at His Incarnation. The Incarnation—*“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us,”* as it says in John,--is a great mystery that we don’t talk a lot about. But it is critical to our belief, because without the Incarnation there’s nothing else that follows. That God must become flesh and dwell among us is such a great mystery.

I’ve shared this story before. But I was asked to do supply work, filling in once at a church service in Richmond. And this church was a very high Anglican church—I mean all the smells and bells, the incense and everything, a lot of ritual. And I know a lot of you don’t care for a ritual, and that’s fine. But a ritual, if one believes in the meaning of what that ritual points to, is very powerful.

And the last thing that church did at the end of the Communion service was an ancient practice. They read the first fourteen verses of the Gospel of John. They’d already had a Gospel reading. But they had a last reading of the Gospel. And they would say, *“In the beginning was the Word,”* and *“The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only-Begotten.”*

And they got to that verse where it said, *“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”* Silence, and the whole congregation went down on their knees. The mystery of the Incarnation, the adoration of the fact that God became man. That’s how important it was to them.

So in that Incarnation,--and I thought I would spend more time on it this morning. I gave you part of the Michael Card song, “To the Mystery.”

Bishop Rodgers: Read it.

Ted: What?

Bishop Rodgers: Read it.

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Ted: Read it?

Bishop Rodgers: Yes, read it.

Ted: It’s very powerful. Let me see if I can even find it in my notes here. Okay, I have it.

If you don’t know Michael Card, I think he comes out of a Reformed Presbyterian background, a PCA background or something like that. And during the ‘70s, ‘80s and ‘90s he wrote some great, great theological music. It was very powerful. And this one is called “To the Mystery.” It says “The Mystery”, but it should say “To the Mystery.”

*“When the Father longed to show
A love He wanted us to know,
He sent His only Son,
And so became a holy Embryo.”*

And then the chorus goes:

*“That is the mystery,
More than you can see;
Give up on your ponderings;
Fall down on your knees.”*

And I think about that service where all the people went down on their knees at the Incarnation. The next verse goes:

*“A fiction as fantastic and wild
As a mother made by her own Child,
A helpless Babe who cried
Was God Incarnate and Man deified.*

*That is the mystery,
More than you can see;
Give up on your ponderings;
Fall down on your knees.
Because the Fall did devastate,
Creator must now re-create,
So to take our sin, was made like us,
So that we could be like Him.*

*That is the mystery,
More than you can see;
Give up on your ponderings;
Fall down on your knees.”*

So that’s the song. It’s a very powerful song, and it talks about the mystery of the Incarnation. And in Philippians it said that “*He emptied Himself.*” And theologically this is what is known as the *kenosis*. It’s from the Greek word *kenos*, which means *to deprive of content; to render void; to be without recognition.*

So in some capacity (and I don’t want to deal with this because I haven’t sorted it out myself), but what does it mean that the Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity, emptied Himself to become a human? What did He empty Himself of? Did He quit being divine? Well, that’s not true. I’m guessing—and Bishop Rodgers can correct me on this,—

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I’m guessing that emptying had something to do with that He gave up the prerogative to be God, to act as God. He gave up the prerogatives to act as God.

So when there was a bug going through the village, He got a cold. When He was cut in carpentry He bled, and He felt it. When His own people disowned Him and humiliated Him, He felt those things.

As God, He could say, “I’m not going to feel any of that. I’m not going to experience any of that.” But in His emptying, the *kenosis* of Jesus Christ, the emptying of Himself, He was humbled.

Now where does this humiliation of Jesus begin? It begins at the Incarnation, and it’s predicted. It’s best known in the predictions and the prophecies of the prophet Isaiah. So I want you to follow along with me, because that lays the groundwork for talking about Christ’s humiliation, and not just Christ’s humiliation, but because I’m in Him and He is in me, my humiliation as well.

