

Courageous Humility

A message by Caleb Hyers | Matthew 23:1-12

What is true humility, and does it mean thinking less of yourself? In this message from Matthew 23:1-12, Caleb Hyers of The Resting Place Apostolic Family in Tampa, FL describes true humility as trusting God to provide in every way, even while taking the low place. The message explores the divine passive in Matthew 23:12, Jesus as the ultimate example in Philippians 2, and serving people who cannot help you. Read the full transcript below to follow the teaching on courageous humility from start to finish.

COURAGEOUS HUMILITY IS PART OF OUR WAY AT THE RESTING PLACE

You ever had church without God before? This sucks. That's so boring. So annoying, actually. What are we doing? It's like a funeral home. It doesn't make any sense. What do we do? He's alive. He's still here. I know Amy and the team aren't singing right now, but the presence of God is still very much here. Amen.

I need my friends in AV to get the clock on the back to do the countdown for me, so I don't keep these people here too long. Thank you very much. I appreciate that. It helps me.

My title this morning for our time in the Word is Courageous Humility. Courageous humility is part of our way at The Resting Place. We have our core values, we have our mission, but we discovered there's a way we go about all of this. It actually came out of a sermon series a couple of years back. When I was preaching it, I was just saying, this is good stuff, where people have prayer, humility, all of this. And it was Victoria Piccirilli who said, "Caleb, that's just us. That's our way." So she coined the term, the TRP Way. I said, "You're right. It is." And so, language shapes landscapes. Words shape worlds.

So today I'm inviting you into that idea of being a person of courageous humility. You may never have heard those words put together. I don't know. I hadn't until we started saying it. But it comes straight out of the reading from our 90 Day Word Challenge. Some of you need to be courageous and catch up on the 90 Day Word Challenge and stay in it. Come on, you can do it. I'm one of you. I am three days behind right now. I'm sitting in front of you, all right? So I've got two days of mine. Do we have anybody who's on time? Anybody keeping up? Look at that. Love it. We were inspired by you. We'll be courageous as well.

It comes out of Matthew 23, but I want to set it up for you today. This is some obvious stuff I'm about to say out loud. Really obvious stuff. The world is full of examples of those who do whatever they can do to get to the top. I don't even need to bring any of them up. You probably have five in your head right now. And we are constantly being told by the world that we need to win. We're told we need to leave a mark. We need to accomplish the goal, have the most, be better than the next person. All the time. And we're told success stories of those who courageously did whatever it takes to get there.

And I want to say to you, there's nothing wrong with success. Did that make anybody feel better? Anybody? Okay, good. There's nothing wrong with success. But my question today is, have we properly defined God's idea of success? Because we shift definitions of things. We change the definition of what it means. And God has a definition of what that looks like for us.

So maybe you're here and you want to be a great person. Maybe you're a business owner, and you want to be the best in your market. Maybe you want to be an incredible parent. You've got a couple of parents-to-be here? Maybe you just want to be extremely successful in your career. There is nothing wrong with any of this. Nothing. Absolutely nothing. These are good things. But there's a right way and a wrong way to go about it.

TRUE HUMILITY REQUIRES GREATNESS

Let me just say before we jump into the text, something I've thought of many times and always like to say: true humility requires greatness. Greatness is actually a prerequisite to humility.

The Rays tied it up last night, two and two. Come on, let's go. You know who they didn't interview? The losing team, after the game. They didn't interview that guy who had the error. He literally thought it was in his glove, and he started throwing the ball. The ball was behind him. All right? Who was it? [inaudible]. Sorry. He made a mistake. Nobody's interviewing that guy after the game. Why? Because he's on the losing team, and it's kind of like, "Oh, bro. You're paid a lot of money to miss like that." They interview the winner.

And often, what do the winners say? They start with saying, "All glory to..." Why do they have the opportunity to speak to millions of people to say, "I want to glorify God first. He gave me these abilities. He gave me these skills, and I'm here to tell you that Jesus is to be glorified"? That's a powerful thing. And you know what? Everybody heard him say it. Why? Because he succeeded.

It does not honor God to suck at stuff. It will never honor God to be bad at stuff. And yet we've got this idea of, "Oh, be humble. Don't be too good at things." It's because we don't understand what humility really is. We're going to understand it today.

