

6.21.2026 Trinity 3 (1 Peter 5:5-11)

Samuel Schereschewsky was born to Jewish parents in Lithuania in 1831. His early education was directed toward the goal of one day becoming a rabbi, but during graduate studies in Germany he became interested in Christianity, both through contact with missionaries and through his own reading of a Hebrew translation of the New Testament. In 1854 he immigrated to America, two years later began training for the priesthood, and was then sent by the Church to China. During his time there, he translated the Bible into Mandarin, was elected Anglican Bishop of Shanghai, founded St. John's University, and began translating the Bible into another Chinese dialect, called Wenli, but sadly, after some years he became seriously ill and almost entirely paralyzed.

In 1883 he resigned his position as Bishop, and spent the rest of his life completing his Wenli Bible, typing the last two thousand pages with the one finger he could still move. Four years before his death, he said, "I have sat in this chair for over twenty years. It seemed very hard at first. But God knew best. He kept me for the work for which I am best fitted."

In the book of Acts, saints Paul and Barnabas are quoted as saying, "*We must endure many hardships to enter the kingdom of God*" (Acts 14:22). Hardship, strife, and uncertainty are sure to be found on the narrow, difficult path that leads us home, and therefore it's of the utmost importance for Christians to believe, as the Bishop did, that God knows best, that He is keeping every one of us for the work for which we are best fitted, and the evidence that it's reasonable to have such faith in God, and in His plan, is clearly seen in the example of the saints that have gone before us.

When you consider the heroes of our faith, men and women who walked the narrow path, you can't help but see that for every one of them, to use the words of the Bishop, the work for which they were best fitted must have "seemed very hard at first." Think of Moses, who, after spending 40 years of his life herding sheep for his father-in law, spent the last forty years of his life herding a different kind of sheep as he led a stubborn, complaining, rebellious people in the deserted wilderness, or David, the shepherd boy who was anointed as the future king by Samuel, who stepped onto the battlefield

and slayed Goliath, but even after being anointed and victorious in battle, David would spend ten years on the run, hiding in rocks and caves from the jealous King Saul who relentlessly sought to kill him.

Think of Esther, who risked her life, her own execution, when she approached the Persian King uninvited in order to save the exiled Jewish people from certain destruction. She had “*come to the kingdom for such a time as this*” (Esther 4:14), but it must have seemed very hard at first. Consider the Blessed Virgin Mary, her Son was “*despised and rejected... a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*” (Isaiah 53:3), and as Simeon foretold, a sword would pierce her own soul as she completed the work for which she was best fitted (Luke 2:35).

Think not only of the examples from the Old and New Testaments, but of countless saints who have “*left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands*” (Matthew 19:29), not to serve their own interests, but to serve God, not to complete their own work, but His. The heroes of our faith were called, and kept by God, for the work for which they were best fitted, and like them, like the Bishop at his typewriter, Moses in the desert, and Esther before the king, we’ve all *come to the kingdom for such a time as this*.

Every person created by God in His own image and likeness, every Christian that is addressed time and again in Scripture as the “*beloved of God... called as saints*” (Romans 1:7), we all have a unique calling, a particular work for which we are best fitted. Oswald Chambers expressed that truth very clearly when he said, “One individual life may be of priceless value to God’s purposes, and yours may be that life” and to consider the example of the saints of God is to realize, not that yours may be that life, but that yours is that life, and one of the keys to living a life of priceless value to God, and completing the work for which you are best fitted is found in every saint, and described in the words of our Epistle, in which St. Peter instructed Christians in this way. He wrote, “*All of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time: casting all your care upon Him; for He cares for you*” (1 Peter 5:5-7).

The saints of God are a very diverse group, but one quality you'll find in every saint, without exception, is humility. Being *clothed with humility* is vital to completing the work for which God knows we're best fitted, because the only way any of us will complete any work of eternal value is by His grace, and as St. Peter tells us, *God resists the proud, and gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God*, writes Peter, *that He may exalt you in due time*. To the humble, God promises grace, and in due time, exaltation. In due time God will lift up the humble, and while it's not often easy to "*wait on the Lord*" (Psalm 27:14), such patient humility, which even for a saint seems very hard at first, will bring us to the best end at last.

God will lift up the humble in due time, just as He, in due time, exalted His only Son our Lord, who "*humbled Himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross*" (Philippians 2:8). In our day we strive to follow the examples of the heroes of our faith, but only because they so closely followed the Perfect Example set by our Savior Christ. In Him, the Triune God of Heaven and Earth humbled Himself by taking on human flesh. C.S. Lewis described the humility of the Incarnation in this way, he wrote, "The Eternal Being, who knows everything and who created the whole universe, became not only a man but before that a baby, and before that a fetus inside a woman's body. If you want to get the hang of it, think how you would like to become a slug or a crab."

We see the diverse examples of humility set for us by the saints as heroic acts of virtue, and yet when we consider how God in the Person of Jesus Christ humbled Himself by taking on human flesh, living the life we could not live, and dying the death that we deserve, their acts, and certainly our own, appear infinitely less humble. Clearly, we've always been tempted to think too highly, and too often, of ourselves. A better course would be found in thinking of ourselves less and our Lord more. As another saint, John the Baptist, declared, "*He must increase but I must decrease*" (John 3:30), and as God increases, as we make room for Him by humbling ourselves under His mighty hand, what seemed very hard at first, what appeared to be a burden, becomes a blessing.

May we ever be mindful of the truth that God knows best, and His plan is to keep us for the work for which we are best fitted. May we, by His grace, humble ourselves under His mighty hand, that He may exalt us in due time.