

Dear members and friends of SEC,

A few Sunday mornings ago we looked at Luke 14:11: 'For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.'

What a great subject this is! There is something in humility that brings us to the very centre of godliness, of holiness, to the very heart of our Saviour himself. There is something in dealing with this subject of humility that necessarily elevates us far above the mere 'morality', which the world can talk about, and takes us into the realm of true spirituality, which only the believer can know. Bishop JC Ryle wrote: 'Humility may well be called the queen of the Christian graces'. Augustine of Hippo was once asked what he deemed the three greatest virtues. He replied at once: "Humility, humility, and then humility."

Because humility is a Christian grace, a spiritual attitude of the heart, the world can never understand it. The words 'humble' and 'humility' are precious to the believer but desperately misunderstood by the world, which treats them with mockery and scorn. We should not be surprised because the world sets the wrong price on everything. We live in a world where the value of everything has been reversed from the order in which God created it – as if someone had gone into a department store overnight and swapped all the price tags round.

The basic idea in humility is of being low. Humility is essentially lowliness, selflessness, meekness. It is the opposite of arrogance, pride and self-importance. To be humble is to have an accurate and Biblical knowledge of our own heart. If we are true learners in the school of Jesus Christ, we will affirm with Paul that we are 'the chief of sinners', and will agree with Job who says 'Behold, I am vile'. A proud person is a shallow person who has never examined his own heart and, in particular, has never done so in the light of what the Bible says.

Humility does what is right, and kind, and obedient, and doesn't look to be noticed by anyone. Humility never declares itself. Humility cannot ask – it is contrary to its very nature to ask – does anyone notice how humble I am? Humility is the condition of soul in which a man recognises his utter and complete need of God's grace; more than that, true humility is a condition of soul that can only come about through God's grace. It takes us to the lowest place, where Christ went, so that we may be exalted to the highest place, where Christ now is.

Your brother in the Lord,

Paul Yeulett

The friend who attends the bridegroom

waits and listens for him, and is full of joy

when he hears the bridegroom's voice.

That joy is mine, and it is now complete.

He must become greater;

I must become less.

John 3:30

