

In View of God's Mercy: Live Humbly
03.06.2022

- A. Once, I was getting home later at night. It had been a long day. It was dark out. And I pulled into the driveway and pushed the garage door button, but nothing happened. I pushed it again. Nothing. You know, sometimes garage door buttons can stick a little bit, so I pressed again...harder. Still nothing. And now I'm pressing it over and over again. Nothing. About that time, I notice that my neighbor's garage door, to my right, was going up and down, up and down. And I thought, that's strange. And then it hit me.

My eyes told me I was in the right place, but I was in the wrong place. And we are trying to push all the right buttons, but nothing is happening the way we think it should be. The primary issue we might be having is that we believe we are in the right place, but we are actually in the wrong place.

- B. Last week, Andy kicked off the message series that we are going to be in for the next three weeks called, "In view of God's mercy..."
1. And the premise of this series of messages is pretty simple.
 2. If we look at life through the lens of God's mercy, it will shape the way we see the world.
 - a. Looking at life through the lens of God's mercy, will shape the way we see the conflict in Ukraine.
 - b. Looking at life through the lens of God's mercy, will shape the way we see the value of human life – from conception all the way through death.
 - c. Looking at life through the lens of God's mercy, will shape the way we see others who are far from Jesus.
 3. If we look at life through the lens of God's mercy, it will the shape the way we see ourselves.
 - a. Looking at our life through the lens of God's mercy, will shape our concept of self-worth.
 - b. Looking at our life through the lens of God's mercy, will shape our concept of purpose.

- c. Through the lens of God's mercy, will shape our love towards others.
4. Nothing should shape our worldview more than God's mercy.

C. Last week we focused on Romans 12:1-2, which says...

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. ² Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.” _Romans 12:1-2

D. Before we go any farther, we need to understand who wrote this.

1. Before he became the Apostle Paul, he was Saul - a deeply devoted leader in the Jewish faith.
2. Growing up Jewish had shaped his view of the world. And he was such an enthusiastic believer in Judaism that he persecuted those who had a different worldview.
3. Paul had a hard time believing the stories about Jesus' death, burial and resurrection from the dead. Jesus couldn't be God! It just didn't fit his worldview.
4. And as Christianity grew, it angered Paul to see people convert from Judaism to Christianity.
5. The Bible describes how Paul created havoc in the early days of the church among those first believers. He would burst into the homes of Christians and he would have men and women arrested and thrown into prisons to be put to death or to die.
6. But then an amazing thing happened to Paul. The Bible describes how he was on the road to Damascus, where he was going to persecute the church, when he was blinded by a light and had an encounter with the resurrected Jesus.
7. But though blinded, Paul saw Jesus clearly for the very first time.
8. And then he went on into the city, where a follower of Jesus, name Ananias met Paul and prayed for him.

9. And Acts 9:18 says that Paul, “got up and was baptized.” In other words, Paul made the decision to become a follower of Jesus and become just like those Christians he had been persecuting.
10. Sometimes, it takes us getting blinded by Jesus and have our sight taken off of the things of this world before we can see things clearly.
11. And becoming a follower of Jesus changed the way Paul saw things. He no longer saw God the same way. He no longer saw people the same way. He no longer saw his own life the same way. What was important to him before was no longer important to him.
12. And Paul would often think, “Why would God be so good to me? Why would God be so good to me after all I’ve done? Why would God be so good to me and give me a new chance at real life after persecuting and killing others?” And I believe it would always lead him to the same place. “I am so thankful for God’s mercy. I didn’t deserve it, but He showed me mercy. I didn’t deserve it, but God showed me love. I didn’t deserve it, but God has forgiven me for all that I’ve done.”
13. You see, when we get closer to God, we don’t become more proud or arrogant. Because we see how much mercy God has shown to us, it makes us more humble.

E. So Paul goes on to write in Romans 12:3-8 – because we should now see life, see others, and see ourselves through the lens of God’s mercy...

³For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you.

⁴For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. ⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸if it is to encourage, then give

encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.” _Romans 12:3-8

- F. Through the lens of God’s mercy, Paul says that we should live humbly. He says...

