

HUMBLE WITH One Another

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Preacher: James Barnett

[0 : 00] You are so arrogant. You think too much of yourself and your own opinion. You only think of yourself and never anyone else.

Have you ever heard someone say that to you? We don't necessarily like being told that we are arrogant. We prefer to think ourselves as humble.

But the problem is all of us can be arrogant. What's the consequence for being arrogant? I was 18 when my parents moved out.

Usually it's the other way around but my parents were moving to Sydney and I stayed in Wollongong. And I moved into a townhouse with my brother and it was the first night of us living on our own.

And my mother had left us some pastry shells. It had gone from her freezer to our freezer. And I thought, I've got pastry shells. I can cook a meal. I'm a man now.

[1 : 01] I'm 18. I'll make that wonderful easy meal a quiche. You know, very easy. You've got the pastry, egg, tomato, bacon, maybe a bit of cheese on top.

You can't go wrong, right? Well, let me tell you, it went wrong. And so I whipped up the egg, chopped the tomato and did all those kinds of things. And I pulled out the pastry shell.

Lo and behold, it was a sweet pastry base. Now, some of you know what that means. I didn't really know what that meant at the time.

It turns out there's two types of pastries. There's a sweet pastry to make a pie or there's a savory pastry to make a quiche or something like that.

And I thought, you know, with the arrogance of a man who doesn't ask directions, the arrogance of a man who won't look at the instruction to set something up. This will work.

[1 : 59] A pastry is pastry, right? So I put the filling in and put it in the oven. And as it was cooking, it smelled wonderful. But it smelled like two wonderful things.

It smelled like a sweet pie, but it also smelled like an eggy quiche. I pulled it out of the oven and served it to my brother and myself. And it turns out if you try and eat something that is that different, it actually makes you want to vomit a little bit.

It was really bad. It turns out I lacked humility when it came to cooking. But now, this is a wider problem for us than just the things we put into our ovens.

We can often assume that our way of doing things is the right way of doing things. The way I've done them in the past must be the right way. And there can be an undercurrent of pride and arrogance.

And it can be revealed when something horrendous comes out of the oven. And so for us, we're going to be thinking about humility today. But is it also possible that we lack spiritual humility?

[3 : 11] Is it possible that we look down on other people, other Christians, and we think, Oh, look, I know better than them, and I know better than God? Have you ever had that moment where you're reading the Bible?

Maybe you even had that moment today where you're reading the Bible, sitting in church and thinking, I know someone who really needs to hear this. They're a terrible sinner. They need to be reading this part of the Bible.

I'm going to go and tell them. Or maybe you dismiss someone's view because they're clearly not as spiritual as you. You know, they haven't been at church as long as you.

And so, of course, they can't know what they're talking about. Maybe today you're still not sure about Jesus, but you're here and you're wanting to find out more about Him.

Or maybe you've put up walls in the past. Let me encourage you today to question what it means to follow Jesus.

[4 : 08] Because our lack of humility damages our relationships with one another, and it damages our relationship with God. And I wonder if sometimes we just don't realize that we lack humility.

And maybe we just don't realize that we need to change. Arrogance is not an attractive characteristic. And while spiritual arrogance, just like regular arrogance, can hide under the surface, it is something that we need to be carefully considering.

Over the last three weeks, as we've had a look at the One Another series, first of all, we saw that for us to love one another, we need to know that God loves us first.

To be united with one another, we need to remember how God has already united us. And then to forgive one another, we need to know how God has already forgiven us.

So a bit of a spoiler as we think about humility. Before we can have humility with one another, we need to be humble before God. And that's the challenge for us today.

[5 : 14] To be humble. When we know our place before God, that will help us to value and love other people. And not to arrogantly demand our own opinions or our own desires.

So as we look at this, let me pray. Dear Heavenly Father, we ask that you would give us much willingness to consider our own hearts.

As we consider whether we are arrogant, particularly when it comes to spiritual arrogance. Make us willing to consider the depths of our own heart and to change to be more like you.

Amen. Now as we think about humility, it's important that we first define what humility is. Maybe you're thinking just when I'm talking about humility, it means being docile.

You need to walk around with your head hanging in shame. You need to change from being a loud, confident person and just walk around, you know, quiet, shy person.

