

# 1 Peter 5:1-11

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[0:00] I'm going to preach to you tonight a one-off sermon on humility. So the last few weeks I've been doing a bit of reading on the subject is to make an apology.

In my humble opinion, it's often said with irony, isn't it? Because you actually think your opinion is very important. You might sign a letter or an email, your humble servant, we say again with irony. Wales have certainly been humbled in the rugby this autumn. Humility is a popular word, but one Christian writer has said this, no one wants it, but everybody needs it.

And when we think we've got it, we've lost it. 1 Timothy chapter 5 and verse 5, can you turn there? That's where we're going to be based, although we're going to bounce around all over the Bible and whether we'll actually get back here, I'm not sure.

But 1 Timothy 5 verse 5 speaks to each one of us who are Christians and it says this, clothe yourself, all of you, with humility towards one another, for God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.

[1:27] Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time he may exalt you. Cast all your anxieties upon him because he cares for you.

The common thread, the central theme, is humility. Verse 5, clothe yourself, all of you, with humility. God gives grace to the humble. Verse 6, humble yourselves, therefore, before the mighty hand of God.

And of course, where we need to begin is we need to understand that to grow in humility means that we are becoming more and more like the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus, he humbled himself more than anyone could imagine.

Philippians chapter 2, though he was in the form of God, he did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but he made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being born in human likeness.

Jesus voluntarily lays down his rights. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. He said really famously in his ministry, didn't he, I am humble and lowly in heart.

[2:39] And we are called to follow him. And at Advent, and in the incarnation, we see the humility of Jesus most particularly, don't we?

He could have been beamed down from heaven as a full-grown man. Instead, he was born a baby. He could have been born in a palace. Instead, he was laid in a manger.

He could have been born rich or prince. But instead, he was born into poverty. And he became a carpenter. He could have been born in a glorious city in Rome or in Jerusalem.

Instead, he was born in Bethlehem. He who fills the heavens is swaddled tightly in cloths. And the one who holds every atom in place, yet claim this to his mother, the one who sustains the fiery stars, we find him crying and needing Mary's comfort.

He's adored by angels. And yet he sleeps amongst the donkeys. It's humility. And the call to follow the Lord Jesus is a call to be humble.

[3:51] To walk in the manner that he walked. To pattern our lives on the Lord Jesus Christ. The good news is this, isn't it? Because Jesus humbled himself, therefore God has highly exalted him.

And given him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow in heaven and on earth. And every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. What we're being directed to do in this call to humility, in humbling ourselves, is also the path to God exalting us and using us.

So Luke 18, Jesus says, he who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted. I want to ask just a number of questions of this text in 1 Peter 5.

Who, what, towards whom, why and how. Very brief. Who, that will add verbs, aren't they? Who, look at the middle of verse 3.

All of you. That's the who. All of you. Each and every one of you. Every believer in the Lord Jesus Christ.

[ 5 : 07 ] Not some of you. So when you look through 1 Peter, who is this all of you? It is those who've been chosen by the Father. Chapter 1, verse 1. It's all who've been redeemed by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Those who've been sanctified by the Spirit. Those who've been born again into a living hope. Chapter 1, verse 3. Those who are strangers and aliens. It's for all of us tonight. If you are a Christian and you are breathing this evening, this has got your name on it.

That's the who. All of you. Number 2, what? What is required of every single one of us as believers? Well, that's obvious, isn't it?

God requires humility. And the longer that we walk with the Lord, and the more humility that the Lord is expecting. So verse 5. Clothe yourself with humility.

Clothe yourself with humility. The word clothe there is a command. It's a choice we make, isn't it? Without this humility, there's a sense in which we're naked.

[ 6 : 14 ] We stand naked. Clothe yourself. Notice it's not forced upon you. No one will dress you. And when we're little children, when we were little, our parents helped us get dressed.

But as we grow, we clothe ourselves. And Peter is saying here, dress yourself. That is, it's a choice that you must make. Daily, moment by moment, to clothe yourself, to choose to clothe yourself with humility.

This was rare in the first century, isn't it? So the Romans, and what we know about the Roman Empire, people pushed their way to the top. It's pretty brutal. The virtue, this virtue of humility, when the church was birthed, it was kind of the opposite to the values of the Roman Empire.

Romans elevate and exalt, but the call of the Lord Jesus is to do the opposite. Humble ourselves. It's the same in our world today, isn't it?

It hasn't changed. But Christ-likeness looks like humility. Humility. And what does humility mean? It means lowliness of mind.

[ 7 : 27 ] Humility is an attitude that ultimately shows itself in actions, but it is a mindset. So Philippians 2, it's considering the interests of others more important than my own.

