

Humility

October 30, 2022

Welcome to the Beamsville Church of Christ Online Ministry. Services are presented on YouTube, Facebook and our website one week following recording. This week's message is titled "Humility." The scripture readings are Ephesians four, two to three and James 4:10. Thank you to Paul, Ed, Gloria and Glynnis for being part of the video.

Welcome, Announcements, Prayer

Hello. It's great to see you all today, both in-person and online. Join with me. I invite you to join with me today as we worship our Lord, learn a little from His word, and participate in communion around the table. A couple announcements before we begin. We have an involvement survey. Check the email bulletin that you get hopefully every week, which, by the way, if you don't get and you would like talk to Adam, I'm sure he would be happy to add you to the list. Anniversaries this week, John and Connie M. Prayer requests. Jack M and Len G are both home from the hospital. Val is still in the Grimsby Hospital and Mike is at home sick he would appreciate calls and prayers for himself. Let's go to God in prayer as we begin our worship today. Dear Lord, thank you for all you've given us. All you've blessed us with. Thank you for this time to be together. Lord, we come before you. A people who who need you. A people who need your saving grace, your empowerment, your your mercy, but also your confidence and your wisdom and your vision. Lord, help us as we move through this world and as we move through our lives, give us the strength to to see our way forward. Give us the wisdom to understand where and how to act and help us to be looking for opportunities to serve. Lord today, would you help us to worship you from our hearts? Help us to be effective. Help us to be open to what is said. And to learn a little more of you. May we come away from this place Blessed, energized and committed to you once more. In Jesus name. Amen. [Amen.]

Communion

In Scripture, there's evidence that people had courage and commitment to God's plan, and they were people of prayer. I think about some of the characters that are described in the Old Testament, like Noah, I want you to build an ark. It's going to take you 125 years. Now, do you think that that took a bit of courage to go about that rabbit in the middle of the desert. Assemble the lumber, to cut the boards, to put that ark together, or to be involved in rounding up the animals. And sure, God helped him with that. That would be a completely impossible task without God's help. And it took courage to commitment to prayer. It took some conversations, I'm sure, between Noah and God for that to happen. Abraham, pick up your family and move. Where am I going? I will show you. How many are up for that? Moses, you need to lead my people out of Egypt! Though, this is a problem. We've been enslaved for generations and generations. God showed them the way Joseph. Person of character is deserted by his family, thrown in a pit. He ends up in another country which is not particularly friendly to these Jewish folks. He's put in really difficult situations, but through prayer and courage and commitment, he does the will of God.

Then there's Joshua, and God actually talks to Joshua, and he says, No man will stand before you as long as you live. Just as I was with Moses, so will I be with you and I will not fail you or abandon you. Be

strong and confident and courageous for you. Will give this people as and as an inheritance. The land which I swore to your fathers to give them only be strong and very courageous. Be careful to do in accordance with the entire law which which Moses, my servant, commanded. You do not turn from it to the right or to the left so that you may prosper and be successful wherever you go. And there's Esther, and there's David. And there's the the prophets of the Old Testament under enormous pressure to do God's will.

And then there's Jesus. Jesus is asked to do something really difficult, to abandon heaven, to come to Earth, to die, to be picked on, to be sworn at, to be spit at, to be persecuted. And you know what he what he was about to do was not easy, the Garden of Gethsemane. And he came out and went as he was his habit to the Mount of Olives. And the disciples followed him. When he arrived at the place, he said to them, Pray continually that you may not fall into temptation. And he withdrew from them about a stone's throw, knelt down and prayed, saying, Father, if you are willing remove this cup from me yet not my will, but yours be done. Now an angel appeared to him from heaven, strengthening him and being in agony and anguish almost to the point of death. He prayed more intently, and this went became like drops of blood falling down to the ground when he arose from his prayer. He came to his disciples and found them sleeping from sorrow.

So Jesus had to have courage. He spent time in prayer. And He was committed to God's plan. This memorial, as we remember Jesus, we need to remember that it was not easy, that it was filled with love. But one of the things that stands out in all of these people, Old Testament, New Testament. There was an element of humility. There was an element of listening to God. There was an element of prayer. And there was an element of courage. I think it's time for all of us to be renewed with the resolve of Scripture, prayer and courage in our lives, personally and in the life of this gathering.

Let us pray. Our Father in Heaven. We are thankful to you for so many wonderful examples of courage and commitment to your will and to your word. We pray for renewal. We pray for courage. We pray for a way forward in our lives and in the life of this church. That honors the sacrifice of your son, Jesus. And we remember him with Thanksgiving and love for what he has done for us. And we pray, Father, that we can we can be emboldened by his love and his courage in our own lives, as we wait before you in this life, we pray this in Jesus name, amen.

