**Christ Sanctified as Lord in Our Hearts**

*The Balance of Humility and Conviction in Faith*

*1 Peter 3:15*

**Introduction**

1. Christians are to uphold and defend the truth against all opposition (**cf. 1 Timothy 3:15; Jude 3**).
2. In doing so, we are to be on guard against pride – **2 Timothy 2:24-25; Galatians 6:1** – our adversary is crafty and can take a soul through warping an effort to save a soul.
3. However, this struggle has caused some to revert to a vacillating faith which is too passive to be steadfast and is therefore left open ended.
   1. More in the church seem hesitant to confidently assert the truth. (EX: Sermon, “The Dangers of Conservatism”)
   2. An inaccurate view of humility has led to the abandonment of open conviction.
4. The gospel clearly requires stout conviction while maintaining the necessity of humility.
5. Christians need to understand the balance of humility and conviction in faith as outlined in the Bible.
   1. Lest they become tainted with pride which is inherently opposed to the gospel message.
   2. Lest they are cornered by ecumenicalism/relativism and made to possess a weak and compromising faith.
6. The key to a balance of humility and conviction in faith is displayed in **1 Peter 3:15**.
7. A Defense from a Christ Ruled Heart
8. Christ Sanctified as Lord in the Heart
   1. Context – faith in suffering:
      1. Obedient children enduring trials by faith, looking to the inheritance – **1 Peter 1** – hope, faith, holiness, reverence
      2. Spiritual work as priests in God’s holy nation – **1 Peter 2** – living differently.
      3. Such a change of relationship with God is manifested in relationships with others:
         1. Government – **1 Peter 2:12-17** – ***“for the Lord’s sake…For this is the will of God”***
         2. Masters – **1 Peter 2:18-25** – ***“because of conscience toward God…committed Himself to Him who judges righteously”***
         3. Marriage – **1 Peter 3:1-7** – ***“chaste conduct accompanied by fear…precious in the sight of God…trusted in God…that your prayers may not be hindered”***
         4. To one another – **1 Peter 3:8-12** – ***“knowing that you were called to this, that you may inherit a blessing”***
         5. God’s rule in your life regulates your relationships. Ultimately in obedience to God (**cf. Colossians 3:23** – as to the Lord).
   2. Suffering for doing good – **1 Peter 3:13-14** – you are blessed because you are obeying God, and they cannot take His blessing away from you.
   3. In face of that opposition fear and obey God, not man – **1 Peter 3:15-17**
      1. ***“but sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts” (NASB)***
      2. I have set apart Christ as the one who reigns in my heart and will only act by fear in Him to do His will.
      3. Threats and opposition will not deter me from standing for truth…
      4. …but Christ’s place in my life will also affect the way I stand for that truth.
      5. NOW MY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE INQUIRING LOST IS TO BE AFFECTED BY MY RELATIONSHIP WITH CHRIST.
9. Defense Given with Meekness and Fear
   1. **Fear** – **1 Peter 1:17** – I am conducting myself in all areas in the fear of God.
      1. The way I answer is drastically influenced by my reverence for God – attitude toward another, and carefulness to speak truth.
      2. My conduct in the moment is ultimately before Him.
   2. **Meekness** – this is where the balance of humility and conviction comes in, and it has everything to do with Christ being sanctified as Lord in our hearts.
      1. *prautēs*; mildness, i.e. (by implication) humility (STRONG)
      2. “It is a grace in advance of *tapeinophrosynē* (humility), not as more precious than it, but as presupposing it, and as being unable to exist without it.” (R. C. Trench, Synonyms of the New Testament)
      3. “The Scriptural *pra‚otēs* (meekness) is not in a man’s outward behaviour only; nor yet in his relations to his fellow-men; as little in his mere natural disposition. Rather is it an inwrought grace of the soul; and the exercises of it are first and chiefly towards God (**Matt. 11:29; Jam. 1:21**). It is that temper of spirit in which we accept his dealings with us as good, and therefore without disputing or resisting; and it is closely linked with the *tapeinophrosynē* (humility), and follows directly upon it (**Ephes. 4:2; Col. 3:12; cf. Zeph. 3:12**); because it is only the humble heart which is also the meek; and which, as such, does not fight against God, and more or less struggle and contend with Him.” (ibid.)
         1. Built upon humility before God.
         2. It is that attitude and corresponding action of acceptance of God’s authority and bringing oneself under its control.
      4. **Both the meekness and fear are in relation to God but will affect the manner of our response to man.**
