



## Path of humility

### Significance

John the Baptist languishes in prison. He sees himself as a failure. *After all my efforts pointing to a great ministry, is my cousin Jesus really the Messiah? Must my preaching end in a whimper, with little to show for it?* Discouragement, despondency, depression—these can be a problem. But the solution does not lie in egotism, vanity, or confidence in ourselves. We live on a pathway between two traps—the dungeon of despair and the pit of pride. What's our solution? Jesus! Always Jesus. "I tell you," responds Jesus, "no one more important than John has ever been born. But the least important person in God's kingdom is more important than John is." Luke 7:28 (NIRV). Think about this, especially the second part. Whether in a prison or a palace, see yourself as Jesus sees you—absolutely significant in him!

### Sacrifice

How's your pride doing lately? Pretty good? Pride was the original sin. It will be the final sin. And it's our primary sin along our way. Look at the news even just for this day—observe the litany of pride and its awful effects on our world. Nebuchadnezzar, Napoleon, Stalin, Hitler, Idi Amin—these and many more show that at its extreme, pride demented, demonised and destroys. Sadly, church history carries its own record of damaging pride. How is it for you? Are you learning the exquisite beauty of humility? Adoring the Creator. Confessing your failings. Preferring others. Sacrificing self. Identifying with people who suffer. Finding joy in service. Seeking and following God's Spirit. The darker the night, the brighter a light. More than ever, will you let the humility of Jesus shine through you?

### Strength

Jesus explains to his followers that before heavenly dominion, there must be personal death. He warns his disciples they will all run away in his hour of need. "No way!" protests Peter. "You're not going to suffer a terrible fate. And even if you do, I will never leave you!" Peter is us; we are Peter. We believe in our strength and deny our weakness. This is our chief sickness individually, and together as a church. What can we do? Hear these words from God: "My grace is all you need. My power is strongest when you are weak." Paul's response: "So I am very happy to brag about how weak I am. Then Christ's power can rest on me." 2 Corinthians 12:9 (NIRV). Know our weakness; accept Christ's strength. This is the solution the world laughs at and rejects. But it's the humility of spirit that wins ultimate battles.

## Silence

“Isn’t this the great Babylon I have built? ... I used my mighty power to build it. It shows how glorious my majesty is.” Pride of accomplishment plunges an ancient king into seven years of dementia. Following that trauma, how different his tune! “Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, give praise and honor and glory to the King of heaven.... He is able to bring down those who live proudly.” Daniel 4:37 (NIRV). Pride is not always obvious. “Let me tell you how much God has blessed us.” “Have you heard about the amazing things God is doing in our church?” Often, this is nothing more than the pride of humanity disguised in the language of God. Religious pride is the worst pride—the kind that contributed to putting Christ on the Cross. God’s most potent blessings speak for themselves. When they do, we must not interrupt.

## Seeking

Before his transformation at Pentecost, Peter’s mistakes are devastating. Walking on water—gotta admire that. But then, with eyes off Jesus, his spike of exhilaration turns to a plunge of fear, and sinks him under the waves. Matthew 14:22–33. Always distrust spiritual exhilaration. “Look what God has done through me! Miracles all over the place! Amazing.” When miracles take place for you or through you, be amazed and be thankful, but never put eyes on yourself. When we seek Jesus for his blessings and miracles, we go under. *Jesus is The Blessing*. We must seek Jesus for himself, not merely for what he might do for us. John the Baptist was decapitated in a dungeon. Peter, it appears, was crucified upside-down. These saints lived and died exulting in one glorious, solitary Blessing—Jesus alone.

## Status

We come back to an astonishing statement by Jesus. His cousin John languishes in prison. “I tell you,” says Jesus, “no one more important than John has ever been born.” Luke 7:28 (NIRV). This is an assessment in the context of Earth. In Jesus’ mind, the disheartened John—going through suffering and facing death—is greater than Abraham, Moses, Elijah or David. Then there’s a second declaration. “*But the least important person in God’s kingdom is more important than John is.*” This is an assessment in the context of Heaven. Think about ordinary, humble believers in Christ. Their names may be unknown or forgotten by the church and the world. But, these are the ones who are *supremely* elevated and treasured in the heart of Almighty God. Let this fact change your day, and your life!