

Humble yourselves (All-Age Talk)

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[0 : 00] Great, thanks Adam. I wonder if you noticed the big command that ties this whole passage together! is there at the start of verse 6 where Peter says to the church,! Humble yourselves!

Humble yourselves! Can anyone tell me, adults or children, what the opposite of being humble is? What's the opposite of being humble? It might be for an adult or someone.

What's the opposite of being humble? Anybody want to say? Arrogant or proud. Yeah, if you're proud, you're someone who bigs yourself up.

Look at me. Life is about me. Everybody listen to things about me. But Peter says to this church here, don't big yourself up. Make yourselves low.

Humble yourselves. Humble yourselves. In fact, in the verse just before, verse 5, the middle of it, all of you clothe yourselves with humility towards one another.

[1 : 06] So imagine, because this is what the word means, imagine a first century kind of house servant or something like that, and clothe yourselves is literally sort of tie a string around yourself.

And so the first century servant might put on a kind of apron-y thing like this over their clothes to protect them while they're doing all the work. And it would show that they were a servant.

They were someone in the house or wherever they were who made themselves very low. And Peter says here to these Christian believers, clothe yourselves with humility.

You don't have to wear an apron with a son. Make yourselves very, very low. Now we're reading 1 Peter, and 1 Peter is to Christian believers, to God's chosen people who put their faith in Jesus, and they're living for God in the world around them.

And life in the world is pretty hard for these Christians here. Because they live differently. And quite a lot of people out in society were out to get them, and laugh at them, and mock them, and heap abuse on them.

[2 : 13] And Peter said, you've got to live differently, you people who belong to Jesus. And here is a way to live very, very differently and distinctively from the world around you.

Humble yourselves. Don't be someone who bigs yourself up. Make yourself very, very low.

Other people first. And God. Now let's just think about this, because I think all of 1 Peter 5 is about this. So first of all, in chapter 5, verse 1, do you see, Peter talks to the elders among you.

To the church leaders. To those in authority within a congregation. To vicars and elders and people like that. And he says, I appeal to you as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ's sufferings, who will also share in glory.

To be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care. Now how should church leaders act? Like you can come to St John's and there's me, and you can go to other churches, there are other church leaders.

[3 : 18] What is a good church leader like? A good church leader is not someone who bigs themselves up. Look, I'm the centre of attention. Everyone look at me. A good church leader is one who makes themselves low.

Even as they watch over and care for a congregation. Look at how Peter puts it in verse 2. I wonder if there's someone who might just, who am I going to ask, might come just to the front and just be a bad elder for me.

Anybody who'd like to do that? You don't really know what you're going to do, but... Look at me! Oh Jude! Look at me! Great! You're all taken to back!

Jude, come and stand here. Wonderful. Good. So here's a bad elder. You can look as you like, Jude, that's fine. So there's three things it says here in this passage that elders are not to be like, and how they are to be like.

Come as well, Philip, that's fine. An elder should not be eldering because they must. They get into ministry and they start to, they love reading the Bible and talking about Jesus, but it's hard work. [4 : 26] And they end up, it's because they must. Don't be like that. Be an elder who is willing as God wants you to be.

Do you know there are church leaders who spend their life in church pursuing dishonest gain. They are greedy. And so here is a church leader who is really after the gold and the money and what they can get.

Now maybe you look around and you know that there are church leaders some of the place, maybe far away from here, who have expensive cars and flying jets and say, you've got to give all your money and God will bless you.

And by the way, they become very rich. That's terrible. As they make themselves proud. There can be Church of England ministers who say, I'm very happy with the £30,000 a year I get in the house as well.

And really, I don't really want to be involved with the church, but I will take the money and I will sit happily. And I will serve myself. Don't be a church leader like that.

[5 : 29] So you could hold the cash. You could be doing it because you feel you must. But also don't, verse 3, lord it over those entrusted to you.

It's like you've got a big stick which you're holding and you think you're the boss in this church. Exactly. And you'd look out at the congregation and you'd tell them what to do. You lord it over them.

And there are ministers who are like that as well. Aren't there? In the world. There are ministers who do it because they must. There are ministers who do it because they're greedy for financial gain.

There are ministers who lord it over people. And even abuse people spiritually. And Peter says to this church here, elders, do not be like that.

You're meant to not make yourself the centre of church life because you're not and be very proud. Make yourselves low. Be a willing leader.

[6 : 32] Be eager to serve. Be an example to the flock of someone who follows Jesus Christ. It's a bit funny me just looking at these verses with you because I'm the main church leader here.

So you should pray for me. Because I have a tendency to be very proud and want to think that everything should be about me. And sometimes when you're standing at the front and talking a lot, you can kind of feel it's like that.

It's not. It shouldn't be. Jesus was a humble servant of those whom he shepherded. And God says to everyone who would be an under shepherd, make yourselves low.

Make yourselves low. And well, when the chief shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. You see, the strange thing about being a Christian is when you make yourselves low, God will lift you up.

So when Jesus comes again, church leaders who've been humble will receive a kind of wreath of glory. You know, in the Olympics, if you win, you now get a medal and you can stand up tall.

[7 : 44] But they used to get a laurel on their head like this. It's glory. It's wonder. You've made it. Well done. And so Peter's saying here, church leaders, make yourselves low.

