

# The Pilgrim's Noble Birth

02 - The Pilgrim

Sunday, 10 March 2013 | Church on the Park

**Text:** “For, as I have often told you before and now say again even with tears, many live as enemies of the cross of Christ. Their destiny is destruction, their god is their stomach, and their glory is in their shame. Their mind is on earthly things. But **our citizenship** is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.” (Phil 3:18-20)

**Intro:** Last week we learned that as pilgrims we are to be united in purpose to glorify God, grow in grace and enable others to grow. This week we will discover that we are of noble birth and that means we are generous in all ways. When you were born again you were born into the most royal family on earth. Your Father is the King of Kings and his Spirit of nobility lives in you.

## 1) When you are born again you are born into the most royal family on earth. You are immediately given heavenly citizenship and directed on the path to glory.

- When **Christian** saw the cross in **Pilgrim's Progress** a great burden fell off his back. Then **three** shining ones came to him. One said his sins were **forgiven**. The other stripped off his rags and replaced them with beautiful **raiment**. And the third put a **mark** on his forehead and gave him a **scroll** to guide and comfort him. (pg. 41)
- You now are of **noble birth**. You have the King of the Universe's favor, peace and blessings. All his angels are working to serve you and you are on the winning side (Heb. 1:14).
- You are now **a brother or sister** of all the greatest men and women that walked on the face of the earth—Noah, Moses, Joshua, Debra, Samuel, David, Isaiah, Mary, Jesus, Paul, etc.
- Hebrews 11:8-10, 13-16 - Abraham's Example
- The Story of Finding Nemo. Nemo loses his father and is swept away to Australia. Nemo longs to find his way home, but the distance is way to far. He thinks his father has abandoned him and he will never get home. But when he hears his father is passionately pursuing him, courage rises up within him to find his father. He finally has hope and soon the two are reunited and make it back home.

## 2) Our Father's royalty and riches means he is generous.

- His generosity moved him to make the heavens and earth.
- His generosity gave us all things
- His generosity meant he gave us what is most precious to him, his one and only son (**\*John 3:16**)
  - This week we had the most people we've ever had in our 316 Centre
  - His generosity has meant our salvation, our eternal life

- Did you know that there was a connection between the word ‘**Genesis**’ and ‘**Generosity**’?
  - They both come from the same Latin root, *Genus*.
    - *Genus* means origin, descent, birth, family, kind
    - From *Genus* comes another Latin word *Generosus*, meaning “of noble birth”
  - The word generous means of noble birth, giving.
  - Why does Scripture say that “God loves a **cheerful giver**”? (2 Cor. 9:7)
    - Because God himself gives cheerfully. He doesn’t give grudgingly.
  - And, **since our Father’s generous spirit is in us, it means we, his people, are generous.**
    - “The wicked borrow and do not repay, but the righteous give generously” (Psa 37:21)
    - “I was young and now I am old, yet I have never seen the righteous forsaken or their children begging bread. They are always generous and lend freely; their children will be a blessing” (Psa. 37:25-26)

### 3) As Pilgrim’s we are not afraid to give because we are laying up treasures in heaven.

- “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. “But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. “The eye is the lamp of the body; so then if your eye is clear, your whole body will be full of light. “But if your eye is bad, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light that is in you is darkness, how great is the darkness! “No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth.” (Matt. 6:19-24)
  - Yesterday, one of my students sowed a Mercedes into **Ram & Monica’s** life.
  - My testimony of **tithing** and coming to Australia - I literally came with nothing but faith and some clothes. And how God provided for our home and honeymoon.
- “Jesus speaks literally of a “single” eye versus a “bad” or “evil” one. This saying may involve several **plays on words**. A “single” eye normally meant a generous one but also sets the reader up for 6:24. A “bad” eye in that culture could mean either a diseased one or a stingy one.”
  - The ancient thought was that light **emanated** from the eyes. We think of light coming into our eyes. They thought of the eyes as lamps or torches.
- An idiom is used here for generous - “if the eye is clear, good or single”. There is a word play going on here. (\***James 1:5** - same word used)
- The Bible makes a connection between being **healthy** and **generous**, between singleness in devotion to God and generosity toward others.
- Generosity is the key to **breaking the power** of mammon over your life. Tithing specifically helps break the idol of money and declares Jesus is Lord over your life.

### 4) There was a time where the people of God lost sight of storing up for themselves treasures in heaven. (\*Neh. 13:1-13)

- Consequently, they stopped tithing and giving substantial offering and thus the Levites could no longer do the Lord's work.
  - Today, pastors are like the Levites of old.
- In contrast there was a time when the people of God did store up for themselves treasures in heaven. (Exo. 36:2-7)

**5) God wants us to be like the Israelites of Moses day who gave abundantly to build God's house and not like the Israelites of Nehemiah's day who neglected God's house.**

- Giving is not losing, rather it's sowing. Giving opens up the windows of blessings so that God can blow through and bless you.
- Locked down in Queen St. because of gunman. Fear locks you in. Faith opens the windows through giving.

