



The conflict



of cultures



The kingdoms of the world



The kingdom of God



The conflict of cultures

We live with a conflict of cultures

Human culture comes from the world made in the image of man according to his values and principles. The image man has made for himself is founded on pride as men determine to live for themselves.

The kingdom of God is founded on the values of God based on humility in submission to the sovereignty of God. The sovereign authority of God crosses out all worldly kingdoms so that all things are under the control of God and done for His glory. Heavenly Kingdom culture values the dominion and authority of God above all things. The Son of God came as a humble servant to restore the kingdom of God on earth.

The world with its pride is in conflict with the kingdom of God. The culture of men is designed to take the place of God's kingdom. The pride of man's life is the beginning of all that displeases God. Pride has replaced

humility in mankind that wants to be self determining. Mankind values the pride of self more than valuing God as the first thing in all life.

Every aspect of life with man at the centre of his world is in direct opposition to the truth that without humility we won't see God. To further the deception of the supremacy of pride, every aspect of life in the kingdom of God has been counterfeited and replaced by the culture of men.

Therefore Christians are to live in the world but not be part of the world. We are in the world for our training in righteousness. This holy training calls on us to refuse to please pride as we live in dependence on God according to His divine nature. It must be stated that we have to seek first the kingdom of God; we need to live by the values and principles of the kingdom.

The great lesson for those who live in dependence on God in His kingdom is humility, which is the opposite attitude of the

world of pride. Learning humility requires putting away all words and deeds that have any aspect of self assertion. Humility knows we are nothing without God being God.

Humility means having God at the centre of all things; it is only then we accept God has to be God in every aspect of this life. For God is ultimately in control of all things, the good, and the bad. God uses all things to teach us a culture of humility so we can be transformed into the image of Christ who was the exact representation of the humility of God.

Kingdom culture is not the natural way of earthly men. We only have the capacity to live according to kingdom culture if we have died with Christ to the world, and being reborn with the divine nature of Christ. When we have died with Him, Christ gives us His life and His indwelling Spirit so we can follow His example and humble ourselves before God and man. By following the lead of the Spirit we are able to put to death that which is still earthly and prideful.

With the chaos caused by pride and self will is always seen before us, we can see there are many ways to identify the culture of the pride of men. Self assertion is rebellious unbelief. Demandingness is self idolatry. Materialism is denying God exists. Complaining is judging God to be an inadequate failure. Anger is living with the delusion that we as imperfect creatures have the right to take God's place and judge others.

Kingdom life is a culture of humility

Jesus Christ came to reveal the heart of God to us so that we might come to love God as much as He did; *"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent."* John 17:3

The Son of God left heaven behind to live as a man, humbling Himself so that we can have life with God. *'Although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in*

appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.'

Phil 2:6-8

The only way to know God personally is by believing and obeying Jesus Christ. "*He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him.*" John 3:36

Believing and obeying requires a change of heart called repentance; this is a heart that has bowed down in dependence on the almighty. Repentance is not just a willingness to stop certain behaviours; repentance is only real in the context of living according to the values and principles of the kingdom of God, which means we change from self control to being under the absolute control of God according to His holiness and justice.

The Spirit of God enables humility

God's word says: "*Repent, and each of you be baptised in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins; and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*" (Acts 2:38)

Forgiveness results in the receiving of a new life of holiness through being born again.

John 3:5, 9 2 Pet 1:4

The presence of the Spirit in the believer means a change in character and culture. *'If you are living according to the flesh, you must die; but if by the Spirit you are putting to death the deeds of the body, you will live.'*

Rom 8:13

'For all who are being led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. The Spirit Himself testifies with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, heirs also, heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him so that we may also be glorified with Him.'

Rom 8:14, 16-17

The culture of the kingdom is the life of the Spirit shining through the lives of those who are willingly being lead according to His authority and power.

We cannot say we are God's children if we are not willing to be humbly led to live according to the life of obedience seen in the Christ.

We should expect that those who have received Christ are growing in His likeness so that they are able to walk as He walked in all humility as they put on the Christ life. This miracle is possible because they no longer live for themselves but for Christ who lives in them.

