

HUMILITY

“So if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don’t fall” (1 Cor. 10:12)

Today’s lesson will be about the importance of humility! Remember: **“Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall” (Prov. 16:18)**. Remember! Jesus **“humbled himself and became obedient unto death” (Phil. 2:8)**. Remember! **“Christ suffered for you, leaving you an example, that you should follow in his steps” (1 Pet. 2:21)**.

Listen carefully to these words of Jesus: **To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’“But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.” (Lk. 18:9-14)**.

- Remember! **“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble (Ja. 4:6)**.
- Haman was proud and confident that he was the man whom the king was going to honor, but he was wrong! The king honored Mordecai, the man Haman hated, and then Haman was hanged on his own gallows (Esther 5:1-7:10).
- The Jewish intellectuals were proud and looked down upon the uneducated followers of Jesus. They said: **“This mob that knows nothing of the law – there is a curse on them” (Jn. 7:49)**. In reality it was the followers of Jesus who were blessed and their arrogant critics who were cursed!
- In fact, these proud scholars of the law told Pilate: **“We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God” (Jn. 19:7)**. THEY COULD NOT HAVE BEEN MORE WRONG! IN THEIR PRIDE THEY HAD REJECTED GOD WHO HAD COME TO EARTH AS THE CHIEF CORNERSTONE! (Acts 4:11)
- Sometimes God reveals things unto uneducated people so they can understand things that the scholars cannot. Jesus said: **“I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them unto little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure” (Matt. 11:25-26)**.
- Being close to Jesus is a great help in understanding the will of God!

GOD CAN DO ANYTHING HE WANTS TO

- The parable of the laborers in the vineyard illustrates that God can do what he wants to do (Matt. 20:1-16). The “owner” of the vineyard is like God. He hired workers at different times of the day but paid them the same. The first were hired early in the morning and agreed to work all day for a denarius. Then the “owner” hired others at the third hour, the sixth hour, the ninth hour, and finally at the eleventh hour. The “owner” then decided to pay everyone the same wage that he promised those who worked all day. When they complained the “owner” explained: **“Don’t I have the right to do what I want to do with my own money?” (Matt. 20:15)**.

- Remember! God created the universe! He owns everything! He owns all the beasts of the forest and the cattle upon a thousand hills (Ps. 50:10). No man can tell God what to do! God can do anything he wants to do!
- Jonah boldly predicted **“Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned” (Jonah 2:4)**. Jonah was wrong! The king of Nineveh repented and so did the whole nation also (Jonah 3:6-9). **“When God saw what they did and how they had turned from their evil ways, he had compassion and did not bring upon them the destruction he had threatened” (Jonah 3:10)**. Jonah, as you know, didn’t like this! He was angry with God. God was right and Jonah was wrong! God is God and can do anything he wants to!
- God, in his infinite wisdom, has appointed Jesus to be our Judge: **“Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son” (John 5:22)**.
- The fact that Jesus is our Judge is the will of God and we can do nothing about it!
- Someday we will understand and agree that God is right for on Judgment Day **“At the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father” (Phil. 2:10-11)**.
- On Judgment Day everyone will know that the Judge of all the earth has done right (Gen. 18:25).
- Please do not be so arrogant that you try to tell God what He can do!

STUPID ARGUMENTS

Paul wrote to Timothy: **“Don’t have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments, because you know they produce quarrels. And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but must be kind to everyone, able to teach, not resentful. Opponents must be gently instructed, in the hope that God will grant them repentance leading them to a knowledge of the truth, and that they will come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil, who has taken them captive to do his will” (2 Tim. 2:23-26)**.

