

From the Pulpit of the Japanese Baptist Church of North Texas  
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## Grace to The Humble

1 Peter 5:5-7

5:5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”

5:6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,

5:7 casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.

### 1. Humility

In today’s verse, the topic is “humility”. Everyone is agree that “humility” is a virtue. You can find the teachings about “humility” everywhere in the Scripture. Verse 5 says, “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” This is an excerpt from Proverbs 3:34. In addition, there is this verse in Proverbs. “Before destruction a man’s heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor.” (Proverbs 18:12) In Japan, we have a proverb: “Proud leads to a loss, humility leads to benefit.”

In Japanese culture, it is very natural to put ourselves down, and it is our manner. Time has been passed, and our thought has changed; however, we still always say “I am an inexperienced person...” or “It is shabby, but...”. However, if you use these expressions but actually don’t think so in your mind, what would happen? We say, “Humility is a form of pride.” Humility is supposed to be beautiful but it actually

turns out being ugly. Moreover, we have a song, “I lower my head when I listen to my parent’s scolding.” It means you can avoid the scolding if you lower your head. You will not loose and fail if you lower your head. This might be true; however, this is not “humility”, it is just “how to get alone in the world” technique.

How does the Bible teach us about “humility”? Verse 6 says, “Under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you.” In other words, we should lower ourselves before God. No matter what talents you have, you have to lower yourself when you stand before almighty God. No matter how you are great, you are still tiny figure before great God. No matter what you have accomplished, you can not stop confessing your sins before holy God. When Job heard the voice of God, he said, “therefore I despise myself, and repent in dust and ashes.” (Job 42:6) When Isaiah saw the illusion of God, he screamed, “Woe is me! For I am lost.” (Isaiah 6:5) When we stand before God, our counterfeit pride will be taken away. When it happens, it is the time that we can understand what is “humility”. The sham humility as worldly wisdom, but true humility we shall understand.

Moreover, the “humility” that the Scripture tells us, is nourished and does work in the church. Verse 5 reads, “Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another”. In the scripture, especially the letters of Apostles, “one another” or “each other” has been used frequently. “Love each other.” “Respect each other.” “Accept and patience one other.” “Teach each other.” “Console each other.” “Bear one another's burdens.” “Forgive each other” “Serve each other”. In Romans 12:16, “Live in harmony with one another. Do not be

haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.” This means that you believe in Jesus Christ and become a part of Christ’s body. You live in a harmony with other parts of body of Christ. You are lived by the Head, which is Jesus Christ, you are supposed by other parts of body. You realize these things and learn the unity and harmony of Christ’s body. These unity and harmony will bring you “humility”.

## **2. Wisdom**

The Bible teaches us to be humble in front of God and in the body of Christ and promises us that those who are humble shall be given blessings, as is said “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” God gives numerous blessings to those who are humble and I would like to point out two blessings today. First, “wisdom” and “knowledge” to know God. Those who are humble will receive deep knowledge about God and wisdom for life based on the knowledge.

In the New Testament, the original word “humility” has a meaning of “low” or “under”. Humans were created under God and His word, however, they attempted to stand with God and above His words. That is where human’s sin started. The temptation by the serpent in the Garden of Eden is as follows: “Did God actually say, ‘You shall not eat of any tree in the garden’?” He attempted to make the women become doubtful about His words. When she replied, “We may eat of the fruit of the trees in the garden, but God said, ‘You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die’, the serpent immediately said, “You will not surely die” and denied God’s word. The serpent further said, ”For God

knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.” This means “You don’t need God to decide what is good and what is bad. Humans can choose whatever they want”. This is a temptation that humans don’t need to stand under God, but they can stand aside God. Adam and Eva took the temptation and ever since, humans became to judge right and wrong by their standard, not by God’s Word, and began to live selfishly and in a self-centered manner. Accordingly, humans forgot basic humility to stand under God and His Word.

The word “human” in Greek has a meaning of “someone who look upon”. That is “humans stand under God and look upon Him”, which illustrates the way we humans should look. However, many humans became to look down God and His Word because of sins.