Jesus dropped this one-liner on us in Matthew 23:12. He said,

Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

He's flipping the whole paradigm upside down.

HAVING COURAGEOUS HUMILITY IS THE GOD-ORDAINED PATH TO BEING SUCCESSFUL IN THE RIGHT WAY

And I want to submit this to you: having courageous humility is the God-ordained path to being successful in the right way. Having courageous humility is the God-ordained path to being successful in the right way. I am going to define that term, courageous humility, as we go here. But I want to point out that having humility cannot actually be the reason you get exalted. Humility cannot actually be done in order to receive or achieve exaltation. But it is the path to godly exaltation.

Humility becomes courageous when it's from a place of total trust in God to provide in every way. Humility isn't just humility anymore. It's courageous when there's a total, complete abandonment to God in trust for everything. What do I mean? I mean trusting God to provide for your reputation. The Proverbs speak about reputation. You need to have a good reputation. It honors God to have a good reputation. It says to keep it, to make sure to watch it. Steward your reputation. That's a biblical principle. But trusting God for your reputation when you continually take the low place is courageous humility.

Trusting God to provide for your connections with other people. If I'm not out front, if I'm not doing the most, if I'm not seen, will I connect with the people I need to connect with? Trust God to connect you with the people you need to connect with. Let me be accurate here. I was corrected this morning about times and dates and stuff, so I'm trying to be accurate. There were probably about 3,000 people at a conference I attended. I just attended. And what do you know? Somebody walked up to me and said, "I feel like God says we need to connect." I'm still friends with that person today. We minister together. God has brought real fruit from that. I was just sitting in a chair in a sea of 3,000 people. God knows how to connect you with the people you need to connect with. You don't have to go make a show and say, "Look, I'm connect-worthy. You need me, I need you." Trust God to provide your connections.

Trust God to provide for your family and your livelihood, even though you take the place of a servant. I've said this many times, so I'm collapsing it in here because it's in the past. Servanthood is the path to God-ordained exaltation. This is totally opposite of the world. It's completely against all the messaging we receive Monday through Saturday. But it's the way. This is the way. That was for Joel.

THE GREATEST AMONG YOU SHALL BE YOUR SERVANT

Anyway, let's read Matthew 23:12 in context. Let's read verses 1 through 12. Jesus is very forward in this context. It's one of those moments I love because he starts beating up the pastors of the day. He starts really giving it to the most holy ones, the upper crust. And it's just great. So let's read this carefully. Matthew 23:1-12.

Then Jesus said to the crowds and his disciples,

Who did he say it to? The crowds and his disciples. Let me just help you. The people he's about to talk about are in the crowd, but he's really speaking... You know how you talk to one person hoping everybody hears you? It was one of those moments. He's speaking to his disciples, knowing the whole crowd can hear him, and he's speaking to the crowds. I just want you to get this picture that he's probably looking at Peter or John or, you know, his guys. And he says,

The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so do and observe whatever they tell you.

Those guys are in the crowd, just so you know. They're there. He doesn't have a microphone. They're just huddled around, all right? They're just talking. And I bet they're like, "Oh yeah, see? Listen to him. Do what we tell you to do." And there are moments when I read my Bible, I think, Jesus, this is surely where you put a dramatic pause. The pauses aren't in the text, but I'm sure he's like,

The scribes and Pharisees sit on Moses' seat. So do and observe whatever they tell you. But not [inaudible].

For they preach, but do not practice. They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. They do all their deeds to be seen by others. For they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long, and they love the place of honor at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces and being called rabbi by others. But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all brothers, and call no man your father on earth, for you have one Father who is in heaven. Neither be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Christ.

And I'm just telling you, these Pharisees are like, "Oh no, he didn't." They're mad. They're big men, all right? They really are. And I want to clarify that Jesus is saying it's okay to have teachers. It's okay to have a dad. Call your dad "Dad." Call him "Father." He's not saying don't call... It's okay. There are rabbis. I have good friends who are Messianic rabbis. Love it. It's good. I'm a teacher, okay? What he's saying is, call no person on earth your ultimate source. Your ultimate source of truth, your ultimate source of comfort, of guidance, of identity. Even your paternity. Say, "God is

my Father. I come from him. I look just like my Dad." That's what he's saying, okay? Does that make sense? But they had taken these titles and made them more than they should have made them. So then he ends by saying,

The greatest among you shall be your servant.

