



August 2007

“

This whole idea of being humble in the sight of Jesus and giving of our time, talent, energies and wealth simply means having things in proper perspective.

”

It has to be awfully hard to be rich and humble. Even though as a matter of course, I don't know for sure, I believe I am right. For the two ideas are really opposed to each other. On the one hand rich means to have plenty or possess in abundance while on the other hand humble means to be meek, mild or like dirt. That's right, like dirt. The word humble has its origins in the Greek word 'humus' which means dirt. Words like humility, human, and humble all derive from this word 'humus.' Perhaps you have used humus as a form of soil for planting or for transplanting flowers or plants. You buy for gardening purposes, is a form of soil or more simply stated dirt.

Butler Street C.M.E. Church
23 Jesse Hill, Jr., Drive, SE
Atlanta, GA 30303
Phone 404.659.8745
FAX 404.581.0145

www.butlerstreetcmechurch.org

PASTOR'S

Perspective

Anthony M. Alford, Sr., Pastor

One day Jesus was talking to a man about riches, eternal life and being humble. This man came to Jesus with the question "what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" From all accounts he was a very wealthy man. Jesus upset his status quo with the answer, "go and sell whatever you have and give to the poor and you shall have treasure in heaven. Then come and take up your cross and follow me." Treasure in heaven? You must be kidding Jesus! Why would I forsake what I have here for a treasure in heaven the man must have been wondering? After all I own land and livestock, I have servants, I have several cars, I have multiple bank accounts, I have blue chip stock in almost all of the "Fortune 100" companies, I have lots of rental property, I have my own plane and a yacht and I even have IRA's and business partnerships to rival any to be found. You want me to sell all that I have and give to the poor? Sorry Jesus, I guess eternal life just ain't for me! With that the man left the presence of Jesus sad. "I thought it would be easier than all of that" he must have mused to himself as he walked away. The real issue for this man was the fact that he could not first become humble. You know it takes a great person to be humble. Everybody doesn't know how to be humble. In fact many persons live a whole lifetime and never learn to be humble. Being humble takes a special sense of what is right as opposed to what is expedient and then acting upon that understanding. Being rich is a good thing. Please don't get me wrong. Every one of us wouldn't mind being in that predicament. But being humble is more important. To serve Jesus we must become humble. There

are instances throughout the Bible where Jesus references us becoming like children in innocence or humble. We are told to be as wise as a serpent yet as gentle as a dove, humble. We make a lot of rich but we often ignore humble. Humble is what the man in the story of Mark lacked. He asked Jesus "what lack I yet?" Jesus was really telling him you must become humble and lowly, that is to say like dirt, in spirit and in your approach to wealth and materialism. You must allow your thoughts about your wealth to become low in your esteem of it so that your materialism will never overshadow your spirituality!

Now this is largely problematic for our day and time. We don't think of ourselves as 'door mats' or as something to be trampled upon. It was hard for the man in our story as well. This whole idea of being humble in the sight of Jesus and giving of our time, talent, energies and wealth simply means having things in proper perspective. There is nothing wrong with earthly resources or riches as long as they do not become barriers to our willingness to give, serve and sacrifice. This man allowed riches to get in the way of his religion. He was not willing to give up what he had in order to gain a greater good. In so doing he walked away from the love of Jesus being heaped upon him as well as the love of Jesus being expressed through him. It must be hard to be rich and humble for unless we can become 'humus' we will miss what the kingdom economy has for us just as the man in our story.