

Humility

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[0 : 0 0] well the word humility is not just a familiar word it's a familiar concept i think it's a concept that most christians would say was really important but after that it gets a bit more difficult so the question then becomes what does it actually look like a person might say you see the stars in the background behind me there a person might say looking up at the night sky wow i feel so humbled or they might greet visitors at um to their home by saying welcome to my humble abode or they might tug with someone having to eat humble pie or someone needing a good dose of humility or it might be a different guy as it comes to you as it might be a really gentle quiet self-effacing person just sitting alongside you and saying well actually yeah i i consider myself to be a really humble person what do we make of those sort of statements is humility a personality trait trait for instance is it something you're born with or is humility something that that we can cultivate or something that we must cultivate because it doesn't come naturally to us a comedian once said that he was so humble and proud of the fact is humility a virtue to be proud of doesn't the person who's who needs to say they're humble actually think they're pretty awesome it's not easy to get a handle on this concept of humility and i think part of our confusion is because our culture has a love-hate relationship with humility on the one hand the primary driver of our society is self-promotion that's self-fulfillment and this inevitably pushes people into being competitive and consumerist gives you a mindset of those two things because what what it means is that others around you are potentially a threat to your sense of self therefore you're competitive or others around you provide the resources that you need to utilize and exploit so that you can feel well about yourself a consumerist in job interviews nowadays we don't just tell them we have the skills we actually have to convince the person interviewing us that we're actually better than everybody else and that we we should have that job by rights a terrible environment to apply for a job these days i think so that's on one hand but on the other hand our culture really punishes people who are deemed to be too self-promoting too self-assured we call that the toll-pobey syndrome because it loves to dish out a big dose of humility to people who've stepped out of their place we like to put them back in their proper place why do we do that?

well i think it's so that we can all be comfortable so here's the confusion on the one hand we have to be self-promoting but at the same time we have to show the right amount of humility now what that does i think is reduce humility as we understand it in our culture to a process called virtue signaling virtue signaling that is we ascribe to ourselves a virtue which becomes a signal to others around us that i am both a good person and acting within the acceptable parameters of culture and society what that does then is allow us to pursue aggressively my own interests as long as that's the self-promoting side i can pursue as aggressively as i want my own interests providing

i virtue signal that i have awareness of the need to be humble that i can convince people i am actually humble and that i'm actually working when the bounds of what society says is tolerable self-promotion it's a weird sort of thing but i think that's how it works at a nuanced level now i think i'm already on a hiding to nothing with this Uriah Heep has anybody ever heard of Uriah Heep?

at least three people right okay you don't count because you didn't hear about him until the beginning of this week so a character a horrible character a David Copperfield actually truth be known I hadn't heard of him until this week Alison researched him for me so Uriah Heep a horrible character in David Copperfield he's a good example of virtue signaling he knew that he had to stay within his station in life and so he was very keen to let everybody know that he was an humble person but behind the scenes he was known as a schemer he worked to hurt and destroy people to exploit them and there we have the problem a view of humility which we've easily come to accept and value in our society it's alright to pursue your own interests be aggressive as you like on that self-promote providing you manage to maintain the balance of a virtue signal that says well actually

I want you to know I'm actually a humble person now I think that confusion has bled into the church it's a big issue for church families like ours on the one hand the Bible has repeated references to God's love for humility and hatred of pride and arrogance but again come back to the question what is it to be a humble Christian how would we see humility in our church family and do we value humility as the Bible defines it to us we see the answer to the question in how Jesus models humility and I'm saying in brackets there that because when we look at this model of Jesus we're always going to find that model hard to accept and hard to value because it exposes our self-interest our self-centeredness if you look at verse 5

[7 : 35] I'm going to take this phrase through the whole of the sermon this morning verse 5 in chapter 2 one that Dave looked at last week have this mind among yourselves which is yours and the Greek there is which is already yours in Christ Jesus so if we want to see the model of humility what we're actually saying is not just a theory so it's not a definition of humility it's a model of the mind of Jesus it's a worked example of the overflow of Christ's heart it's attitude attitude and perspective David took us through this in detail last week I'm just going to try and summarize so attitude and perspective Jesus is really and truly God and he alone has the right to be proud he alone has the right to be protective of his heavenly status his power his prestige his influence his reputation his sovereignty and he has the perfect right to command service from every creature in this world but Jesus didn't see those as a platform for self-display nor a launching pad for self-advancement rather

