

Clothed In Humility

I'm not getting tired of saying this (hopefully, you're not either), but we've got another request. Today we're discussing the importance of humility in our lives. Next week's sermon will center on another request: the balance of emotion and order in worship. The individual requesting today's sermon wants to check their life and attitude. In particular, they want to see if pride is present. They understand the need for humility and gentleness.

Knowing how to address topics is always challenging. Here's how we'll approach it today - if our goal is to love God and our neighbors, we'll focus on showing humility towards God and one another.

Humility towards God:

- **Luke 18:9-14** - Jesus' comment at the end clarifies that God justifies the humble. However, in life, many exalt themselves. Such people have difficulty seeing anyone but themselves - their words give them away.
 - Notice the personal pronouns in this passage. It's interesting what he can see and what he can't. He's very much aware of what he's done. It's almost comical how it's worded, "prayed to himself." He's addressing it to God, but it makes you wonder who he's talking to. Do you notice anything missing from his prayer? There's no praising God. There are no requests of God. It seems he didn't need anything. There was no time to praise God because he was too busy praising himself.
 - May I remind us that the great physician can only heal the sick? Those who are well don't need Him as their primary physician. Jesus didn't come for the righteous but for sinners.
 - The tax collector can't even look up to God. He pleads for God to be merciful towards a sinner.

Humility towards others:

- **Colossians 3:12-13** "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive."
 - The church needs humility because pride gets in the way of reconciliation. As we've discussed, you typically encounter conflict when people are around one another long enough. Marriages and friendships also require humility for the same reason. Families need humility.
 - A person who struggles with pride can struggle with forgiveness. Do we think we're without sin? I loved when Jesus instructed those without sin to cast the first stone, and the first ones who walked away were the older ones. Time has a way of humbling you because you can look back and see your own downfalls. Are we looking for reconciliation or revenge? As time passes, we begin to value our families, friendship, spouses, and spiritual family. We don't have a problem forgiving others, but we don't struggle as much with saying, "I am the man."

- Brethren, we have to be able to look in the mirror. It has to be intentional. Yes, that means we look to God's word, but more importantly, we must seek to apply it. So many shy away from self-criticism. I noticed that affirmations are a thing now. I don't know what to think about it. We all need encouragement, need to be reminded of our gifts, etc. However, more than anything, we need to remember how God encourages us because He forgave us.
- **Philippians 2:1–3** "So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves."
- Conceit means "a vain or exaggerated self-evaluation, vanity, conceit, excessive ambition." I find the "exaggerated self-evaluation" interesting. In other words - you think too much of yourself.
- This is ultimately a heart issue.
 - Mark 7:20–23 *And he said, "What comes out of a person is what defiles him. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."*
 - **Pride.** A reasonable or justifiable self-respect; or improper and excessive self-esteem known as conceit or arrogance. (*Baker Encyclopedia of the Bible*)
 - **a state of undue sense of one's importance bordering on insolence, arrogance, haughtiness, pride** (BDAG).
- Life isn't about what we can get out of it or who we can get to praise us. When we begin to lose focus, we tend to focus on ourselves. When you only look at yourself, you don't treat others as they should. When you think too highly of yourself, you don't see the needs of others. Jesus is higher than everyone, yet He humbled Himself to serve humanity. So, not only do we have difficulty forgiving others, but we have a difficult time serving others. Why? Because we feel more important. We don't see them. We only see ourselves.
- Let's level with one another: not only does God take issue with those who are prideful (He opposes and brings down those who exalt themselves), but it hurts the body. It's the wrong picture of Christ, brings others down, and has been the downfall of many relationships in the body. It leads to a lack of trust and creates an environment the Lord never intended for His people. Our communication and approach in the body can be affected by pride. You're no longer listening when you think you're better or brighter. You're justifying. You cannot bend. Look how far Jesus was willing to bend down for us. So . . .
 - We need to be humble toward God.
 - We need to be humble in our studies.
 - We need to be humble in our conversations.
 - We need to be humble in our judgments.
 - We need to be humble enough to receive feedback.