IN THE WORD

I. DON’T THINK HIGHLY OF YOURSELF.

A. Can I be honest with you...

1. Some of you...are pretty smart. You have this amazing mind; maybe a brilliant mind. You can solve problems. You can think of better ways of doing things. Your brilliant mind helps you be a better leader. And people respect you.
2. Some of us are good-looking. Beautiful people. When you enter a room, men notice you. Women say, “Oh my.”
3. I heard about a good-looking man. A woman walked up to him and said, “You look like my fourth husband.” And he replied, “How many times have you been married?” And she said, “Three.”
4. And some of us have made quite a bit of money. You’ve done well. You’ve got a comfortable home, nice cars, you’ve been able to arrange your money so that you can take care of any contingency, you can take nice vacations and give generously to the church.
5. Now is there anything wrong with being smart? Is there anything wrong with being good-looking? Is there anything wrong with being financially successful? No, of course not.
6. Competence leads to confidence. And there is nothing wrong with being confident. The only problem is if those things leads to pride.
7. Pride is when we become enamored of our own greatness. Pride says, “Look at me.” “I’m ahead of all you all.”
8. It dangerous when our self-worth is tied up in being better than others.

- B. Like a lot of others, I believe Winston Churchill was the most important person in the 20th century. He was once asked, “Doesn’t it thrill you to know that every time you make a speech, the hall is packed to overflowing?”
- “It’s quite flattering,” he replied. “But whenever I feel that way, I always remember that if instead of making a speech I was being hanged, the crowd would be twice as big.”
- C. Paul says, “Don’t think of yourself more highly than you ought to think. Be humble.”
1. Paul was smart, a good communicator, a hard worker, he wrote 13 or 14 of the books in the New Testament, he started lots of churches – he was the most influential Christian not just in the first century, but possibly for all time. And he says, “Because of God’s mercy toward me, I need to be humble. We need to be humble.”
 2. Before Jesus began his ministry, people traveled for miles to hear John the Baptist speak and repenting and turning to God. And lots of people did. He had an amazing influence on hundreds, thousands of lives. But when Jesus began His ministry, John said, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” _John 3:30
John was saying, “Jesus is much more important than me.”
 3. Even Jesus said in Mark 10:43: “Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant.” _Mark 10:43
 4. In God’s eyes, through the lens of His mercy, greatness isn’t measured by standing out in the crowd; greatness is measured by humility.
 5. “Don’t think of yourself more highly than you ought to think, not because your worthless, but because God has been so good to you.”
 6. That doesn’t mean that life is easy. That doesn’t mean that bad things don’t happen. That doesn’t mean that storms won’t rock your world. But when we view things through God’s mercy, at least, we shouldn’t be proud. We should be humble.
 7. Humility...
 - a. Doesn’t make you soft; it makes you bold.

- b. Doesn't mean you are weak, it means you are strong in the Lord.
- c. Humility doesn't mean you should see yourself as worthless; it means you should see how much worth you have in the eyes of God.

Transition: You are here to make a difference. But also...

II. WE ARE HERE TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

A. We are part of one body. Paul goes on to write...

“For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵ so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” _Romans 12:4-5

B. In view of the mercy of God, we begin to realize that we are part of something bigger.

1. When we view life through the mercy of God, we realize that we are part of a body of believers, the church.
2. And the church is not the business of Christ or the busyness of Christ. The church is the body of Christ. And just like all the parts of our body matter, you matter to the body of Christ.
3. And because we are the body of Christ together, together we are called to be humble and make a difference.
4. It's why, as a church, some drive to Nashville some Saturdays to feed the homeless. It's why some of us go to Murfreesboro to build walls for a house for foster kids. It's why we send money to missionaries around the world. It's why we serve with "The Well" to feed those in our community with food insecurity. My wife and daughter served at The Well on Wednesday night and there was a family that came in that had moved here from the Ukraine four months ago. It's why we serve as a church. It's why we give as a church. It's why we go as a church. To make a difference.

- B. One of our mission partners is Team Expansion. We are the support for a pastor and his family in Africa. But Team Expansion's work is global – sending missionaries to places where there are no churches.

Doug Lucas is the founder and president of Team Expansion. In the fall of 1990, a friend came to him and said, "You should prepare a team for the Soviet Union. Just watch. It's going to crumble soon."

