

SERMON - THE 3<sup>RD</sup> SUNDAY AFTER EPIPHANY - 24 JANUARY 2010  
St. John's Anglican Church, Greensboro, North Carolina

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*Romans 12:16 (KJV)*

*Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits.*

Humility. What we are talking about here is humility.

What is humility, anyways?

Saint Benedict talks a lot about humility in his Rule. In fact he talks about humility more than about any thing else. He goes through a process of twelve steps to instill humility into the monastic community.

Humility is the Publican who would not even lift his eyes to Heaven but smote his breast and prayed, "Lord, Have mercy on me, a sinner."

John Trimethius, the 15<sup>th</sup> Century monk and writer, wrote, "Attribute to the mercy and kindness of God whatever good you have and do; in this, seek not your own praise and glory but God's."

But, when you really boil it down, humility is no more or no less than submitting yourself to the will of God, submitting yourself to God.

In other words, humility is letting God control us instead of us trying to control others.

Humility, then is the antithesis, the opposite of what the world promotes, the control of others through money, through power, through force.

God wants us to give our money away, to be humble and to seek peace.

The world wants us to grasp, to amass, to accumulate.

God says for us not to be anxious about what we have.

The world wants to manipulate others for our own agendas, or is that agendae.

God tells us to love Him with all of our being and to love others as ourselves.

Humility is knowing who you really are and acknowledging the fact that it is God who is in control. Humility is realizing that you are not god.

Jesus tells us in Luke 22:25-26 (KJV) *The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. [26] But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.*

James wrote James 4:10 (KJV) *Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up.*

And Peter also wrote in 1 Peter 5:5-7 (KJV) *Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder. Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble. [6] Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time: [7] Casting all your care upon him; for he careth for you.*

Humility is the reflection of our own relationship with God. Vainglory, self glory, is the reflection of our own ego. Referring to John Trithemius again, he wrote, *Vainglory is a love of our own excellence. Vainglory gives birth to self-exaltation, pride, arrogance, contention, affront, contempt, presumption, disobedience, irreverence, and very often to factions, the worst of plagues. To avoid these things, we must glory in the Lord and not in*

*ourselves.*

Humility comes from within where God resides in us. Nikitas Stithatos, the disciple and biographer of St. Symeon the New Theologian, tells us humility comes from a contrite heart and a spirit of self-abasement. The Psalmist wrote in Psalm 51:17 (KJV) *The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise.*

To have true humility we must have true repentance. We have to ask God to forgive us all those things which keep us from having a complete relationship with Him. We must be like the Prodigal Son and return home, home to God, humbly and with repentance. We must have a broken spirit and a contrite heart.

Life is a journey. Life is the journey. We cannot really begin that walk until we have come home to God.

We have choices. We can either live in the world and live as the world or we can live humbly as God would have us do. God gives us that free will to make that choice and we have to make that choice. We cannot live with one foot in the world and one foot on the journey. It will not work.

We cannot love both God and Mammon.

Amen.