[6 : 20] This might be quite difficult for you. And so you think maybe humility, that's just not me. Humility is not just lowness. It's not being inferior.

And the opposite of humility is not boldness or confidence. You can be humble and confident at the same time. I want to say if we, there might be a definition that comes up on the screen in a second. Humility is the right understanding of oneself. Humility means knowing your strengths and weaknesses. Humility means knowing your value and knowing other people's value.

Take the Olympic runner who finishes first and wins gold. And, you know, they've always got a camera shoved in the front of their face and a microphone and they're still, you know, panting and unable to breathe.

And the person asks them, you know, how did you run the race? Well, a runner can be humble and say, well, I ran well. I came first. But a humble athlete will say, well, there's still some things I need to work on.

[7 : 28] Take the French soccer team who won the World Cup. They can say, yes, we won. And that's not arrogance. They did win. But they can also acknowledge, yes, there's things we need to continue to work on as a team.

Arrogance says, oh, I am the best runner and there is never going to be anyone like me. No one else can run like me. I am just the best. It's Muhammad Ali. You know, I am the best boxer there ever was.

And that is arrogance. You know, the best soccer team says there is never going to be anyone as good as France. You know, no one could be as good as me. So humility is the right understanding of oneself.

And pride or arrogance, I'm going to use them interchangeably, it's the inflated view of oneself. I was reading recently a story about a Bible translator.

He was translating the Bible into another language and they didn't have the word pride in this language. So he was trying to figure out how can I get across pride without using this word in this other language he was translating to.

[8 : 32] And so he ended up using the phrase ears too far apart. Now, what is the ears too far apart got to do with pride?

Well, it's the head being too big. It's the head being inflated. Arrogance is having a big head. It's having a puffed up view of yourself. Your ears too far apart.

And so when we come to humility before God and with one another, we first need to understand who we are. And we need to make sure that we don't have an inflated view.

We don't have ears that are too far apart because our head is puffed up with our own view. So we're going to be spending some time in James chapter 4 today.

James is the brother of Jesus. And he's going to help us understand what it means to have humility. And so James is writing this book to a group of churches and they didn't have humility.

[9 : 34] They were totally arrogant and totally full of pride over the top of one another. And so let me read from James chapter 4. James chapter 5. James chapter 5. What causes fights and quarrels among you?

Don't they come from your desires that battle within you? You desire but do not have so you kill. You covet but you cannot get what you want so you quarrel and fight. You do not have because you do not ask God.

And when you ask, you do not receive because you ask with wrong motives. That you may spend what you get on your pleasures. And so James is describing a picture of a church that is just at war with one another.

There's fights. There's quarrels. There's sinful desires. There's murder. There's coveting. Everyone is putting themselves and their desires and opinions over everyone else.

They hadn't listened to Klinker's story this morning. Totally self-absorbed. Totally selfish. And they're even praying with arrogance and pride with wrong motives.

[10 : 35] You know, you can hear the prayer. It's the kind of prayer that says, God, my neighbor has a car and it's a new shiny car and I'm jealous and I want one. Give me that car and while you're at it, can you make them have a car accident so I feel better about myself?

Maybe you've prayed a prayer not too dissimilar to that in the past. They're not humble with one another. They're fighting and they're clawing for things.

And they're the same before God too. James 4.4 This is explosive language.

James is saying that if you're chasing the things of the world, that means you are God's enemy.

And you're an adulterer. You have betrayed your first love. And James is using imagery from the Old Testament where there's this common picture of rebellion against God as adultery.

It's prostitution. It's whoring against God to other gods. We get a picture of this in the book of Hosea where God is described as a husband.

[11 : 55] And Israel, his wife, is a woman who keeps running into the arms of another man. These people are chasing the pleasures of the world. Money, material.

Instead of pursuing God who made the world. They were enemies of God. And what do enemies deserve? Well, enemies deserve destruction.

Enemies of God deserve punishment. Enemies of God very much so deserve just to be snuffed out by God. And that is what could have happened to us all.

This is who we are. This is what we deserve. We do not deserve love. We do not deserve forgiveness. We do not deserve being united to God's family.

But we are God's enemies and we deserve wrath and condemnation. Have you ever had that feeling where you really want someone else's arrogance to be exposed?

[12 : 58] I see this with villains in TV shows and movies. Think of the James Bond villain. I don't know if you watch James Bond. There's another one coming out soon. The James Bond villain always catches James Bond.

