

GLENKIRK CHURCH



WEEKLY DEVOTIONS

The DEVO

JULY 31 - AUGUST 4, 2023

Sermon Series 5.28 - 8.13

FORGED

IN THE FURNACE

MONDAY

Read **1 Peter 5:1-5; Philippians 2:1-10; Matthew 11:28-30**

“I am gentle and humble in heart.” (Matthew 11:29)

At the beginning of chapter 5 of Peter’s first letter in the New Testament, he counsels leaders to be humble, like Jesus. Humility is part of His core character. But how can leaders be humble? They can follow Jesus’ example by cultivating a close relationship with Him. They can truly love, care for, and listen to the ones they lead.

Humility is an essential for everyone who wants to be the person they were created to be—even Jesus, who was not created, but was present at the creation of the world. True, Jesus is very special because He is God, but He gave up all of His prerogatives as God to become fully human, like us in every way, except that He never sinned. How did He do this? It was because of His humility—His God-reliance on His Father and the Holy Spirit—that He could be what He came on earth to be, the Sacrificial Lamb taking away the sin of the world (John 1:29).

Jesus invites anyone who wants to learn from Him how to live. He is approachable because He loves us and is *“gentle and humble in heart”* (Matthew 11:29). We are to follow Jesus’ lead especially in this respect – humbly to trust and obey. As Paul said, *“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus”* (Philippians 2:5).

Ralph Waldo Emerson wrote a treatise on self-reliance, urging that we take responsibility to become self-made people. This approach to life has some positive aspects. However, this way of living tends toward pride and takes away our reliance on God's help and the mutual support of others.

God gives grace to the humble. He resists the proud (Proverbs 3:34; James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5). All of us need His grace. It comes down to trust—trust in God. Is God trustworthy? You bet He is. We can trust Him with our lives in every detail.

QUESTIONS

How did you come to trust in God? How is Jesus a role model for you in regard to being a humble person?

PRAYERS

For Shepherd's Pantry

Shepherd's Pantry continues to see a growing demand for services and is now serving an average of 2,300 households a month across its three sites of distribution. Our prayer is that we continue to receive donations of food, monetary donations, and grants in order to continue blessing our neighbors in need.

TUESDAY

Read 1 John 1; Psalm 51; John 21

“If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another. ... If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:7, 9)

Yesterday we saw that the first way to gain humility is to follow Jesus and model one’s life after His by total obedience and with full trust in Him. The second way to gain humility is to confess our sins and “keep short accounts” with God (1 John 1:9). “Keeping short accounts” means checking in often with Him, throughout the day (and night, if necessary).

We have two models to follow this second way to humility: David in the Old Testament and Peter in the New Testament.

David had the help of the prophet Nathan to bring him to his knees in self-confrontation of just how deeply he had sinned against God and his friend Uriah. His confession demonstrates how undone he was by looking in God’s mirror. His prayer of contrition was genuine and was answered by God’s restoration of David’s right relationship with Him (Psalm 51).

Peter had the help of Jesus, who knew where to find him—fishing on the Sea of Galilee with six other disciples. It’s as if Peter thought that, following his failure by disowning his Lord and Savior, his commission

to lead Christ's Church was "out the window." But here was Jesus on the beach, just like at the beginning of their relationship. Another big catch of fish (by throwing the nets on the other side of the boat), but this time the nets did not break. Jesus purged Peter's pride and restored his commission to follow and serve Him. And that's what Peter did!

God will do the same for us! He will purge us of pride, take away our fear, and embolden us to do His bidding.

QUESTIONS

Who has helped you to confess sin? How has God restored you to His path for your life? Is maintaining a right relationship with God worth the effort of "keeping short accounts" with Him?

PRAYERS

For Shepherd's Pantry

As the need for Shepherd's Pantry's services continues to increase, we have begun to outgrow our space. Shepherd's Pantry currently rents both of its facilities. Our prayer is for guidance, opportunities, and support to work towards one day owning our own facility.

WEDNESDAY

Read **1 Peter 5:6; Psalm 75:6-7; Philippians 2:1-10**

“Humble yourselves, therefore, under God’s mighty hand, that He may lift you up in due time.” (1 Peter 5:6)

According to Peter, humble submission to godly leadership leads to promotion from the Lord in due course. Humility-to-promotion stories in the Bible include stories of Joseph, Daniel and Jesus. Many are acquainted with these stories, and they can help to steer our lives in the right direction.

Joseph (whose story of ascension from a betrayed prisoner to ancient Egypt’s second-in-command is shared in Genesis 39-41) was sold by his brothers to slaver traders headed to Egypt, where Joseph worked for Potiphar, then the prison warden, and finally as Pharaoh’s viceroy. God’s favor was with him at every step.

Daniel, along with his three friends, was taken into Babylonian captivity (Daniel 1). He submitted to authority when it did not violate his conscience. He was polite in requesting a different approach to eating and drinking. He served in multiple administrations in several capacities. Like Joseph, he knew God as the Interpreter of Dreams (Daniel 2-4). In the case of Daniel, he not only interpreted, he also revealed what the dream was. Only the dreamer and the God of dreams could know the dream itself.

In Philippians 2:5-11, Paul tells the story of Jesus' descent from heaven, humbling Himself to the lowest position. He was born in a barn, part of an immigrant family in Egypt, sometimes homeless, speaking in the looked-down-upon Galilean dialect. Isaiah 53:1-6 predicted this. In humble submission to His Father's wishes, and with His Father's and the Holy Spirit's help, He went to the Cross, dying in our place and trusting to be resurrected from the grave, which He was. All of this He did, Scripture says, because He loves His Father and us. And that is why Jesus has been elevated above all others, fulfilling His own words that *"the last will become first"* (Matthew 20:16).