Scripture Reading

This morning, the first one is from Ephesians four versus two and three, and the second one is from James four, verse ten Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace. Humble yourselves before the Lord and He will lift you up.

Sermon

Good morning. Good morning. Thank you. Ed and all the others. So just to we're going to talk about humility this morning and just to go back over the scripture that was read, be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love, make every effort to keep the unity of the spirit through the bond of peace. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up. Don has been preaching to us about the fruits of the spirit, and so far he's talked to us about love, joy and peace. I had already chosen what I wanted to talk to you about today, and it occurred to me that

humility, our humility plays an important role in how the spirit works to produce the fruits of the spirit in our lives, even in the two short scriptures that we just read. There's love, peace and patience. And so I do believe that there is a close and really important link between humility and our ability to receive and make use in service of the gifts that the Holy Spirit gives us. Just like a fruit tree needs soil and earth and rain and bees to bear fruit. I think that humility is an important part of the environment, that the fruits of the spirit will thrive or wither in.

Merriam-Webster defines humility as the freedom from pride or arrogance. I'm going to look at Romans 12 verses three through eight. I say to every one of you, Do not think of yourselves more highly than you are, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you for justice. Each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function. So in Christ, through so many, we form one body and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith. If it is serving, then serve. If it is teaching, then teach. If it is encourage, then give encouragement. If it is giving, then give generously. If it is to lead, do it diligently. If it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

I've got several really, really good friends. One of them is with me this morning. And we have been friends for like well over 30 years. We walk in faith together. We are deeply involved in each other's lives and they've been involved very much in shaping my character. We've shared the faith that we have together. We've leaned on each other. We've even borrowed each other's faith right through some really tough times in our lives. We've wrestled through some very, very difficult character issues, and we've always been allowing one another to speak the truth in love to one another. And that's always in love and with deep compassion. So I want to share with you this morning one of my most memorable, what I call spiritual aha moments in my faith walk. I was born into a very angry family. My parents fought all the time and they separated and divorced when I was nine. I learned very early that the safest place to be was inside my own head. I thought deeply about life even as a child when I was dating my first husband. He called me wise and an old soul. I was good at school, enjoyed every subject and even the ones that I wasn't very good at. But I really enjoyed the learning that I was able to participate in.

So fast forward to the years after I became a Christian. I was 27 when I was baptized, and so I was in my early thirties. Wait a second, that doesn't make sense, does it? So this this experience I was baptized when I was 27, but this experience occurred when I was in my early thirties. You know how many? It doesn't matter how many times you read and reread, it's like, Yeah, that doesn't make sense. But I was, I was in my early thirties, ah, the church that we were going to had several classes every, every year on Wednesday nights and I worked very hard at them and did very well on the exams. Thank you very much. And I even did well on the Scripture memory, although I have to say for me it was it was brutal. I don't have a good memory for Scripture. I don't have a good memory for actually anything but memory is not my strong point. But I studied my Bible vigorously and every day, and I loved the insights that I got from God. I loved talking about and debating issues, and I construct a good small argument about almost any topic, right? Leslie? And I still can. But I was angry. She once told me it was actually Leslie that said this, that her mother that she told her mother that I was the angriest person she'd ever met. One day when we were debating something or other, she said to me in frustration. She said that I was so arrogant. I was floored. I loved my dad very much, but he was the

arrogant guy in our family. He was always puffed up about his stature in life, and he had a reputation at work for being able to take on anyone. I wasn't like that. I was just a mother. I mean, gosh, But I agreed that I would pray about it.

Hanan Parvez, who's a psychologist, author and blogger, says the following about arrogant people and their effect on others. And this is very true about me. And so I want you to know what I mean when I say arrogant. Those who are arrogant are likely to be intellectually arrogant as well. Intellectual arrogance is the tendency in people to regard belief as true simply because it is their own belief. Just as arrogant people are competitive in other domains of life, they're also competitive when it comes to beliefs. Their beliefs are like their valuable possessions that they're hardly willing to give up. People with intellectual arrogance identify with their beliefs, their cherished beliefs contribute to their sense of self-worth. So losing them would mean losing their identity and worthiness an arrogant people dread nothing more. That describes me very well. So I prayed every day. I was really bothered by not being able to see something this unpleasant in myself. I prayed literally every day for two weeks, and I'm not talking like, Oh God, please help me to see arrogance. Like, it was I was pleading with, God, help me to see this. I do not see it. I really did not see it. Then one day it's kind of funny. Like, I remember the day and the moment so well. I was out on my front lawn digging up dandelions with one of those tools that you put down and you pop up the dandelions in them, pull them out, and all of a sudden, just as I was doing it, it was like a ton of bricks and really, I believe it was a flash of insight from the Holy Spirit.

Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought. I thought a lot, and I really thought a lot about what I thought. In fact, I thought a lot about what I thought I had. I thought that my thinking was better than anybody else's. Nobody had better thoughts than I did. I even thought that what I thought was more insight insightful than God. I am arrogant. In the Romans 12 passage of Scripture that we read. I got all caught up in all of the gifts of the members of the body, of Christ and missed that critical point. Do not think of yourselves more highly than you ought. Romans 12, verse three in the amplified Bible says, For by the grace of God given to me, I say to every one of you not to think more highly of himself and of his importance and ability than he ought to think, but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has apportioned to each a degree of faith and a purpose designed for service. Okay. My thinking was not aligned with service, and my lack of humility was totally getting the way, getting in the way of being loving, joyful, and filled with peace. Philippians two verses 3 to 5 and then 6 to 11 says, Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather humility. Value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests, but to each but each of you, to the interests of others in your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Jesus Christ, 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 the 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, on Earth and under the Earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

As James four says, Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up. Jesus humbled himself. And God lifted him up. He could do that for me to Romans 12 two, which is the verse immediately preceding the, you know, don't think of yourselves more highly than you ought says do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. I had

known for some time that I needed a transformation, and I prayed about it. And here God was answering my prayers and showing me my biggest stumbling block. This was really a pivotal self-understanding for me. I believe it was totally revealed by God who was faithful in answer to my prayers. I am still very much in my sinful nature, arrogant. I see it in so many of my ways. But where I once closed my ears to what others were saying about a given topic, I learned to listen carefully to them and to try to see their thinking from their perspective, from their personal culture, which is something that Dawn talks a lot to us about in his messages. James 1:19 to 25 says, My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this. Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry because anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you which can save you. I was definitely in my competitiveness and commitment to being right, hurting my friends and shutting them out of my life. I was argumentative and left people feeling like they needed to walk on eggshells around me. James goes on to say, Do not merely listen to the word and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. Anyone who listens to the word but does not do it, it says, is like is someone who looks at his face in the mirror. And after looking himself goes away and immediately forgets what he looks like. But whoever looks intently into the perfect law that gives freedom and continues in it, not forgetting what they have heard, but doing it. They will be blessed in what they do. It was time for me to do what the mirror of my close fellowship with my friend, together with what the Holy Spirit was revealing to me.

It changed my relationships to my closest friends. Letting go of what I thought and my perspective allowed a gentleness and openness into my heart after a time and honestly, with much patience. I found that the anger I had when I had once felt it was being dissipated and replaced by a deeper empathy towards others and the better understanding and trust that God was in control. I had the perspective of me, but God had the perspective of omniscience in time and space and in every single person's life. And I had the confidence that he loved me and knew even better than I did what I needed. It was a giant letting go. I could talk to my friends without getting all twisted up that they didn't understand. God understood. It changed my relationship big time with my first husband. It just took the emphasis off of being right and of course, trying to prove how right I was to humbly allowing God to work through the situation, through patient prayer, and through me working to love my husband better. I had at one point in our marriage, realized that I had fallen out of love with him and I was able to realize my sin and beg God to change my heart. I had heard that marriage is not 50/50, but it's 100% what I put into changing the way things are. Several years later, when he died, we had restored our relationship completely. You know, the way marriages are completely is not completely. But it was, you know, although I often wrestle with it, subduing my arrogance literally, and listening and allowing others ideas to surface, it changed my relationships at work. I came to understand that God would work out the truth and the best way to meet the needs of the students and teachers with whom I worked. It was good both for the situation and for me personally to do things in a way that wasn't the way that I thought it should be. Even though I know I had the best interests of the teachers and students at heart, and I thought long and hard about the most kind and gentle ways to help people to see that teaching differently would make a difference to how students learn.