And when he's captured, reveals his plan. And it's just the arrogance of the villain. It's just like James Bond, I've got you now.

And here is my plan for world destruction or whatever they're doing. But often their arrogance is their downfall. You know, while he's telling this long story to James Bond, he's unpicked his handcuffs or something and James Bond gets free.

And then there's that feeling of joy and of justice. As James Bond takes down this arrogant villain. You know that feeling of joy when the arrogant gets taken down a peg?

Maybe you've seen this in your own life. Well, the problem is that villain is us. We are not the good guy. We are not James Bond in that story.

[14 : 00] We are the villain. We are the arrogant one who think we can trick God. We can pull the wool over God's eyes. We are the ones who deserve imprisonment in hell.

Do we think we deserve better than we have it? Do we think that God should bless us more? Do you look at other people and think you deserve more than what God has already given you?

When we think like that, we make ourselves more important than God. And we make ourselves more important than other people. We need to keep God where he is.

We need to keep God on his throne. And we need to know that we deserve to be very far from God. You see, these churches that James was talking to, they were not living a life of humility.

They had become arrogant. Their view of themselves had become puffed up. Their ears were too far apart. And they had inflated themselves and reduced other people and God.

[15:08] But even though these churches and us have been adulterous with inflated views of ourselves, James says something in verse 6 that is always shocking and amazing.

God gives us more grace. Even though we are his enemies, God gives us grace. He has grace to save us from our sin when we turn to Jesus.

And he has grace to continually forgive us and love us as we wait for Jesus' return. And we get a picture of this grace in Philippians 2 that Sarah read for us.

Verse 3, Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility, value each other or value one another above yourselves.

Not looking to your own interests, but each of you to the interests of the others. And Paul gives us this amazing view of Jesus. He who was God, who models humility to us.

[16:14] Verse 6, Who being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage. He didn't have the arrogance to grasp and stay in heaven.

Rather, he had the humility to obey God. Verse 7, Rather, he made himself nothing. By taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

The humility of Jesus looked like him knowing who he was. He was God's son. And that means he obeys God, even when God sends him to earth to die for us.

We are people who deserve nothing but judgment from God. And yet, and yet he blesses us richly in that Jesus humbled himself for us.

Jesus obeyed God. And as we've seen over the last three weeks, that means we are loved by God. We are part of God's family. We are united into this family. And we are forgiven.

[17:25] So it's very important that we hold two different things in our hands. First of all, we need to hold in one hand God's view that we are sinners, that we deserve to be punished.

We are the villains on one hand, destined only for destruction. And in the other hand, God's view that we are his children, that we are redeemed, that we are invited to be part of his family, that we can have a close connection.

We can call God Abba, Father. Now, when we hold, I'm holding a mic, so I can't hold out two hands. I'll just do this. When we hold, I can't, let's imagine I'm holding two things.

When we hold both of these things in our hand, that's what spiritual humility looks like. That's what humility looks like that says, on the one hand, I've done nothing to deserve this relationship with God.

But I know that he values me. He has made me worthwhile. He loves me and made me a child with the highest position ever.

[18:34] True humility looks like knowing who we are in God's sight and who he has made us to be. But these two views can be tricky to hold together.

We can't juggle them. If you only have one, if you've only got the one view that we are sinful, that we deserve destruction, well, what can happen is that can just lead to low self-esteem.

That can just lead to depression. God hates me. I'm his enemy. I deserve nothing. But if we only hold the other view, that I'm God's child, that I'm saved, on its own, that can lead to arrogance.

Yeah, I deserve all these blessings. I'm God's child and I can't do anything wrong because he's forgiven me. So I'm going to do whatever I want and everyone else is wrong. On the one hand, if we only have one, it can lead to depression and forgetting God's love.

And if we only hold the other, it can lead to the spiritual arrogance of thinking we know best. We need to hold both these positions in our hands because they correct each other.

[19:47] They keep them focused on God's gracious love. Brothers and sisters, we, first of all, need to know who we are. And then we can fully grasp the magnitude of what it means for Jesus to die for us.

And only then can we have humility with one another. James has painted a picture of people who are at war with God and with one another. And what changes is the centerpiece of this passage.

