Let Us Be Humble as the Lord Jesus Was

Let us open the Word of God to 1 John, chapter 2. I am going to read verse 6, page 1199: "He that saith he abideth in him ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked. Amen." This is a rather difficult verse.

Perhaps some will want to say, "But I am not in Him, so I don't have to live the way He lived." But the Word of God tells us that if anyone is not in Him, he is none of His.

Or if he is in Him and bears no fruit, he is cut off and cast out. And the Lord Jesus says, "Without me ye can do nothing." So it is an absolute requirement that we abide in Him. That we be in Him and abide in Him, and this obliges us to live as the Lord Jesus lived.

I am going to try to bring out two aspects of the Lord Jesus' life. And I would like each of us to meditate on this. A few days ago, together with some of the people here, we talked about the time we give to God.

That is how we have learned to say it: to God. But does God need our time? He doesn't. We need Him. What we are really talking about is the time we give to ourselves, for eternal life.

And one of the things that matters most is to find time to learn to live as the Lord Jesus lived. As He lived, so I should live too. But how did He live?

I don't know how many of you have built a house, but if you have, you'll remember there were plans involved; there was a design, and it had to be followed step by step.

Tomorrow I had to buy cement and steel, find workers and so on, and I had to do some calculations, have the money ready, and give up a great deal of my time.

A great many things had to be done. And we who have answered God's call must now build the image of Christ in ourselves.

We must live as the Lord Jesus lived, because only in this way will we be able to build His image in us. And in order to build, we have to give a lot of time.

The image of Christ in me doesn't come by itself. As if I live the way the heathen live, digging the garden, planting cabbages, picking the grapes, tending the vineyard and so on, and Christ simply takes shape in me without my thinking about it, without my noticing.

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If you remember, God too had a plan before the world existed. He said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And He had to design him, He had to build him, and now we too must rebuild the image of Christ in ourselves. And there is a lot of work to do.

And one of the things that keeps us from building the image of Christ in ourselves is the time we don't find for this investment. The time we would give to knowing Him. The time we don't use to follow Him. The time we don't use to find out how the Lord Jesus lived. He lived a life of total dependence on the Father. We are going to read a few things. And we have to carry over to ourselves what He did, so that we do the same.

Let's go to Luke, chapter 5, verse 16. It is about the Lord Jesus.

The Lord Jesus withdrew into the wilderness and prayed. What can we learn from this? He went into desert places. Before we learn the Lord's Prayer in Matthew, He teaches us figuratively: go into your closet. Into your little room. Into your inner self. And do what?

Shut the door behind you and be with Me. Work together with Me. So that My image may be written anew in you. It is time we have to set aside. What are we to work on there? What are we to do in that little room?

We will read from Luke 6, verses 12 and 13. *"And it came to pass in those days, that he went out into a mountain to pray, and continued all night in prayer to God. And when it was day, he called unto him his disciples: and of them he chose twelve, whom also he named apostles."* Amen.

He went into a mountain, He went into desert places; we'll find again that the Lord Jesus went up into a mountain to pray. And here it tells us He continued all night in prayer to God. He had a very good reason, and when it was day, He called His disciples, of whom there were many, and of them He chose twelve, whom He named apostles.

Let's go to John 17 to see who chose these apostles. He prayed, and here it says He chose twelve people.

From this event we will learn to live as the Lord Jesus lived in His relationship with the Father; we will learn how to work together with God. We don't have very many of the Lord Jesus' prayers in the Gospels, but we do have some.

And here in John 17 we find one of the Lord Jesus' prayers. We read from verse 6. *"I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world: thine they were, and thou gavest them me; and they have kept thy word."* Amen. *"Thine they were, and thou gavest them me."*

Let's also read verses 11 and 12. *"And now I am no more in the world, but these are in the world, and I come to thee. Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world, I kept them in thy name: those that thou gavest me I have kept, and none of them is lost, but the son of perdition; that the scripture might be fulfilled."* Amen.