The interests of Jesus more important than my own. It is self-denial. And so I want us just to look a little bit at Scripture and where we see this.

So let's go to the Sermon on the Mount. And Matthew chapter 5, in the very first beatitude, it really is a call to humility. No one enters the kingdom of God arrogantly.

No one enters the kingdom of God exalting themselves. Everyone who enters the kingdom of God enters into the kingdom of God with a step of humility. So the beatitudes begin, blessed are the poor in spirit, because for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

You have nothing tonight to commend yourself to God. You and I, we are nothing in and of ourselves.

[ 8 : 40 ] We enter the kingdom of God by declaring bankruptcy before God. This is who I am. I'm poor in spirit. I'm broke. And then, blessed are those who mourn.

There's a weeping over your lack of spiritual capital to commend yourself to God. And so, where does Jesus begin in the Sermon on the Mount? He begins with humility, the poor in spirit, the beggar.

Nothing in their hands. Maybe you're here tonight, and you recognize, actually, I'm not a Christian. I'm not believing in the Lord Jesus. Can I ask you, why is it that you're not a Christian? Try to ask yourself that question as we go through this. How do we begin the Christian life?

We begin the Christian life. Nothing in my hands I bring. Simply, to your cross I cling. And that's not just, is it, where we begin the Christian life? It's how we go on in the Christian life.

[ 9 : 44 ] Matthew chapter 18 says to us that no one is saved without humility. Jesus says, truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Whoever humbles himself like this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. And that's the path of greatness, the path of entrance into the kingdom of heaven, but it's also the path of greatness once you're in the kingdom of heaven.

You cannot be saved without humility. You cannot grow without humility. So the famous passage in Luke 18 of the Pharisee and the tax collector. And the Pharisee, he gives thanks.

He says, thank you, I'm not like other men. Thank you, I do this and I do that. Thank you, I'm not like this tax collector over there. But the tax collector says, God be merciful to me, the sinner. He can't even look up.

He beats his breast. And Jesus emphatically says, I tell you, this man, the tax collector, went down to his house justified rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.

[10:53] What Jesus is saying there is really important. It's saying that in the end, we're all going to be humbled. We will all be humbled. Either you will choose voluntarily to humble yourself or God will humble you.

Every step of spiritual progress is made by spiritual humility. Ephesians chapter four, verse one, the apostle Paul picks up this theme.

He says, I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you've been called. And the very first step in chapter four, verse two, what is required to walk in a manner worthy of the calling?

He says this, in all humility. With all humility. There's no partial or half-hearted humility.

Everything flows from this. Gentleness, patience, love. All of Christian character grows out of the soil of humility.

[12:01] Every spiritual fruit in your life is growing out of the soil of humility. And when our hearts become proud, it cuts off spiritual growth.

Philippians two, again, you go there again and again, don't you, when you think of humility. The apostle Paul says, do nothing. It's all inclusive. Do nothing from selfish ambition.

But with humility of mind. Count others more significant than yourselves. Humility begins with the mind. It's a mindset. Lowliness of mind and self-denial.

Now, C.S. Lewis has got a phrase, I've used actually a quote, where he says, humility is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less.

Which I've loved that quote. I think it's completely wrong. I don't think it's right at all. I think C.S. Lewis, well, don't start me on him, but I think he's really wrong on that. Because humility is tied with self-denial.

[13:11] It's tied with this mindset of a lowliness of mind. Colossians three, verse 12, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience.

And Paul appeals to us, tonight, as the elect of God, as those who've been chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world, to make deliberate, conscious choices, to put on humility.

What? What? We are to clothe ourselves with humility. He follows that up, doesn't he, in verse 6 of 1 Peter 5.

He says, therefore humble yourself. It's something I must do, something you must do. I must choose to lower myself before one another, to serve one another, to consider the interests of others more important than my own, to be subject to the lordship of Jesus, who all of you, what, clothe yourself with humility, and then towards whom.

There's a twofold humility, isn't it? So the first is in verse 5, and the second is in verse 6. To whom must we be humble? Well, well, first of all, clothe yourself with humility towards one another.

[14:33] One another refers to other believers in the church. It's one of those famous one another passages in the Old Testament, in the New Testament. We are to submit to the preferences of one another.

But not only to one another, verse 6 escalates the measure of this humility. Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. In reality, the only way that we can humble ourselves to every Christian, to one another, is to humble ourselves under the mighty hand of God.

I don't know how you find Christians. I find Christians hard work. It's this little rhyme, isn't it? To live up above with those that we love, that will be glory. To live down below with those that we know, that's a different story.

How can we, as the church family here, how can we live in subjection to one another? How can we humble ourselves before each other?

