

Gospel Partners Share a Mindset of Humility

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Preacher: Dave Nannery

[0 : 00] All right, well, let's pray for ourselves as we prepare to hear God's word this morning. It's great to hear the opportunities kids have to grow up hearing God's word from their teachers, and we need that as well each and every day.

So let me open us up in prayer. Father, we thank you that we have an opportunity to gather together to meet not just in safety, but to meet in a way that we can encourage one another, in a way that we can hear your word preached and see your word opened up and learn how you have called us to live our lives in light of all that Jesus Christ, our Lord, has done for us.

Lord God, give us eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts to understand. Lord God, we need your word. We need to be attentive. Help us to listen.

Amen. Okay. Well, I needed a bit of coffee this morning. Wouldn't you love to know where you can find the world's best cup of coffee?

Well, in Christmas 2003, if Ryan could put up on the screen the next slide, we learn from Buddy the Elf in the movie Elf that the world's best cup of coffee was located at a diner in Manhattan, New York.

[1 : 26] And Buddy the Elf knew it was the best cup of coffee because that sign in the front window said it was. According to a source I encountered on the internet this week, this sign was actually available for auction back in 2014.

And I was really disappointed to see that only one person bid on it. I don't know how much they paid for that sign, but they won it. And I think, to me, that's a lost opportunity for us.

Because if you want your coffee to be the best, you have to get your hands on that sign. It's sort of my greatest regret as a pastor that we did not have the opportunity to bid on that as a church.

And we could have, man, can you just imagine how our foyer decor would have been improved with that glowing neon sign, you know, right above the kitchen area, announcing to all of Squamish, we've got the best cup of coffee.

Here. Here. Well, there's a certain pleasure in being the best. Some people love to boast that their church is the best at something. You can have, you can achieve greatness by having this season the biggest Christmas tree.

[2 : 42] You can achieve greatness by having the best Christmas light display. Or you can put up on social media the best family photos. Right? And then once the Christmas season is over, we get back to our usual treadmills of how we're going to achieve greatness.

Maybe you can be the best in your career field. Maybe you can transform yourself into a fine-tuned, trail-running, mountain-biking, rock-climbing athlete. Maybe you can achieve greatness by developing a winning, charming personality, a terrific sense of humor.

Maybe you can achieve greatness by having the best social media account, the most followers, the most likes. Maybe you can stuff your head with knowledge, go to the best university, get the most advanced degrees.

Maybe you can marry the most impressive person, raise the most wonderful and successful children. Maybe you can buy a mansion and you can buy maybe that \$20,000 mountain bike to go with it.

And if you're thinking mountain bikes don't cost \$20,000, well, the way inflation is going, just hang on to that. Whatever you've got right now may be an appreciating asset. So anyway, the point is we have so many avenues, so many opportunities in our culture to be the best, to be the greatest.

[4 : 00] You can be the best. You can elevate your status. You can go higher. You can do more. You can be better. Let me tell you what Jesus thinks about that sort of greatness, that pursuit of status.

In the Gospel of Mark, in chapter 9, Jesus is traveling on the road with his disciples. And Jesus warns his disciples that he is not going to be the great, victorious, military, political messiah that they are expecting.

And that's something we've learned this past year as BK has taken us through these Gospel accounts of Jesus' life. Consider this. Consider what's happening here. This is Mark chapter 9, beginning in verse 30.

Here we read, Here we read, They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And he, so this is Jesus, he did not want anyone to know. For he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him.

And when he is killed, after three days, he will rise. But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him.

[5 : 16] And you can tell, they don't understand what Jesus is talking about. It's just, they don't have a framework to absorb and to make sense of what Jesus is saying here. Because what happens next, literally right after this, in light of what Jesus just said, what happens next seems so small, so petty.

They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, What were you discussing on the way? But they kept silent, for on the way, they had argued with one another about who was the greatest.

And he sat down and called the twelve, and he said to them, If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.

And he took a child and put him in the midst of them. And taking him in his arms, he said to them, Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me.

And whoever receives me receives not me, but him who sent me. So Jesus is not impressed with any sort of greatness that you and I can earn for ourselves.

[6 : 33] I don't care how rich, how powerful, how strong, how smart, how good looking you are. Jesus is not impressed. What really makes an impression on our Lord is not somebody who elevates themselves and achieves greatness and boosts themselves.

What makes an impression on Jesus is someone who chooses to be last of all and servant of all. It's someone who chooses, in fact, to lower their status, to reduce their status to that of a small child.

