

Humble Yourself

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[0 : 0 0] let's turn again to the chapter we read first peter chapter two chapter five sorry first peter chapter five let's read at verse five likewise you who are younger be subject to the elders clothe yourselves all of you with humility towards one another for god opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble and particularly the next verse humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of god that he so that he may so that at the proper time he may exalt you not not very long remember looking at verse seven here where we're asked to cast all our anxieties or our cares upon the lord because he cares for us and probably mentioned a little of verse six but i want us particularly to home in on on that verse now as we know peter is writing to christians who were scattered here there in everhood because of the fires of persecution and there have been a different periods in the world that have been very difficult times there is an uh an incredible hatred against the christian and the more you think about it the more irrational it often is because there is no system or philosophy or religion or whatever in this world that at its very heart promotes goodness and peace like the christian faith and yet there doesn't seem to be any faith in this world that seems to be so systematically attacked down throughout the years but we ought not to be surprised at that because there is a deep-rooted hatred against god and there was in this world while he lived here a deep-rooted hatred against the lord jesus christ it tells us in the word that he was hated they hated me without a cause and how true that is because when when you think about it if there was any person that should have been esteemed by the world it's the lord jesus christ but of course what we've got to remember is that there is an arch enemy uh that that is in this world and over this world doesn't have the ultimate authority that authority belongs to god but satan we've got to remember is termed the god of this world and he has a kingdom a kingdom of darkness that is opposed to everything that is good and right so we ought not to be surprised that the fires of persecution and the hatred of the christian is something that will always be in this world because it is a fallen world that is against god that's the baseline that's the default position if you want to say whatever it is is that human nature without christ is against god there is a a natural enmity against god in the human heart now of course there are periods when the fires of persecution are terrible it was at the beginning when when you read through through the times of the roman persecution and such like it was awful but there have been there have been periods right throughout and there are still to this very day and we think of some of the nations of this world where it it costs beyond what we can understand to be a christian if we lived for instance in north korea we couldn't do what we're doing just now couldn't have the freedoms that so often we take for granted and it's it's like that in other parts of this world so we need to remember the christian so it was to people who were being persecuted uh that peter was writing that they were they were scattered we read about that throughout at the

beginning of the the letter he writes like that and as peter is writing he is telling in the previous chapter chapter 4 he talks about fiery trials that's what he says in verse 12 of chapter 4 beloved do not be surprised at the fiery trial when it comes upon you but you'll notice it it is to test you now you and i know that fire is something that burns if you have if you ever get burnt even just a little even just a little burn it's it's really sore i can't imagine what it must be like to be badly burnt it must be just i just i just can't even begin to to think of the pain that that would cause but when we applied spiritually these trials they hurt and you and i know that in life we go through these trials and all of us at different ways at different levels have experienced trials maybe some of you tonight know all about a fiery trial you've gone through a trial that has broken you it's broken your heart and in a sense your heart although you've got your coping in life you have never completely got over and you never will because this is something that has really really broken you but what we've got to remember that in the trials and in all these things god is at work and god god is testing us and he's also purifying us god doesn't allow trial into our life just as a random thing but through often the pains and the sorrows that come into our life god works in these things so that although it's painful god is actually working what is going to be for our eternal good through these things and we we see that so often in in scripture and that that's why these things are so hard are often to to deal with but god gives grace and he enables us and he helps us to keep going in the face of these things and i'm sure as you look back in life you see it you sure you know this i don't know well you you say i do know i know how i've managed to get to here but there might have been a time in your life you didn't think you would get to where you are because the trial was such that it was breaking you and you didn't think that you were going to make it through but you have and the lord is taking you through and he will continue to take you through that's what what he does so in this chapter here we find that the the the apostle is talking about the importance of humility now of course the minister and dealing in philippians and going through there about christ humbling himself has spent quite some time dealing with that very thing and of course it is something that ought to characterize the life of the christian and how we react under god when god's providence is difficult and you know when you look in scripture and you see the way that god deals with some of his people there's a lot of lessons to be learned for instance when you look at the life of joseph joseph joseph was somebody who was humbled and humbled and humbled but you know the wonderful thing when you look at joseph's life is that he was kind of the same man in prison and on the throne there was a beautiful consistency about the life of joseph just as there was in the life of david and david and david and david gives us a a tremendous uh picture there's a great example given

