



Welcome to our Sunday Service (13/06/21)

Humility: Walking humbly with our God

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Some of Mels' prayer: Father in heaven we thank you for the tremendous privilege of being able to share with you all that is in our lives; to bring to you our thanks & our gratitude; the folks we love who need you; the issues that sometimes bring fear. Father, thank you that you know us so well & have made it so possible for us to come and share with you, through Jesus. Thank you for the freedom we have now because of him to come to you as our Father. We offer our thanks in Jesus' name, Amen.

Today we are looking at another of our church's core values: humility or being humble.

How do we define humility? Webster's dictionary says it is **freedom from pride or arrogance: the quality or state of being humble**. Abraham Lincoln alludes to it: **It's surprising how much you can accomplish if you don't care who gets the credit.**

Pride is one of the biggest, ugliest monsters Christians have to deal with, sometimes manifesting itself in obvious ways, other times more subtle. While contemplating humility I found myself eating humble pie on several occasions!



Let's look at 3 Ms to help unpack biblical humility, its impact on us as individuals & as a church.

M1 Prophet Micah: contemporary of Isaiah & Amos, approx 700 yrs BC. Micah pulled no punches with his call to repentance for the Israelites, but he also offered forgiveness & great hope to those who turned back to God. Israel spiritually is a "type" of God's people, church. Micah's message can be applied today, whenever God is sadly mocked & His "core values" rejected. **And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy & to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)**

Pride has a lot to answer for. Maybe if we learnt humility first, we would be more inclined to act justly & mercifully? Micah's wasn't a new message – God gave commandments & guidelines to His people many years earlier. Which brings us to our 2nd M.

M2 This "M" is described in scripture as the **"meekest"** or **"most humble"** man on earth (**Numbers 12:3**) Who is this? Moses. His life = 3 equal portions of 40 years. Over 4 books of the bible! There is a great overview by Stephen in **Acts 7** picking up at **v20** which is much quicker to read!

1st 40 years Egypt – from Water Baby to Prince of Egypt.

Because his mother & sister were involved as nurses in his early upbringing, he learnt of God. Trained in Egypt to become great: military, excellent orator, respected leader and also popular, according to the Jewish historian, Josephus. Then....personal downfall. He saw an Egyptian beating a Hebrew & reacted impulsively, murdering the Egyptian & burying him in the sand. The next day, while trying to separate 2 Hebrews fighting, one of them asks: ***Who made you ruler & judge over us?***

I wonder: Did position & power go to Moses' head? Did he think he had the right to kill? Did popularity & leadership cause him to believe his bad reactions would be overlooked? That his own people would understand? The Bible says:

Humility comes before honour' (Prov 15:33):

Humble yourself before the Lord, & he will lift you up (James 4:10).

2nd 40 years Midian – from Palatial Heights to Desert Depths.

A time of running as fugitive, meeting his wife-to-be, having 2 sons, & working for father-in-law. Add insult to injury, his new job was to be a shepherd. Egyptians had no respect for shepherds ([Gen 46: 33-34](#)) Moses had more humble pie to eat. Imagine the ridicule if they knew he was looking after sheep! He also had plenty of thinking time. ***Would he have reflected on his status – rise & fall? Had his attitude changed? Maybe he gazed at starry skies while watching sheep, recalling God's covenant with Abraham, Isaac & Jacob? How did fit he into God's plan? Had he blown it? "Who made you ruler & judge?" may have rung in his ears for some time but may also have prompted a change in his heart.***

Then he meets a Holy God in a burning bush & is given a new job description.

And he was sent to be their (Hebrews) ruler & deliverer

(Acts 7:35) He no longer saw himself as powerful in speech. Response:

who am I, that I should go to Pharaoh & bring the Israelites out of Egypt?

(Exodus 2:11).



I've always thought of this as human fear. But maybe it was also growing humility within his heart? An emptying of "me" & "self"?

A lot different to Pharaoh's arrogant response: ***Who is the Lord, that I should obey him & let Israel go? (Exodus 5:2).*** Some humble pie needed here, methinks!

3rd 40 yrs from bondage in Egypt to Promised Land freedom.

