

Humility In Wisdom: 5

The Outworking of Grace

1 Peter 5; James 4

In these studies we have said that God always intends us to come up to a new level, He always has something better for us – we may not necessarily know what that is until we come up to a newer higher level and it begins to open up in front of us.

In presenting this series of teaching, I recalled a visit I made to a hotel where in order to go up to the upper levels from the ground floor you had to first go down a set of stairs to where the lifts and staircases were – in effect the first step up was down. This is the essence of this series – so that we can come up higher, we must first learn to take a step down, that down step is an act of humility and submission.

The Bible says that if we humble ourselves then God will exalt, lift and raise us up.

Let us turn up the two Scriptures we read in a previous study – **1 Peter 5.5-6** and **James 4.10**

[“Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for "GOD RESISTS THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE." Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time”](#) 1 Peter 5.5-6

[“Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.”](#) James 4.10

Both these verses tell us to humble ourselves under God and He will exalt us and lift us up.

Tonight we are going to take this a step further and see what it is that's at work to lift us up.

We have already read in 1 Peter 5.5 and we see it again in **James 4.6** that [“God gives grace to the humble”](#) - It is the *grace of God* that exalts us and takes us to the next level.

What is grace?

Grace (Gk *charis*.) - “endue with favour, kindness, goodness and blessing”.

- It is an attribute of God;
- It is the gift of God - free and unmerited.
- It is the blessing of God
- An outworking of God's love toward us

Let us look at **1 Peter 5.8-12**

[“\(8\) Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. \(9\) Resist him, steadfast in the faith, knowing that the same sufferings are experienced by your brotherhood in the world. \(10\) But may the God of all grace, who called us to His eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after you have suffered a](#)

while, perfect, establish, strengthen, and settle you. (11) To Him be the glory and the dominion forever and ever. Amen. (12) By Silvanus, our faithful brother as I consider him, I have written to you briefly, exhorting and testifying that this is the true grace of God in which you stand.”

Here the apostle exhorts us to not only to be humble under God, but that we should be aware and alert of the schemes of the devil and resist him (v8-9).

(10) He goes on to say that God is the God of all grace and by that outworking of grace in our lives He will perfect, establish, strengthen and settle you.

In verse 12, “*..in which you stand*” Peter confirms that what he had just declared to them was the same message of grace which Paul had preached to them (Silvanus, aka Silas, was Paul’s companion and apostle in his own right. He was the bearer of this letter to the church)

So, let us briefly look at some of Paul's teachings on this message of grace

Ephesians 2.4-6

“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus...”

- We are saved by the grace of God
- The grace of God has quickened us even though we were dead in trespasses and sins
- The grace of God has raised us up and made us sit together in the heavenly places
- The grace of God has lifted us from one level to another – as the Psalmist could say “*He also brought me up out of a horrible pit, Out of the miry clay, And set my feet upon a rock, And established my steps*” (Psalm 40.2)

2 Corinthians 12.7-10

“(7) And lest I should be exalted above measure by the abundance of the revelations, a thorn in the flesh was given to me, a messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I be exalted above measure. (8) Concerning this thing I pleaded with the Lord three times that it might depart from me. (9) And He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." Therefore most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. (10) Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in needs, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake. For when I am weak, then I am strong.”

- “*Lest I be exalted above measure..*” - become haughty, self exaltation brings us low but being humble exalts us. Paul was receiving many revelations, which we now have as the NT, these revelations could have made him proud with feelings of grandeur and importance.
- This 'thorn in the flesh' was not an affliction to keep Paul humble, as some believe – the Bible clearly identifies this *thorn* as a 'messenger of satan to buffet' him, and I believe it was to get him to focus on himself and not in the Lord.
- The word buffet means to 'strike with the fist, maltreat and violently abuse'

- God's reply to Paul's pleadings were “My grace is sufficient for you” - grace was all he needed to lift him up. Because of the grace of God, Paul could declare “when I am weak, then I am strong”. Grace lifted him from a time of weakness to a time of strength.

2 Corinthians 8.9

“For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that you through His poverty might become rich”

- He became poor so that we might become rich
- This verse tells us that Jesus humbled himself so that we could be exalted by the grace of God.
- Jesus laid aside everything (*became poor*), His Deity, his reputation, his stately form and became as a man, so that we could be beneficiaries (*become rich*) of grace – favour, kindness, goodness and the blessing of God

2 Corinthians 9.7-11

“(7) So let each one give as he purposes in his heart, not grudgingly or of necessity; for God loves a cheerful giver. (8) And God is able to make all grace abound toward you, that you, always having all sufficiency in all things, may have an abundance for every good work. (9) As it is written: "HE HAS DISPERSED ABROAD, HE HAS GIVEN TO THE POOR; HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS ENDURES FOREVER." (10) Now may He who supplies seed to the sower, and bread for food, supply and multiply the seed you have sown and increase the fruits of your righteousness, (11) while you are enriched in everything for all liberality, which causes thanksgiving through us to God.”

- Purposeful & bountiful giving is honouring God with your substance – act of worship, also humbling yourself to God.
- God is able to make all grace [all favour, all kindness, all goodness, all blessing] abound toward you.
- That you might abound - to cause to overflow, exceed, excel, be pre-eminent – to cause to rise above and beyond.
- This type of giving causes the grace of God to go to work on your behalf increasing and blessing you – raising you up to a new level

As we continue in this series we are going to see how some Bible characters who humbled themselves were elevated because of the grace of God.