That's the mindset that Jesus himself had. That is why Jesus, just before this, is talking about how he is willing to subject himself to low status, to shame and suffering and public crucifixion.

And to be a true Christian means that we walk the path that Jesus walked. Where Jesus went, there we go too, in union with him.

You're meant to be like Jesus. You're meant to adopt Jesus' mindset, to think the way that Jesus thinks. Here's how the Apostle Paul explains it. Man, the more that I read Paul over the years, the more I'm like, this guy got Jesus on a level that you and I are just barely beginning to grasp.

[7 : 56] He got Jesus and the mindset of Jesus Christ. And he shares it in the book of Philippians. This is a letter to the little church in the city of Philippi.

I'm going to be reading from Philippians, beginning in chapter 2, verse 1. So I'd love for you to follow along in your translation of the Bible. Philippians chapter 2, and I'm going to read verses 1 through 11.

Here's what Paul writes, inspired by the Holy Spirit. So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

[9 : 31] And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

This is the word of the Lord to us this morning. To lay the foundation for what we're learning about today, we start with verse one.

There we read about encouragement in Christ, comfort from his love, participation in the spirit. What verse one is talking about is that gospel partners, people who have gathered together around the good news of Jesus Christ, gospel partners unite because of that very gospel, that very good news.

To be a part of the church means that you and I are joined together in one family, with one father, citizens of one kingdom, with one king whom we proclaim.

We're all joined together. Our family business, our national effort in the church, is the advance of the gospel. We want the whole world, and especially the town of Squamish, to know the good news that Jesus of Nazareth, he is God's anointed king.

[11 : 12] He is God's Messiah. His Christ. Jesus is the hope that was promised to the people of Israel throughout their history, as recorded in the Old Testament.

He was the Emmanuel that Israel was looking forward to and longing for. He is the hope, not only of the nation of Israel, but he is the desire of nations.

He is the hope of the whole world. Everyone who trusts Jesus, everyone who believes that Jesus Christ's death, his resurrection, were real events that really rescue us from our sin and from the punishment we deserve for our sin.

Everyone who trusts Jesus, is united with him, is raised from the dead to new life as part of his family, with hope, looking forward to that time when Jesus Christ returns and brings joy to the world. We continue laying the foundation for what we're going to learn in verse two because here we read about being of the same mind, having the same love.

[12 : 21] In light of that good news, gospel partners share this mindset of solidarity. Sometimes good Christians make a very honest mistake when they talk about the gospel. They talk about, oh, you as an individual can be saved from your sin.

God loves you individually. Jesus died for you individually. He can be your personal, individual Lord and Savior. That's all entirely true and you need to know that. But it leaves out this crucial element that we find throughout the Bible.

My relationship with God and your relationship with God is not an individual thing. That covenant relationship includes the rest of the church.

It is not just me and Jesus. We are saved out of the world and we gain this new family identity.

We're part of the family of God now. We're part of the church now.

So gospel partners share a mindset of solidarity. We're all in this together and we have the same mindset. Gospel partners have the same love that Jesus had, united in spirit, single-minded.

[13 : 26] And that brings us to what we're learning today. In verses three and four, we read another way in which the truth of the gospel changes the way that we think, the way that we speak, the way that we act.

Here's what Paul writes. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility, count others more significant than yourselves.

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. So here is another way in which Jesus' mindset becomes our mindset.

Another way in which we imitate Jesus as his disciples. Gospel partners share a mindset of humility. Gospel partners share a mindset of humility.

Maybe it would be helpful first of all to understand what humility really is. Humility is one of those attributes that feels really good when we see it in other people.

[14 : 37] I mean, when you encounter a person who's truly humble, it feels really good to see that. You marvel at it. You're amazed by it. It's beautiful. When it's you, it doesn't always feel really good to experience humility.

It feels very different on the inside than it does on the outside. In Paul's day, in the pagan Roman world, humility was not seen as a virtue. It was not a virtue.

Humility was a degrading thing. Humility was humiliating. No respectable person would ever want to be humble.

No one wants to be at the bottom of that human pile. Everyone else standing on your head. Nobody wants to be at the bottom. In a culture that's all about achievement, of all about who's the best, who's the greatest, who comes from the best family, who's done the most things, who's living the

best life, humility runs counter to all of those things.

What can motivate a proud and respectable person like Paul to say something like this? In humility, count others more significant than yourselves. Paul, what's happened to your self-esteem, man?

[15:58] Come on. Well, if you've read the rest of Paul's writings, you know exactly what's happened to it. There's a proverb in the book of Proverbs in the Old Testament. This one is very instructive.

