

CHARITY & ITS FRUITS

A Study of 1 Corinthians 13 based on the sermons of Jonathan Edwards

Sermon 6

“Love does not...boast; it is not arrogant or rude.”

1 Corinthians 13:4b-5a

Introduction

“The Apostle in the words last insisted on has declared how contrary charity was to a spirit of envy; and now he declares how contrary it is to that which especially _____ men to envy others that honor or prosperity which they possess...When men have obtained prosperity or are advanced, and others observe that they are proud of it, are puffed up, and vaunt themselves in it, this tends to provoke envy and make others uneasy as the sight of their prosperity, and to grudge it to them...But the Apostle shows how Christian love tends to men’s behaving suitably and amiably in every condition. If men are below others, it disposes them not to envy those that are above them; and if they are above others, it disposes them not to be proud of their superiority.” (139-140)

Doctrine—“A Christian spirit is a humble spirit .”

“Humility may be defined to be a sense of our own comparative _____, with a disposition to a behavior answerable thereto...partly in the sense they have of themselves, and partly in the disposition they have to a behavior answerable to that sense.” (140)

“But humility is an excellency proper to all created intelligent beings, for they are all infinitely mean and _____ before God, and most of them mean in comparison with some of their fellow creatures...It does primarily consist in a sense of his own meanness as compared with God or a sense of the infinite distance between God and us. We are little, despicable creatures, and mean worms of the dust, as nothing and less than nothing before God...there is no true humility without a sense of their meanness before God.” (142)

“For man is not only a mean creature in comparison with God, but he is very mean compared with multitudes of creatures of superior rank...He who has a right sense of himself with respect to God will open his eyes to see himself aright in all respects. If a person sees how he stands with respect to the first Being, the Head of all beings, it will tend greatly to help him to a just apprehension of the place in which he stands among His creatures. He who does not know the first Being and the Fountain of being _____ know anything aright.” (143)

Edwards then explains how fallen man is to be humble before God for both natural and moral reasons. The natural reasons for humility are based on God’s perfections verses our imperfections (knowledge, wisdom, greatness, power, etc.). The moral reasons have to do with man’s sinfulness compared with God’s holiness. Edwards writes, “Fallen man is infinitely different from God in both of these respects; both as _____ and as filthy.” (144)

“And both together in a sense of our own littleness, and also as sense of our own moral vileness before God, are implied in that poverty of spirit which the Scripture speaks of in Matthew 5:3...They who do not know God never can have any right knowledge of _____ and their own meanness and unworthiness.” (145)

“There can be no true humility in any without the creature’s seeing his distance from God, not only with respect to greatness but also loveliness. The angels and saints in heaven see both. They see not only how much greater God is than they, but how much more lovely He is than they.” (146)

Edwards then discusses how humility before God works itself out in four ways.

First. “Humility disposes a person heartily and freely to acknowledge his own meanness before God...It is the disposition of the humble soul to lie _____ before God, to humble himself in the dust in His presence.” (147)

Second. “Humility disposes a person to be _____ of himself, and depend on God.” (147)

Third. “He is disposed to _____ all glory of the good he has or does, and give it to God.” (147)

Fourth. “It is the disposition of an humble person wholly to _____ himself to God...He is disposed to be subject to the commands and laws of God...For by seeing his meanness and unworthiness, he is sensible that afflictive dispensations are what he deserves, and that mean circumstances are good enough for him.” (147-148)

Edwards then shows seven ways that humility is seen amongst other men.

First. “It tends to prevent an aspiring and ambitious behavior among men...an humble spirit is content with such a situation among men as God is pleased to allot him, and is not _____ of honor.” (148)

Second. “It tends to prevent an ostentatious behavior...The humble person, if he has greater natural abilities than others, does not appear forward to show his abilities; he is not careful that others may know how much more he knows than others...He does not affect to be esteemed of men as an eminent saint and a favorite of heaven. It is a small matter with him what _____ think of him.” (148)

Third. “Humility tends to prevent an assuming behavior...His behavior does not carry that face with it that he is the _____ man there, that he is the person to whom the chief regard should be shown.” (149)

Fourth. “Humility tends to prevent a scornful behavior. Treating others with scorn and contempt is the _____ manifestation of pride towards men.” (149)

Fifth. “Humility will tend to prevent a willful behavior among men. They who are under the influence of a humble spirit will not set up their _____ will either in public or private affairs, and be stiff and inflexible...” (150)

Sixth. “Humility will tend to prevent a leveling behavior. They who are under the influence of a humble spirit will not be opposite to giving to others the honor which is _____ them. (150)