The answer is to first be in humility to the Lord Jesus. That is the antidote, under the mighty hand of God. And when we read that phrase from 1 Peter 5, we must see that that little phrase, the mighty hand of God, is taken from the Old Testament.

[15:57] And so we need to go back to see what does it mean in the Old Testament. Go back to Moses and Exodus and the hand of God. What did that represent? It represented the sovereign power over the lives of humans.

Come with me, if you will, to Exodus 3. All right? Exodus 3. We'll spend a little bit of time in here. Exodus 3. And God is the speaker. The setting is the burning bush.

The voice is the voice of one coming out of the burning bush. God says, Moses, get your sandals off. It's holy ground. And Moses sees the bush. It is burning and yet it's not consumed.

It's telling us that God is self-sufficient. That God is autonomous. He's independent. This voice from the sovereign God out of the burning bush speaks to Moses.

And then God says in verse 20, So I will stretch out my hand and strike Egypt with all the wonders that I was doing it. And after that, Pharaoh will let you go.

[16:57] Do you see? I will stretch out my hand. It's this picture of the stretching out of the hand of God. It represents, doesn't it, the sovereign, free, great authority of Almighty God.

He's saying to Moses, Pharaoh is no match for me. I am who I am. It is the representation of the absolute sovereignty of God, him stretching out his hand.

Go to chapter 6 and verse 1 of Exodus. But the Lord said to Moses, Now you shall see what I will do to Pharaoh, for with a strong hand he will send them out.

And with a strong hand he will drive them out of this land. When I stretch out my hand, men are under compulsion.

Even Pharaoh is but a pawn of the sovereign God. The hand of the Lord. Next chapter, chapter 7 verses 4 and 5. Please note, Pharaoh will not listen to you.

[17:59] Then I'll lay my hand on Egypt and bring my host, my people, the children of Israel out of the land of Egypt by great acts of judgment. The Egyptians will know that I am the Lord when I stretch out my hand against Egypt and I bring out the people of Israel from among them.

Pharaoh won't listen to you but he will listen to me. When I stretch out my hand he will let you go. The sovereign hand of God will be extended. Then the Egyptians will know that I am the Lord.

Verse 5, How will they know that I am the Lord when I stretch out my hand? You could go to chapter 9 verse 15, you could go to chapter 13 3 and 9 and verse 14. It escalates as Exodus unfolds. The hand of the Lord represents his unrivaled, unhindered, absolute, sovereign prerogative and supreme discretion to do whatever he pleases.

And that's the imagery of 1 Peter 5 verse 5. So close yourself with humility to one another and humble yourself before the mighty hand of God.

every one of us must humble our lives under the sovereign authority of God. And we play the hand we've been dealt to play.

[19:16] We go where he requires and we do what he commands and we pay whatever price is necessary to do his bidding, to carry out his purpose. That is why we exist. And we bring ourselves again and again in our Christian lives to yielding lower humility under the mighty hand of God.

when you became a Christian, when you were saved, you finally came to an end of yourself. You realised if you're a Christian tonight, I can't direct my life, I've ruined it.

And as you received the Lord Jesus, so walk in him. Colossians 2 verse 6 and 7. We live under the shadow of the almighty, under the mighty hand of God.

That is towards whom we are to be humble. Who? What? Towards whom? Number four, why? Why should we humble ourselves? Why can't I do my own thing?

Why can't I live my life my way? Why can't I call the shots? Why can't I do what I want to do? Why must I humble myself?

[20:30] Two reasons. He says at the end of verse 5, God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. And see the word for that's there?

That explains why we should do what he's just told us to do. If you grew up in a home with children, your children, sometimes when you ask them to do something will say, why?

And then they might continue to say, why? And you give them a reason. And then they continue to say, why? And then you say, what? Because I say so. It's gracious of God, doesn't he, that God doesn't say, because I say so.

The loving God opens his mind and he reveals to us why we must live in a state of humility. Number, reason number one, you should humble yourself and I should humble myself because if we do not, God will be opposed to us.

I've struggled with this a little bit in preparation because this is directed towards believers, isn't it? Peter speaks here and he says, God is opposed to believers during those times in which they take matters into their own hands.

[ 22 : 00 ] When they do their own thing, when they call their own shots, now it's true for believers permanently but the focus here in 1 Peter 5 is believers. In verse 5, he underscores the authority by which he says this.

He makes his point by quoting the Old Testament. The end verse 5 is a direct quote from Proverbs 3 verse 34 that says, God is opposed to the proud and the word opposed there literally means to set oneself against God.

He sets himself against the proud, not only against unbelievers but when we as believers walk in pride, God sets himself against us.