Here we find Moses wrangling with Pharaoh, leading the people out of Egypt, lots of moans & groans, meeting with God, teaching laws, commandments & the pattern for worship.

Imagine how humbling, as a former murderer, to receive God's commandment "You shall not murder". But what a taste of glorious forgiveness & freedom!

Finally, the promised land is viewed at a distance.

But guess what, Moses didn't make it. Why? He messed up. How? There are 2 incidents with water from a rock [Exodus 17:6](#) & [Numbers 20:8-11](#). The 1st time, Moses does exactly what God says; the 2nd time, he is angry with the people & in frustration he disobeys God. It is an interesting account to reflect on, especially when we consider these words in [1 Corinthians 10:4](#): *They drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ.*

I've often felt sorry for Moses not making it to the promised land. But while considering humility, I can also see Moses' response is a wonderful testimony to his walking humbly with his God, putting others before self.

No arguing, trying to defend his actions. No quitting or running away.

Continues listening & leading as God commands. And as the journey progresses & God reminds him about no entry, there's no complaint. Instead he beseeches God to raise up a new leader to take his place at the appointed time: Joshua. When time to step down, Moses does so humbly, honouring & encouraging Joshua.



Peter in his letter says: *Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time* | [Peter 5:6](#) True to His word, God exalts Moses. He spoke to him face to face, as to a friend [Exodus 33:11](#) & Moses is frequently referred to throughout both Old & New Testaments. He appears with Elijah in the transfiguration of Jesus ([Mark 9:2-4](#)). He's mentioned in the Hall of Faith [Hebrews 11:24-28](#). And in [Rev.15:3](#) we find the overcomers (us) singing the *song of Moses servant of God & the Lamb....*

Moses is often referred to as a "type" of Christ, whose story points forward to Jesus. Which brings us to our 3rd M.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped., but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became 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.....[Philippians 2:3-9](#)

M3 Messiah – Jesus. Our deliverer, who leads us out of bondage into freedom, setting us on our way to the eternal promised land.

When considering humility as a core value, Jesus is our primary source. Moses is described as the meekest or most humble man on earth at that time. Sometimes meekness & humility seem to be very close.

“**Meek**” today has connotations of being weak. A better description is **strength under control**. It’s about gentleness & consideration towards others. Humility is to do with crushing our pride, becoming less self-absorbed. Jesus humbled himself; **he chose** humility. Often the outworking of humility is reflected in meekness & gentleness. Neither humility nor meekness mean being walked over, like a doormat, or being wimpish. The writer Patra Chiradeep sums it up like this:

***The mixture of these two characters are lethal.
It is never weakness but always a strength
to kill the power of hatred, the power of vengeance & the power of pride.***

Jesus was meek but never weak; humble but never a doormat. Let’s look at some illustrations.

[Matthew 11:29](#): *“Take my yoke upon you and learn of me; for I am meek & lowly in heart: and you shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”*

Agricultural analogy: a well-fitting yoke was needed for animals to produce best results, as pairs or in a team. As a carpenter, Jesus himself would most likely have made animal & human yokes. Let’s contemplate the words Jesus speaks to those who are weary & burdened.



Come.....***another wonderful personal invitation***

Take. ***Take what?***.....my (Jesus’) yoke. (Remove our ill-fitting yokes)

Learn of me. ***Learn what?***.....That I (Jesus) am meek & lowly/humble

Find rest. ***How?***.....by being yoked to Jesus.

Jesus is not offering a life of ease or lack of commitment, but rather a life of working **with him**, listening **to him** & learning **from him**, with attention to meekness & humility. ***A problem shared is a problem halved*** comes to mind; ***burden shared*** might be more appropriate when discussing yokes!

Which yokes need removing because they are ill-fitting & burdensome? Pride has already been mentioned. Plenty of others. Here's one to reflect on. LEGALISM: that heavy list of dos & don'ts. As well as the Mosaic law given by God, the religious leaders created an oral law, hundreds of extra laws, burdening the people. Sometimes we can create similar religious lists today.

Jesus was regularly challenged by religious legalism. Take the woman caught in adultery ([John 8:1-11](#)). Jesus was teaching in the temple courts when the religious leaders presented this woman to him. What was his opinion on the matter?