I love how that whole section, Isaiah 52 and 53, kind of covers this great prophecy about the Servant of God, God’s Representative on earth. And it starts off well in 52 verse 10. *“The LORD has bared His holy arm before the eyes of the nation. And all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.”*

It’s a good start, a great start. I like that kind of stuff. I want God to bare His arms and show the nations who’s in charge and who has the power.

*“Behold, My Servant shall act wisely;
He shall be high and lifted up,
And shall be exalted.”*

This is verse 13. Oh, I like this kind of stuff, this great exaltation and strength of the Servant of God who is the Messiah, Jesus Christ.

But then suddenly things start to turn ugly. And as I read these verses, I want you to note in your own mind how these prophecies were fulfilled in the life of Jesus in His own humiliation. I’m starting with 52:13.

*“As many were astonished at Him,
His appearance was so marred, beyond human semblance,
And His form beyond that of the children of mankind.”*

Now remember, just in the verse before, God is baring His strong arm. And then suddenly we get this. We get that people were astounded by the Servant’s appearance. It was so marred, beyond human semblance. And then going to chapter 53, beginning with verse 5:

“He was despised and rejected by men,”

The humiliation of the Servant.

“A Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.”

The humiliation of the Servant of God.

*“As One from whom men hide their faces He was despised,
And we esteemed Him not.*

We esteemed Him stricken, smitten by God and afflicted.”

The humiliation of the Servant of God.

“He was pierced for our transgressions,

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*He was crushed for our iniquities.
He was oppressed and He was afflicted,
Yet He opened not His mouth.
Like a lamb that is led to the slaughter,
He opens not His mouth.
By oppression and judgment He was taken away.”*

The humiliation of the Servant of God.
*“They made His grave with the wicked,
Although He had done no violence,
And there was no deceit in His mouth.
Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush Him.
He was put to grief.
Out of His anguish His soul shall see and be satisfied.”*

The exaltation of the Son of God.
So the Incarnation is about Christmas, Jesus as a Babe being born in a manger. It’s also about the emptying of the Son of God, the second Person of the Trinity, of His divine prerogatives. But it’s also about His humiliation and humbling.

So in reading that passage from Isaiah, where did you see things that were reflected in Jesus’ own experience? Can you think about those? Just tell me what you see.

Bishop Rodgers: The whole story of the cross, His suffering on the cross.

Ted: Right. It’s an absolutely authentic reflection of the Crucifixion and the whole Passion Week. What else do you see in there?

Don Nemit: His humbling; He opened not His mouth.

Ted: “Wait a second. I’m innocent. You know, I’m the Son of God. What’s going on here? Do you want to see My bare arms?”

Bishop Rodgers: He did not call down any angels. He could have.

Ted: He didn’t call down any angels.

Bishop Rodgers: He could have done so.

Ted: That’s what He told them. He said, “I have the power to do this. But I’ve emptied Myself of that prerogative. I’m not going to do it. I’m going to accept this humiliation and this humbling.”

I came across a number of other things in the Scriptures. He was humbled because He was misunderstood by His parents. Remember this scene from the temple when he was a young man? *“And He said to His parents, ‘Why were you looking for Me? Did you not know that I must be in My Father’s house?’ And they did not understand the saying that He had spoken to them. A”*

So “My parents don’t get me.” Jesus’ parents didn’t get Him! He was hungry, tired and homeless, forty days being tempted by the devil, and He ate nothing. *“And when they were ended, He was hungry.”* And He told people, *“Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.”* The humiliation of Christ.

“Where do You live, Jesus? Do you have a nice place deserving of a man of Your standing and reputation?”

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“I have no place at all to lay My head.”

He was rejected by His own people, His own town. They drove Him out of town and brought Him to the brow of the hill so that they could throw Him down the cliff. That’s what His own people thought about Him.

He was opposed and mocked. Some of them said, *“He casts out demons by Beelzebub, the prince of demons.”* So they called Him a devil.

