

THEME OF THE WEEK: **Believing Humility**

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus describes the character of the Christian in terms which are repulsive to the unbelieving world. Those who in Christ are “blessed” are the poor in spirit, the mourner, the persecuted, the meek, the merciful – hardly virtues in our world. And so you see, you cannot follow after the Christ as a proud peacock, strutting about in delusions of self-importance, desiring God and others to take notice of you. Rather you know your place as a creature of your Creator, and a sinful one at that. This is the posture of faith, a “believing humility” which knows who the merciful God is, and who we are as the objects of His mercy.

SUN

SCRIPTURE: **Luke 18:9-14 – Humility before God**

Two men go up the temple to pray. One stands by himself and praises himself. The other stands far off and begs mercy from God, and God gives it. He “went down to his house justified,” that is, forgiven and reconciled to God. Righteousness is given as a gift to those who know their great need, as the tax collector did. But those who would assert their own righteousness, ironically, are unrighteous before God. Christ has come for sinners. If you would have Him and His righteousness, count yourself as such.
Lord Jesus, have mercy on me, a sinner!

MON

SCRIPTURE: **Psalms 119:81-88 (KAPH) – When will you comfort me?**

Not all psalms are nice. The psalms which describe a God who is near to us, the pastoral God who leads us to pastures green and by still waters are in the minority. Rather, much of the psalter is lament. “When will you comfort me?” prays the psalmist. He endures pain, persecution, and suffering unto death. God seems far away. Jesus Himself prayed in His dereliction “My God, why have You forsaken Me?” This is the paradox of suffering - God is near to you even in when He seems most far. Cling to Him still, just as the psalmist does, just as Christ does. There is Presence in His absence. The Father did not abandon His Son. Neither will He abandon you. *Lord, give me life, that I may keep Thy testimonies.*

TUE

SCRIPTURE: **1 Corinthians 15:1-10 – Reminders**

“Now I would remind you, brothers, of the gospel I preached to you...” Paul had founded the churches in Corinth a few years earlier. It was certainly a labor of love, as he spent a year and six months there preaching and teaching (Acts 18:11). And yet, for all his teaching, exhortation, and catechesis, he reminds them once again of the substance of the gospel (reminiscent of the Apostles Creed), “Christ died for our sins...he was buried...raised...appeared to many.” We Christians never get beyond the Gospel, the reality of our justification for the sake of Jesus’ death and resurrection. We need those reminders. If your pastor tells you of that reality once again this Sunday, he does just what Jesus would have him do. *Lord, open my ears to hear!*

WED

SCRIPTURE: **2 Samuel 22:21-31 – Our Righteousness**

You are righteous. Holy. Undeified. Blameless. Jesus has won and given you His righteousness by faith. Do not doubt this. David didn’t. This is why he can say, “The Lord has dealt with me according to my righteousness.” David the sinner, who murdered Uriah the Hittite and took his wife, can say that the Lord has accounted him blameless. His righteousness is not his own. So it is that David loves the precepts of God, doing justice, and showing mercy, for God has had mercy on him. So it is with all Christians. They love because God first loved them (1 John 4:19). In Christ, we sinners can even dare to assert our righteousness to God, not because of what we do, but because of what He has done for us! *Lord, You make me righteous!*

THU

SCRIPTURE: **Luke 7:36-50 – Many sins, much forgiveness**

Hearing this account of our Lord, it is our tendency to put ourselves in the position of the woman of the city, the sinner, who wet the Lord’s feet with her tears of repentance. This is a fine thing. But the reality is that we are more often akin to Simon the Pharisee. We may perhaps believe that Jesus is the Christ, but we keep Him at arm’s length, attending to His word only when it is convenient to do so, and we certainly do not fall down weeping for our sins! What a shameful sight that would be! But that is the humility of faith which the Lord is looking for. He has mercy to give. Our sins, which are many, are indeed forgiven for Christ’s sake. *Lord, make me to know my sins, that I may thank You aright.*

FRI

SCRIPTURE: **Romans 10:4-18 – The Humble Ear**

How many marriages would survive even the first year if the marriage depended solely on how couples felt about each other at any given time? Not many. It takes the outward, objective vow of marriage and the power of the Holy Spirit to make Holy Marriage. In a similar way, our status before God is not dependent upon what we might think about it. Our feelings, our “gut”, and our instincts are deceiving. It takes the outward, objective word of God to be preached into the ear to declare both law and gospel to us. All of our emotions, however powerful or convincing must be subjected to that most humble of organs – the ear. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. *Lord, open my ears that I may hear Your truth. Amen.*

SAT

SCRIPTURE: **Psalms 147 – God Heals the Brokenhearted**

When it comes to how the world views religion, it is thought that religion primarily exists to give one a sense of purpose, fulfillment, to make him a better person, and so forth. However, the Christian religion is not like that. It may indeed give purpose, fulfillment and even joy, but the principle purpose of true Religion is that sinners would find forgiveness and life in God. It is not a self-help program or a way to deal with the ups and downs of life, it is a death and resurrection in which God heals the brokenhearted and binds up the afflicted. He does not set for us tasks to do in order to keep us in His good graces. He comes to us, delights in us, suffers for us, forgives us and takes us to Himself. *Lord, keep me in this religion always. Amen.*

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