

JESUS: I AM THE TEACHER AND THE LORD

Jesus "I AM" (15)

Banska Bystrica, 28 December 2014

John 13:1-17 Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. ² During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, ³ Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, ⁴ rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. ⁵ Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. ⁶ He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" ⁷ Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." ⁸ Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." ⁹ Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" ¹⁰ Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet,¹ but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." ¹¹ For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean." ¹² When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, he said to them, "Do you understand what I have done to you? ¹³ You call me **Teacher and Lord, and** you are right, for so I am. ¹⁴ If I then, your **Lord and Teacher**, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. ¹⁵ For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. ¹⁶ Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant¹ is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷ If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.

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0. INTRODUCTION: ON HUMILITY

The way of understanding humility differs from person to person. Do I understand humility in its Biblical meaning?

0.1. THE CONTEXT

- “Washing guests’ feet was a job for a household servant to carry out when guests arrived. But Jesus wrapped a towel around his waist, as the lowliest slave would do, and washed and dried his disciples’ feet.” (*Life Application Bible*)

0.2. THE TEACHER & THE LORD

Jesus introduces Himself as a teacher and the Lord.

We associate “teacher” with the school environment, but Jesus did not only teach, but He set an example and empowered His students to follow this example. When they didn’t have ability to do something He did it in their place.

The term “Lord” refers to the ultimate God.

Combination of the two terms in our everyday life: (see the table)

- **Jn 13:13** ‘μεις φωνειτε με· ο διδασκαλος, και· ο κυριος, και καλωσ λεγετε· ειμι γαρ.

• coach	• umpire
• teacher	• examiner
• steward	• owner
• doer	• judge

0.3. HUMILITY – A VIRTUE?

Jesus says that all power has been given to Him. So we ask – What is He going to do with that power? Shockingly, He does what the last slave would have to do.

HUMILITY: the others are more important, forgetting about oneself, not focusing on whether or not one is humble or not

Do you want to be humble? Stop thinking about what you want.

- ταπεινός - (1) lying low, (2) brought down, humbled, (3) downcast, submissive, mean, base, abject, (4) poor, low,
- “Humility has become an unpopular, even forgotten, virtue in contemporary Western culture.”¹
- “...humility, thrift and conscientiousness could appear in no Greek list of the virtues; the other is to stress once more the alternative interpretations of one and the same virtue which were possible. Consider not only honor and justice, but the virtue whose name is sophrosune. In origin it is an aristocratic virtue. It is the virtue of the man who could but does not abuse his power.”² Hume condemns humility as useless...
- “*Hubris* is clearly connected with excess and sometimes occurs in circumstances in which a mortal forgets the limitations of his status and seeks to compete with or even equal the gods; that is the reason why the gods are particularly interested in punishing hubristic attitudes.”³
- If humility were put up as an ideal it would serve only to increase pride. Humility is not an ideal, it is the unconscious result of the life being rightly related to God and centred in Him.⁴
- And therefore a meek knowing of oneself is a surer way to God than is the searching for highness of cunning. (Humilis tui cognitio certior via est ad Deum, quam profundae scientiae inquisitio.)⁵

¹ RUDDY, D. W. *A Christological Approach to Virtue: Augustine and Humility*, Boston College : 2001. p. v.

² MACINTYRE, A. *After Virtue*, p. 136.

³ *Mnemosyne* 61 (2008) 451-458

⁴ CHAMBERS, O. *Biblical psychology*.

⁵ KEMPIS *De imitatione* 1.3.

0.4. HUMILITY IN THE BIBLE

- **Mt 5:3** **Blessed are** the poor in spirit (πτωχοὶ τῷ πνεύματι), for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ...**Mt 5:5** "**Blessed are** the meek (οἱ πραεῖς), for they shall inherit the earth.
- **James 4:6** "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble."
- **Mt 18:4** ...whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.
- **Isa 57:15** For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, With him *who* has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones.
- **Phil 2:3** Do nothing from rivalry (ἐριθείαν) or conceit (κενοδοξίαν), but in humility **count others more significant** than yourselves (τῇ ταπεινοφροσύνῃ ἀλλήλους ἡγούμενοι ὑπερέχοντας ἑαυτῶν,) ... the interests of others ...**Phil 2:5** Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus...
- **1Cor 4:7** For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

1. THE COMMANDMENT OF JESUS

- ¹⁴ If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet.

1.1. THE WASHING OF THE FEET

- Should it be a regular part of the Lord's Supper?
- It was practical/necessary
- It was a metaphor → discussion with Peter
- Where does your brother/sister have his/her "dirt" you can wash without repulsion and in love?
- → the test of *judgmental* attitudes...

1.2. THE LOWLIEST SERVICE

- From the *Teacher*: the motivation to the action
- From the *Lord*: the importance of the action
- In love, without self-consciousness or theatrical effects ... willingly, without outward or inward compulsion
- Great and important acts of service are dangerous in the sense they focus attention on the one who performs them → IDOLATRY – humility works completely focused on the loved one who is being served...

2. HOW THE TEACHER TEACHES IT

- WWDJ? → Remember the metaphor of "the vine"

2.1. BY GIVING AN EXAMPLE

- ¹⁵ For I have given you an example (ὑπόδειγμα γὰρ ἔδωκα ὑμῖν)
- **Mt 11:28-30** Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart (ὅτι πραῦς εἰμι καὶ ταπεινὸς τῇ καρδίᾳ), and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

2.2. BY GIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

- Your new nature – as strong as your love for Jesus
- The fruit of the Spirit

3. WHY THE LORD REQUIRES IT

- According to Augustine, all Christian virtues are rooted in this foundational Christian attribute revealed in Jesus Christ.⁶
- The *one* thing that the Lord will ask → did you visit the suffering ones → διακονία
- Paul called his ministry διακονία - (**Rom 11:13** εἰμι ἐγὼ ἔθνῶν ἀπόστολος, τὴν διακονίαν μου δοξάζω,)

Serving the others NOT for the sake of good deeds but because of unselfish, self-forgetting love.

3.1. ABILITY TO RECEIVE (→ FAITH)

- the condition of grace
- **Romans 10:3 (Rom 9:31** Israel) ...being ignorant of the righteousness that comes from God, and seeking **to** establish their own, they did not submit to (οὐχ ὑπετάγησαν) God's righteousness.

3.2. ABILITY TO SUBMIT (→ OBEDIENCE)

- the condition of victory and growth
- **James 4:7** **Submit** (ὑποτάγητε) yourselves therefore **to** God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

3.3. ABILITY TO BE IN UNITY

- the condition of unity
- **1 Peter 5:5** Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility (ταπεινοφροσύνην ἐγκομβώσασθε) toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."
- **Heb 13:17** Obey your leaders and **submit to** them (ὑπέικετε), for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have **to** give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage **to** you.

4. TO REMEMBER

- To serve others in humility means to forget about self and do out of love for Jesus and those who are served
- Jesus not only gives an example but gives the Spirit that brings the attitude of loving submission to God the Father and ability of genuine service to others.
- Jesus as the Lord and Judge made humble service the hallmark of discipleship by doing the lowliest service himself.

⁶ RUDDY, D. W. *A Christological Approach to Virtue: Augustine and Humility*, p. v.