         1. “The Christian quality, in its manifestation, reveals all that was best in the heathen virtue – mildness, gentleness, equanimity – but these manifestations toward men are emphasized as outgrowths of a spiritual relation to God.” (Vincent’s Word Studies, *praus*, “Meek”) (*praus* is the root of *prautēs* and *pra‚otēs*)
         2. “The meekness of the Christian springs from a sense of the inferiority of the creature to the Creator, and especially of the sinful creature to the holy God.” (ibid.)
      5. Praus, meek, “was used of a horse; gentle” (Vincent’s Word Studies, praus) – hence, strength under harness.
         1. In humility, it demonstrates complete submission to God, placing self under His yoke of authority. (I.e. Christ is set apart as Lord in the heart.)
         2. In answering another (**cf. 1 Peter 3:15**), it is not arrogant or harsh, but calmly reflects an unwavering loyalty to God.
         3. Therefore, there is conviction and certainty, but humility knowing that such is dictated by God, and merely accepted by man.
      6. **Ironically, such may come across to the uninformed as pride or arrogance because it is so certain by faith.**
         1. **The meek does not doubt God’s word and does not apologize for it.**
         2. **The meek does not spare any part of God’s word from others – even if it contradicts another or causes them discomfort.**
10. Three Portraits – Showing the balance of humility and conviction in faith. Meekness brought on and manifested by one sanctifying the Lord in their heart.
11. Isaiah
    1. **1 Peter 3:14** – quotation of **Isaiah 8:12** – parallel in context to Peter’s point concerning suffering for doing good, and continuing in faith to do good before God.
    2. Context – Ahaz is troubled by the threat of Israel and Syria and thinks to turn to Assyria for help.
    3. Isaiah’s message – Look to the Holy One of Israel; Wait on the Lord (**cf. Isaiah 31:1).**
       1. It is foolish to trust in Assyria – in every way – politically, strategically, spiritually.
       2. These threats will be taken away – **Isaiah 7:4, 16**
       3. Since you did not trust in God – **Isaiah 7:17; 8:5-8** – He will bring Assyria against you.
    4. Isaiah’s call to be a prophet – **Isaiah 6:5** – in humility – thought himself unfit.
       1. Yet called to be relentless in his unpopular message – **Isaiah 6:9-12**
    5. The Lord to Isaiah – **Isaiah 8:11-18** – essentially, don’t stop speaking the truth because of their threat, continue to fear God only, trust in Him, wait on Him.
       1. Was this arrogant? – **(v. 12)** – people calling him a conspirator against the king. They viewed him as a stubborn rebel who thought he knew better.
       2. This was evidence of the Lord being on the throne of his heart, and his meekness of spirit – HUMILITY AND CONVICTION.
       3. His stance was not one of being smarter or better than Ahaz, but one of faith in God.
12. Amos
    1. Context – Amos prophesies destruction against Israel for excess/luxury, and moral/political/religious decay.
       1. Plumb line – **Amos 7:7-9** – Israel isn’t “measuring up” to God’s standard, so He will not pass by them, and He will punish them.
       2. Amaziah to king Jeroboam – **Amos 7:10-11** – Amos is conspiring against you, and the people shouldn’t hear him.
    2. Was Amos elevating himself in defiance to the king? Did he make these prophecies out of a self-inflated view of his position? Was he speaking presumptuously?
    3. Amaziah’s further words, and Amos’ reply – **Amos 7:12-17** – this was never about Amos as Amaziah made it out to be, but was simply about Amos submitting to God’s call, and speaking His message.
    4. His message came from humility and conviction – He knew his message was right as it was God’s word and would not depart from it in the least.
13. Jesus
    1. Context – The people divided in view of Jesus, and His teaching in the temple in the middle of the feast of tabernacles. (**cf. John 7:12-24**)
       1. Two views of Jesus – **John 7:12** – good or deceives people.
       2. Jesus’ teaching, and explanation of teaching – **John 7:14-18** – He is not deceiving the people and seeking glory for Himself – His teaching is true, and verifiable by God’s will.
          1. **(vv. 12, 18)** – is He arrogant, speaking from Himself, seeking His own?
          2. No, He is simply speaking His Father’s will, and will not stop.
    2. Addressing previous charges – **John 7:19-24** – bringing up the healing on the Sabbath in chapter 5 (man at pool of Bethesda).
       1. **John 5:18** – charge of breaking Sabbath, and blasphemy (making self-equal with God).
       2. **(vv. 19-24)** – essentially saying they were ignorant of the Law, and He did nothing wrong – they should not seek to kill Him.
       3. **Was this in arrogance? NO! THIS IS A PICTURE OF MEEKNESS – Jesus knows the law and is convicted. In humility He is submissive to the Law, and His Father’s will, to the extent of calling out the inconsistencies of others, yet not in self-glorification, but glorifying God.**