- First, please note that pride invariably is involved in arguments: **“Pride only breeds quarrels, but wisdom is found in those who take advice” (Prov. 13:10)**.
- When proud religious people argue it is a bad witness to the unsaved, and often leads to division. So Paul told Timothy: **“Warn them before God against quarreling about words; it is no value, and only ruins those who listen” (2 Tim. 2;14)**.
- It did no good for the laborers in the vineyard to argue with the owner of the vineyard. The owner of the vineyard had every right to do whatever he wanted to do with his own money.
- Neither do we have a right to disagree with God! **“Let God be true and every man a liar” (Rom. 3:4)**.
- We need to be aware of Satan’s schemes that he might not outwit us (2 Cor. 2:11).
- God is good, and Satan is bad! When God finished creation He saw that everything He had created was “very good” (Gen. 1:31). Satan, by contrast, has been a murderer from the beginning and is the father of lies (Jn. 8:44). Everything Satan does is bad!
- One of Satan’s schemes is to get us to argue about the good things God has given. For example:
 - God has given us “one baptism” (Eph. 4:4). This “one baptism” can unite the divided people of the earth into One Body whether they are Jews or Greeks, slave or free (1 Cor.

12:13). Sadly, Satan has tricked the followers of Jesus in arguing and dividing over baptism!

- God has given us the “communion” supper to unite us. When we come together to break bread **“we who are many, are one body, for we all partake of the one loaf” (1 Cor. 10:14-17)**. Sadly, Satan has tricked the followers of Jesus into arguing and dividing over “communion”.
- There is only one Holy Spirit (Eph. 4:4). It doesn’t matter whether you are rich or poor, Jew or Gentile, slave or free, God gives the Holy Spirit to every one of His children. **“If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ” (Rom. 8:9)**. Sadly Satan has tricked the followers of Jesus into arguing and dividing over the Holy Spirit.
- Jesus is coming again. When Jesus ascended into heaven two men dressed in white said to the apostles: **“Men of Galilee . . . why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven” (Acts 1:10-11)**. The glorious appearing of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ is a “blessed hope” and ought to unite all believers (Tit. 2:13). Sadly, however, Satan has tricked the followers of Jesus into arguing and dividing over the second coming of Christ.
- Please don’t let Satan trick you into foolish and stupid arguments.
- We need to be humble! Paul wrote: **“If you forgive anyone, I also forgive him – if there is anything to forgive – I have forgiven it in the sight of Christ for your sake, in order that Satan might not outwit us. For we are not unaware of his schemes” (2 Cor. 2:10-11)**.
- Like Timothy, we too need to not have anything to do with foolish and stupid arguments. We also need to be humble, kind and gentle to those who want to argue. We need to pray that God will grant them repentance so they can come to their senses and escape from the trap of the devil! (2 Tim. 2:25-26).
- When we defend our faith we need to do so with “gentleness and respect” (1 Pet. 3:15-16).

THE SILENCE OF SCRIPTURE

We need to speak where the Bible speaks, and to be silent where the Bible is silent! God has a reason for everything He says and also has a reason for everything He does not say! Sadly, many denominations have concluded that the Bible does not say enough and have created their own creeds to clarify what they think is missing in the Bible. Martin Luther, for example, began a movement based on “sola scriptura”(Only the Scriptures). Then the Lutheran Church decided that the Scriptures were not enough and adopted the Augsburg Confession of Faith. The Augsburg Confession is a lengthy document with 28 articles. It was adopted in 1530 and was the first of the great Protestant Confessions of the Reformation. All orthodox Lutheran churches base their teachings upon this document.

Then other denominations also decided that the Bible was not enough. The Church of England added the Anglican Creed, the Presbyterian Church added the Westminster Confession of Faith, the Methodist Church added the Methodist Book of Discipline, the Baptist Church added the Philadelphia Confession of Faith, etc. Each of these denominations dared to speak where the Scriptures were silent.

If a creed says more than the Bible it says too much. If it says less than the Bible it does not say enough. If it says the same thing as the Bible it is not needed!

The Scriptures admonish us: **“Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought” (Rom. 12:3)**. It seems that anyone trying to improve on the Bible thinks more of themselves than they ought to. Such arrogance does not reflect the spirit of humility and obedience manifested by Jesus?

The Catholic Church decided that the Bible was not enough and officially declared the infallibility of the Pope in 1870. For example, on November 1, 1950, Pope Pius XII solemnly defined the dogma of the Assumption of Our Lady into heaven. This “dogma”, of course, is not in the Bible but every Catholic must now believe it. Catholics apparently believe that they have an “Infallible Interpreter” of the Bible.