Radical statement. Slave, servant. It was very common for people to be working off debt, living in the back of somebody's house and working every day to work off a debt. And he said, do that. That's greatness. In their hearing, they must have been like, "What? I have servants. I'm supposed to be one? What?" Sometimes we just gloss over this stuff. We just read it, but think about the way it would have landed on them.

Whoever exalts himself will be humbled. Whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

So the Pharisees had let their position and their role go to their head, all right? They used their authority to look down rather than lift people up. And we need to examine ourselves, friends. We need to examine ourselves to know whether we are acting that way today, or if we're walking in humility.

The Divine Passive

I want to point out in Matthew 23:12 that there are active and passive verbs here. What's active in there? "Exalts himself," "humbles himself." Those are active. But "be humbled" and "be exalted" are passive. That's something done to you. So exalting yourself and humbling yourself are things you do, but being humbled and being exalted are things done to you. It's passive. So our actions dictate the first part, but the result is always dictated by the Lord. Amen.

In theological circles, this is called the divine passive, or the theological passive. All right? Whenever it says "exalts himself will be humbled" and it doesn't say who will do the humbling, in Jewish speech and vernacular, that's an indication you're talking about God. When there's silence about the who, the assumption is always that it's God. It's called the divine passive, or the theological passive. That's the way they write. They don't need to say who's going to humble you, because you know. And they're not saying who's going to exalt you, because you should know.

So again, this passage is not teaching us that if we humble ourselves, we will automatically receive exaltation. Come on. This is not an if-this-then-that situation, all right? It's teaching us only that when we truly humble ourselves, God will look to exalt us. If we truly walk in courageous humility, God will go, "Oh, I like that. I want to make them an example. I'm going to put them up for others to see."

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE TO EXALT YOURSELF?

What does it look like to exalt yourself? It's a great question. I'm so glad you're asking questions like this this morning. All right? The word exalt means to raise someone or something to a higher rank in English. It means to raise something or someone to a higher power or status, or to praise them, or to glorify, or to extol them greatly. The Greek word is *hypsōō*, and it means to elevate to a new height.

I'm going to give you some biblical examples of this just to clarify it, even though I think we have plenty of pictures. In the Bible, Isaiah 14:12-16, you can just write these down. It's a multi-layered passage, but many scholars believe he was talking about Satan, where it says he exalted himself to be above God. He said, "I will make myself like the Most High," and even above the Most High. Isaiah 14:12-16. That's the essence of pride right there. "I'm better than God." Pharaoh did this. He continually exalted himself and refused humility, even while the plagues were going down. That's Exodus 9:17 and Exodus 10:3, if you want to look that up. Haven't you heard of these two? Adam and Eve. They fell for Satan's trap. Why? What did he say? He said, "If you eat the fruit, it'll make you like God," even though they were already made in the image and likeness of God. An elevation change was proposed. You'll get like him. You'll be on his level. That's Genesis 3:5. And then Genesis 11:4. It was those building the tower of Babel. They said, "Let us make a name for ourselves." And they literally built a tower to get them up into heaven. The most drastic example of exalting yourself: "We will build a tower into the heavens." Those are some biblical examples.

Well, what are everyday examples? I'll give you some, since you're asking. Here's an everyday example. The pastor or the believer who claims they're the only one who can hear God, and nobody can correct them. The business leader who refuses to see they're actually the problem with their system, and instead blames their employees. The coworker who does everything they can do to look good to the boss by putting everybody else down. The friend who cannot listen to a single story

without one-upping it and telling their own grander story in order to be seen as better. The spouse who refuses to look in the mirror and realize they're the main contributor to the lack of intimacy. The teenage son or daughter who will not listen to their parents because they just know better, with all their years of wisdom.

Let me help you. If you just thought of other people just now, you're doing it wrong. If me reading that list made you think of everybody but you, you're the problem. This is a hard thing. I've been waiting since Wednesday to get you with that one. Wait, wait, wait. He who exalts himself will be humbled. And look in the mirror, friends. Are we doing that?

What Does It Look Like to Humble Yourself?