Gal 2:20

The true disciple who has denied themselves and taken up their cross will have the Spirit of God motivating their life to achieve the will of God. *'By this we may know that we are in him: whoever says he abides in him ought to walk in the same way in which he walked.'*

1 John 2:5-6

This divine humility is the outward appearance of the imparted divine nature of Christ in the believer through the new birth and the indwelling power Spirit of God. The possession of humility is a testimony that God is working to save all who would trust in Him. This raises the obvious question: How well do we know our Christ so that we may be readily transformed into His humble image?

Kingdom humility must replace pride

All national, religious, ethnic, and caste differences are overturned by the kingdom of God. *'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'* (Gal 3:28) All men and women are created equal before God and are therefore of equal value. While God has ordained that men and women have different functions, all are valued in the same way in His sight. If anyone holds themselves to be above another, they know nothing of the unifying power of the Spirit of God. *'If anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.'*

Gal 6:3

As far as religion is concerned, God requires we worship Him in spirit and truth. (John 4:24) Jesus Christ gives the life of the Spirit to those who humble themselves before him. This great salvation of God that comes through Christ to enable us to worship in spirit and truth can only happen when we give ourselves

unreservedly over to Jesus Christ to be our Lord and Master.

Religious passion and acts of devotion in study and prayer rituals and observance of special days might move many to great sacrifice, but without the willingness to learn to live under the control of Christ according to His nature, it is of no eternal value. Any sacred religious image or person that takes the place of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ is just another way of refusing to humble ourselves before the saviour of the world so that we might have His life in abundance. If our religion doesn't include a willingness to die with Christ to follow His example and endure suffering with Him, then we are not willing to be nothing in Christ so Christ can be all in us.

If Christ isn't Lord of all in us, we cannot claim the benefits of being redeemed from the sin of pride in self. Evidence for belonging to God is found first in the humility only Christ gives to those who are abiding in Him. Evidence of spiritual life means we find no

values according the ways of men to please themselves as they seek happiness in the world. Evidence of spiritual life is the humility of Christ. Those who are in Christ have received His humility in order to be like Him in holiness and truth.

God created man to live humbly before Him as His beloved children. However the spiritual power of the darkness of Satan enticed the first man's heart to replace humility with pride. But God never stopped loving mankind so Jesus came to renew us to a life of humility.

To find holiness we look to Christ

Jesus lived in humility as our example of how to live before God as His dependent children. Therefore to know how we are to live we must learn what He is like, He is the only one who was the pinnacle of humility.

'Although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the

likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.'

Phil 2:6-8

We must know how He lived to set us the example we need to be a blessing to God and the world. As His humility flowed from His divine nature, to be humble is a natural result of being born again of the Spirit of God.

The fruit of the tree flows naturally from the nature of the root that gives it life. If we are abiding in Christ we produce the humility of Christ.

Our ability to be humble depends on the quality of our dependence on Him who is our life. Jesus showed us His dependence on God on a daily basis was absolute. *'Jesus answered and was saying to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless it is something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in like manner."*

John 5:19

Even as the creator of the world He wouldn't stand on His rights as God. "*I can do nothing on My own initiative.*" (John 5:30; John 14:10) He wouldn't allow pride to prevent Him from obeying the Father of all. "*I do not receive glory from men.*" John 5:41

Jesus came to do the will of God, this required great humility. "*For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me.*" (John 6:38) Jesus even insisted on telling everyone He was not blowing His own trumpet. "*My teaching is not Mine, but His who sent Me.*" John 7:28

Jesus wasn't interested in the praises of men. "*I do not seek My glory.*" (John 8:50) Jesus came to give glory to God. "*But for this purpose I have come to this hour. Father, glorify your name.*" John 12:27-28

Even in His last hours Jesus showed His dependence on God. '*Jesus spoke these things; and lifting up His eyes to heaven, He said, "Father, the hour has come; glorify Your Son, that the Son may glorify You, even*

as You gave Him authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life."

John 17:1-2

Jesus humbled Himself in the presence of men to be the servant of all men, and He calls us to follow His example as we humble ourselves before Him. *"Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven."* (Matt 18:4) *"and whoever wishes to be first among you shall be your slave; just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."*

Matt 20:27-28

We are to be humble like our Saviour

"If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet." (John 13:14) *"The greatest among you shall be your servant."* Matt 23:11

Jesus makes it clear we are to become like Him in humility before man and God. *"You call Me Teacher and Lord; and you are right, for so I am."* *"If I then, the Lord and the Teacher, washed your feet, you also ought to*

wash one another's feet. "For I gave you an example that you also should do as I did to you."

