

## **Fie on You, Oh Silly Heart!**

By Natalie Warner

*"But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus...."*

(1 Corinthians 1:30a)

It is a cross between irony and hypocrisy for a debtor to call himself rich or a child to say he is independent. The debtor is, by his situation, owned by those he is in debt to. The child is under the care, supervision, and guidance of his parents. We boast that America is the richest nation - but in fact, we are one of the poorest. We are so in debt to other countries that it is by their patience (and overall God's mercy) that we still exist as a nation. We survive as long as those to whom we are indebted don't demand full payment. The child can only be independent when he is grown and out on his own. For now, at least, he is still under the authority of his parents. If they say he can do something, he can; if not, he would disobey if he chose to go against their wishes.

The U.S.'s boast about its economic stronghold is a laugh when you consider the bondage we're actually in, just like the child's boast that he can control his life on his own has no credibility to it. In the same way, we human beings – created, fallible, and slaves to sin (because of Adam) and only freed by the redemption of Christ – have nothing to boast for ourselves.

Charles Spurgeon once aptly said, "Oh! strange infatuation, that you, who have borrowed everything, should think of exalting yourself, a poor dependent pensioner upon the bounty of your Savior, one who has a life which dies without fresh streams of life from Jesus, and yet proud! Fie on you, oh silly heart." We are dependent, obligated, and completely helpless beings by ourselves. The only One who can give us life is the Author of Life and our Creator. If we as Christians have anything to boast about, it is the Lord our King and His work in us, for us, and around us:

*"For consider your calling, brethren, that there were not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble; but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to shame the things which are strong, and the base things of the world and the despised God has chosen, the things that are not, so that He may nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before God. But by His doing you are in Christ Jesus, who became to us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification, and redemption, so that, just as it is written, 'LET HIM WHO BOASTS, BOAST IN THE LORD'"* (1 Corinthians 1:26-31, bold emphasis added).

Recordings in the First Testament give us a wonderful example of someone whose pride was humbled and shown to be nothing before the Lord. King Nebuchadnezzar was given a dream from the Lord that foretold an event that happened twelve months later. At that time, he was *"walking on the roof of the royal palace of Babylon. The king reflected and said, 'Is this not Babylon the great, which I myself have built as a royal residence by the might of my power and for the glory of my majesty?' While the word was in the king's mouth, a voice came from heaven, saying, 'King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is declared: sovereignty has been removed from you, and you will be driven away from mankind, and your dwelling place will be with the beasts of the field. You will be given grass to eat like cattle, and seven periods of time will pass over you until you recognize that the Most High is ruler over the realm of mankind and bestows it on whomever He wishes'"* (Daniel 4:29b-32). Nebuchadnezzar did what many of us do: he gazed over on

what he had achieved and marveled at his own greatness. He had indeed grown powerful - Daniel, while interpreting the king's dream a year earlier, had said, "*You have become great and grown strong, and your majesty has become great and reached to the sky and your dominion to the end of the earth*" (Daniel 4:22). However, whatever sovereignty he had had not been gained by his capabilities but because the Lord was gracious to give it to him. All sovereignty belongs to the Lord - we are nothing without Him to breathe life into us, to raise us from the clutches of death, and to free us from sin's bondage. Whatever we have that is good is not of our own accord but because He has wished to bestow it upon us for His glory!

Because of Nebuchadnezzar's pride, the Lord humbled him as He had shown him in the dream, and "*immediately the word concerning Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled; and he was driven away from mankind and began eating grass like cattle, and his body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair had grown like eagles' feathers and his nails like birds' claws*" (Daniel 4:33). God had ordained and enacted this plan to play out for His glory. According to Nebuchadnezzar, "*At the end of that period, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven and my reason returned to me, and I blessed the Most High and praised and honored Him who lives forever...*" (Daniel 4:34a). After this, God blessed Nebuchadnezzar, and he was "*reestablished in my [Nebuchadnezzar's] sovereignty, and surpassing greatness was added to me*" (Daniel 4:36). The Lord humbled him in his pride and then exalted him (though he was still under the sovereignty of the Lord) in his humility for the sake of the name of the Lord. Indeed, "*GOD IS OPPOSED TO THE PROUD, BUT GIVES GRACE TO THE HUMBLE*" (James 4:6).

King Nebuchadnezzar had not gained his prowess by his own hands; rather, it was the Lord *allowing* and *giving* it to him that caused for his greatness. And as the Lord chose to give it, He also chose to take it away for a short time. We can boast in nothing that we ourselves have done. If we have done well in the sight of the Lord, it is because He ordained it in His sovereignty for one main reason: His glory. It is not our glory that we should be seeking to show to the world but the glory and majesty and praise of the One Who is the true King of Life.

Galatians 2:20 says, "*I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.*" There is no room for pride in the life of a Christian or even in the life of an unbeliever. Why? Because no one in the world, Believer or unbeliever, has done anything even remotely close to the greatest act of humility (and it's eternal, not a temporary act) that was and is displayed through the Son of God. The Lamb came as the most vulnerable person on the earth - a baby - raised in Nazareth, a place that was despised. In John 1:46, Nathanael said, "*Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?*" Isaiah 53:3 foretold the Christ would be "*despised and forsaken of men, A man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and like one from whom men hide their face He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.*"

Christ ministered in wisdom and grace. He rebuked in love and on a number of occasions told His disciples not to publicize His miracles. As 2 Corinthians 8:9 says, "*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich.*" As He prayed to the Father, "*I glorified You on the earth, having accomplished the work which You have given Me to do*" (John 17:4), His sole purpose and desire was to obey and glorify the Father Who sent Him, and in this, the Son also was glorified. He died the most cruel death imaginable, and even in His final breath He asked not for retribution but forgiveness for those who had crucified Him.

We are nothing before Him; therefore, how can we boast in anything of ourselves? If we boast, it must be of the Lord and what He has done in us, since we as Believers have been

crucified in Him. May the words of John the Baptist be a step-by-step reminder to us: *"He must increase, but I must decrease"* (John 3:30).

*"Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise, exalt and honor the King of heaven, for all His works are true and His ways just, and He is able to humble those who walk in pride."*  
(Daniel 4:37)