

N. Union
11/15/53
A.M.

Scripture Lesson: - St Luke 7: 19-29.

Text: - Matthew 11: 28, 29, & 30.

Introduction: - There is no harder lesson to learn than the lesson of humility. It is not taught in the public schools, only in the school of Christ. It is the rarest of gifts. Very rarely do we find a man or a woman who is following closely the footsteps of the Master in meekness and humility. I believe that it is the hardest lesson which Jesus Christ had to teach his disciples. It looked at first, as though He had failed to teach it to the twelve men who had been with him constantly for three years.

After all, I think that more depends upon us than upon the Lord, because he is ready to give us a blessing and give it freely, but we are not always in a position to receive it. He always blesses the humble, and if we can get down in the dust before him, we will not go away disappointed. It was Mary at the feet of Jesus, who had chosen the "better part".

Did you ever notice the reason Christ gave for learning of him? He might have said, "Learn of me, because I am the most advanced thinker of the age. I have performed miracles that no other man has performed. I have shown my supernatural power in a thousand ways. But, no, the reason he gave was "that he was meek and lowly in heart".

I.

We read of three men in Scripture whose faces shone, and all three were noted for their meekness and humility. We are told that the face of Christ shone at his transfiguration; Moses, after he had been in the mount for forty days, came down from his communion with God with a shining face. Stephen when he stood before the Sanhedrin on the day of his death, his face lighted up with glory. If our faces are to shine we must get into the valley of humility; we must go down

in the dust before God. Bunyan says that it is hard to get down into the valley of humiliation, the descent into it is steep and rugged; but that it is very fruitful and fertile and beautiful when once we get there. I think that no one would dispute that; almost every man, even the ungodly, admires meekness and humility. Some one asked Augustine, what is the first one of the religious graces, and he replied, "Humility". They asked what is the second. Again he replied, "Humility". What is the third, and he said, "Humility". Yes, if we are humble, we have all of the graces. A man who is flattering himself that he is humble and is walking close to the Master, is self-deceived. It consists not in thinking meanly of ourselves, but in not thinking of ourselves at all. Moses knew not that his face shone. You can not counterfeit humility. You may counterfeit faith, you may counterfeit hope, you may counterfeit love, but you cannot counterfeit humility. The Arabs have a saying, that as the tares and the wheat grow they show which God has blessed. The heads of grain which God has blessed, bow their heads. The tares lift up their heads, high above the wheat, but they are only tares. If we only get down low enough, my friends, God will use every one of us to his glory. "As the lark that soars the highest builds her nest the lowest; as the nightingale that sings so sweetly, sings in the shade when all other birds have gone to rest; as the branches that are most laden with fruit, bend lowest; as the ship that is laden the heaviest, sinks deepest in the water, so the holiest and best Christians are the humblest."

II.

One of the meekest characters in history was John the Baptist. You remember when they sent a committee to John and asked if he were Elias, or this prophet or that prophet, he said, "No." He might have said some very flattering things of himself. He might have said, "I am the son of the old prophet Zacharias. Haven't you heard as a preacher? I have baptized more people probably, than any man living. The world has

never seen a preacher like myself. I wonder how many men of the present day would take the humble attitude that John took.

In our day it is a little bit different. Today we have great evangelists, great preachers, great singers, great theologians, great bishops.

They simply asked John, "Who are you?" "I am only a voice. He had no great thing to say of himself. Let us hear him preach. "There cometh one mightier than I after me, the latchets of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose." Think of that; bear in mind that Christ was looked upon as a deceiver, a village carpenter. John the Baptist had a much higher in the sight of men than Jesus had. Great crowds were coming to hear him. Yet he said, "I am not the Christ." And they asked him, "What then? Art thou Elias?" He saith, "I am not. Art thou that prophet?" He again answered "No!" Then they said unto him, "Who art thou? that we may give answer to them that sent us. What sayest thou of thyself?" He said, "I am the voice of one crying in the wilderness, Make straight the way of the Lord, as said the prophet Esaias. And they asked him and said unto him, "Why baptizeth thou then, if thou be not the Christ, nor Elias, or that prophet?" John answered them, "I baptize with water: but there standeth one among you, whom ye know not; he it is who is coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoe's latchet I am not worthy to unloose." "He must increase. I must decrease." It is easy to read that, but it is hard for us to live under the power of it. It is very hard for us to be ready to decrease, to grow smaller and smaller, that Christ may increase.

III.

One day after he was on his way to Capernaum, and was talking about his death, his suffering, and his resurrection, he heard quite a heated discussion going on behind him. When he came to the house at Capernaum he turned to the disciples and said, "What was all that discussion about? They all looked ashamed. "Who shall be the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" That discus-

sion has wrecked party after party, one society after another. Christ set a little child in the midst of them and said, "If you want to be great take the child for an example, and he who wants to be the greatest, let him be the servant of all".

One of the saddest things in the life of Jesus was the fact that just before his crucifixion, his disciples were striving to see who would be the greatest in the kingdom of God. It was his last night on earth. He knew that Judas was going to betray him. He knew that Peter would deny him, and yet in spite of it all the disciples were striving to see who would be the greatest. Yet, Jesus took a towel and girded himself, took a basin of water and stooped and washed their feet. That was another lesson in humility. Some of the disciples objected to his washing their feet. Jesus replied, "If I wash thee not thou hast no part with me". Peter replied, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head".

When the Holy Ghost came, and these men were filled, they became as nothing. Matthew takes up his pen to write, and he keeps Matthew out of sight. He tells what Peter and Andrew did, but calls himself, "the publican". You cannot find Luke's name in his gospel. He is called ~~him~~ "the disciple whom Jesus loved".

Dear friends, people of ~~North Union~~ ^{Dayton Chapel} church, I believe our only hope is to be filled with the Spirit of Christ. May God fill us, so that we shall be filled with meekness and humility. There is an old hymn, entitled, "Oh To Be Nothing". Let every one of you make that title the language of your heart. It breathes the spirit of him who said, "The Son can do nothing of Himself".

Oh to be nothing, nothing!
Only to lie at His feet,
A broken and emptied vessel,
For the Master's use made meet.
Emptied, that He might fill me.
As forth to his service I go;
Broken, that so unhindered,
His life through me might flow.