“The scribes and the Pharisees lay in wait for Him to catch Him on something that He might say.” *“One of the criminals who hung there railed against Him, saying, ‘Are you not the Christ? Save Yourself and us!’* *“Show us Your bare, mighty arms if You’re that great!”*

His followers continually got it wrong. They never got it. *“He said to them, ‘You give them something to eat.’”*

“And they said, ‘We have no more than five loaves and two fishes, unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.’”

“Peter said to Jesus, ‘Master, it is a good thing that we are here. Let us make three tents: one for you, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.’ The Creator of the entire universe being put on the same level in their minds as Moses and Elijah, great religious leaders. The Scripture says, *“not knowing what they had said.”*

“An argument rose among His followers as to which one of them was the greatest.” They never got it. And Jesus has to listen to this day in and day out.

A life of unjust suffering and rejection. He told His followers that *“The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected, and be killed. And on the third day He will rise.”* Physical violence and death. *“The Son of Man will be mocked and shamefully treated and spit upon. And after flogging Him they will kill Him. And on the third day He will rise.”*

“The men who were holding Jesus in custody were mocking Him, and they beat Him, blaspheming Him.” The humiliation of Christ.

His betrayal. *“Judas drew near to Jesus to kiss Him. But Jesus said to him, ‘Judas, would you betray the Son of Man with a kiss?’* *“I’ve been with you all this time. Is this what it comes down to?”*

Peter denied Him, and said, *“Woman, I do not know Him!”*

“Peter, I poured My life into you, and this is where it is?” This is the humbling, the humiliation of Christ. Yes, Don? Are you stretching, or just—

Don Maurer: No. What about *“My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?”*

Ted: That’s excellent; right. That’s right. I mean, we could spend all our time here just coming up with examples that make it very clear that the life of Jesus, the earthly life, the Incarnation, was a life of humbling and humiliation. Now we could stop there and say, *“Isn’t this inspiring! Isn’t this great! Jesus was humbled and He was an example, and I’m going to be humbled because I follow in His footsteps as an example.”*

But it’s more than that, because in His humiliation I have my humiliation. Because of my own sin, the sin of others, or the circumstances of my life, my life is going to be a life of humiliation and humbling. That is the reality.

Now without disparaging or making light of any and all of the difficulties we report at the beginning of every meeting, isn’t that a reflection of the humiliation that we live

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with? You look at pictures of the way you used to look in your prime. You pick the year—20, 25, 30, 35. And then you look at yourself now and you say, “What happened?” (*Laughter*) You’re being humbled by the nature of your own sin, the sin of others, and just the plain circumstances of your life. When we become ill and incapacitated, we are debased and brought low. And that is the expectation that we should have in this life.

Humiliation is to be expected. Jesus says, “*Whoever does not bear His own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.*” This is what you signed up for. And many of us, if we had known this, would never have signed the membership card. Do you want to be a member of the family of God? Do you want to be a follower of Jesus Christ?

I love the good stuff! I love the exaltation, the strength, the power, the miracles, the thrill, the joy! I love all that stuff! Well, wait a second. That’s the second paragraph. Did you read that?—to take up your cross and follow Him?

I love that verse in Hebrews, 12:2. “*Jesus endured the cross, despising the shame.*” We get the same shame. But we don’t despise it. He despised it. He said, “I’m being shamed. But I’m not rejecting it.”

Humiliation is commanded. “*Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others as more significant than yourself.*” “*God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Submit yourselves, therefore, to God.*”

How can I fulfill this commandment? I’m commanded to humble myself before the Lord. How can I fulfill that commandment to be humble before God? How is that possible for me to fulfill that commandment? Because it says here, “*Count others as more significant than yourselves.*”

How are you doing with that? How are you doing with counting others as more significant than yourself? You could get it right sometimes, right? But often you don’t get it right and I don’t get it right. So how do I fulfill that commandment to be humble?