**Conclusion:** When you are born again you are given a passport to the Kingdom of God—you are now a heavenly citizen. You are of noble birth since your Father is the King of kings. Consequently, God's rich spirit of generosity now lives in you. You now desire and are called to lay up your treasures in heaven rather than on earth—you are called to generosity.

## END NOTES

Forgiveness is generosity in action—it's giving mercy to someone. Tithing is generosity in action—it's giving to the Lord to support God's leaders and house. Fellowship is generosity in action—it's giving your time and life to help build others up.

Love is measured by generosity.

## IVP Bible Background Commentary

6:19. Ancient teachers like Hillel, a famous Jewish teacher, generally acknowledged the corruptibility of earthly treasure. Because thieves could dig through walls and steal a strongbox in one's home, well-to-do people usually tried one of several other methods to safeguard their wealth: investing money with moneychangers, depositing it in a temple for safekeeping (even most robbers balked at "robbing gods") or burying it in the ground or in caves, where, however, moth (for expensive apparel) or rust (for coins) could destroy its value in time.

6:20–21. Jewish texts spoke of "laying up treasure" with God (e.g., Tobit 4:7–10). Sometimes this meant that the generous person could trust that God would help him in time of need; sometimes it referred (as here) to treasure in the world to come.

6:22–23. Jesus speaks literally of a "single" eye versus a "bad" or "evil" one. This saying may involve several plays on words. A "single" eye normally meant a generous one but

also sets the reader up for 6:24. A “bad” eye in that culture could mean either a diseased one or a stingy one. Many people believed that light was emitted from the eye, enabling one to see, rather than that light was admitted through the eye. Although here Jesus compares the eye to a lamp, he speaks of “diseased” eyes which fail to admit light. Such eyes become a symbol for the worthlessness of a stingy person.

6:24. Two masters rarely shared slaves, but when they did it always led to divided interests. “Mammon” is an Aramaic word for possessions or money, and Jesus seems to be personifying it as an idol, using another ancient figure of speech (personification).

**ἀπλόος *haplóos***; contracted *haploús*, fem. *haplé*, neut. *haploún*. Only in Matt. 6:22; Luke 11:34 translated single, i.e., not complex, easy, used of the eye as not seeing double as when it is diseased. When the eye accomplishes its purpose of seeing things as they are, then it is *haploús*, single, healthy, perfect. Singleness, simplicity, absence of folds. This, however, does not involve stupidity on the part of the Christian, but rather *phrónēsis* (5428), prudence, knowing how to deal with fellow humans and the circumstances of life. Thus the Christian is supposed to be not only *haploús*, single and without duplicity, but also *phrónimos* (5429), prudent (Matt. 10:16; Rom. 16:19).

**Deriv.:** *haplótēs* (572), singleness; *haplós* (574), bountifully.

**Syn.:** *ákakos* (172), harmless, unwilling to do harm; *akéraios* (185), harmless; *ádoos* (97), without guile; *gnēsios* (1103), sincere, genuine; *eilikrinēs* (1506), pure, sincere; *agathós* (18), benevolent; *kalós* (2570), good; *chrēstós* (5443), kindly.

**Ant.:** *dólios* (1386), deceitful; *plános* (4108), one leading astray; *phrenapátēs* (5423), a mind deceiver; *kakós* (2556), bad; *ponēros* (4190), evil, malevolent; *phaúlos* (5337), slight, trivial.

**574. ἀπλῶς *haplós***; adv. *haploús* (573), sincere, uncompounded, clear, without duplicity. Bountifully, liberally (James 1:5).

**Syn.:** *ep' eulogiais* (*epí* [1909], upon; and *eulogía* [2129], blessing, well-speaking), well-doing, abundance.

**Ant.:** *phaidoménōs* (5340), sparingly.<sup>1</sup>

**57.107 ἀπλοῦς<sup>b</sup>, ἢ, οὖν; ἀπλῶς:** pertaining to willing and generous giving —‘generous, generously, liberal.’

ἀπλοῦς<sup>b</sup>: ἐὰν οὖν ᾗ ὁ ὀφθαλμὸς σου ἀπλοῦς, ὅλον τὸ σῶμά σου φωτεινὸν ἔσται ‘if you (literally ‘your eye’) are generous, then your whole body will be filled with light’ Mt 6:22. In Mt 6:22 and the corresponding passage in Lk 11:34, most scholars understand ἀπλοῦς in the sense of ‘to be healthy’ or ‘to be sound’ (see 23.132).

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<sup>1</sup> Zodhiates, S. (2000). *The complete word study dictionary: New Testament* (electronic ed.). Chattanooga, TN: AMG Publishers.

ἀπλῶς: αἰτείτω παρὰ τοῦ διδόντος θεοῦ πᾶσιν ἀπλῶς 'let that person ask from God, who gives to all generously' Jas 1:5.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Louw, J. P., & Nida, E. A. (1996). *Vol. 1: Greek-English lexicon of the New Testament: Based on semantic domains* (electronic ed. of the 2nd edition.) (569). New York: United Bible Societies.