



*Every Spiritual
Blessing*

EPHESIANS - WEEK 9

Humility is the Christian Way

Opening prayer

Prayer for the millennial generation:

Begin to show your servant your greatness and your strong hand. (Deut. 3:24)

Prayer for a local church:

This morning we pray for our brother Kasey Crawford and Elevation Church.

Closing prayer

INTRODUCTION

“I am persuaded that love and humility are the highest attainments in the school of Christ and

the brightest evidences that He is indeed our Master.” (John Newton)

Now, another way of saying this is that humility is the hight of Christian maturity and humility is the greatest evidence that Christ is your Lord.

Humility is going to be our emphasis today. There is only one way to advance in the Christian life and that is humility. There is only one way to keep unity in the church and that is humility. There is

only one way to overcome evil and that is humility.

Big Idea: Humility is the Christian way.

Ephesians 4:1-6 (NIV)

4 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. **2** Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. **3** Make every effort to keep the unity of

the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

The NIV begins:

4 As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

The irony is that none of us are worthy of the gospel. But now that we have been given ears to hear and eyes to see, we must now rise to reflect well upon the gospel. And the only way to rise up is to be brought low. The way up is the way down, is the idea.

1 Point #1 - Your life says something about the gospel.

Our lives don't preach the gospel, but they do communicate something about the gospel.

“Do you think that the gospel is something you *live*? There is a sense in which this sounds reasonable. Because of our American, ‘can do’ culture... We certainly want to get the gospel *out*. But the truth is, we can’t live the gospel. If we try to go that route, we often put the emphasis on the messenger – you and me – instead of the message – the person and work of Jesus Christ. The danger, if we pursue *living* the gospel, is that we confuse the message of the gospel with the messenger, and then our personal failure becomes a failure of the gospel. The gospel is

not a plan for us to execute, or an ideal toward which we strive. We are not extensions of the incarnation, and our work is not redemptive. Jesus has conquered sin, death, and hell, and he calls us as his ambassadors to announce this good news to the world – as part of the Great Commission.” (Michael Horton)

So, as long as we don't confuse our lives with the gospel, we can say that our lives say something about the gospel. And humility says the most.

If you were with us in the beginning of this letter, you can see how Paul has gone from very lofty theological thoughts to this very practical application. He urges us to walk in a manner worthy of the gospel, which means you can make choices that are unworthy of the gospel and unworthy your call to the gospel.

The teaching of Jesus is instructive here. In the gospel of Matthew, the author gives the account of Jesus calling him. Matthew was a tax collector, not well regarded in Jewish culture even as a Jew, when Jesus called him.

Matthew 9:10-13

10 And as Jesus reclined at table in the house, behold, many tax collectors and sinners came and were reclining with Jesus and his disciples. 11 And when the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?” 12 But when he heard it, he said, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 13 Go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and

not sacrifice.’ For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.”

What did this mean for them? ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice.’ It meant they could offer all the right religious sacrifices and still miss the command to love their neighbor. What does it mean for us? We can have the right doctrine without the right practice. Now, I must emphasize that you cannot have the right practice without the right doctrine, but you can have the right doctrine without the right practice.

And that's the point. Our belief in the gospel should produce lives that point to the gospel. This doesn't confuse our lives with the gospel, but it does say that how we live says something about what we believe about the gospel. How the gospel has effected us tells people something about it.

Now, Paul doesn't focus on the negative aspects of walking in manner unworthy of the gospel, but he focuses on the positive aspects of living a life worthy of the calling you have received.

Only a human being whose life has infinite value, limitless value, could pay for the sins of many. That is who Jesus Christ is — God in the flesh.

And because Christ is God, He is Lord. This is where your life speaks of the gospel. Does your life say, “He is Lord.”

Matthew 7:21

21 “Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but the one who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

That's how your life says He is Lord — when you're actually concerned about doing His will. And when it comes to living a life worthy of the calling we have received, humility is the key. Humility is the Christian way, because it is the way of Christ.

2 Point #2 - Humility speaks the loudest.

2 Be completely humble

I like the emphasis of the NIV, because of how it captures the thought. Don't just have a touch of humility, a smidgen of humility, a bit of humility, don't just have some humility, but **be completely humble**. It's an imperative. It's a command. The ESV says "with all humility" which basically says the same thing, but not as forcefully.

What does humility look like in real life? Here are seven signs that God is working humility into your life.

1. If God is working humility into your life, then you will have times when feel like you're in the wilderness. (Deut. 8:2)

Deuteronomy 8:2

And you shall remember the whole way that the Lord your God has led you these forty years in the wilderness, that he might humble you, testing you to know what was in your heart, whether you would keep his commandments or not.

If you fall away when things aren't going well it's a sign that you don't trust God. You do not trust someone that you do not know. So, it's a sign that you do not know God that well. You have misconceptions about the gospel.

Also, if you fall away when things aren't going well it's a sign that you are not humbly looking to the Lord, but you are arrogantly looking to yourself or someone other than the Lord. It could also be a sign that you think God should do what you want.

2. If you find yourself concerned with doing the right thing, specifically what God says the right thing to do is, that's a sign God is working humility into your life, because...