The Lord Jesus repeats these things: "Those whom thou hast given me." "I kept them in thy name, those that thou gavest me, and none of them is lost."

He prayed a whole night, and one of the results of that prayer is that in the morning He chose twelve disciples. Who actually chose them? The Father. He simply worked as the Father commanded Him. In John 5 the Lord Jesus tells us: *"I can of mine own self do nothing... because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me."* And here He beautifully says, "Thou gavest them me." The thing to hold on to here is that the Lord Jesus spent the whole night in prayer.

Let's go on and read more about the Lord Jesus. We read from Luke chapter 9, verse 18. *"And it came to pass, as he was alone praying, his disciples were with him: and he asked them, saying, Whom say the people that I am?"* It's the first part of this verse that interests us. Jesus was praying alone, apart. What need did the Lord Jesus have of prayer? Did He need prayer or didn't

He?

Let's also read from Luke 11, from verse 1: "And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples."

From what we've read, we've noted that He went into desert places and prayed. He went up into a mountain and prayed all night. Then we see He prays alone, apart, yet in the presence of people. And here too, He prays in the presence of people.

He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk, even as the Lord Jesus walked. Let's stay in Luke and go to chapter 18, verse 1: *"And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint."* The Lord Jesus tells us a parable too, to show us that we ought always to pray and not to give up.

Can we say of the Lord Jesus that He did this? He was without sin, He was the Son of God on earth, He is the Son of God, and on the face of it He wouldn't seem to need to pray; He wouldn't seem to have reasons for His prayers.

We have many reasons for prayer that the Lord Jesus shouldn't have had. And yet He was a man of prayer, and He teaches us too. Why must we pray? Why must we have a time in our little room when we pray? Maybe for some people prayer is less important. Is it or isn't it? Let's look at the purpose of prayer as we build the image of Christ in ourselves.

Let's think about what role prayer plays in our work of becoming like the Lord Jesus.

Another step we must take in this work of rebuilding the image of Christ in ourselves is to learn humility. To pray to be humble. Humility is not a trait of the natural man. What characterizes the natural man? Humility, or its opposite, which is conceit, pride?

I'm going to read a passage from 1 Peter so we can see how important humility is in our lives. It is the starting point. Humility belongs to the realm of self-denial. And we have to work very hard to learn humility. And not just any humility, but the humility the Lord Jesus had. And for that, prayer is needed. We need to withdraw and stay in God's presence and ask God to help us live as the Lord Jesus lived.

We read from 1 Peter, chapter 5, verse 6: *"Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time.* Amen."

I believe we all want to share in the grace of God. We can ask God to give us grace and to keep us in His grace, in His mercy, in His compassion.

But we don't really pray to be humble. If we pray to be humble and we become humble, God gives us grace. Is it a great thing for God to grant you mercy? Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time. Amen.

I'd like us to go to Zechariah. We find a prophecy there. *"Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion; shout, O daughter of Jerusalem: behold, thy King cometh unto thee: he is just, and having salvation; lowly, and riding upon an ass, and upon a colt the foal of an ass."* Amen. He is just, victorious and lowly. What interests us now is that the Lord Jesus, for it is He who is spoken of here, He is in this prophecy, also tells us in verse 10 that He shall speak peace unto the heathen, and His dominion shall be from sea even to sea, and from the river even to the ends of the earth.

He is lowly. It is a prophecy that points to the Lord Jesus. A prophecy that was fulfilled, as we will see when we read Matthew 11.

We read from verse 29: *"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."* Matthew 11:28 says: *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."*

This verse calls us to come to the Lord Jesus and learn humility from Him. If we are humble, we will find rest. If we are proud, we will find turmoil, because God resists the proud. It is essential that we live as He lived and take on the humble character of the Lord Jesus.

In the Acts of the Apostles, the Lord Jesus is presented as the model of humility. In chapter 8, verses 26–35, Philip meets an Ethiopian who was reading the prophet Isaiah.