We can also ask this very important question: What does it look like to humble yourself? We don't want to just say, don't do that, without giving the positive. Give the positive here. Rick Warren said this great quote, which is often misattributed to C.S. Lewis: "True humility is not thinking less of yourself. It's thinking of yourself less." Some have made humility to be humiliation, in that "I'm just terrible, I'm awful, I suck." They don't interview that guy after the game.

Do everything with excellence unto the Lord, and not unto men.

Colossians 3:23. Do everything with a full heart, as unto the Lord.

You know, I'm giving away my traps. I don't get to do this much anymore because I say it in public. But one of my biggest pet peeves, for a long time, was when I would compliment somebody in church and they'd say, "Oh, brother, it was all God. It was all the Lord. Praise God." And my response was always, "No, I wasn't that good. It was good. But if it was all God, it would have been better." I was trying to tell you, "Good job," but now you've made it a "God job," and only God can do a God job. So, you're wrong. Sorry, that's not what I meant. I don't get to say that to people anymore because I keep saying it here, and I miss my opportunity. No one says that to me anymore. That's false humility. You know you tried. You know you contributed. You know you put in the work.

It's like the story about the farmer whose friend comes up and says, "Wow, these fields are amazing. God has really blessed your farm." And the farmer goes, "Huh, you should have seen the farm when only God was here. You should have seen the field before I got here." That might be a little too far the other way, but it's a good example. You're a co-laborer with Christ. You're called to work with God and do things. And you're supposed to have mighty exploits, to do awesome stuff.

I'll give you a pride deterrent. This is a prayer of my life. I say, "Lord, do something so magnificent through my life that if I ever try to take the credit, everyone would laugh." That's my pride deterrent. Do it so big that if I were like, "Look what I did," everybody goes, "Ha ha. He thinks he did that. That was obviously the Lord. That was obviously not possible for him." Do something so big that everyone would laugh every time I try to take credit. You can steal that. Make it a prayer.

I'm going to read you a whole paragraph out of C.S. Lewis's Mere Christianity, because he talks about this, and I think he does a great job. He said, "Do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man, he will be what most people call humble nowadays. He will not be a sort of greasy, smarmy person who's always telling you that, of course, he is nobody. He won't always say, 'I'm nobody.' No. Probably all you will think about him is that he seemed a cheerful, intelligent chap who took a real interest in what you said to him. If you do dislike him, it will be because you feel a little envious of anyone who seems to enjoy life so easily. He will not be thinking about humility. He will not be thinking about himself at all." Good old Lewis. Preaching books in paragraphs. Every sentence.

Humility, in the Greek here, means to make or become low. To humble is to make or become low, to show humility or true lowliness. Helps Word-studies says, with the believer, this happens by being fully dependent upon the Lord, dismissing reliance upon self and self-government, and emptying yourself of carnal ego. This exalts the Lord as our all in all and prompts the gift of his fullness in us.

NOBODY DID IT LIKE JESUS

So where do we see this in Scripture? Paul humbled himself. Yes, he was one of those. Peter, John, all of them. But Jesus is the example, friends. Nobody did it like Jesus. We're going to read Philippians 2:3-11. This is so clear. This is Paul speaking of Christ. He says,

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by 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 the point of death, even death on a cross.

Now pause for a moment with me. Think about the fact that God humbled himself to even wear that meat blanket you're wearing right now. To put on human flesh. What kind of humility does it take for a creator to step into the created form? Jesus was never created. He actively limited himself the entire time he was in this body. Sovereignly, spectacularly, always God, and yet he humbled himself to the human experience. Think about that for the next 20 years.

Not only that, he said, with this body, I'm going to serve everybody. He put a towel around his waist and washed his disciples' feet. It says,

Knowing that he had come from God and all things were under his authority, he took a towel and began to wash his disciples' feet.

John 13. What? Knowing that he had come from God, and was returning, and all things were under his authority, he took the dirtiest job possible. Amazing. And then he dies for us at our own hand. The humility of that. Now, was he lacking greatness at any point? Was it his greatness that made it humility? Yes. And it goes on in Philippians 2. It says,

Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Now, let me help you. We have a high Christology around here, all right? I know this is going out on Facebook, so I don't want anybody mistaking me to think that we interpret that to say Jesus wasn't great before that. He didn't have a name before that. No. It's just that the name he gave him was Yeshua HaMashiach. Jesus the Christ, born of a virgin in Nazareth, okay? The name, the understanding, the recognition. That's what Jesus got by overcoming death, hell, and the grave: the

recognition by name from the human race. He has always been highly exalted. Come on, somebody. He's always been the name that's above every other name. We just didn't always know his name. Jesus is God, amen? Amen. All right, that was decent. Jesus is God, amen?