John 13:13-16

Humility is needed in our suffering

'For what credit is there if, when you sin and are harshly treated, you endure it with patience? But if when you do what is right and suffer for it you patiently endure it, this finds favour with God. For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH.'

1 Pet 2:20-22

If we want to know what God requires of humility in us, we look to Christ for our example.

If we struggle with obedience, look to Christ.

If we are rejected by people, look to Christ.

If our family doesn't believe us, look to Christ.

If we are falsely accused, we look to Christ.

If we are unloved, we look to Christ.

If we are not appreciated, we look to Christ.
If we are lonely, we look to Christ.
If our testimony is rejected, we look to Christ.
If our teaching is not valued, we look to Christ.
If people bring false witness against us, we look to Christ.
If we have nowhere to lay our head, we look to Christ.
If we suffer unjustly, we look to Christ.
If we want to be faithful to God regardless of the cost, we look to Christ.
If our faithfulness is being put to the test, we look to Christ.
If we find being a lowly servant is asking too much, we look to Christ.
If we struggle with unforgiveness, we look to Christ.
If we lack light in the darkness of the world, we look to Christ.
If our suffering is unbearable, we look to Christ.
If we want to know what is required of a true disciple, we look to the teaching of Christ.

Humility recognises God is the sovereign Lord of the entire universe who must be worshipped in humility and truth in every situation. The humble heart will therefore accept graciously all that God allows to exist in our lives to train us in the humility of Christ.

Regardless of whether the test is coming from family, friends, enemy, or government; or from the world in the form of natural disaster, we don't grumble because we are assured growth in humility is growth in holiness. Therefore in every situation we recognise God is using all things for our good so we become like Christ.

Rom 8:28-29

Therefore we are not to be downcast but humbly accept the Father's care: *We 'Rejoice always; we pray without ceasing; in everything we give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.'* 1 Thess 5:16-18

We have a choice

We must choose daily between the culture of men based on pride or the culture of God

based on humility. This constant need to choose wisely is required by the Lord in His words: *“If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.”* Luke 9:23

In the life of Jesus Christ we can see that His humility was the unshakable foundation from where all the other virtues of God arise. Without humility, sacrificial love was impossible, and without love the hope of salvation is but a cloud without water, giving no more hope of eternal life than the religion of men.

However, since God has proved His love through His humility, we can be assured of His promise we will be like Christ, we will prove our love for Him by our humility. Therefore living out the humility of Christ by the power of the Spirit should be our constant desire.

The Lord has made it abundantly possible for us to succeed in gaining the fullness of holy

humility. It is up to us to now work out the humility He has worked in us.

If I have no humility love is not possible. *'If I give all my possessions to feed the poor, and if I surrender my body to be burned, but do not have love, it profits me nothing.'* 1 Cor 13:3

Religious life without the humility only Christ can give to those who abide in Him has the form of righteousness but has no power to produce lasting fruit or satisfy the consuming fire of a Holy God. 2 Tim 3:5

We must consider our culture

All the evils of men proceed from the heart of pride. *'For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world.'* (1 John 2:16) Even in the church: *'For if anyone thinks he is something when he is nothing, he deceives himself.'*

Gal 6:3

All the blessings of God flow from the humility of Christ who revealed the love of

God to the world. Humility has the favour of God. *“But to this one I will look, To him who is humble and contrite of spirit, and who trembles at My word.”* Isa 66:3

Our daily behaviour reveals our choice of culture, whether pride, or humility, which means we either live according to the values and beliefs of the world or we live for the values and beliefs of God. Thus we represent God or man.

The culture of the kingdom of God means the humble heart won't grumble. The humble won't growl. The humble will be quick in obedience. The humble won't demand. The humble will show mercy because they know they have received the mercy of God. The humble will cherish their relationship with God.

When Jesus spoke about receiving eternal life He spoke of knowing the intimacy of a personal relationship with the Father and the Son: *“This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ*

whom You have sent.” (John 17:3) Here He is telling us that true religion was not found in external religious practices but a deep personal relationship with the Father and the Son. Only our humility allows God to be God.

This is made clear in Matthew. *“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. Many will say to Me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?’ And then I will declare to them, I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.”*

Matt 7:21-23

Because of the power Christ brings to this deeply personal relationship, the more we see the glory of Christ opened up to us the less we see ourselves. God has arranged that the closer we are to Him the more the life of His Son will shine from us. The more we humbly depend on God the more peace and joy we will have in the world.