Seventh. “Humility tends to prevent a self-justifying behavior...It is _____ that makes men so exceedingly backward, when they have fallen into a fault, to confess it. It makes them think it is to their shame.” (151)

Edwards then shows that the Christian love is a humble love. “A spirit of divine love implies and tends to humility...True _____ love is an humble love.” (151)

“A sense of the _____ of God is peculiarly that discovery of God which makes humility. A sense or discovery of God’s greatness without His loveliness will not do it...The knowledge of God is the foundation of all grace. But the knowledge of God or sense of Him which is the essential thing, the very thing which works humility in the heart, is a sense of His loveliness, or seeing how infinitely God is above us in loveliness. Merely having a sense that God is infinitely above us, and that there is an infinite distance between Him and us in greatness, will not work humility; it will signify nothing towards making the heart humble, unless we are sensible there is an infinite distance between Him and us in respect to His loveliness.” (152)

“The devils and damned spirits have a great sense of God’s being infinitely above them in _____; but yet have no humility, because they do not see how He is above them in loveliness.” (153)

“It is enmity against God which makes men’s hearts so opposite to bow to God...Men are willing to honor those for whom they have a great _____.” (154)

“Love to God tends to an abhorrence of sin against God, and so to our being humbled before Him for it. So much as anything is loved, so much will its contrary be _____; therefore so much as anyone loves God, so much will they have an abhorrence of sin against God; and having an abhorrence of sin against God will tend to our abhorring ourselves for it, and so humbling ourselves for it before God.” (155)

“The gospel leads us to love God as an infinitely condescending God. The gospel above all things in the world holds forth the exceeding condescension of God...For there is no disposition of the creature more adapted to the condescension of the Creator than humility...And humility is the nearest and most proper _____ to the condescension of God that can be in a creature.” (156-157)

“The gospel leads us to love Christ, as an humble person. Christ is one who is God-man, and so has not only condescension which is a _____ perfection, but also humility which is a creaturely excellence...If our

Lord and Head be humble, and we love Him as such, certainly it becomes us who are His disciples and servants to be so; for surely it does not become the servant to be prouder or less abased than his Master.” (156)

“The gospel leads us to love Christ as a crucified Savior, as a Savior and Lord who suffered the greatest of ignominies, was put in the most ignominious death, though He was the Lord of glory. This in many ways teaches His followers humility, and leads them to an humble love of Christ. For by God’s sending His Son into the world to suffer such an ignominious death, He did as it were pour contempt on all that _____ glory which men are wont to be proud of, in that He gave His Son, the Head of all elect men, to appear in circumstances so far from earthly glory, circumstances of the greatest earthly ignominy... Christ our Lord and Master and Head showed His contempt of earthly glory, and those things upon which men pride themselves. If we therefore behave ourselves as the followers of a crucified Jesus we shall walk humbly before God and men all the days of our lives.” (157)

“The gospel yet further tends to lead us to humble exercises of love as it leads us to love Christ as one that was _____ for our sins... For Christ being crucified for our sins is the greatest testimony of God against our sins that ever was. It shows more of God’s abhorrence of our sins than any other dispensation of God. God so abhorred our sins that He would have them so terribly punished, and His wrath so exerted against them, even when imputed to His own Son... the excellency of Christ and the love of Christ appear more in that act, His yielding Himself to be crucified for us, than in any other act.” (157)

Application-Edwards gives three points of application: instruction, self-examination, and exhortation

Instruction. “This may show us the _____ of the Christian spirit... how true Christians are more excellent than other men.” (158)

Self-examination. “His soul, which is lifted up, is _____ upright in him (Hab. 2:4).” (158)

Exhortation. Edwards first addresses _____ men and says, “Let them be hence exhorted to seek after the grace of God... Though you may not seem to carry yourself very proudly among men, yet you are lifting up yourself against God in refusing to submit your reason to God’s word. And in doing this, you are disregarding or defying God’s sovereignty, and daring to contend with your Maker, though He dreadfully threatens those who do this.” (158)

Then Edwards addresses all men, “Let all be exhorted earnestly to seek much of an humble spirit, and to endeavor to be humble in all their behavior toward God and men... _____ God. Confess your nothingness and ill-deserts before Him. Distrust yourself. Rely on God. Renounce all glory except from Him. Yield yourself heartily to His will and service. Avoid an aspiring, ambitious, ostentatious, assuming, arrogant, scornful, stubborn, willful, leveling, self-justifying behavior; and strive for more and more of the humble spirit that Christ manifested while He was on earth... Earnestly seek, then, and diligently and prayerfully cherish an humble spirit, and God shall walk with you here below, and when a few days have passed, He will receive you in the honors bestowed on His people at Christ’s right hand.” (159)