Protestants also decided that the Bible is not enough, but reject the authority of the Pope. Protestants apparently believe in the infallibility of their creeds for just as Catholics must believe in the Assumption of Mary to be a Catholic, you must believe the Protestant’s creed in order to belong to their denomination. So the Catholics believe in an “Infallible Interpreter” and the Protestants believe in an “Infallible Interpretation”.

It is dangerous to “add to” or “take away” from the Word of God. The last chapter of the Bible contains this warning: **“I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book” (Rev. 22:18-19)**.

CLOTHE YOURSELF WITH HUMILITY

“Young men, in the same way be submissive to those who are older. All of you, clothe yourself with humility toward one another, because ‘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. Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you” (1 Pet. 5:5-7).

Our word “school” comes from the Greek word “scholē” which means “leisure”. The apostles of Jesus had to work for a living and consequently did not have “leisure” to study. This caused the Jewish scholars to look down upon them as **“unschooled, ordinary men”** (Acts 4:13). These proud scholars wanted to punish the apostles for being ignorant, but Gamaliel, a wise and humble man, gave them this wise advice: **“I advise you: leave these men alone! Let them go! For if their purpose or activity is of human origin it will fail. But if it is from God you will not be able to stop these men; you will only find yourselves fighting against God” (Acts 5:38-39)**.

Gamaliel was right! He apparently had clothed himself with humility!

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell the story of a woman who, like the apostles, was among the unschooled mob criticized by those **“who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else”**. This poor woman was sick and had been subject to bleeding for twelve years (Matt. 9:18-22; Mk. 5:21-34; Lk. 8:40-48). She had spent all of her money on doctors but only got worse. Even though she was not a scholar or teacher of the law, she was apparently seeking God with all of her heart. Remember this promise from God: **“You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart” (Jer. 29:13)**. According to the law this woman was unclean and was not to be

in public (Lev. 15:25-27). According to the law “everyone” she touched became unclean and “everything” she touched also became unclean. Apparently, however, she was searching for God with all of her heart. Consequently, she not only found God, but also was healed of her infirmity.

This poor ignorant woman said to herself: **“If only I can touch his cloak I will be healed” (Matt. 9:21)**. Where did she ever get an idea like this? There is not one Scripture in all the Bible that makes such a promise! It would be easy to argue with such a woman and dismiss her ridiculous idea. Humble people, however, like Gamaliel, would leave her alone and see what happened!

As you know when she touched the clothes of Jesus the bleeding immediately stopped! At the time Jesus was surrounded by many people who were constantly pressing up against him. When this woman touched his garment, however, **“At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked ‘Who touched my clothes?’ ‘You see the people crowding against you his disciples answered, and yet you asked who touched me?’” (Mk. 5:30-31)**.

Please remember that God can do anything He wants to:

- God can create the heavens and the earth (Gen. 1:1).
- God can part the waters of the Red Sea (Ex. 14:16).
- God can enable a donkey to speak with a human voice (Nu. 22:28-30).
- God can make the sun stand still (Josh. 10:12-13).
- God can do anything He wants to!
- Apparently God gave this uneducated peasant woman the idea to touch the garment of Jesus and be healed. It worked! Jesus did not criticize this woman for doing something unbiblical, but congratulated her by saying: **“Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be free from your suffering” (Mk. 5:34)**.
- WE NEED TO CLOTHE OURSELVES WITH HUMILITY AND REFUSE TO TELL GOD WHAT HE CAN OR CANNOT DO!

WHAT DOES THE LORD REQUIRE?

God commanded sacrifices and offerings, but it is possible to sacrifice a bull in the same way you would kill a man. It is possible to offer a lamb like you were breaking a dog’s neck. It is possible to make a grain offering like you were presenting pig’s blood (See Isaiah 66:3). For this reason God explained how to correctly make a sacrifice: **“This is the one I esteem: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word” (Is. 66:2)**.

The prophet Micah said it like this: **“With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of olive oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.” (Micah 6:6-8)**

PLEASE BE HUMBLE FOR GOD HATES PRIDE AND ARROGANCE! (PROV. 8:13)