



Humility
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The Crossing Church
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OPENING

The goal for this series is to help us disagree politically and love unconditionally no matter what race, class, color, gender or political preference we encounter in the world. This week we are talking about humility because every person needs a good dose of it to serve in the Kingdom of God. It is one of the primary characteristics of God's Kingdom -- Jesus says we must demonstrate humility in every conversation and encounter we experience, so let's listen, learn, love and be humble together.

QUESTION: What is your definition of humility? Why is it important to God?

SCRIPTURE¹

Philippians 2:1-11 Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests, but each of you to the interests of others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus. 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! Therefore, God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Proverbs 16:18 (Msg) First pride, then the crash – the bigger the ego, the harder the fall.

John 13:8 (Msg) Peter tells him to stop washing his feet. “You are above this!” Jesus tells Peter to sit down.

Luke 19:10 (Msg) “I have come to seek, and to save ... and to serve, those who are lost.”

1 Peter 5:5 And all of you clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.”

OBSERVATION

In ancient times, whenever anyone went into a house there would be a servant who would bend down and wash their feet. There were no shoes – just sandals and, with the muddy, dusty roads being traveled, there were a lot of dirty feet. In John 13, Jesus was with His disciples in an upper room and no one had had their feet washed. So, Jesus got up, got a basin of water and a towel and began one by one to wash their feet – and He included Judas. He did not say, “Now I am going to demonstrate humility for you.”

QUESTION: When have you literally washed someone's feet as an exercise in humility? What impact did that experience have on you?

QUESTION: Who is the Judas betrayer in your life? What do you think about washing his/her feet?

¹ All scripture is NIV unless otherwise indicated

QUESTION: Other than washing His disciples' feet, in what ways do you see Jesus' humility demonstrated in the four gospels?

APPLICATION

The message this week is good for our souls, but also painful for our false selves which are the basis for our pride. Humility means **there is nothing beneath us – there is no one beneath us** or, everything and everyone is important in God's Kingdom. How many of us can say that we are living our lives today based on this definition? Yet there is something beautiful about humility. We admire it and respect it when we see it in others. We might even wish it for ourselves, but it is one of those virtues that is actually never gained by merely seeking it. It's a paradox – when we think we have it, that means we don't! If we tell someone we are feeling especially humble today we have just demonstrated pride. What an irony that is! One of the most staggering ideas in Christianity is that Jesus is the most humble being. And what makes God the strongest being is that He is the most humble.

QUESTION: On a range of 1-10, 10 being the highest, how humble are you? How did you arrive at that number?

QUESTION: What are the tasks and who are the people you consider to be beneath you today?

The way we preserve humility is to "have the same mindset as Christ Jesus." It is not through selfish ambition or vain conceit which says, "I see the world from this perspective because I am the center of it." We all have some of the virus called pride. Killing it depends on whether we are willing to take the antidote – Jesus. One of the first things He said when He emerged into the public eye at the age of thirty was simply to say this, "The Kingdom of God is here." He did not say, "Look out world! Here I come!"

QUESTION: Where do you see yourself demonstrating selfish ambition or vain conceit in your life?

Pride is the ugliness we see in other people yet we are slow to see in ourselves. If humility is one of the highest values in God's Kingdom, pride is one of its greatest threats. Our scripture begins, "**Being** in very nature God..." and ends with "he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant." We can translate "being" in two ways: 1) **Although** means despite the fact that he is God, he decided to become a servant, or 2) **Because** He is God, He became a servant, meaning humility is an expression of divinity! The word because means "as a result of God's very nature" and is the more powerful phrase in defining "being." To be humble is to somehow participate in the life of God. If we want to know what He is like, we have only to look at Jesus who is the essence of a humble servant. Jesus redefines our image of who God really is. And humility is having an appropriate view of ourselves – and above all knowing our place in relation to who God is: His grace, His majesty, His greatness, and recognizing His humility. Our posture toward one another should mirror His posture toward us, and our responsibility is to show humility even when we disagree politically. In summary, Parker Palmer² said, "Humility is the only lens through which great things can be seen – and once we have seen them, humility is the only posture possible."

QUESTION: Are you willing to let pride or humility lead the way in your life? How can an observer tell?

QUESTION: With whom do you discuss politics most often? How do conversations go with someone of a different political viewpoint?

QUESTION: When have you burned a relational bridge over a political viewpoint?

Remember, everyone came from dust and that's where we are all headed. That realization should keep us humble.

PRAYER Heavenly Father, civility, dignity and humility are attributes we so want to model as we read how Jesus related to the people who followed Him. We are blessed with His power which is totally accessible, so we surely can approach others in all situations with humility. In Jesus' name. Amen.

² Parker Palmer is an American author, educator, and activist who focuses on spirituality and social change.



QUESTIONS

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QUESTION: Who is the Judas betrayer in your life? What do you think about washing his/her feet?

QUESTION: Other than washing His disciples' feet, in what ways do you see Jesus' humility demonstrated in scripture?

QUESTION: On a range of 1-10, 10 being the highest, how humble are you? How did you arrive at that number?

QUESTION: What are the tasks and who are the people you consider to be beneath you today?

QUESTION: Where do you see yourself demonstrating selfish ambition or vain conceit in your life?

QUESTION: Are you willing to let pride or humility lead the way in your life? How can an observer tell?

QUESTION: With whom do you discuss politics most often? How do conversations go with someone of a different political viewpoint?

QUESTION: When have you burned a relational bridge over a political viewpoint?