

WE DON'T NEED TO IMPRESS 'OTHERS'; HUMILITY IS THE KEY TO SALVATION

by

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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. [I. Peter 5: 5]

Humility is of fundamental importance: without it we cannot be saved. St. John Climacus defined it as “the constant forgetfulness of one’s achievements”. Humility is the most important virtue, the means for avoiding arrogance.

This morning I was sipping decaf at a well known coffee house (you don’t drink coffee at this establishment; rather, you daintily sip it! (smile, smile), which is frequented by “shakers and movers,” so they think (apparently), and other more hedonistic types – a perfect place for evangelism, yet so far spiritually unfruitful! On my right stands a wordy feminist extolling her work ethic to an presumed business underling over her cell phone. If you saw and heard this woman whilst overseas, she would conjure up images of the classic “ugly American”. Unfortunately, I must admit that in the past I have been within this category (smile).

Her end of the conversation never lagged. What an ego! She had to be speaking 90 % of the time. it was obvious by that she cared little or nothing for any input from the other end. The ‘indoctrination’ was all about one thing only: making money, money and lots more money! Now, Lulabelle, as I will affectionately call her, begins to pace up and down, up and down the main aisle gesticulating wildly with her right hand as her left cradles the ‘evil instrument’ of modern secularism, the cell phone, against her left cheek. Many lawyers/barristers I have known would love to be able to emulate her nuanced walk and cadence, might be ideal for a summation to judge or jury.

I just picked up a few tidbits of conversation gems such as “husbands...” Don’t know the context, but just now she stated, actually really bellowed, that “Husbands are only good for making money.” In short, over the last 20 minutes, nothing except the search for and accumulation of money to buy things has been mentioned.

Oh, did I forget to say, she is, approximately 22-26 years of age. That’s why she has so much knowledge and wisdom: it’s her youth, stupid!

She’s now left the premises, and the customers can begin reading again. Naturally, they were at full attention for her address to the throng. What a relief! I then remembered a bit how I must have been at the same age, relatively young people always believe they and like ones around them are infallible

and immortal. Sometimes it doesn't cross our minds then that we could, now just maybe, be WRONG!

There, I've said it, the word that modern man and woman do not comprehend: their penchant to be wrong coming from the fact that none of us is infallible. It's difficult to even perfunctorily understand this if you're a teenager or thereabouts because it's doubtful you've ever heard "no" during your permissive upbringing (smile, smile).

What I am saying about Lulabelle, as I recall, could have been said about me during my earlier years. I knew it all. It's amazing (I learned this word from our gold medal winners at Beijing) that it takes a lifetime for some of us to learn the truth which was perfectly obvious from the very beginning if we'd just taken the time to look. I didn't begin to really assess my situation until something led me to our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. I would not be so vain to suggest being personally called by the Lord, but perhaps in some way by His grace I began to see that I was not immortal and all-knowing and needed reforming.

THE WORLD HATES US

Secularly, this world despises humility. Have you heard many people congratulate others for being humble? You might read it in obituaries, but... The world also hates Christians, so it would be natural for it to dislike humility. Hear our Saviour's words:

If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you.

If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. [Christ at St. John 15: 18-19]

And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved. [Christ at Matthew 10: 22]

Without humility, there would be no Christians.

Man (consider this to mean society at large today) does not value humility. One who is humble gets stepped upon by the shakers and movers. So be it! We, as Christians, are meant to suffer!

And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together.

For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.

[St. Paul in Romans 8: 17-18]

We suffer together, with Christ, collectively as, Christians:

The suffering and misfortune that the Lord allows to fall on the righteous is not the work of evil but a medicine, both for the righteous themselves and for those around them who understand that their suffering is sent from God for their good. The suffering that comes from the attacks of evil spirits on man, or as a consequence of sin, is evil. But the suffering that God allows to fall on men, in order to cleanse them completely from sin, pluck them out from under the devil's tyranny and bring them close to Himself - this purifying suffering neither comes from evil nor is in itself evil, but is from God and for the good of men.

'It is good for me that Thou hast afflicted me; that I might learn Thine ordinances' (Ps. 118:71), says the discerning King David.

[Bishop Nikolai Velimirovich]

Today's Man is like Dr. Alexandre Kalomiros' European:

A frightening antinomy characterizes the Europeans: [Editorial note- read this as also including Americans and all people committed to following secularism first, and maybe, just maybe, the Lord, He many times not even a distant second choice.]: it is the antithesis between the inward and outward man. The European appears to be one thing, but is really something else. He lives and moves in the falsehood of compromises. His entire culture is a collection of conventional lies to which he has adapted himself. He is extremely egocentric, but he conducts himself with absolute and almost exaggerated courtesy.

In the 'underdeveloped' countries where the people still lack the finesse of culture, everyone more or less expresses his inner world with some freedom and simplicity which you cannot find in Europe. Their manners are coarse, but the people are more genuine. In Europe this is considered a lack of culture and spiritual development.

In this way, the constant game of hypocrisy has come to be regarded as culture, *where the white-washed tombs are full of stench, and the outside of the cup always cleaned for the sake of the appearance to the people* (emphasis supplied).... The sentiments they nurture for people are inferior to the love they have for their dogs....

This is the European. Whatever religion he thinks he might have, deep down his religion is the worship of the idol 'man'. The European has ceased to see the image of God in man: he sees only the image of himself.... This inward will of man to believe in his own divinity, together with the fact of his submission to the demonic powers, is the basis of *every* (emphasis supplied) form of idolatry."...

The ideal of the European is identical with the ideal of Lucifer. Deep down, it is the same contempt for the goodness of God, the same insult against His love, the same revolt and estrangement from His providence, the same ingratitude, the same desolate path which, instead of leading upward as man thinks he is going, leads to the abyss of death.

[Dr. Alexandre Kalomiros, AGAINST FALSE UNION, Chapter Two, XVI., CONTEMPORARY IDOLATRY]

You see how this turns around the Truth of Christ. Man thinks he can become God on his own. This is the Evil One's work in 'this world,' Reject him! If we emphasise man in this world, we jeopardise our salvation. To be blunt, salvation is impossible unless man comes to his spiritual senses and places God first. This requires a dramatic change in direction and a willingness to struggle and suffer. If the world hates us, so what? The world will hate us as they hated our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Relish their hatred but, at the same time, be merciful to those who hate you for what you are.

Pray for Lullabelle and other unbelievers, but reject their social pressures on us to conform to *this* world. The 'others' can always change until their end on this earth. In the meantime, let's all get *our* spiritual ships in inspection shape for His coming again! Each of us will be examined in the following way:

In the future life the Christian is not examined if he has renounced the whole world for Christ's love, or if he has distributed his riches to the poor or if he fasted or kept vigil or prayed, or if he wept and lamented for his sins, or if he has done any other good in this life, but he is examined attentively if he has any similitude with Christ, as a son does with his father.

St. Symeon the New Theologian

+ In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.