I find a very interesting verse: John the 12th chapter, the 26th verse. “*If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me.*” Okay, I got that. “*If anyone serves Me, he must follow Me. And where I am, there My servant will be also.*”

Where I am, there My servant will be also.” What do you think that means? “*Where I am, My servant will be also.*” Does that mean that if Jesus is there and I’m following Him, that’s where I am? Or does it mean something else? Is it more like a statement of fact, that *where I am, My servant will be also?*” So when Jesus says, ‘I’m humiliated, I’m humbled.’ That’s where Jesus is; He’s in humiliation and being humbled. That’s where He is. That’s where you’re going to be. “*Where I am, My servant will be also.*”

Union with Christ—when I’m in Christ and He’s in me,—union with Christ joins me to His life, His death, His burial, His resurrection and ascension. When I’m put into Him and Him into me, everything about Him I go with.

And I’ve shared this example before. Watchman Nee talks about this. He says, “*It’s like this. This is Christ, this is me. When I go into Him, every place He goes I go as well, because ‘Where I am, My servant will be also.’ It’s a matter of fact. That’s what’s going to be my experience.*”

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“I want to know Christ.” Remember what Paul prayed. And it’s my prayer; it’s my personal prayer. *“I want to know Christ, yes, to know the power of His resurrection, and the participation in His suffering, becoming like Him in His death, and so somehow attaining to the resurrection of the dead.”* That’s Philippians 3:10-11.

I want to know Christ. Well, what does it mean to know Christ? *“I want to participate in His suffering.”* That is the nature of our lives, to be humiliated with Him.

One of my favorite modern commentators and analysts of our society is Jordan Peterson. Do you know Jordan Peterson? He’s a hero of mine. He’s not necessarily a Christian, but he’s got the insight. I love his comment, his quote. *“Life is hard; that’s just the way it is. Life is hard.”* By being in Christ, united to Him, I’m guaranteed a life of humiliation and a life of being humbled.

Now the problem is that this is counter to a lot of modern-day evangelical Christian thinking. But this idea of my humiliation, being joined to Christ, that if He was humbled I am humbled as well being joined to Christ, this was a very critical part of thinking in the early centuries of the church. But it has all but disappeared now. We are in the age of prosperity, abundance, health and wealth, every day and in every way bigger and better. That’s the way we want to see and live life.

Isn’t it amazing? Somebody gets ill. They get cancer and they die. Why did that happen? Why couldn’t the doctors do something about it? Isn’t there some cure along the way

We live in a time when that is often the case. But the vast majority of humanity throughout the ages has never experienced that. We are the wealthiest, healthiest, most equitable and just society that has ever been on this earth. And yet these blessings are not enough for us. We despise the shame of it all, the humiliation.

Now we all can criticize the prosperity gospel. You know, trust Jesus and send in \$141 because the Lord gave me this number and God wants to bless you in so many ways. *(Laughter)* We can criticize that. But what about the sermons that we hear in our churches every day that are not prosperity gospel churches? What about the sermons on how to be a better (fill in the blank)? Here’s how you can be a better father. Here’s how you can be a better husband. Here’s how you can deal without anxiety or deal without fear, or all these kinds of how-to’s. How many sermons have you heard preached about the humiliation of Christ? And because he was humiliated, I am humiliated because that comes with being in Him.

So what are the practical blessings and benefits to the experience of the humiliation of Christ? What are the benefits and blessings that come from experiencing, accepting and embracing the humiliation of Christ in me?

I can grow to accept and rejoice in my humiliation because, #1., *that humiliation and that humbling breaks the old man and makes me more compliant.* All the things that Christ commands us to do, and that we do not do, come because we know better than Him, and we want to avoid that humiliation. But when God puts the pressure on and begins to break us, that’s when we see no other option.

I love that story, once again going back to Watchman Nee. This is reported. He reports this conversation he had with a young Christian. And it is reported as saying, *“It is a*

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blessed thing that we know the Lord has met you and touched you in a fundamental way. And that disabling touch has been received.”