Psalm 25:9

**9 He leads the humble in what is right,
and teaches the humble his way.**

You have to humble yourself continually to learn who God is and what He wants. In Christianity, your view of the world is always being corrected. The way you think about things is always being

corrected. Your view of Christianity is always being corrected.

3. When you hear how God has used someone, or is using someone, if you are glad to hear it, that's a sign of humility.

Psalm 34:2

**2 My soul makes its boast in the Lord;
let the humble hear and be glad.**

The proud will hear and get jealous. The humble will hear and be glad.

4. If you respect God's Word as the final authority in your life, it's a sign God is working humility into your life.

Isaiah 66:2

**2 All these things my hand has made,
and so all these things came to be,
declares the Lord.**

**But this is the one to whom I will look:
he who is humble and contrite in spirit
and trembles at my word.**

There is no walk with Jesus without the words of Jesus. This is an aspect of the Christian life that generation after generation must practice or they will soon be overwhelmed and overtaken by whatever culture they find themselves in. Five-minutes a day in prayer and Bible reading changed the course of my life. The Word of God is the final authority for life and practice of the Christian growing in humility.

5. If you can point to a time in your life when you God humbled you, that's a sign God is working humility into your life.

Daniel 4:37

37 Now I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and extol and honor the King of heaven, for all his works are right and his ways are just; and those who walk in pride he is able to humble.

Those are times to be thankful for and to remember and to learn from so as not to fall back into that same kind of pride, which you're probably susceptible to.

6. If you're conscious of following God's commands, it's a sign that he's working humility into your life.

If you do something just because the Bible says to do it.

Zephaniah 2:3

**3 Seek the Lord, all you humble of the land,
who do his just commands;
seek righteousness; seek humility;**

**perhaps you may be hidden
on the day of the anger of the Lord.**

There are some who are concerned about justice from a social-political perspective. But the average Christian who simply wants to do the will of God treats people justly. They live out justice and therefore make a more just society. They want people to be treated fairly whoever they are.

The problem with justice from only a social-political perspective is that it has the subtext of Christianity without the Christ of Christianity. In

other words, there is no moral authority in social-political justice. And this is one of the dangers of the time we're living in. Because we were created to worship God, human beings, even after abandoning God can't help but find something to worship. When cultures become more secular politics becomes a religion. That is why politics is so divisive right now. It is a religion to many people.

7. If you're not afraid to ask for help, it's a sign the Lord is working humility into your life.

Zephaniah 3:12

12 But I will leave in your midst

a people humble and lowly.

**They shall seek refuge in the name of
the Lord,**

Notice that they specifically seek help from the Lord. Who do you turn to first when you need help?

Right after Paul tells us to be completely humble, he gives us four characteristics of humility. So, if God is working humility into your life, you will

then have these characteristics or traits of humility consistently growing in your life.

1. **and gentle;**

How do you handle people? What's your tone like? Your manner? Now, some of you are mild-mannered by nature, so don't mistake that for humility.

- The Humble Award

Biblical humility is always connected to Christ, meaning that you will find yourself correcting yourself or adapting or adjusting your tone or whatever else because you are conscientious of being His servant and friend and brother. You will be gentle in both your manner and in your tone, even when delivering very hard truths.

2. **be patient,**

Even as you gently deliver the truth, it's going to take more than one discussion. People aren't apt

to get it the first time around. You have to be patient. This is why Paul adds the phrase “bearing with one another in love.”

3. bearing with one another in love.

When you're being patience you are most often bearing with someone in love. This means you are putting up with them sometimes. Because sometimes people will say really dumb things to you. The temptation is always to respond to what they're saying, to put them in their place, to show them that they just said something dumb. Or sometimes it's a behavior or a habit someone

has. We have to learn how to bear with the weaknesses of others by reminding ourselves this is how Jesus bears with us every day. He is gentle and humble at heart, he says, and deals with each of us in this very manner.

Because when we deal with each other in these humble ways it shows that we are...

- 4. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.**

3 | Point #3 - Humility is the key to unity.

Unity is something we maintain. So, there is maintenance in church life. And that maintenance is checking our attitudes toward others. Are we being gentle and patience, bearing with others in love?

4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call—⁵ one Lord, one faith, one

baptism, ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

- The ex-Mormon
- This is why doctrine is important.
- Jim Carrey's Jesus

APPLICATION

If it wasn't for humility you wouldn't be saved. Christ humbled himself to the point of death. The One who gave life to those who put him to death. Just by taking on human flesh, God the Son

humbled himself because just by being human there would be those who would think less of him, those who wouldn't be able to see past his humanity. When Jesus calls people to come to him one of the assurances he gives them is that he is gentle and humble at heart.

Becoming a Christian is always a humbling experience. For years we thought we were all that, but then God takes us like Nebuchadnezzar and humbles us, because it's in that humble state of mind that we see ourselves for the first

time. When you find yourself, it's never flattering.

But Christ underwent his humility to bring you to God the Father. He humbly endured the cross so you could have life.

If humility is the key to unity in the church, then consider that it's also the key to unity in your family.