Jesus is the ultimate example of one who humbled himself and then was exalted. The ultimate example. He was fully dependent upon Father God the whole time he lived. He dismissed reliance upon himself. He even prayed, and in our 90 days this morning, the reading was, "Not my will, but yours, Lord." He even said, "I don't want to make all the decisions. I want to consult with the Father." He didn't rely on himself completely. He didn't yield to any carnal, egotistical temptations. You understand Jesus was tempted in every way you are? Every way common to man. He was tempted to be carnal in his thoughts, and he refused it. That's what makes it powerful. He refused it.

I'm in trouble with what I'm about to say, if I say it. Do it. Holy Ghost. Okay, don't. I like that. I feel better. Oh no, he said, "Not yet." Hold on, okay. We'll see if it comes back up. That'll be the Lord, because I'm going to move on. He didn't yield to the carnal, egotistical temptations that the world would put on him and puts on us. He gave glory to God in heaven by making him his all in all, and therefore God has highly exalted him by bestowing on him a name that we all know, and we can say at the name of Jesus [inaudible]. Amen? Ah, I don't want to say it. I was going to say, Jesus absolutely had the capacity to sin. Absolutely. He chose every single moment of every single day not to... Some would say I'm lowering our Christology by saying such things. Some believe that he's God the Son, so he didn't have capacity. That's out there, friends. Listen, I'm just paying attention to the theological landscape so you don't have to, all right? There are two things pulling right now. There are people saying Jesus isn't God. And there are people saying he didn't really have all the temptations of man. He had temptations, but as the God-man, he wasn't fully, in the moment, where we are. He is. He can sympathize with you. We don't have a high priest who can't sympathize with us in our weakness. The book of Hebrews says he knows what it feels like to want to be the best in the room. He knows that pull, that temptation. Come on. Got away with it, huh? Well, the keyboard warriors might be upset, but that's okay.

I'm trying to say, we need to receive courage from the example of Jesus. We don't need to put ourselves at the top of the pecking order. We don't need to make sure we're up there. We don't need to fear being left behind because we're not being noticed right now by others. Come on, somebody. We don't need to position ourselves in the front of the line, concerned that we'll never be called up to the front.

LET GOD DO THE EXALT THING WHILE WE INTENTIONALLY TAKE THE LOW PLACE

We need to let God do the exalt thing while we intentionally take the low place. We need to courageously throw off worldly ideas of success and become those who simply wash the feet of everyone around us. Listen, I'm washing your feet right now. This is the way I wash feet. I teach, okay? Everyone has their own role. This doesn't make me more holy or spiritual than you. You see the disagreement you just felt? Did you feel that? Anybody else paying attention? Some of y'all think that this job is holier than a plumber. Let the plumber [inaudible] deliverance on homes, okay? Let the plumber clear the way. Come on, somebody. I love that example, because it's probably the most spiritual thing that happens in my house, you know what I mean? Just kidding. Let them do that. Don't send them on a mission trip to Africa because that's more holy. Let them walk in their God-given assignment.

There's this thing, a spiritual elitism that's still going on. I'm fighting it right now. I fight it all the time. I fight it by sitting down here. At first, I said, I need to sit on the floor or something, because some of y'all are still intimidated by me. Somebody else is still scared to ask me that question. It comes out years later. Two or three years in, inevitably someone who started here eventually says, "Yeah, I was really intimidated by you at first." And I'm like, "Why? What did I do?" And I've come to realize, it's not me. It's you. Thank you. And it's that elitist paradigm that you've received from the system of the world. It's infiltrated the church so deeply you don't even know it's there. And there are people in my position who lord over those they lead and use this as a bully pulpit. I understand that. So I'm not faulting you for having that paradigm. I'm saying, let's break it already. I'm your brother. You're my sister, you're my brother. We're all family here. I have a role ordained by God. I am going to do it with my full heart. I'm going to do it well. But that does not make me any better or holier or more spiritual than any of y'all.