So they went to work. At a conference in Moscow, Doug was approached by a team from the city of Kherson who wanted Team Expansion to come and help them grow their church. Doug agreed. And that became a spark for starting several churches in, what was then, the USSR.

And it turned out that the USSR was disintegrating. A few months later, the USSR became 15 different countries.

Team Expansion sent a team to Simferopol and established a church there. And within a few short years, God enabled Team Expansion workers to build a solid witness in no fewer than five cities. Many churches were birthed. At least one, the Kherson Christian Church, grew to more than 1000 members, started dozens of daughter churches, and helped send two different mission teams to unreached people groups in other lands. And all the churches established by Team Expansion workers reached a point where they no longer needed missionaries from America helping them in their churches. The believers in the churches at Kherson and Simferopol could stand on their own.

I'd like to show you on a map where Team Expansion was making an impact...

Transition: Paul says, "In view of God's mercy, understand that we are part of something bigger. Not just a local church, but a church that reaches around the world and makes a difference." And when we go and when we give, we see the evidence that the body of Christ living and active and is changing lives. And we see that the gates of hell, Vladimir Putin and the Russian army, will not prevail against it.

III. WE AREN'T THE SAME, WE'RE DIFFERENT. AND WE CAN DO DIFFERENT THINGS TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

A. Paul writes...

“We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your^[a] faith; ⁷ if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸ if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.” _Romans 12:6-8

God has shown us mercy, but He has also shown us grace. He has given us what we don't deserve. He has given us different gifts for doing different things. And there is this word in verse 6 that we need to see. It's a transition word. It's the word, "SO." What Paul is saying is that you have a gift. So...

1. You might be a very influential person. So what are you going to do with it?
2. You might a very talented person. So what are you going to do with it?
3. You might be a great teacher. So what are you going to do with it?
4. You might have the gift of generosity. So what are you going to do with it?
5. You might have the gift of encouragement. So what are you going to do with it?
6. You might have the gift of leading others. So what are you going to do with it?
7. God never places anything in our hands, God never blesses u with some kind of gift, ability, talent or skill, while at the same time not expecting us to use it for something than our own self-satisfaction. We have been given these things to serve others.

CLOSING

- A. It had been a long day and Jesus and his disciples were tired and hungry and their feet were dirty and smelly. And it was time to eat and the disciples took off their sandals, so a servant could wash their feet. To eat they had to recline on their side, so their feet could have been in someone else's face. A lot of us wear sandals these days and after a long, hot day walking around in the dust, none of us would want our feet to be in someone else's face. Washing feet was the job of the lowliest servant. And the must of wondered, "Where is he? Where is the servant?" And Jesus got up and took off his outer garment, put a towel around his waist, and poured water in a basin, and begins to wash, one by one, the disciples feet. Peter, Andrew, James, John. One by one. Philip, Thomas, Matthew, Bartholomew. One by one. The other James, Simon, and Thaddeus. And he washed the feet of Judas. His eventual betrayer.
- B. Someone said, "Humility isn't thinking less of yourself, humility isn't thinking of yourself at all."
1. It takes humility to serve others. But as long as we are thinking about ourselves, we can't serve. Or maybe, more properly, we won't serve others. It's just going to take too much of me to serve them.
 2. But Jesus smashes through that obstacle. He humbled himself. And served.
 3. A preacher once said, "I would never want to reach out someday with a soft, uncalloused hand – a hand never dirtied by serving – and shake the nail-pierce hand of Jesus."
- C. Living humbly is a better way to live. It's the way Jesus, a man who didn't have to be humble, lived.
- D. **2** Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ² then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³ Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value

others above yourselves, ⁴ not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

⁵ In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus:

⁶ Who, being in very nature^[a] God,
did not consider equality with God something
to be used to his own advantage;

⁷ rather, he made himself nothing
by taking the very nature^[b] of a servant,
being made in human likeness.

⁸ And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
by becoming obedient to death—
even death on a cross!

⁹ Therefore God exalted him to the highest place
and gave him the name that is above every name,

¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow,
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,

¹¹ and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.” _Phillipians 2:1-11

E. In view of God’s mercy, live humbly. Like Jesus.