Proverbs 15, verse 33 reads, The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor. Notice how those two ideas are paired together.

The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor. Those belong together. There's a tight connection between the fear of the Lord, wisdom, humility, and honor. What happens is that when you know who the Lord is, when you understand him, you recognize his gravity, you recognize that he is so much greater than you are.

He is holy, immensely holy, massively powerful, the creator of the world, tremendously wise, and you tremble before him.

[17:03] You begin to fear him. You feel small before someone so great in power and significance and holiness. The fear of the Lord is a death blow to our self-esteem because what it does is it takes your self-esteem and replaces it with God-esteem.

To be wise is to know God and to know how he's ordered his world. And oh, to be called by the name of the Lord.

Lord, that's your glory. Not that I'm great. Not that I'm sufficient and I'm adequate and I'm capable. But I'm with Jesus. And he is sufficient and adequate and capable.

And he is glorious. And that glory can never be taken away from me when I belong to him. To be wise is to know God, to know how he's ordered the world, and humility is a form of that wisdom.

To lack humility means you're seeing the world all wrong. But to be humble is to know who you are in light of who God is.

[18:15] And I want to tell you, when I'm working with counseling people, it is so liberating to people when they realize that God is big and people are small. The moments of sanity in my life when I can remember that and hold on to that are moments where I'm liberated from the judgment of other people, liberated from people-pleasing, liberated from shame, liberated from all these fears that cripple us and hold us back, from becoming partners in the gospel and walking the life-giving path that Jesus walked.

The Lord God, almighty, is powerful enough to push aside the waters of the Red Sea. You and I struggle to dig our car out of a snowbank.

The Lord God, almighty, is holy enough that his own son was able to live 33 years of life without sinning even once in thought, word, or deed.

You and I can't go half an hour without entertaining a proud or irritable or immoral thought or word or action. The Lord God almighty is wise enough to ordain and determine the motion of every atom in the universe and to see all things from the beginning to the end.

You and I can't figure out how to set the clock on our microwave. To be humble is to admit that God is great and you are not and that's exactly how things should be.

[19:48] That is okay. You can be a human-sized human and let God be the almighty God. You can leave judgment to him and you're angry. You can leave vengeance to him.

You can leave it to him to figure out and you can trust all things over to him. When my brothers and I were a lot younger, in my teenage years, we loved to watch pro wrestling on TV and if you haven't watched it, it's basically a soap opera for teenage boys.

That's what pro wrestling is. There was a time in my life when I was the target demographic and one of my favorite fake wrestlers is a guy that most of us should probably know by now.

It was The Rock because The Rock moved on to become a famous actor and now he's in all sorts of movies and he's recognizable and his catchphrase at the time was the very rude statement, know your role and shut your mouth.

And that's a very aggressive statement. The Bible has a similar thing to say to us. Be still and know that I am God. Be still and know that I am God.

[20:57] To be humble is to embrace that. To admit that God is great and you aren't. That's a deeply life-giving, reassuring, encouraging thing when you take it to heart.

Imagine how you would be free if you could let go of trying to be great and trying to be the best and trying to elevate yourself and your status and trying to avoid being shamed and trying to honor yourself and trying to get people to like you and trying and trying and trying and trying and trying. How much energy, how much liberation you would feel to finally let go of all that and learn to walk in partnership in the gospel together with others to the glory and honor of God.

To the mind of a person who hasn't been born again this sounds awful. No one wants to be humble like that. No one wants to have their own status, their own elevation of their self blown to pieces like that.

For the promise of Proverbs 15 verse 33, humility comes before honor. If you are humble, you will be rewarded with an honor that you cannot begin to imagine.

[22 : 17] The honor of being told this is the one to whom God will look. He who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at the word of the Lord.

It is the honor of finding this colossal almighty God looks at you and says, well done. Looks at you and says, I rejoice in you.

I enjoy you. What an experience that will be to stand face to face before the living God and to experience his favor, his love, his joy at being with you and you with him.

one commentator on Proverbs 15 verse 33 writes, the way to the height lies through the depth, the depth of humility under the hand of God.

The way to the height lies through the depth, the depth of humility under the hand of God. This humility changes everything. When gospel partners share this mindset of humility, it changes the way that we behave towards one another, the way we live together.

[23 : 32] Our solidarity and our humility, it protects the church from division. It draws us together. It keeps us from fragmenting apart and schisming. Here's how this humility plays out in the church.