We, Christians, should respect the Bible and should never put God’s Word under us, but we sometimes make a mistake of attempting to understand the Bible only with human rationale when we study it. In the most cases, it is an honest mistake being passionate about learning how to interpret the Bible or from exchanging the arguments. But we sometimes end up just arguing and don’t get what God is really talking to us. If we argue as if we look down the Bible, we will not gain anything through faith or receive any encouragements to follow Christ. We cannot receive wisdom to live in this world as a believer. As the word “understand” is made up of “under” and “stand”, we can understand the Bible correctly when we stand under the Bible and humbly listen to Him speaking to us.

In the garden of a church I visited, I saw a bronze statue of Christ squatting. The title said “Jesus Blessing Children”. Jesus must have

squatted when he dealt with children so that he could keep the same height as them. The status was expressing His humbleness. But if I stood up and saw the statue, I could not see His face. So, I also squatted, then I saw Jesus' gentle face with full of smiles. I learned that I could understand Jesus if I lower myself as He did and stand in front of God or to interact with others. I would like to receive the wisdom and knowledge to know God, which is only given to those who humble themselves.

### **3. Need**

Another blessing given to those who are humble is that their spiritual and physical needs will be provided. The needs of those who are humble are always provided by God. Why? Humility leads us prayer, and the needs will be provided through prayer.

Many people think that humility is in reserved and passive attitudes. But, it's not true. Those who are humble know that they have various kind of shot coming. Since they know their short comings and weaknesses, they pray and ask God. Those who are humble never try to fill their needs by kicking others down and taking others properties. They will patiently endure their lack of needs. But they are not inactive. They do asking their needs repeatedly and never forget to share their possessions with other people.

At the Wednesday prayer meetings, we have a meditation time on each psalm of the Song of Ascents. In Psalm 123:2, it is written, "Behold, as the eyes of servants look to the hand of their master, as the eyes of a maidservant to the hand of her mistress, so our eyes look to the LORD our God, till he has mercy upon us." Like servants and

maidservants ask their masters and mistresses, the believers place themselves in the position of servants or maidservants, and humbly ask God His grace and peace. In Psalms there are many prayers of petition, saying, “Have mercy on your servant!” “Have mercy!” or “Show mercy!” are the words of beggars. The Bible shows us many believers who prayed eagerly to God by put themselves in the position of servants and even of beggars.

Mark 7:24-31 tells a story about a mother in the land of Tyre, She was a Syrophenician. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. And Jesus said to her, “Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.” Jesus mentioned Israelites by the word: “children,” and gentiles by the word: “dogs.” Jesus was the Savior of all people, both of Israelites and gentiles. But at this moment he was working as the Savior of Israelites, then he said such words to the mother.

But the mother didn't quit. She answered, “Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs.” What does this mean? At that time, people eat meals without using knife and fork. They ate with their fingers, and they wiped their fingers with a piece of bread. The piece was given to dogs after meal. “Even dogs can receive the piece of bread with which children wiped their fingers. Lord, give me a piece of your power and mercy!” The mother made herself humble by putting herself in the position of a dog, and eagerly begged Jesus. Jesus could not refuse such prayer. The demon has immediately left her daughter as the mother asked Jesus.

Verse 7 says, “Casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you.” Those who are humble can pray, and those who can pray

will be released from their anxieties. Those who don't know to be humble before God try to manage their life by themselves, and as the result, their heart become filled with anxieties. Let's set aside our excessive pride saying, "I can live my life without depending God." And see the reality that we are lived and sustained by God. Let's ask humbly and earnestly the knowledge of the Lord and the supply for our needs to God, as we walk our path of life.

**(Prayer)**

Our Heavenly Father, sin began from the pride of men that rejected to stand under You and Your Word. You sent Christ in the form of humility to resolve the sin. We are saved with the humility of Christ that compare to nothing. And the salvation works in the souls who become humble before You. Lead us to live our life becoming humble, and being filled with all of Your goodness by the power of the salvation. In Jesus' name, Amen.