The more intimate we are with Christ the less concerned we will be with the world and its beliefs and values.

Humility requires daily self denial

However the Holy Spirit cannot bring us into the fullness of intimate humble devotion if we haven't denied ourselves by taking up our cross to follow the one we love. The humble cross bearer knows that worship in spirit and truth begins on the inside of the humble heart, where external things become obsolete because the temple of God is not made by human hands.

From this we see the culture of heaven is internalised in our heart while the world is concerned with the appearance of things made by the hands of men. Until the Lord Jesus is internalised as our most precious possession we don't really know Him. If we are sincere we can take comfort that Christ in us is the work of the Spirit of God who reveals Christ in the sanctuary of our hearts.

The hymn written by Helen Howarth Lemmel, expresses the right idea. *“Turn your eyes upon Jesus, Look full in His wonderful face, And the things of earth will grow strangely dim, In the light of His glory and grace.”*

Our spiritual transformation into the life of Christ requires a complete cultural transfer as we put away the pride of men and put on the humility of Christ who lives in us. The faithful follower of Christ has to make the daily choice of cultures if they are not to be deceived by creeping complacency.

“Don’t let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould, but let God re-mould your minds from within, so that you may prove in practice that the plan of God for you is good, meets all his demands and moves towards the goal of true maturity.” Rom 12:2 Phillips

God rewards the humble

God has promised to exalt the humble person. And God exalts us by living in us as the Lord of glory. Jesus has said He shares His glory with those who love Him. (John 17:22) The

highest goal we can have is to be a living temple for the glory of God. This holy temple created by God cannot have dual occupancy; it is only when we are willing to be nothing that God can be everything in us.

God gives Himself to the humble, the more we humble ourselves the more God can take full possession of the temple He has prepared. Humility allows for divine indwelling which is the only way to conform us to the fullness of the humility of the Lamb of God.

“God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6) *‘Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you at the proper time.’* 1 Peter 5:6

Being exalted by God is to be filled with His glory and sit on His throne in the new heaven and earth. As the Father exalted Christ, He will exalt us. *Therefore God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name that is above every name”* Phil 2:9

And all those who are in Christ will be exalted with Him. Those who choose wisely to live

the humble life of Christ and resist the lure of pride are in safe hands. *“For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”* Luke 14:11

“He who overcomes, I will grant to him to sit down with Me on My throne, as I also overcame and sat down with My Father on His throne.” Rev 3:21

If we are to know God and be free from the destructive power of pride we must never cease to know the reality of humility in the kingdom of God.

We must choose wisely how we live, our behaviour either aligns us with the culture of the world or if the kingdom of God.

We either love God with all our hearts, minds and strength, or we love the world.

Humility means the unity of the believers love for one another is grounded on the unity of the sacrificial love of the Father, Son and Spirit.

If we don't love those in the family of God in the same way God loves us, and see their

well-being and growth towards Christ as being more important than our own comfort, we don't know God well enough and we still live according to the culture of the world.

Consequently if we don't love those in the world who live in darkness enough to die for them as Christ did, we also don't know the love of God that denied His heavenly glory to live in humility so that He could die for the world.

Living according to the kingdom of God's culture also means God provides what we need; the desire for what we want comes from the world.

Attraction to the world is often seen in what we want. And this means holding onto what we can get our hands on. Then we seek the pleasure of things instead of the pleasure of God.

However, if all we have belongs to God who rules His kingdom, and is humbly set aside for His use, we need to let Him decide if what we want is really what we need.

The test of humble dependence is: What would we give of what we have always wanted so that others in the family of God can have what they need? 1 John 3:17

Remember, the flesh and the world war against the spirit, (Gal 5:17) so we cannot do what we want but only respond humbly to the will of God.

However when the Lord shakes us out of our pride, we can know His banner over us is love. For the Father disciplines His children so they grow into mature images of Christ.

'We proclaim Him, admonishing every man and teaching every man with all wisdom, so that we may present every man complete in Christ.' Col 1:28

Are you choosing wisely whom you serve?

Contentment and joy abides with those who choose wisely to live according to the humble culture of the kingdom of God.

Abide in Christ



Living Water Resources



Come to the River



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