Not only did I change, but my faith in God and in his powerful goodness and love toward me and those I care about grew in leaps and bounds. I know that God is able and that I am not. He has sustained me in my darkest hours as I wrestle with all that life has thrown at me. But I am filled with an inexpressible

joy in knowing that he who promised is faithful. Never will he leave me. Never will he forsake me. And so I continue always seeing how my arrogance raises its ugly head and asking God to help me to be humble. Humility is not my middle name. It's not. It's really not. But I know how much I have been changed by allowing God, really inviting God to show me my arrogance and by doing what I can to humble myself before God's eyes and trust that He will work all things out for the good. I've seen in my own life what Philippians 12 to 16 says. Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed, not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence, continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfill His good purpose as an extension of working out our salvation. James goes on to say, sort of like, as you're working it out, this is kind of a how. So that's one of the things I love about the Bible is it's so practical. He says, Do everything without grumbling or arguing so that you may become blameless, impure children of God without fault in a warped and crooked generation. Then you will shine like stars among them, like stars in the sky as you hold firmly to the word of life.

My salvation is in this life. I have been saved by the ravages that I believe was a life that would have been focused completely on myself. What I think a life very much in opposition like. Think about that saved from a life in opposition to the Lord and God of the universe. I can't even imagine what the ravages of that life would have been. As the Scripture says, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. My soul was saved at my baptism, but me was saved and is ongoing. Being saved by my willingness to see the living out of my life from perspectives other than the one that comes to me naturally and its work. And it's scary at times and takes great courage. But as one of my dearest friends has said, humility will take you to places that only faith can sustain you. When I face my sin, confess my sin, then only faith can sustain me. Thinking about how other people think. I'll say that again. Thinking about how other people think. It's a very unnatural act. But it's necessary for for humility and for empathy to grow. How would you feel if I were in that person's skin? It's a secret to good teaching. It's a secret to being a good team member in the workplace. It's a secret to being a good friend. It's a secret to giving good gifts. It's a secret to a good marriage. It's a secret to loving others. Here are a few more passages of Scripture that have helped me.

Philippians one, verse 27 says, Whatever happens, conduct yourself in the matter in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ. Ephesians 4:2 and then 31 and 29 says, Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other. Just as in Christ, God forgave you. Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander along with every form of malice. Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths. But only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs that it may benefit those who listen. Ephesians four, verse 22-24 says That, however, is not the way of life you learned when you heard about Christ and were taught in Him in accordance with the truth, that as in Jesus, you were taught with regard to your former way of life to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires, to be made new in the attitudes of your mind, and to put on the new self created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness. I needed a new attitude of my mind. The love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness and self-control. All the fruits of the Spirit in God in Galatians five, 22 and 23 evaded me. I find that working on my own humility by being willing to pray, to see my own arrogance, and to learn how to humble myself in the sight of the Lord is a key to unlocking the ability of the Spirit to allow me to bear good fruit as I continue to work out my salvation, which for me is the renewing of my mind. I'm filled with joy and gratitude for what God has done for me as I share my faith with my trusted friends and with you. I'm in awe of what God can do in our lives.

The friend, this friend who in desperation and agony of heart, told me I was arrogant so many years ago, has told me that that is a word that no longer characterizes me.

Glory honestly, and having struggled with this as much as I have in my mind, I mean that this is the truth, the fact that that's a word that no longer characterizes me. Is glory be to the father, into the sun and to the Holy Spirit. This is the kind of joy that that was sung about when Jesus was born. This is joy to the world that we can change. Finally, Jesus says, Come to me all who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me. For I am gentle and humble and heart. And you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Closing Prayer

Thank you, everyone. Today, I should say for a great time to worship our Lord. Your lesson reminded me of. I don't know if anyone else will remember this tonight. I grew up down the road somewhere about a half an hour. That way I can't see the sun and one of the songs that we sing down in Fenwick was and I think this is the right "None of self, all of thee." Does that sound familiar to anybody? Well, in that song, it's I think it's got five verses and it's a progression. So it starts out with none-or-all of self. None of Thee. And then little of self are ---. Most. Sorry, most of self, and a little of Thee. And then some. Some. And then the inverse. And then a little of self and. And most of Thee. And then none of self; all of Thee. It's a- it's a journey that we're all on at different points in our lives. I growing up, I always used to wonder how we sang the last hymn or the last verse exactly. In Christ, we can. Of course, but but I think that's an A and it's a wonderful testament to our Lord that He walks with us on that on that journey, and each one of us has a little different path of that journey. It has reminded me of that. And and thank you very much. Let's close today with a prayer and a blessing for our week.

Dear Lord. Thank you for all you've given us and all you've blessed us with. We thank you for this time, Lord. May you bless us as we go out from this place, as we as we go throughout the week, we see the challenges and opportunities that we have. Lord, may you help us to look to you for how we live, how we speak, how we act, how we choose to act or speak. Help us to to live a life who have worshiped today and have hopefully learned a little something of you and of your word in Jesus' name, amen.

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