Jesus was no respecter of persons, making time for all sorts of people without attaching labels. He responded with humility to the stigmatised, ignoring wagging tongues & fingers, gently restoring, giving new hope, for *a bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory* [Matthew 12:20](#).

Jesus, knowing full well they were trying to trap him, looks down, says nothing, writes on ground. Dilemma? As Son of Man he knew better than anyone God's laws. As Son of God he knew he had come to fulfil the law. He knew better than anyone His Father's heart. I wonder if [Micah 6](#) came to mind as he balanced justice & mercy with humility. 1st words: *If any of you is without sin, let him be first to throw a stone at her.* A simple but profound statement, challenging their integrity. Turning the situation around. No gloating with contempt or pride from Jesus. He quietly returns to writing on the ground. When they have gone he looks up at the woman & asks a soul-searching question: *has no one condemned you?* She knew she was guilty of death by the law, but somehow she'd been saved. Jesus sets her free without condemnation yet also with a challenge to her integrity. *Neither do I condemn you. Go now & leave your life of sin.* Wonderful freedom with a chance to start afresh.

He nudges us, too, with similar soul searching statements whenever pride surges above humility in our attitude towards others. When inwardly we might already have passed judgment. Or formed a blinkered or biased opinion of some situations. He also nudges us to question our own integrity. As believers we are not condemned, but we need to keep our lives in order.

Being yoked to Jesus is better way, finding rest for our souls by *learning of him with him*: learning *meekness, humility* & the greatest commandments, *love God & love others*. Simple but profound truths for each of us. Yoked with Jesus individually & as team church!

Humbly living out what we preach is a powerful witness to Christ's servant heart. In [John 13:12-17](#), we find Jesus asking his disciples: *Do you understand what I have done for you?.....I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you...* Here we find Jesus has shocked his disciples by washing their feet during the last supper.



It was customary for the Rabbi/teacher to be given the place of honour. This was unheard of! Jesus, their teacher, opting to serve in humility by washing their dusty, filthy, smelly feet! Jesus illustrates **by example** words he spoke to his disciples a few days earlier, when they were vying for honoured positions in the eternal kingdom to come:

Whoever wants to become great amongst you must be your servant and whoever wants to be first must be your slave.....just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many Mtth 20:26-28

Jesus lived to serve & died that we might live & serve others. Part of our job description as followers of Jesus is to serve others as he did, preferring their needs above our own.

We may not be called to lay down our lives, but what sort of sacrifices, small or big, might the Lord be asking us to make in our call to humbly serve & impact the lives of others with Jesus?

Jesus never sought glory for himself (John 8:50). He never retaliated when accused or tried to defend himself (1Peter 2:23), though he did speak & act in defence of his heavenly Father, eg overturning tables in temple, as well as vocally & actively supporting the weak & vulnerable of society.

True humility is to be nurtured & cultivated within each individual believer. A strength not a weakness, a crucial part of how we act, react & interact within our church family as well as with other Christians locally & beyond.

Humility begins by submitting to God & developing the mindset of Christ. Not clinging to our rights in Christ in a selfish way but living them out for the benefits of others that they, too, may experience the powerful love of God. An ever-learning, servant heart attitude, where pride & self-centredness are unwelcome visitors!



I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received.

Be completely humble & gentle;

be patient bearing with one another in love.

Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

Ephesians 4:1-3

And what does the Lord require of us?

To act justly.....to love mercy..... & to walk humbly with our God.

A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO...

...Mitchell, who is 5 years old today, and to Jane G.



MAY GOD BLESS YOU BOTH

Jesus Christ I think upon your sacrifice,
You became nothing, poured out to death.
Many times I've wondered at
your gift of life
And I'm in that place once again.
Yes, I'm in that place once again.

And once again I look upon the cross
where you died.
I'm humbled by your mercy
and I'm broken inside.
Once again I thank you,
once again I pour out my life.

Now you are exalted to the highest place,
King of the heavens where one day I'll
bow.

But for now I marvel at your saving grace
And I'm full of praise once again,
Yes, I'm full of praise once again.

Thank you for the cross,
Thank you for the cross,
Thank you for the cross, my friend.

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God,
and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all, now and
forever more, Amen