14. When Christ is Sanctified as Lord in Our Hearts
15. We Love Truth
    1. Bereans – **Acts 17:10-12** – fair-minded, ready, searched scriptures to verify, believed.
    2. Bereans in contrast to:
       1. Thessalonians – **Acts 17:1-4** – rejected the gospel because it was NEW, and DIFFERENT than what they had always believed.
       2. Athenians – **Acts 17:19-21** – showed willingness to hear SIMPLY BECAUSE IT WAS NEW AND DIFFERENT.
          1. **Acts 17:32** – proved even too different for some of them.
       3. Bereans believed the truth because it was true, and they loved truth.
    3. **Meekness cares not how old, new, simple, or complex something is, but simply whether it is from the Lord.**
16. We Embrace the Simplicity of the Pattern
    1. **1 Corinthians 3:18** – become a fool to become wise.
    2. **2 Timothy 1:13** – hold fast the pattern.
    3. **Deuteronomy 4:2** – do not add or subtract, but keep.
    4. Feigned humility – “Just because that’s all that we have on the subject does not mean all other ways of doing it are wrong.” – I don’t want to come across as restrictive, and exclusive.
       1. This is presumptuous in itself.
       2. If God has not revealed, we must not speak or do – this is an acceptance of Christ’s authority in meekness.
17. We Bring Thoughts into Captivity to the Obedience of Christ
    1. **2 Corinthians 10:3-6** – no use of carnal weapons (EX: **v. 10**), but spiritual weapons – the word of God (**cf. Ephesians 6:17**)
       1. Goal – **(v. 5)** – making captives for Christ.
       2. How? – **(vv. 4-5a)** – military language used to describe the gospel message tearing apart erroneous, yet deceptive messages in conflict with truth.
       3. NOTE: Opponents – false apostles (**2 Corinthians 11:12-15**) whose message is not inspired of God; Paul’s point – His weapons are ***“mighty in God”*** ***(“divinely powerful,”*** NASB) – from God, inspired of God, and will prevail.
    2. Paul never held back in this, and instructed Timothy to do the same – **2 Timothy 4:2** – And Titus – **Titus 2:15**
    3. Is this irreconcilable to humility? Is it arrogant to be confident in the truth, and allow it to be effective in use?
       1. Some avoid convincing and rebuking with the gospel. They avoid tearing down arguments.
       2. Sometimes this is in an effort to remain “humble” – “I do not want to come across as ‘holier than thou,’ or as one who appears to be ‘right about everything.’”
          1. This becomes the very thing that is sought to be avoided.
          2. When we are unwilling to take a confident stance with truth against error/sin because we’re worried about coming across as “holier than thou” or arrogant, are we really displaying humility, or are we serving our own ego, and getting in the way of God’s truth fulfilling its designed purpose?
    4. Our job as those who have humbly submitted to Christ’s rule in our heart is to let the truth work by plainly and unapologetically proclaiming it – **Hebrews 4:12** – this effect is not a product of arrogance on our part, but of the power of God’s word.
18. We Maintain a Good Conscience and Avoid Appeasing Men
    1. **1 Peter 3:15-17** – we give the defense in meekness and fear before God and maintain a good conscience.
       1. We are not to allow their false accusations – ***“when they defame you as evildoers”*** – alter how we are to stand and defend the truth.
       2. Paul prayed for an open door for the word, ***“that I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak” (Colossians 4:4)*** – i.e. that he may speak it clearly to all, that they would know it, and have opportunity to act on it.
       3. To speak with less clarity and certainty concerning the truth is to fall prey to Satan’s attempts to bring down the truth, and you who are to proclaim it.
       4. We are not to please men by softening the word to appear less divisive, arrogant, exclusive, self-righteous, etc. – claims that are false anyway when a faithful Christian is defending the truth.
          1. **Galatians 1:6-10** – Paul did not soften the blow because he wasn’t seeking to please any man.
    2. If we reject a good conscience – **1 Timothy 1:19-20** – make shipwreck of the faith.
    3. **1 Peter 3:15** – if Christ is our fear, we don’t worry about the false accusations against us as we stand for truth, but rest assured knowing we’re right with Him.

**Conclusion**

1. An inaccurate view of humility has led some Christians to abandon a resolute stand for the truth in open conviction.
2. Humility does not consist in refusing to make a plain, bold statement which implicates another of wrong.
3. The humility of scripture leads to the meekness which submits to God first and foremost, thus, always speaks the truth in humility as a servant of His.