Gospel partners share this mindset of humility. They are preoccupied with the value of one another. They're actually preoccupied with the value of one another. In Philippians chapter 2 verse 3, Paul writes to the Philippian believers, do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.

So Paul gives us a negative example of what pride looks like. Alongside that he places a positive example of what humility looks like. So on the negative side, pride consists of selfish ambition and conceit.

A proud person is someone whose chief goal in life is to elevate themselves, to feel better about themselves, to boost themselves, to rise to the top, to rise above the crowd.

A proud person is full of conceit. They feel entitled. I deserve to be treated better. I deserve to be the center. Here's what this kind of person looks like.

[24 : 52] It plays out in a hundred little subtle ways all throughout our lives. We can think of that star we see in TV who's boasting and bragging and we think, okay, yeah, that's a proud person.

But it sort of shows up in all these little ways. A man who quickly loses his temper with his wife and children because they keep interfering with his orderly way of doing things.

A woman who resents her husband because he's too soft and passive and he's not meeting her needs. It's a teenager who obsesses over her appearance in the mirror because she craves the admiration of her peers.

It is an employee who grumbles and gossips about her boss because she isn't getting the respect she deserves. It's a church ministry leader who is irritated because he's being asked to change the way his ministry is being run.

His ministry. It's a seminary graduate who becomes a pastor of a small country church who intends to use it as a stepping stone to bigger and better career opportunities.

[25 : 56] It's the pastor of a church who refuses to admit any sort of weakness, is terrified that people might see him as foolish, flawed, or sinful. Is that a little too specific at times?

Have you ever been one of those people? I've been several of them. But gospel partners have been encouraged by the gospel. They've been comforted by the love of Christ.

They have the spirit of God in and among them. They know the affection and sympathy of Jesus Christ. Through the message of the gospel, they have come face to face with the living God.

And so gospel partners share a mindset of humility. They're no longer preoccupied with their own self-worth, with their own achievements, with their own superiority. Their worth is safe in Christ.

They're no longer preoccupied with their own reputation, their own status. They have the name of Jesus Christ. So they're humble. And that frees them up to start being preoccupied with one another.

[27 : 01] Here's what this kind of person looks like. It's a man who, instead of being irritable, is patient with his wife and children. Yeah, they interfere with his orderly life and the way he'd like to live, but he's patient with them.

It's a woman who stops thinking about her own needs and instead finds ways to look, finds ways to encourage and support her husband. It's a teenager who finds ways to compliment her peers whom she sees at school, to maybe express admiration and kind words for them.

It's an employee who gives a full effort for her boss, looks for reasons to speak well of him, even though he doesn't respect her the way that she should. It's a church ministry leader who is eager to learn new ways to lead the ministry he's been entrusted with.

He's even willing to give up that ministry altogether if that's what's best for the family of God.

Seminary graduate, pastors a small country church, sticks with his new church family for a long time, even if it means passing up glamorous opportunities because it's not about the status.

It's a pastor of the church who admits his struggles to good friends at the church. church, ask them for their prayers and encouragement. Gospel partners share a mindset of humility.

[28 : 15] They are preoccupied with the value of one another. They aren't fixated on their own value and reputation. They aren't fixated on what they can get from other people.

What they're thinking about is, my brothers, my sisters, how can I serve them? Just as Jesus himself took the form of a servant. There's a second way in which gospel partners share a mindset of humility.

They are preoccupied with the interests of one another. They're preoccupied with the interests of one another. Paul writes about it in verse 4. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

So once again, Paul starts out by warning you and me away from a proud attitude. attitude, a proud person is one who pays attention only to his own interests. A proud person doesn't care about the things that are important to other people.

It's a woman who runs her household her way, doesn't give a second thought about what her husband thinks. A man who watches sports on TV all evening ignores his wife while the house falls apart. It's a teenager who hogs the bathroom because she's spending half an hour in front of the mirror every morning and her brother can't even get in.

[29 : 33] It's a boss who piles more and more work on his exhausted employees just so that he can pad his own resume. It's a pastor who tries to force his agenda down the throat of a church that just isn't quite ready for it.

Gospel partners share a mindset of humility. They know that God has met all of their true physical and spiritual needs. They know that the church is all about glorifying their heavenly father.

It's not about themselves. They know that their own ideas and interests come after the unity and solidarity and love of the church family.

Gospel partners are humble. Gospel partners live at peace. They are preoccupied with the interests of their family. Here's what this kind of person looks like.