And then one day God will lift you up. OK, thank you to you two. Thank you very much for doing that. That's for church elders. And actually, for those who are younger, who belong to the congregation, Peter says, submit yourself to your elders.

Not do everything they say when they command you. Not like that. But when you have a church leader who is humbly seeking to serve the church, then line yourself up under them.

Listen and go along with where the church is going. Ask questions. Be critical. Come and talk to them. But this is what a church should look like. A humble leader and humble youngers, too.

OK, that's the thing. We're talking about making yourself low. So all of us having an apron like this, which says humility. And Peter goes on, verse five. All of you clothe yourselves with humility towards one another.

[9 : 01] So what that means is in a church like this, don't come to church and say, it's all about me. And everyone should fit in with my musical choices and service choices and listen to me while I rattle on about me and my life.

Everyone tells me how sorry they are and wonderful me. And I try and do that. And Kate tries to do that. And Tyler tries to do that. And it's horrible. Because I want to talk about me and you want to talk about you.

And then we get disappointed because we're not the centre of conversation. And that's how things are in the world. That's how things are on social media. Where 70% of posts are really, let me talk about me and tell you about me.

No, no. All of you clothe yourselves with humility towards one another. I'll listen to you. I'll serve you. I'll seek to do what's best for you.

And you're saying that about me. It's amazing to be part of a community like that. Why should you do it? Oh, because God opposes the proud.

[10:05] But shows favour to the humble. So a church of people who big themselves up, verse 5b, if you big yourself up, God will oppose you and he'll bring you down.

But if you humble yourselves together, it says here God will show you favour. And lift you up. This is what we're talking about very simply this morning.

Will we be a church? Will we be people who humble ourselves like Jesus Christ? There's a last little bit in verses 6 and 7.

Look at this. Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

So to a whole congregation. Hello, Molly. Molly and all of us. To a whole congregation, Peter says here, humble yourselves under God's mighty hand.

[11:07] Do you know that living as a Christian can be hard? We've seen that in 1 Peter. Because you try to live for God, but it's hard. There are people who are against you.

That's tough. And under God's mighty hand, you can feel, ah, I'm being pulled down here. What might you do? Ah, God, what are you doing?

I'm against you. I will survive by myself. I will keep going. No, no, no, says Peter. Humble yourself under God's mighty hand. And this is what it looks like, finally, verse 7.

Cast all your anxiety on him, because he cares for you. And I left in the car, unfortunately, just now, my big eight-ounce kettlebell, which said anxiety on it.

It's in the boot of the car. You know when life's cares and the stressors of life get on top of you, they're like a heavy kettlebell. You think, what am I going to do?

[12:10] Peter says here, don't try and carry your burdens by yourself, but cast your anxiety on him, because he cares for you.

And that's what maybe some of the children have got round to doing. There's a little picture of a boy and his anxiety. And then he slides his anxiety along to God and says, I give you all my worries and my cares.

I'm talking about prayer, really. A bunch of people, a congregation, for whom life is very hard some of the time. For whom life may be very hard as you return to another country, as you have cares on you, as you live for Christ in a world that's against him.

And Peter says, this is what you do. Don't stand up big and tall. I'll fight. Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand. Get on your knees if you want to.

And pray to your father. And say, all my cares I give to you, heavenly father, because you care for me. I humble myself before you.

[13:22] And if you're someone like that, and if we're a church like that, what does God say? The very last thing, verse 4. Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time.

See, here's the message of 1 Peter 5 to people who put their faith in Jesus, to a church. If you big yourself up, I'm proud, I'm the centre of everything, I'll do it all by myself.

God will bring you down. Because he'll oppose you. But if you make yourself low, like Jesus, in your attitudes to one another, and in your relationship with God, he will lift you up on the final day.

When you, along with elders in the church, you will receive the crown of glory, as you're made perfectly like Jesus Christ forever.

Humble yourselves, and God will lift you up. Well, let me pray a short prayer, and then we're going to sing together. Almighty God, we live in a world full of arrogant pride.

[14:39] And we know that in ourselves, by ourselves, we are so self-centred and proud. Want to do things our own way. Want to be the centre of attention.

But that's not what you command. And that's not what Christ was like. He humbled himself. And you raised him up. Make us those who seek to please you, who seek your grace.

Please make us adults and children who make ourselves low, as we serve one another and pray to you. And please, we pray that you would lift us up in due time.

We ask in Jesus' name. Amen. And we're going to sing together. We're going to sing of this shepherd of ours, who is a sovereign, a mighty protector of his flock.

As the music starts, we're going to stand and sing. A sovereign protector I have, unseen yet forever at hand, unchangeably faithful to save, almighty to rule and command.

[16:12] and command he smiles and my comforts abound his grace has the Jews shall descend and walls of salvation surround the soul he delights to defend inspire and hearer of prayer both leading and guarding your sheep I place in your cavern and care my life both awake and asleep if you are my shield and my son the night is no dark nest to me for fast as my moments roll on so nearer to you I shall be creator and ground of my hope to your name alone I shall bow a new Ebenezer set up to show God has helped us till now I think on the years that are past when all my defence you have proved nor will you relinquish at last a sinner so blessed and so loved so loved so loved

Amen.