Let's see, there's still pushback. I feel that. Like, "Nah." But no, you're wrong about that. You're wrong. The Lord has called each one of us to be every joint that supplies the body. You have to do your part. Just do what God calls you to do. Do it with a full heart and unto the Lord, not unto people. Amen. We need to courageously do this. This will attract heaven, friends. This is where God pours out his blessing. That does not mean we'll always get the promotion or win the popularity contest. All right? I'm very unpopular with plenty of people. Very. It's not about winning in that way.

It does mean our soul's delight will be in him, no matter our societal elevation. That's the context. He's saying the Pharisees put themselves over you. They made themselves better. It's a societal elevation that we're fighting right now. Your soul's delight can be in him, no matter where you are in the societal spectrum.

Courageous humility anchors the delight of your soul in the Father who sees in secret. That's what he does. Courageous humility anchors the delight of your soul in the Father who sees in secret. Because I know what God thinks about me. And I know what I think about me. And that's enough. I don't care what you think about me. You know, spiritual leaders, pastors, are tormented every night. We're like, "What do they think? What do they think?" I don't have that problem. I have other problems. But that one, I don't have. And I fall asleep thinking, "Oh, I'm a watchman over these people's souls. I will be held to account for every single person under my care. What are they doing? Help me help them." Boy, that's how I fall asleep.

True humility, when done well and done right, does lead to godly exaltation. Self-exaltation leads to being humbled. You don't want that. Humble yourself before God humbles you, bro. It's like, check yourself before you wreck yourself. You don't want that. You do not want God to humble you. True humility leads to God looking to exalt you.

Trouble With Actually Receiving the Exaltation After the Humility

I wonder if we have trouble with actually receiving the exaltation after the humility. I wonder if we have that moment where we were truly humble, but then someone tries to exalt us, God is trying to exalt us through somebody or whatever, and we start to refuse it. I've done that before. I have a story to tell you.

Many of you know To Gather Pentecost. I think we've been a part of it. Pastor Gio and Destiny Munoz received the word from the Lord to do that. Gio calls me. I'm in. And we did the first year outside of Overflow Church. How many of you were there? Amazing. We broke Bell Shoals. Fifteen hundred people showed up, and thirty-three different congregations were represented. We thought there'd be five, maybe. And it was crazy. There were protesters. First year. With no marketing. I was like, how did you hear about that? But I was so pleased. I'm like, "They're mad at us. Yay. We did it."

Anyway, after year one, year two came around, and all of a sudden everybody wants to do it again. And we got to go to a stadium. How many remember Steinbrenner? Yeah, bro. We were in the sun, in multiple ways. Burning for the Lord. On fire for Jesus. Roasting, not with the fires of hell, but the love of God was blazing on our foreheads. Anyway, tongues of fire, walking out. That was just sunburn right here. [inaudible].

Anyway, we're planning that event and we're leading up to it, and I told Gio and Jesse, "Listen, I'm not taking a microphone. I'm here to serve the vision. I'm here to submit to you all. I'm going to make this event go. I'm the stage manager. I've got plenty to do. I don't want [inaudible]. Don't give me that." But then we got closer, and they said, "No, you're going to pray. You're going to start it off with a Jesus. You're going to do the thing." And I said, "No, I'm not doing that." And they said, "What do you mean?" I said, "I'm just here to serve. I'm running the thing. I'm just serving it. I don't want that. I'm not doing that." And it was Destiny. She's a prophet. She ended up having to say, and I don't have her exact words, this is a paraphrase, she ended up saying something like, "If it's true you're submitted to us, then aren't you in rebellion right now?" I was like... is this what the bears just felt like? "Aren't you in rebellion by refusing what we're asking you to do?" I repented. I said, "I repent," and I apologized. And I said, "Whatever you want me to do, I'll do it. Whatever you want. I'll do it, on and off the stage."

Now, honestly, that took courage. I had to admit I was wrong. Number one, not easy to do. I grew up Southern Baptist, so my pastors were always saying, "I've been wrong before, but I've never struggled with doubt." That's how I grew up. I'm like, why doubt yourself? No, no. So I admitted I was wrong. I also had to trust someone else to know what God wanted me to do. I had to lay aside my own conviction and say, "You know what? I'm saying I'm following you, so I'm listening to you, so it would dictate that God would tell you what I need to do, even though I feel convicted otherwise." Mental courage. I don't know if that would take courage for you, but it took courage for me.