It's a woman who chooses to honor her husband, to use all her wisdom and abilities to help him lead their family well. It's a man who cancels that sports package on his cable bill so that he can devote more time to the problems his wife is pointing out around the house.

[30 : 39] It's a teenager who takes a quick shower every morning so there's hot water left over for her little brother. It's a boss who protects his employees from exhaustion. He takes on more of the work himself, maybe even turns down a job offer elsewhere so that he can remain with and encourage his team.

It's an elder who patiently teaches and trains the church under his care so that when it comes time to make the changes the church needs, there's a relationship of trust and they're ready to embrace it.

Gospel partners share a mindset of humility. They are preoccupied with the value of one another. They are preoccupied with the interests of one another. And brothers and sisters, that's the sort of humility we want in our church.

It's not the humility of being a doormat. That's not true humility. True humility is when we are attentive to the people around us and we care deeply for them because we're not trying to constantly elevate ourselves and be preoccupied with ourselves.

But we're freed from that and we can start looking around and actually loving other people. That humility looks beautiful. But love doesn't always feel beautiful.

[31 : 59] It's just like the world's greatest cup of coffee in the movie Elf. Sometimes it doesn't feel like what it's advertised to be. Sometimes love even feels like you're dying.

It did for Jesus. Humility is what brought our Lord Jesus to the point of death, even death on a cross. If humility were easy, if humility felt beautiful, we'd all be humble already, wouldn't we? I want to conclude with a promise that God gives you because I want to encourage you that the hardship that humility and love brings into our lives, the self-denial that Jesus calls us to, the path that he walked, is not just this path of misery and being crushed and reduced to nothingness and the end.

There's a great hope from learning how to walk as Jesus walked. In verses 9 through 11, Philippians 2 verses 9 through 11, we are told that there is more to the story.

Remember, to be a Christian means you are united with Jesus Christ. You're part of God's family now. You're crucified with him to that old way of life, to the proud and selfish, conceited way of thinking that we all once lived in.

[33 : 17] But I want you to take a look. Look at what God the Father has done for Jesus Christ, our Lord. Therefore, God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

He was once a baby boy, born in a manger, born among the animals. And then he went lower. He became despised and rejected by men.

God the Son took on human form, reducing his status, and then he went lower, despised and rejected, and then he went lower, crucified publicly in utter shame and disgrace and scorn.

This is the one whom God has exalted and elevated and given the name that is above every name. In that time, in that place, people would say, Caesar is Lord.

But this is the counter message to that. Jesus Christ is Lord. He is King of kings and Lord of lords. The name that is above every name. And because we have been united with Christ, that means that our journey is the same as his.

[35 : 00] His journey becomes ours. His pathway down into humility is ours. His pathway where God then raises him to glory and elevates him, that is ours too. We walk the path he walks.

We descend as he descended, and we are raised up to new life and to new glory just as he is.

Sometimes we get a little taste and glimpse of that in this life and our joy and our expectation.

So when Christ returns, when joy comes to the world, the Lord has come. Let the earth receive her king. But that glory will be ours forever, and no one will take it away from you.

It is safe. That is why Paul writes in Philippians chapter 3, our citizenship is in heaven. And from it, we await a savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.

We will be made like him in body and spirit. We will be transformed into a people who are perfectly humble just as he is, people who know and accept and embrace and enjoy who they are in light of who God is.

[36 : 24] And in the meantime, Paul writes in chapter 4, my God will supply every need of yours according to his riches in glory in Christ Jesus.

To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen. Our God and our Father, we come to you and we confess that we have sought glory for ourselves.

We've forgotten what our Savior said when he prayed to you and he said, the glory that you have given to me, I have given to them that they may become perfectly one.

Lord, that partnership, that oneness, that unity that we ought to have has been torn apart by our efforts to elevate ourselves. Our efforts to pursue our own interests with no regard for others.

Our efforts to elevate our and enforce our own value with no regard for the value of others. Lord, our value is safe with Christ and God.

[37 : 32] Our glory and our honor is safe. Our name is the name of Jesus Christ. That is our identity united with him.

I pray, Lord God, that each and every one of us would remind ourselves and remind and encourage one another again and again and again. This is who we are in Christ Jesus. This mindset is ours in Christ Jesus. And so we are free to advance the gospel together. So we are free, set free to love one another, set free to care for one another, and set free to live that life of humility and joy that you have called us to. This is very hard. Sometimes it feels tremendously unnatural. But this is the way of Christ. Lord God, win us over. Remind us that you dwell with those of a lowly spirit because you yourself are gentle and lowly in heart. Amen.