In his humility, the Ethiopian was open to receiving teaching from Philip. *"And who shall declare his generation? for his life is taken from the earth. And the eunuch answered Philip, and said, I pray thee, of whom speaketh the prophet this? of himself, or of some other man? Then Philip opened his mouth, and began at the same scripture, and preached unto him Jesus."* Amen.

The Lord Jesus is described here. Some of the traits of His character. In His humiliation His judgment was taken away. We understand what it means to have our judgment taken away. But for this we have to work. We have to come into our little room and be together with our Heavenly Father.

Let's build humility together with Him. He gives grace to the humble. We are not born with humility. You saw in 1 Peter, chapter 5, the apostle Peter gives an exhortation there: you younger ones, submit yourselves, submit yourselves.

The word humility means lowly and submissive. What does lowly mean? A state of being lifted up, or a state of being low, of lowliness? Lowly and submissive. It is hard, it isn't easy, because we were taught to be proud, and we are human, and we all have faults.

That is why we have to work. We have to set aside time, and what is very important is that we must begin with humility. In His humiliation His judgment was taken away. Let's open Paul's epistle to Titus. We will read from chapter 1, verse 16. It is a stance typical of many Christians today. They profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate. Amen.

If we replace the word disobedient, what could we put there? Proud, or not humble. They profess to know God, but they are not humble.

And what is very ugly, and what the Word of God tells us, is that they are abominable. That word is very harsh, but it is written here; we find it in the Word of God. The disobedient, reprobate unto every good work, are an abomination to God.

They profess to know God, but they do not know the humility of the Lord Jesus. In His humility, in His submission, His judgment was taken away. We must learn this, and we must learn it methodically, learn it carefully, think about it, want to be humble.

Because He gives grace only to the humble. If we don't find time to work on our character, how will we have the character of Christ? To get there, we must be humble.

Let's also read from John chapter 5. We have read it on another occasion, but I'd like to emphasize it. We'll read verse 19. "Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise" (John 5:19). And further: "I can of mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and my judgment is just; because I seek not mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent me" (John 5:30).

This is the Lord Jesus, and we want to be like the Lord Jesus. If we abide in Him, we must live as the Lord Jesus lived.

I'll read one more description, by the apostle Paul. He describes the Lord Jesus in Philippians 2:5: "*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.* Amen." Let this mind be in us.

If we don't set aside time to put our thoughts in order, to build His image in us, the way a builder schedules every stage of construction each day, we won't reach the end of the work bearing His image. In the same way, we must plan every day we have ahead of us, building the image of Christ in us stage by stage.

One of the things at the very start of the work is submission; only in humility can we build. "Teach me, Lord, to be submissive. Teach me to obey You in all things."

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus. Let us learn that, though He was in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God.

We often make ourselves equal with God. Not just occasionally, but often. When we go by our own thoughts, we have made ourselves equal with God.

I mean those who have entered into covenant with God, of course. Those who don't know God live… 100% by their own thoughts. And they make themselves 100% equal with God.

They blame God. Why is there war over there? Why is it like that over there? Why doesn't it rain? Why… and so on. And the Lord Jesus, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.

When He prayed a whole night, He prayed for the Father to reveal His will to Him. He didn't pray so that He Himself could appoint the disciples. "Thou gavest them me. Thine they were."

The Lord Jesus did not step in through prayer saying, "Father, let Me choose them." He simply appointed what the Father told Him to. He did not make Himself equal with God.

Let us have in us the mind that was also in Christ. That is how He lived. And it tells us that he who says he abides in Him ought himself also to live the same way. He made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant. If we put humility together with servitude, are they very much alike? Humble, servant, submissive.

What is a slave like? What traits does a slave have? He carries out orders; his submission is blind, total. Anyone who has looked up the word servant or slave in the dictionary will find that he obeys his master blindly. Blindly — what does that mean? Without adding anything of his own.

Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became unconditionally obedient unto death. We must learn this. Because that is how the Lord Jesus lived. And if we say we abide in Him, we must live that way.

The one who lives in humility receives rest. If we are humble, we will find rest for our souls. And God gives us grace, grace upon grace, but He resists those who are not humble.

Let us learn to work at it. "Let's not say, 'We don't have time, I don't have time for anything. I only read the Bible.' Does God need me to read the Bible?

God wants me to understand, to be humble. That is what God wants. And He wants me to work at becoming humble. Must I pray for humility, so that it can take root in my life?

Think about it yourselves. How many times have you prayed to be humble? Because that is how His image is built in us. With the Father, nothing is for sale. Nothing costs money. In the world everything costs money. We go and buy what we need. Isn't that true? Here we don't have to go and buy. Here we only have to ask the Father: Help me, Father, to be humble."

I'd like us to read a little more about the Lord Jesus, in Hebrews. Let's go there: from chapter 5, verse 7, through verse 9. *"Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death, and was heard in that he feared; though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered." "Who in the days of his flesh, when he had offered up prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears unto him that was able to save him from death"* (Hebrews 5:7).

The Lord Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane, with tears, to the Father, asking Him to save Him from death. This prayer was heard, and He was made perfect and became the author

of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.

Humility is an important part of godly fear. A godly person is humble and submissive, admiring his Master. In the Old Testament, a servant who wanted to stay with his master after being set free became a servant for life, out of admiration and respect for his master.

Let us meditate on these things and humble ourselves before God. Humility is essential, because God resists the proud.

Submission can be hard, but nothing can take its place. If we recall the Old Testament, the people of Israel had trouble accepting the leadership of Moses and Aaron because they lacked humility. Do you remember Korah's rebellion in Numbers 16? When they said, "Enough. You've kept leading us round and round this mountain. You promised us milk and honey. You promised to bring us into Canaan. And? We keep going round in circles here. Enough."

They thought they were capable of going on their own and that they were close to God. They could not understand the order God gives to the humble. The young must submit to the elders, because that is how God arranged things. The elders may have their problems; one example is Aaron, who was not perfect. They didn't want Aaron to be high priest. Aaron's rod budded, a sign that God had set things in order.

Man does not understand why it is so, but we must learn and come to humility. Some say they submit only to God, but they must submit to people as well, because God has arranged things that way.

When you humble yourself and submit, it's as if everything starts to boil inside you, because everything feels upside down. It is hard to submit to a person with faults, but we must learn to accept this order.

But let us remember that He knows why. His wisdom… His judgment was taken away. In Ephesians chapter 4, verse 21, it tells us: *"Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God. Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body. Therefore as the church is subject unto Christ, so let the wives be to their own husbands in every thing. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it.* Amen." Often it is very hard, but only in this way do we find rest.

This is what the Lord Jesus tells us: *"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."* If God has exalted someone, has raised someone up to be greater, what should we do? It says there that He will exalt you in due time. A time will come when He will exalt you. Perhaps. We don't know. What must the others do when you are exalted? Must they submit to those in authority who have been raised up? "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers" (1 Peter 5:6).

Submit to rulers, to the authorities, because they have been raised up by God. And if we must submit to these people who are of the world, how much more must we submit to those God has placed over us to help us grow.

But to be submissive, we have to learn. We have to learn humility. I've come across many cases. People have said, "Who am I supposed to submit to? Submit to him? Just look at what he does. Look, this, this and this." There are many tangled things, but there's no other way. This is God's rule. To find rest for your soul, you must be submissive.

Wives must submit to their husbands as unto the Lord in all things. As the Lord Jesus was toward the Father. That is true humility. "I submit to him only 80%, and the other 20% I just can't." Let us understand clearly that we are talking about submission within the Word. "I won't submit by going out to steal, or lying, or doing certain things just because my husband asks me to and I'm 'submissive in all things.'" May the Lord help us all to learn humility, so that we receive grace and rest for our souls. Amen.

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