to us in david's life when uh you remember when after the rebellion of absalom and david uh was having to to uh to uh to run from uh absalom was planning against him and uh when he's making his way he's running away as it were from um absalom and the rebellion we find that uh when he was going out going from jerusalem to run this man shimei came out and he started to curse david and throw stones at david one of david's men said david let me go and take his head off it's kind of what the way they did and talked in those days and david said no leave him alone he said this is of the lord he saw david he saw the lord's hand in this but he also said it may be that god will see what is happening and that he will repay his servant in time and we know that that's one of the the wonderful examples of being submissive under the mighty hand of god because when we wronged and shimei was cursing david and so much of what he was saying was absolute rubbish it was lies and misrepresentation and everything and you would say david had every right to go over and to deal with with shimei or he could have said to his servant right that's the best thing go and cut his head off no no leave him alone he saw god's hand in it and i wonder are we like that when when maybe we've been maligned or misrepresented or where false accusation has been leveled against us or we think do we get just does a spirit of revenge or do we get incensed or do we say lord i don't know why this is coming but use it for my growth and development but lord you know what is right and ask the lord to deal with it and very interestingly later on shimei didn't get away with what he did because in solomon's reign shimei became disobedient and to solomon and solomon had him put to death and he said to him because of your disobedience and because so god god is watching over everything and even although we might not deal with something god does so we're told here to clothe ourselves likewise you are younger be subject to the elders clothe yourselves all of you with humility towards one another now at one level that's that's quite a difficult thing to do where we are to be have a spirit of humility one to another but it's following on from this theme that mr mckeever's been looking at the importance of esteeming others better than ourselves of looking out for others and putting others above ourselves and that is not natural it's not it's not the natural way of things we always want the best for ourselves that's natural but it is here that we're to clothe ourselves all of you with humility towards one another and you know we'll never be humble one with another until we are first humble before god that's where it starts and the more we learn humility before god the quicker we will be able to humble ourselves before one another and what a different church and i'm talking about the church in its width and it's right throughout time what a different church it would be if this was the spirit and the attitude

that was adopted all the time if the church took on board this clothe yourselves all of you with humility towards one another and then we see that god opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble and the more that we seek to humble ourselves before god and before one another the more god will give us grace because we need grace not something that we can do naturally ourselves we need god's grace in this and then peter says humble yourselves and therefore under the mighty hand of god so that the proper time he may exhort you god's mighty hand is sometimes upon us in different ways great example of that is israel in the wilderness israel in the wilderness for 40 years and god said to them i led you these 40 years through the wilderness to humble you to prove you to test what was in you whether you would obey my commandments or not it wasn't a random journey that they were on every step god was with them but he was teaching them he was instructing them he was humbling them he was bringing them down from their own self-importance their own self-reliance to the place where they learned to trust in him you know the israel that stood before the waters of the red sea and the israel that stood before the waters of the jordan 40 years apart couldn't it be more different the israel before the red sea they were although they had been in slavery they were a grumbling hard-hearted nation the israel before the raging waters of the jordan waiting to cross was a nation that was ready to listen to god to go to keep in step with god because these 40 years god was molding them and shaping them and humbling them breaking themselves breaking self and bringing a reliance upon god and that's what god does with us and through many of the things that come into our life whether it is illnesses or darkness of mind or allowing strong temptations to take us you know there are times that god does that that he gives satan a wee bit of access to us he did that with job with terrifying consequences you remember how satan complained about job and he said of course job fears you because you put a hedge around him and all that he has it's not a wonderful thought that's what god does he puts a hedge around us and all that we have divine protection and satan couldn't get at job and it wasn't until the lord opened the hedge so to speak that satan was able to do his damage and there are times that the lord will permit to a certain extent maybe satan to really tempt us you might be going through just now really a terrible time of temptation the like of which you've never known before maybe it's put you off your sleep maybe you're wondering if you're a christian at all there are thoughts going through your mind there's everything and you're saying what on earth is going on well god's humbling you through this and he's bringing you to an ever greater understanding of who he is and a reliance upon him he will come back into you he will deliver you but sometimes this is all part of the humbling that goes on and so there are various things that happen in our experience god does allows many