QUESTIONS

Sometimes humility includes patient endurance. What are you enduring now while waiting on God (Isaiah 40:31)? How is God helping you in this season of your life?

PRAYERS

For Shepherd's Pantry

Both our Glendora and Irwindale sites have recently seen a large increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness seeking our services. We continue to pray with and for those living without a roof over their heads.

THURSDAY

Read **Matthew 5:14-16; John 12:32; Romans 12:1**

“Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on a stand.” (Matthew 5:15)

Jesus believes in His Father, in Himself, in His mission, and in His disciples. Such a disciple was Paul Eshleman. He made a serious decision to follow Christ the morning after a girl friend at Michigan State University challenged him with these words: “You’re just fooling around with God.” It made him angry, and he couldn’t sleep that night, the words “ringing” in his ears.

First thing that morning he tracked down the local leader of Campus Crusade for Christ, where he attended a meeting and asked, “What do you want me to do?” He pitched in, helping out when asked. One thing led to another, and he later joined Campus Crusade as a staff member.

At the request of Campus Crusade president, Bill Bright, Paul Eshleman helped produce and distribute the “Jesus Film” based on Luke’s gospel, figuring out a system of translating it into the world’s languages—2,000 so far—with 500 million decisions recorded for Christ. He lived to be 80—1943-2023. (Sillman)

For me, Jesus’ words near the beginning of His most famous sermon (Matthew 5:14-16) do not mean we are to put our light on a lampstand. That’s God’s part. Our part is to shine—*“to offer [ourselves] as a living*

sacrifice” (Romans 12:1) to God for whatever He asks us to do, always trusting Him.

Jesus modeled for us how to live humbly by trusting His heavenly Father and His earthly parents. He was born in an animal shelter, His family fled to Egypt for safety, and He returned to lowly Nazareth. He was an unknown carpenter’s son for most of His brief life. But then for three years, He was elevated by His heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit to a “lampstand,” where the Light of the World (John 8:12) shone brightly and continues to shine through two millennia to the present day.

Humility is the way we shine our light—that and loving others by serving their needs.

QUESTIONS

If our part is to shine and God’s part is to put us on a lampstand, what are some ways you shine a light on your world? What are other ways you could shine a light in your world?

PRAYERS

For Shepherd’s Pantry

In the last three years Shepherd’s Pantry has doubled the number of households it serves. However, the number of staff members has remained the same. Our prayer is for our staff to be granted good health and patience, and that they will always feel and know how appreciated they are.

FRIDAY

Read **Genesis 18:14; Jeremiah 32:27; 1 Peter 5:7**

“Casting all your care on God, for He cares for you.” (1 Peter 5:7)

Lots of issues press down on us. We have illness; we have heartaches. We are misunderstood, and we misunderstand. We may not know what to believe or who to trust. But we can give it all to the Lord because nothing is too hard for God.

For example, I believed Lance Armstrong was not cheating (doping) in the *Tour de France* cycling race over many summers in the Alps and the Pyrenees—however, continuing evidence surfaced about his cheating, which he eventually admitted. And I really thought the book *Three Cups of Tea* by Greg Mortenson and David Oliver Relin described events that actually happened in the shadow of K-2 in northern Pakistan’s Western Himalayas. It turns out the book was mostly fiction. (And like other educators, I had assigned it for class reading.) It was humbling for me to admit that I had been wrong in my judgment. I misunderstood these situations initially, but our loving Creator never does. I was surprised and disappointed, but nothing surprises All-Knowing God. And He loves and provides for us despite how disappointing we and others can be.

Jesus anchored His hopes in God, His Father. He faced real challenges, including dense disciples and hard-hearted religious leaders. There was the beheading of His beloved cousin, John the Baptist. The Sanhedrin who collaborated with the Roman government crucified Him, but God raised Him from the dead.

“We anchor our hope in God ... even though we are tempted to despair by our troubles” (a main point in a recent sermon by Pastor Tim on June 4, 2023, “Living Faithfully as Exiles”). Jesus spoke to His disciples at the Last Supper, *“These things I have spoken to you, that in Me you may have peace. In the world you will have [trouble]; but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world”* (John 16:33 NKJV).

God is up to the task of handling our troubles. With the shield of faith, *“[we] will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one”* (Ephesians 6:16 KJV).

QUESTIONS

What is “bugging” you right now? Have you cast it on God in prayer?

PRAYERS

For Shepherd’s Pantry

Shepherd’s Pantry could not fulfill its mission of helping our neighbors in need without the help of our volunteers. We are experiencing a shortage of volunteers in some key areas. Our prayer request is for more volunteers and that the correct people will be moved to step up to fill those key roles.

Sources

- Ralph Waldo Emerson, “Self-Reliance,” *Essays: First Series*, 1841: <https://archive.vcu.edu/english/engweb/transcendentalism/authors/emerson/essays/selfreliance.html>.
- Daniel Sillman, “Died: Paul Eshleman, Who Brought ‘Jesus’ Film to the Ends of the Earth,” *Christianity Today*, June 1, 2023, <https://www.christianitytoday.com/news/2023/june/paul-eshleman-died-jesus-film-campus-crusade-finish-task.html>.
- Tim Peck, Sermon on June 4, 2023, “Living Faithfully As Exiles,” go to <https://www.glenkirkchurch.org/sermon/june-4-2023-living-faithfully-as-exiles-vivir-en-el-temor-a-dios/>.



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