

“From The Ashes” Sermon Series Part 2 “Humility”

**Scripture: John 13:1-11, Philippians 2:1-11, Ephesians 4:2,
Micah 6:8, Romans 12:3, Matthew 23:10-12**

Main Argument: Jesus demonstrated humility by coming to earth from heaven and washing the feet of His disciples. When we choose to exercise humility, we look most like Christ to the world around us.

Once upon a time a rider came across a few soldiers who were trying to move a heavy log of wood without success. The corporal was standing by just watching as the men struggled. The rider couldn't believe it. He finally asked the corporal why he wasn't helping.

The corporal replied: “I am the corporal. I give orders.” The rider said nothing in response. Instead, he dismounted his horse. He went up and stood by the soldiers and as they tried to lift the wood he helped them. With his help, the task was finally able to be carried out.

Who was this kind rider? The rider was George Washington, the Commander-in-chief.

This is a story, an example of humility, that invites our admiration of George Washington and conversely our disdain for the arrogant corporal. A story like this doesn't need any explanation because we all understand what's going on. We know because there are times in our lives when we've acted more like the corporal than we care to admit.

We want to be humble, to be helpful, to think of others more so than we think of ourselves.

“Humility”, it has been said, “Is a thing so fragile, that he who thinks he has it, has already lost it.”

True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less. – Rick Warren

And today we get an opportunity to learn from the example of Christ. The King of kings and Lord of lords who humbled himself and conquered death so that we might experience abundant life.

What a King; *what a Savior.*

Jesus Set the Example

As admirable of an example George Washington set in our story, the reality is that we have an even greater example in Christ Jesus for what it looks like to humble ourselves and serve others.

Listen to Paul's words from Philippians 2;

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." Philippians 2:3-5

Humility isn't as much a destination to be reached as it is an attitude to be embraced. And, it's an important attitude, posture, and way of living to God.

Paul's encouragement is for believers to be like Christ. For our attitudes to be like His. Our actions to mirror His. On the one hand you could say, "Yeah that's easier said than done, you're talking about the very son of God!" And on the other hand, Paul goes on to list out for us the attitudes and actions we should model;

"Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!" Philippians 2:5-8

Here are some specifics Paul identifies in Jesus and I believe we can all get on board with them;

- **Don't take advantage of your position.** Or said another way, don't lord yourself over others. Most all of us are leaders in some area of our lives at some point in our lives. We will all have opportunities to take advantage of others, but Paul is reminding us here that Jesus had all the power and opportunity in the universe to use His position to His advantage and instead, He chose to lay it all aside.
- **Serve others.** When Christ laid aside His royal position He chose instead to become a servant. Throughout His earthly ministry Jesus gave himself to the needs of others. We'll get into this point more later.
- **Give your life away.** Jesus' humility led Him ultimately to the cross. We are all familiar with this story, but what about your story. Where are you holding on too tightly to all the

things you want; your kingdom, your things, your dreams and aspirations? What do you need to let go of? Where, or who can you give your life to this coming week?

Humility is Kind of a Big Deal

It's odd to say that humility is *kind of a big deal*... Can you even imagine humility boasting about itself or pointing to its own jersey number like we see athletes do whenever they make a big play. Wouldn't it seem silly if humility danced around the boxing ring like Muhammed Ali, screaming, "I'M THE GREATEST! I'M THE GREATEST!" Of course it would be silly...

All joking aside, humility is a big deal. As evidenced in the life of Christ and in the number of different times and places the Bible encourages humility and gives warning to the destructive nature of pride. While I don't have time today to go through an exhaustive list, I do have time to hit some highlights and encourage you to set aside your own time for further study. Okay, so here we go.

We already heard from the Apostle Paul in his letter to the Philippians, so here's what Peter says about humility;

"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time." 1 Peter 5:5-6

James, the leader of the Jerusalem church, quotes the same Old Testament passage that Peter does when he says;

"God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

Both of these New Testament church leaders are encouraging humility and both men quote the same passage from Proverbs 3:34 when they describe *God opposing the proud and giving grace to the humble*.

Now obviously no one here wants God opposing them, which is a strong enough argument in itself to promote humility and selflessness. But let me take it a step further for you today. Turn with me to Psalm 138:6 which says,

"Though the Lord is on high He looks upon the lowly, but the proud he knows from afar."

That's the NIV translation, the NLT gives it even further clarity;

"Though the Lord is great, he cares for the humble, but He keeps His distance from the proud."

God's opposition is one thing, and it's horrible. But the idea in Psalm 138 that God distances himself from the prideful should be terrifying to us. Pride and arrogance are incompatible with

humility which means these are attitudes you will only find far away from Jesus. These are heart positions and postures that will keep you at a distance from righteousness. Pride can destroy you.

And it's a big enough deal that the bible addresses it again and again and again.

Not the least of which is the example, and the exhortation of Jesus himself, which is where we'll finish up our time today.

John 13:1-17 *Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet* is a familiar text. (Reference Image of statue)

At the end of verse 13:1 John records Jesus *showing them the full extent of His love*. Later in the chapter John records Jesus saying,

"Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them." John 13:14-17

So Jesus, the King of kings and Lord of lords got down on his knees, filled up a basin of water and washed the feet of his disciples. The washing of feet was an incredibly lowly act of service, as the feet were considered to be the dirtiest, most unclean part of the body at the time.

There is much to be taken from the example Jesus set here, but here's where I think it gets incredibly poignant. Jesus wanted the disciples to know how much He loved them. So he took the position of a simple house servant and washed their dirty feet clean. He did this to show that no one is too important to get down and serve another. He did this to show His love and care for the disciples.

His example in John 13 is recorded for the church today too. So we can see and know the heart and character of our Savior.

So it begs the question today...Who do you need to serve this week?

Where might you need to confess your pride? (Proverbs 29:1 says, *"Whoever remains stiff-necked after many rebukes will suddenly be destroyed--without remedy."* Some people's pride destroys their lives... pray for them)

How will the example of Christ impact your daily routine starting tomorrow morning?

Do you want to be opposed to God? Far from God? Incompatible with the righteousness of Jesus?

Let us pray.