The Bible Is Emphatic About This Paradigm

The Bible is emphatic about this paradigm of what happens. Proverbs 15:33:

The fear of the Lord is instruction and wisdom, and humility comes before honor.

There's an order to it. Proverbs 18:12:

Before destruction a man's heart is haughty, prideful, but humility comes before honor.

Proverbs 22:4:

The reward for humility and the fear of the Lord is riches and honor and life.

In the New Testament, James 4:10:

Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

First Peter 5:5-6:

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.

It's very rare for the Bible to be this repetitious and explicit about something, friends. We should not be against exaltation. But we should fiercely refuse self-exaltation. I tripped over that in the first gathering too. Let's try it again. We should not be against exaltation, but we should fiercely refuse self-exaltation. Fiercely refuse it. When we are selfless and even forgettable of ourselves, God can trust us to be exalted and honored as an example to follow. I'll put it this way: sincere selflessness is rewarded by God in this life and the next. Insincere selflessness is rewarded and liked by no one. Insincere selflessness. Nobody likes that, and everybody can smell it. It's kind of like you're the last person to know you need a mint, but your mouth is the closest mouth to your nose. Your nose is the closest nose to your mouth, and somehow everybody else finds out before you do. It's like, my nose is right there. How did you know? What's happening here? It's like that.

HOW DO WE STEP INTO COURAGEOUS HUMILITY?

So how do we step into courageous humility? Three things, and I'm going to close. Sorry, taking a couple extra minutes here. Three things. How do we do this?

Number one, trust God to be your source in all things. Now, that sounds like a giving message, but it's a humility message. Because you need to trust God to be your source of identity. From your identity to your bank account, everything in between, friends. We have to find our security in Jesus, not in ourselves, not in our track record, not in our gifts, not in our skills. It has to be God. We put our trust in him for our whole selves, our whole being. Does that make sense?

Number two, we need to fully rely on the Holy Spirit to give you grace and power to walk all this out. You can't do that without the Holy Ghost. People say you need the Holy Ghost, speaking in tongues or whatever, to get into heaven. I'm like, I need the Holy Ghost to go to Walmart. Lord, have mercy. Alan, we found out last week, was giving up on Walmart. We're going to pray for him to receive the Holy Spirit today. I'm just kidding. I get it, bro. I understand. You need God to empower courageous humility, or else it ain't going to happen, friend. You cannot strive your way there. You can't drum it up. You have to ask God, "Please, birth this in me." Good.

Number three, you need to take risks to serve your fellow men in ways that nobody will ever recognize you for. Intentionally serve people who cannot help you, and you won't be recognized for it. About 18 years ago, I had this realization that everybody I'm helping can help me. And probably will. And I thought, I need to change that. I need to find some people that I should help who can't help me. And so I intentionally started doing that. I'm not going to tell you what that is, because that ruins number three, you know what I mean? Anyway. Can you give anonymously? You need to help people secretly. Find a way to do it in secret. Someone gave my family money this week through a cashier's check. It just ended up on my desk. It was secret. Somebody, probably one of y'all, thank you, God, for you. We needed it. Very, very thankful. Help people secretly.

Take the lowest place. Take the lowest place possible. Why? In order to lift others up. Get underneath somebody and lift. If you can't answer this question, I'm not sure you're walking in humility: Who are you serving? If there aren't names and faces, you may not be low enough.

Let others tell you what God is saying for you. Let others tell you, "This is what the Lord wants for you," and try it. Actually go, "Okay, I don't know it all. I don't hear it all. I'm going to take a risk and believe them." That's the greatest humility.

A person with courageous humility may very well be trusted by God with greatness. An entrepreneur of courageous humility may very well be trusted with the fruits of an incredible, thriving business. A parent marked by courageous humility may be used by the Lord to shift generational lines. Amen. It's true. And this is for all of us. One walking in courageous humility can have success without success having them, because God is their source in all things. Amen.

So, Lord, help us. We need you to do it. You need him? Ask him. Help me. We need you to do this. We trust you to do this. In Jesus' name, amen.

Would you stand right now? Deanna, in the gathering for us. Give it up for Deanna real good. Better than that.

Transcript of a message by Caleb Hyers delivered at The Resting Place Apostolic Family | Tampa Bay, FL | trpfamily.org