So he’s saying to the young Christian that it’s a blessed thing to know that God has met you and touched you so that in a fundamental way that disabling touch has been received. And Nee reports that *“At that point there was a plate of biscuits and cookies between us on the table. And I picked one up and I broke it in half, as though to eat it. Then putting the two pieces together carefully I said, ‘It looks all right. But it is never quite the same again, is it?’ When once your back is broken, you will yield thereafter to the slightest touch from the Master’s hand.”*

That’s absolutely true. And perhaps the reason that we’re not more advanced in our own walk with Christ is that we lack that humiliation and the acceptance of it. So that’s the first blessing.

The second blessing or benefit is because *humility is humanly impossible*. I don’t believe that you can humanly make yourself humble. Humiliation takes away all my reliance on myself to do it. I just can’t do it.

This was pointed out to me not long ago. Remember where Jesus says in John 13, *“A new commandment I give you, that you love one another.”*

Okay, that’s great, isn’t it? I’m commanded to love Greg, for instance, and he’s commanded to love me. But this is not a new commandment, is it? “Love the LORD your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself.” So that’s not a new commandment. It’s an old commandment.

But what’s new about it? Well, here’s what’s new about it. Read the rest of that verse. *“A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another. As I have loved you, so you are to love one another.”* That’s the new part of that commandment—*“as I have loved you.”* And you know, humanly speaking, that you will not give your life up for another. Your life is too precious. There are rare instances of it. But that’s the situation we find ourselves in.

I can’t do it. But only He can do it. The apostle in 1 Peter says, *“All of you, have unity of mind, sympathy, brotherly love, and a tender heart and a humble mind.”*

I mean, that’s the easiest thing in the world to preach. Okay, guys, all of you, have unity of mind. Be in sympathy with one another. Have brotherly love. Have a tender heart. Have a humble mind. All of you do that. Now go out and do it.

“Love one another.” Okay, I got that. *“As I have loved you,”* “where I laid down My life and counted Myself as nothing for you. Once again, impossible. *“Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others as more significant than yourselves.”* I don’t count others as more significant than myself. I count myself as more significant than others. God has to change me. It’s got to be a supernatural act. It has to be Christ in me that does that. Is there a question here?

Greg Miller: In the reading of Isaiah 53, that *“He was wounded for our transgressions,”* I recently heard a story from a seminary professor who asked his class, “Okay, how many of you would like to be successful in ministry?” Everybody raised their hands.

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Then he said, “How many of you would like the person next to you to be successful in ministry?” Everybody had their hands up.

“Okay, how many of you would be willing to fail and be laughed at so that the person next to you could be looked at as successful in ministry?” All the hands went down. But that really is where we find out if we have the mind of Christ. That is what leads to success in God’s eyes.

Ted: Right.

Greg: That doesn’t come to us naturally, that’s for sure.

Ted: That’s right. But it is in us in Christ. That is the hope. All the world has are commandments and admonitions. You should be doing that. That’s all the world has.

Brave Man: That’s works.

Ted: Yes, it’s works; we call it works. But it’s all a matter of here’s the truth; now go out and do it. And Jesus says, “I’m the truth, and I will do it through you.”

Don Nemit: Amen.

Ted: It’s a completely different approach. It’s unique. There’s nothing else in the world like it. There’s no other system that says that.

So a third thing, the third benefit, (and praise God!), *the humiliation is not forever*. You know, we do die, and we go to be with the Lord. This age, this life of difficulty and pain and sickness and failing,--failing others, failing ourselves, being failed,--all of this is going to come to an end. And because we’re in Christ it will lead to a great reward.

Paul says in Romans 8 that *“I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed in us.”* So anything we’re going through,-- “Oh Ted, I believe that in theory.” Well, I don’t know what else you have. That’s what he said. He said that all the sufferings you’re going through, all the things we heard about in the prayer requests, that’s not worth comparing to where we’re headed.

“Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you. Rejoice in so far as you share Christ’s sufferings, that you also may rejoice and be glad when His glory is revealed. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time He may exalt you.”

It is God’s mighty hand, His mighty arms, His bared arms. It’s no coincidence, or the power of the sin of others, or your own sin over your life, that both humbles me and raises me up. It is the mighty hand of God that does it. That fact is my confidence and my joy and my blessed assurance. Nothing else helps or is good.

That kind of concludes my thoughts on that. And I would just say that the reason I talk about these things is because, as I said, I’ve wrestled with this myself. This is such a huge challenge. And I find that one of the responsibilities,--and I said this once and people didn’t care for it,--but one of the jobs of the preacher and the teacher is to explain what’s happening, and to put it in the context of who God is and what He’s doing.

So I tried to explain to you all the humiliation of Christ and your own humiliation. Now we could go into lots of examples about your own humblings and sufferings and humiliations. But you need to see that in the context of that’s who you are. That’s part of your lot. You’ve been pulled into it in Christ. And because of that, you’re also pulled into that exaltation and rising up and being lifted up. But that’s the next time I talk. Do we

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have any thoughts, questions, observations, concerns, hopes? Every time I talk everyone gets very quiet.

Bill Obaker: We see the time moving, when people we love are usually going to die with humiliation. You know, we're thankful when we see those we love pass without having to go through that.

Ted: That's right.

Bill: So I know a lot of people who have died peacefully and are happy that they died that way. And they loved the Lord and they got through it.

Ted: Right.

Jim: But they didn't go through this kind of suffering.

Ted: Okay. John, go ahead. You can go ahead and clear any—

Bishop Rodgers: What I take away from what you were reflecting is that I can embrace the tough side of life.

Ted: Yes.

Bishop Rodgers: It's there. It's no use to flee from it or deny it, or just grumble about it. It's part of the story. And in Christ there's a certain comfort about it, that you can embrace this and move on. I mean, there is the exaltation to come, and the firstfruits of Adam. We'll talk about it next time. But it takes away the need to deny things.

Ted: Yes, right.

Bishop Rodgers: I think that's very helpful.

Ted: Yes. And I'm not talking about the fact. But I just want you to understand that, as Jordan Peterson said, “Life is hard.” And the things we go through we look at as negatives. But that's part of what we're experiencing by being in Christ, that we're sharing His life. And also, at the same time, we're being shaped by this, so that we in essence humble ourselves when we're not humanly capable. Being broken down will humble you, and will force you either to be bitter and negative had critical and blaming, or will cause you to say, “God, thank You for the wounds, because I would not be where I am today without those wounds in that suffering.” Yes?

Greg: Bruce said something one time that struck me. He was talking about what was on his heart, and whatnot. There were two things by which he identified himself most of his life, his physical prowess and his teaching ability.

Ted: Right.

Greg: But when those two things were being taken away from him, how difficult that was! And having been a former runner, as those start to dissipate, it is difficult, as the bishop said. And Jesus in us helps us to realize that is our lot.

Ted: Part of being in Christ. It's not alien to Christ. It's not like Christ is the health, the blessings and all the good things and everything. That's out there someplace. And we pray to Jesus to kind of make it right. That's not the way it works. He pulls us into Him. And the things we're going through—the whole aging, the dying, the getting sick, getting fired, that divorce,—everything is part of that humiliation, because it makes us as nothing.

I mean, when I went through my divorce, I was a big cheese. I mean, I'd been in a church. In the two years I was there the attendance went up 10% and the giving went up 40%. And then I became like nothing! And that's when my life started to turn around.

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That humbling saved me. It was my own sin; I’m not saying it was anybody else’s. But it doesn’t make any difference. It was the beginning of the breaking of me. And there’s a lot more breaking to be done. Thank goodness I wasn’t totally crushed. Did Frank want to say something? Frank, go ahead, please.