Jesus took all of that and put it in the context of an opportunity for self-denial an opportunity to pour himself out in service of others and so instead of grasping we see in the mind of Christ we see the mind of Christ in decisive commitment on the part of Jesus to living out obedience for the glory of his father and that's verses 7 through to 11 essentially and it goes like this summary like this in obedience to his father's purpose and salvation and verse 11 ultimately to bring glory to the father and at huge personal cost Jesus made a conscious decision his conscious decision was to relinquish his right of absolute sovereignty to become a low status human being no power no position no reputation no sovereignty and he followed that commitment all the way through to death on the cross as a criminal cursed and forsaken a conscious decision to live obedience for the glory of his father and we're told then in those same verses that the father was delighted in response to Jesus action but we need to note here he wasn't just delighted in the death of Christ to achieve salvation

I think that he was delighted in the whole mind of Christ that is the father was delighted in the sort of person that Jesus showed himself to be the way he looked at things in this world the values he cherished as he made that decision to go to his death the principles he observed in achieving salvation for his sinful undeserving people and the delight of the father then immediately exalts Jesus returning him to that which he has always been even in death Lord of the universe my friends Christ was exalted because he demonstrated a proper sense of self living obediently under

God's purpose wanting only the father's approval and being totally committed to serving his sinful undeserving people in their need and ultimately saying no to self interest that's what delighted the father about Jesus so where's that leave is well my friends humility is not a passive personality trait not as the bible models it to us here in Jesus humility is not a passive personality trait so that one person has it and another person doesn't nor is humility just a collection of personal characteristics or attributes such as being self-effacing or generous or thoughtful or gentle most likely those characteristics will be evident in someone who's seeking to leave out the mind of Christ but that of itself isn't the heart of the mind of Christ humility at its heart is a heart attitude a heart attitude overflowing practically in purposeful commitment to the pathway of obedience regardless of personal cost ultimately for the sake of bringing honour to the

Lord and doing what is best for sinful and deserving people that we live amongst that's a big step away from the way humility is thought of and practised in our society so how do we move towards living humility or how do we move towards developing the mind of Christ in every circumstance well I just want to give three minor points in here first is we've got to understand the power of humility even Uriah Heap recognised that he had a little bit of power what is the power of humility well the power of humility is being who you are in Christ again verses 1 to 5 that verse 5 where I started and that's a summary of verses 1 to 5 have this mind among you which is already yours in Christ my friends we need to hear this next statement if we are Christians if you this morning are a

[15 : 21] Christian if you are already in Christ you are already connected practically and really and completely into the mind of Christ you already enjoy the practical outworking of the mind of Christ as his spirit verse 2 renovates you from the inside out that is the spirit job to develop in you the mind of Christ in verse earlier verse 11 I think it was in chapter 1 it's described as the fruit of righteousness here's the point here if we want to know the power of humility it's engaging with what we already are we do not have to create humility our challenge as Christians is to express the mind of Christ that we already have by virtue of being in Christ and as

Paul's big themes come out in his letter we express the mind of Christ in joy together in unity in partnership in the gospel so all these things joy partnership in the gospel and unity are underpinned by the mind of Christ or humility Christ's humility actually results in God's people being united with him and with one another in new salvation community if you look at the end of verse 10 and 11 Christ's humility is the thing that achieves God's purpose and salvation and God's purpose and salvation is the reunification of his alienated people with himself in a new salvation community humility produces the unity results in the unity inseparable connection of course we want to talk about unity on a basis altogether different often time sorry it's satisfied merely to virtue signal humility while keeping your distance from

Christ personally and keeping a guarded commitment to obedience so my final sentence takes you to the chilling reality of verse 21 if you got your bible open look at it now there's a chilling reality in this verse and I want to suggest to you this morning that every one of us finds ourselves in this verse let me read it to you they all seek their own interests wow what a statement that is the idea of humility seeing the mind of Christ in action is obviously a rare thing for Paul they all seek their own interests not those of Jesus Christ so here's the question I say we're all in that verse the only question is which clause of that verse there's two clauses which clause best describes you humility frequently used word but Paul says here it's a very rare commodity indeed in the church which clause describes you let me pray

Lord I pray again as I've prayed so often after opening your word that we stand exposed before it your word is that living two-edged sword that divides deep into our hearts and exposes that which is truly there Lord so Lord help us to contemplate that verse 21 and all it's chilling reality that in the church community such as ours that word humility can be used so frequently and yet if what Paul says is true there it's actually something that approximates or some caricature of humility but true humility is a rare commodity help us then Lord to find ourselves as those who are truly interested in the welfare and advancing the honour of Christ

Amen Thanks David Just a brief summary then Jesus is our example of humility in life and he's our experience of humility in his death and resurrection on the true joy true unity true partnership in this church family or would he call you out as a grumbling complaining dissatisfied person a Uriah heap type character driven by self interest satisfied merely to signal sorry satisfied merely to virtue signal humility while keeping your distance from

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