It's that God has more grace. God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. That's the center. That's the changing point in this chapter. And now he describes what these children are to

be like.

Verse 11. Brothers and sisters, do not slander one another. Anyone who speaks against a brother or sister or judges them speaks against the law and judges it.

When you judge in law, you are not keeping it but sitting in judgment on it. There is only one lawgiver and judge, the one who is able to save and destroy. But you, who are you to judge your neighbor?

[20 : 58] The relationship between one another, it's no longer marked by fighting. There's no slander. There's no judgment. They're not to place themselves over one another as judge.

And as we saw in Philippians, Paul said, do nothing out of selfish ambition. Rather, in humility, value one another above yourselves.

Value one another in humility above yourselves. Jonathan Edwards was an American preacher from a couple hundred years ago.

And he said this about humility. The humble Christian has so much to do at home and sees so much evil in his own heart and is so concerned about it that he is not apt to be very busy with other hearts.

He is apt to esteem others better than himself. It is such a contrasting view of the church at the start of James chapter 4. They were at war, stealing, fighting, killing each other.

[22 : 02] And Jonathan Edwards reflects on this and says that the Christians should be so busy working on their own hearts, so busy in their own backyard of their life, they don't even have time to climb the fence and look over to the grass on the other side and to see the problems or to see the benefits of other people.

Brothers and sisters, we, the humble Christian, should be so concerned with what is in our hearts, what is in our lives, that we are far too busy to judge others.

What does humility with one another need to look like? Where does our spiritual arrogance lie?

Well, as a church, we are trying to do something that is different.

We are trying to be a trans-cultural church. This is not just a Western church that just speaks English. We're not just trying to be a church of one specific language group.

We want to treasure Jesus together as a united family, different nations, different tribes, different tongues. But putting people together from many different places in the same church service is difficult.

[23 : 19] And it can lead to arrogance, but it's also an opportunity for humility for all of us. It's easy to think, oh, my culture is the culture.

My food preferences are the best. If you've ever eaten in Chatswood, you'd probably know that there's many other options that are good. We can think, my way of doing things is better than yours.

My way of doing church is better than yours. The way I've always done church is better than the way you want to do church now. The way my culture does it is better than yours.

My view of Christianity is better than your view of Christianity. That kind of thinking ends up pitting us against one another instead of putting others above us in humility.

Now, as we've heard, the World Cup of Soccer has only just finished, but it reminded me of a great underdog victory that happened a couple of years ago. It was the English Premier League.

[24 : 18] Does anybody ever follow the English Premier League? There's maybe two people here. That's okay. It's a soccer competition in England. Very competitive. There are teams like Manchester United and Liverpool, and they literally have billions of dollars to throw at people.

And they will pay some players hundreds of millions of dollars, just ridiculous amounts of money.

And then there are teams made up of nobodies. And there was a team from a place called Leicester City.

And they were so bad that they nearly got kicked to the level below. Nobody expected them to win anything. But somehow, this lowly team came from nowhere, and they started winning games.

And then they won the whole competition. They beat these teams that literally had billions of dollars to throw at people. It's one of modern history's great underdog stories.

A very humble team worked together and took down the giants. But we have an even better underdog story.

[25 : 30] One that is about Jesus, who didn't seem that impressive. When he comes up against Pharisees and kings, he doesn't come across as impressive.

He is just a humble man. But he was able to bring salvation to us all, because he was humble before God's command to die for us.

I wonder what would happen if we, as a church, stopped clawing over the top of one another. What would happen if we stopped looking out for just ourselves?

What would happen if we had the humility, that means we know who we are, we don't deserve anything from God, and yet he gives us everything? What could God do through us as a church if we had this kind of humility?

What could God do to restore our relationships with one another, our relationships with people in our family, and with friends, and with the community around us in Chatswood?

[26 : 39] May God open our eyes to our faults and help us to be humble with one another. Let me pray.

Heavenly Father, you are indeed a great and mighty and very generous God. You give us so much that we don't deserve.

Father, we ask that you would help us to remember what we deserve, but to know deeply what you have given us in Jesus. Father, help us to be so busy meditating on what you have done for us, so busy looking at our own hearts, that we wouldn't look at other people and try to bring them low.

Father, thank you that you have lifted us up to the very highest of heights to be your children. We pray all this in your son's name and for your glory. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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