Frank Melnyk: Ultimate humility comes from ultimate obedience?

Ted: Are you suggesting that or are you saying that?

Frank: I’m suggesting it.

Ted: Okay. Well, it does. Ultimate humility comes from ultimate obedience. I guess I would go the other direction. I would say—well, which direction are you going? Which comes first, the humility or the obedience? What were you saying? Help me out, Frank.

Frank: I’d say that obedience needs to come first.

Ted: Okay. That’s not what I think. I think the humbling comes, then the obedience, because I just gave you all the things you’re supposed to be. I just told you all the things you’re supposed to do. I mean, I’m reading from the Scriptures. How are you doing? How are you going to get there? Are you just going to try harder?

“Well, I guess.”

Are you just going to try to do more Bible study, more praying, more fellowship, more whatever you need? Or is the real change going to come when Christ lets you experience His humiliation and that begins to break you, so you really have no other option? I mean, most of our obedience comes when we have no other option.

Bishop Rodgers: Amen.

Frank: But didn’t Jesus obey before He became humble?

Ted: Well that’s a good question, Frank. And I thank you because this is an excellent discussion. His very birth, the Incarnation, was the humiliation. He came into this world humble. He emptied Himself. He had all these prerogatives of divinity. He gave them up. He became as nothing—from the Creator of the universe to as nothing. So that’s how He started.

Now I don’t believe He had to be perfected. Let’s not even deal with that subject. That’s another theological issue. But I just think that how you actually change, how you get from one place to the next in your Christian walk, if it’s not in part through being broken, as Watchman Nee talked about. Break the cookie. Put it back together. Fold it up. It looks the same, right? No, it’s not the same, because you know what? I’d rather obey than experience the crushing, the humiliation. I’d rather do that.

Bob Busted: I think a lot of people have this type of attitude. When we think of being humble or of humility, it’s something we’re not very proud of, and we’re a little embarrassed about it.

Ted: That’s right.

Bob: I mean, we tend to want to move on. It’s kind of like worry. When you think about it, it’s not going to do any good, so I’m going to move on. I’m going to think about other things and not dwell on it. And what you brought out this morning is an important lesson for us to think about: the experience of being humble.

Ted: Right.

Bob: And what we need to do because of that experience.

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Ted: Well, yes. Think and meditate on the humiliation of Christ so you’ll understand your own humiliation. You always start with Him, and that gives you intelligence about yourself. Yes?

Corky Semler: What did Satan want Christ to do in the wilderness? To exalt Himself.

Ted: That’s exactly right—to rise up, to take back the prerogatives. That’s an excellent point. Yes.

Corky: And it is our nature to work with and to cooperate with Satan, to want to do that. In my mind that is one of , perhaps the greatest evidence, that the Bible is God-inspired. Man in his sinful nature, wanting to exalt himself, would never invent a God who humbled Himself.

Ted: Right. Yes.

Corky: And so I think your teaching this morning hits the spot.

Ted: I think you’re right; good. Matt?

Matt Reichart: You know, our first humiliation is when we come into salvation, because we’ve got to humble ourselves and acknowledge our sin.

Ted: Exactly.

Matt: And that’s like comparing coming to Christ to suicide, because we don’t want to be humiliated.

Ted: That’s exactly right.

Matt: And you know, you were talking about Peter. *“God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble,”* and *“He will exalt you at the proper time.”* He said, *“Though everybody else leaves you, I will never—“*

Ted: Yes, right.

Matt: And so Christ couldn’t use him until He broke him.

Ted: Yes!

Matt: And He said, *“Oh yeah, Pete? You think so? Before the cock crows, you’re going to deny Me three times.”*

Ted: Right.

Matt: So what I’ve learned is that I identify with Peter. *“I will never—“*

Ted: *“I will never”*; right.

