

Year C Pentecost 12 O Lord it's Hard to be Humble

DJK 28/08/2022 MVLC

I wonder if Mac Davis knew this is one of the most profound theological songs ever sung.

It's not just "hard to be humble" it's impossible – especially when we all, at some time, think we are 'perfect in every way'.

Remember the Beatitudes – Jesus first sermon.

In the first of the beatitudes Jesus says:

"Blessed are the humble for theirs is the Kingdom of heaven".

The very nature of a beatitude is that we try and be it – we try and be humble – *O Lord it'd hard to be humble...*

The thing is that not one of the Beatitudes are about being:

- You don't try and be persecuted so that you inherit the Kingdom of heaven.
- You don't try and be humbled so that you inherit the Kingdom of heaven.

Funny that word Beatitude is nothing about doing – it's the Latin word for blessed. Being blessed is something done to you?

If you are humbled, you are blessed – someone has done something to you.

What kind of things would someone have to do to you to make you humbled?

For most of us it is to have something that is shameful revealed to all.

If you could look into my heart and see each and every evil desire – that would humble me but how does it make us blessed?

In John 16 Jesus says:

...very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. ⁸ When he comes, he will convince the world that they are wrong about sin, and judgment, and righteousness.

This is very strange – the world is wrong about sin, Judgement, and righteousness??

You see if God looks into my heart he sees sin – that's the truth.

If I look into my heart I see that it's not so bad – not as bad as God sees it for sure: *"It's hard to be humble.."*

If I think about righteousness, I think I'm not so bad – I do a lot for God and the church – I should be fairly right.

If God sees my sin, he finds me unrighteous in every sense.

When I try and work out my judgement I think 'well I'm not as bad as that person over there' – I think I have fair chance.

God says the wages of sin is death – that is my true judgment.

The truth about our sin, and righteousness, and judgment is rather humbling.

I have no right to God's love and grace.

O Lord, on our own, it's hard to be humble – we're so perfect in every way.

For the Holy Spirit it's as easy as opening our heart for just a moment.

The gift of humility happens to us.

Today we hear a strange text.

On the surface we could think that Jesus is giving us a hint on how to get the best seat at the party.

He says go for the lowest seat and then the host may come to you and say take the best seat from the proud who have grabbed the best seats.

It's not a lesson on how to get the best seat in the house.

He's saying the humbled – not the humble – the humbled will be elevated.

The humbled will have had their hearts opened by the Holy Spirit – it is a humbling experience.

The humbled will have had the opportunity to take the hand of Jesus forgiveness.

The humbled will have the best seat in the house – just as the beatitude says – blessed are the humble.

There was a dark time in Israel's history (one of the many). The people of Israel were worshiping God perfectly – doing exactly what the law said – the right sacrifices – killed in the right way – the right Psalms, the right Hymns (Isaiah 64).

God looked down. He said, your proper worship, your righteous acts, stink like filthy rags to me. There is no heart in this. All I want is a pure and honest heart.

If only we could be honest and open with God.

He wants to see the rubbish – he wants you to give him your sin, your pain, your shame.

The world is wrong – God doesn't want perfection – he knows he will never get it.

Our God wants us to take the hand of Jesus forgiveness.

Our God wants us to eat and drink Jesus' sacrifice for us.

Our God wants us washed pure with the blood of Jesus.

We hear today there is a banquet.

It's a blue-ribbon event.

Those who can pay their way are not invited.

Those who cannot pay – those humbled by their own circumstance are welcomed.

Those who have never looked inside their heart are not welcomed.

Those who have been named and shamed in front of God and rely on his grace are welcomed.

God's banquet is a strange place.

We often ask. "have you got your affairs in order". Meaning have you got all your loose ends tidied up – paid all your bills, got your Will sorted.

That's not what God means.

If God taps you on the shoulder and asks have you got your affairs in order – he means – have you been honest with the Holy Spirit – have you looked into your heart together and been shamed.

In your helplessness have reached out to Jesus who promises to take all that shame to the cross.

Have you heard Jesus say I forgive you – I love you.

Have you heard that Jesus has paid all your debt – you are free.

God's world and ways are not our ways.

"Humility isn't denying your strengths; it's being honest about your weaknesses."

The walk of faith is daily repenting – in other words daily being honest, daily being humbled, daily being offered the grace of God.

O Lord it's hard to be humble please help me – please help me be honest with the Holy Spirit; Help me let Jesus serve me, Help me take Jesus hand do forgiveness. Amen.