different things as we said it could be misrepresentation or being slandered or there's just there are difficulties going through your life but then we see how are we to deal with things well we we have a duty when god's mighty hand is upon us we're not to rebel because that's in a sense is very often the natural reaction when we sometimes if we feel that god's hand is on sometimes there's this oh i'm get angry but that's not the way we're to be we are to humble ourselves and how do we humble ourselves well there's lots of different things in a sense that we can do the first and the most important thing is to examine ourselves and always remember that we examine ourselves with the word never examine yourselves by measuring yourself against another christian never examine yourselves by what you feel because your heart is deceitful above all things desperately wicked when you measure yourself against another christian you're judging that christian you have no idea really of what that person really is you and i don't really know one another we do we know the surface level we know a but we don't really know in depth what it's like god alone knows but the only way to truly examine ourselves is against god's word against the light of god's word and we do so prayerfully saying oh lord you have searched me and known me and we ask the lord to search you and you know it's one of the most humbling things when god begins to reveal something of who we really are when we get our knowledge a little in-depth knowledge just a little and we see the the seed of every conceivable sin lurking there within our heart it can be quite disturbing and we say oh i didn't realize i was quite like this so that's the sort of thing we ought to do when god's hand is upon us not to fight against but to ask for the grace in order that we will seek to humble ourselves in his presence and as we've said before when we look at our lives and see how little we've grown you know you think back and maybe when you started out first and it was all so new and you had this hunger this thirst and you couldn't get enough and you thought this is how it's going to be for the rest of my journey and you were thinking if the lord spears you 40 years that you will be like daniel that you will be one an amazing believer and now here you are and you're looking back and you say this is not how i thought it would be i thought i'd be a giant of faith now no i'm not and then you look how little you've done and you say to yourself you know i thought i would do so much more and so it goes on and that that is all part of the humbling that we ought to be doing before the lord even when we look at our lives and we think of eternity and look at how often we feel how unready we feel for death and you know as we begin to humble ourselves before god our attitude changes because you find in scripture that as god is dealing with his people and humbling them as he did with job job was a great man a godly man there was none like him in his day and yet god was bringing job down and down and we know that job complained before god

[20 : 23] but then he came to a point where he began to see god began to see his glory and his majesty and his own nothingness and then he was so ashamed and he kept saying to lord lord i'm so ashamed i want to put my hand over my mouth because of all that i've been saying and you know when we humble ourselves before the lord and we're being humbled by him that's also how we are we want to put our hands over our mouth and say lord i said so many things i thought so many things that i shouldn't but you know the wonderful thing is we don't stay there because we're told here a lot more we could say at the proper time humble yourselves therefore under the hand the mighty hand of god so that at the proper time he may exalt you it's not that may is not perhaps exalt you but that he will exalt you it's going to lift you up again in fact that's a whole journey of the christian isn't it because we begin by being humbled in order to come to faith nobody comes to faith who isn't first humbled because we're brought to see enough of ourselves by god's spirit to need the savior so that there's this humbling of ourselves where we realize our own need and we cry out for help and of course we're taken we're taken from the down to the up and we're brought into the liberty and the freedom of the gospel so there is an exaltation that comes in our coming to faith but our journey through the christian life is a serious a process of humblings and exaltings that's the way it goes you look at david he was so humbled seven years on the run he had been promised the throne he was dicing with death year in year out he had nowhere to call home he was on the run and then all of a sudden he's put onto the throne but his life was nothing but not plain sailing there were there were there were periods where where it was going really well but there were also very difficult periods and so it is in the christian life it's a process of humblings and lifting up sometimes it's extreme sometimes it's it's not but that's the nature of the christian life but one day there will be a complete and altogether wonderful exaltation and that is when we will be transferred from this world into the next who will be brought with gladness great and mirth on every side into the palace of the king and there we shall abide beautiful word abide stay there forever that is that is how it is for the christian so if you tonight if you're down and the things are on top of you and your world has caved in in many different ways remember that this is part of the process but that you won't be left there god lift you up again and this process of down and up will continue till we'll finally brought forever and there'll be no more downs forever and ever up let us pray lord our god we give thanks for your word tonight we give thanks for what you tell us in it we give thanks lord for the way you show us yourselves and show us yourself we pray that you will be with us bless each and every one of us here bless our homes our families and all whom we love oh lord we give thanks for your mercy for your goodness and mercy and we pray that that will continue to follow us all the days of our life

so that then we will dwell with you forever in your house lord be with us we pray again we remember duncan mcclain your servant in hospital lord he has helped so many people in hospital lord we pray that you will help him in hospital now lord that it might please you to to lift him up again you are the great physician you are able to do this and we ask that this may be indeed what you may do we pray for annabel and the family we bring them before you and ask that you will bless each and every one of them at this time as they're worried we pray for all who are sad and only remember mrs morrison norman norman morrison the late norman morrison's widow when we ask that you would bless her we pray for all who mourn all who are sad all who are weary we commit them to your care and keeping bless us and we pray and take us to our home safely forgiving us our every sin in jesus name amen