Matt: There are things I said I would never do. Then Christ came to him and said, *“Do you really love Me, Pete?”* He asked him that three times.

Ted: Yes.

Matt: And He asked for that *agape*.

Ted: Right, yes.

Matt: And he answered with *fileo*. It means, *“I don’t know.”*

“Pete, do you love me, Pete?”

“I don’t know.”

“Do you fileo Me?”

“I don’t know.” He was rid of himself. He was humbled; he was broken. So out of our brokenness we surrender. If you surrender, now Christ can use you.

Ted: Yes, that’s good. That’s excellent, that’s great. Thank you. Yes?

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Don Nemit: What my brother was just talking about is identified in Jeremiah chapter 18.

Ted: Go!

Don: It’s when God had Jeremiah go to the potter.

Ted: Yes.

And he said that when he made it of clay, it was broken. He remade it.

Ted: Yes.

Don: He remade it. When you give yourself to the Lord and allow yourself to be broken, then you’ll be remade in Christ’s image.

Ted: Yes. But prior to giving yourself to the Lord, God has to compel you to that position, because you won’t do it on your own. You have to be broken. Yes?

Kirk Ellerbusch: I was just kind of curious about this. At the same time, He’s made us new creatures in Christ, right?

Ted: Yes.

Kirk: He has given us a new nature. There are times in my life where I know that God has got to put pressure on me. He’s breaking me. But then I read in Proverbs, paraphrasing Proverbs, “If you will heed.” In other words, humble yourselves.

Ted: Okay. Go ahead and humble yourself. Do it.

Kirk: Well, all that I’m saying is that if we know the right thing to do, we are to humble ourselves and do it. And we’re new creatures in Christ, and we have “everything we need pertaining to life and godliness.” And I’m not trying to counteract anything you’re saying,--

Ted: No, I know. Hang on.

Kirk: Okay.

Ted: I mean, I understand this. And I’m just not there. I’ve gone beyond that, because it doesn’t work.

Don Maurer: It’s commanded.

Ted: What? It’s commanded, right? Is that what you said, Don?

Don: Yes.

Ted: It’s commanded, right. Okay, it’s commanded, Don. Is everybody satisfied? Do you know the right thing to do? I mean, do you ever sin? Before your—

Don: Well, of course I sin. But what’s the difference between the person who is in Christ and the person who is not in Christ? Like Kirk says, “*we have everything we need for life and godliness.*” The unbeliever doesn’t.

Ted: That’s right, yes.

Don: That’s the tension that I have.

Ted: It’s because everything the unbeliever does he does in his own strength. He’s not in Christ; he’s in the flesh. And everything the believer, the converted person, the regenerated person does, he does in Christ whether you see it or not. All the good that you’re doing is no longer Don trying to live up to a commandment or be obedient. It’s Christ in you doing those very things. “*It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.*” Yes?

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Matt: As Reformers and conservatives, we forget about the Holy Spirit. Christ has imparted His Holy Spirit in us.

Ted: Well, that’s it.

Matt: And that gives us the power. The unbeliever doesn’t have that; we have that.

Ted: Yes. And that’s because Jesus is embodied and seated at the right hand of the Father. Jesus doesn’t really come into you. It’s the Spirit that does, because that’s the thing that can inhabit you. But that’s another talk altogether.

Oh, my gosh! You know what I’ve got? I’ve got kittens that need to be spayed by 8:30 and I’ve got to get to the vet. Quick, Bill.

Brave Man: You’re going to humble them.

Ted: For their good. *(Laughter)*

Bill McCoy: Our culture promotes the pursuit of pleasure and avoids pain at all cost. And that appeals to my flesh.

Ted: It does. And I mean, that’s the way we were made. We don’t go for pain; we go for pleasure. That’s why *“if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation.”* It has to be a whole new way of looking at things. Brothers, go in peace. Thank you.

Brave Men: Amen. *(Applause)*