Who here wants to have God oppose us? but he gives grace to the humble. Do you want grace? He doesn't give a drop of grace to the humble but he gives oceans to the humble.

And when we humble ourselves before the Lord, he gives so much grace that we could never contain it. He gives strengthening grace.

[ 23 : 11 ] He gives daily grace. He gives enabling grace. He will give dying grace. The grace that PJ is talking about here is it's not saving grace.

It's strengthening grace and sanctifying grace and serving grace and living grace. grace. It's grace to help me do all that I am called to do.

And as God makes his way clear to you in your life and directs your path and you say, God help me, God enable me, that requires, doesn't it, that we humble ourselves before the Lord.

Verse 6, here's the other reason why we should humble ourselves, that he may may exalt you at the present time. It's very clear, this word exalt means to raise up, to lift up.

And the idea is to be lifted up out of trials and temptations in the midst of difficulties, that he may exalt you. And the you refers to those who've closed themselves with humility.

[ 24 : 17 ] You, believers, who choose to humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, that is who he exalts at the proper time. God has a perfect time schedule in our lives.

And the imagery, the picture there is of you and I finding ourselves in hard circumstances as the readers were persecuted for their faith. Being met with waves of difficulty.

And Peter is saying to them, God will save you at the proper time by his grace. You hang in there because he will pull you through and he will pull you out at the proper time and it will be only by his grace.

That is the why. And finally, how? How? As believers, as we humbly endure difficulty before he raises us up at the proper time, as we remain in the furnace of difficulty, how do we persevere?

How do you keep going this week in the tough times until he exalts us at the proper time? And verse 7 gives you the answer. How are we to live in the meantime?

[ 25 : 28 ] What are we to do in the meantime? We are to cast all our anxiety upon him because he cares for you. The only person who will do this is a humble person.

Prideful people are self-reliant. And prideful people are self-made. Prideful people look to themselves to solve their problems.

they are not casting their anxieties on the Lord. The only person who is casting their anxieties on the Lord is the one who's clothed themselves with humility.

Because the humble person realises they've got no resources in and of themselves to go through their difficulties. And since I've got no resources, I must cast all my anxieties and my burdens and my cares on the Lord.

The word cast, you know what it means? It means to throw down something. When you get in from school, some children cast their coat to the side.

[ 26 : 47 ] They throw it down. It's the picture of flinging something away from yourself. It's a very deliberate act to throw something away from ourselves onto another object.

And so what is Peter saying to you tonight? He is saying, take your anxieties and your worries and your discouragements and your despair. You feel like you're drawn in different directions.

You feel that you're at breaking point. You might feel you're about to snap into. And he says, take all your anxieties and cast them on the Lord.

It's a single act. Leave them there, he says. Don't cast them onto the Lord and then pick them up and carry them around all day.

It's hard to leave it there, isn't it? But what Peter is saying, it's not present in continuous tense. It is a decisive one-time act. Cast it with the Lord.

[ 27 : 53 ] We should say to one another, leave it with the Lord. It's like you put money into the bank.

You put the money into the bank, you pay the check in or whatever it is, you go and put the money into the bank, you don't go back the following day to you and say, well, have you got the money?

Can I see the money?

You leave it with the bank. You throw it there. That's the picture. You aggressively take all these worries and these concerns and you throw them to the Lord.

And not some of them, but all of them. And we have so many anxieties, don't we? He cares for us.

He invites us to bring our anxieties and cast them into his omnipotent arms and he can bear them up and he can do what is necessary. And so ask yourself tonight, what is there tonight in your heart and in your soul that so easily troubles and disturbs you?

[ 29 : 05 ] There's not one of us tonight that doesn't carry anxieties. But if we're truly humble, we will let go, casting it onto the Lord, knowing I cannot be my own saviour.

I can't even be my own strength. You toss them onto the Lord once and for all. And at the end of verse seven, simply to encourage us to do it, he says, he cares for you.

And so when we bring our anxieties and our burdens to him, he doesn't slap your hand. He doesn't say, it's you again.

He doesn't lecture us. He doesn't talk down to us. He doesn't roll his eyes at us. He cares for us.

The Lord Jesus Christ entered the human race and he knows experientially what it is to live in this world.

[ 30 : 17 ] He knows what it is to be hungry and to be thirsty, to go without, to not know where his next meal will come from, to be persecuted. He knows what it is to be opposed. He knows what it is to be betrayed.

He knows what it is to be bitterly disappointed. He knows, experientially, what this is. When we come to him and we say, I'm so frightened, I'm so fearful, he, through this text and so many other verses, says, I care for you.

And what other anxieties have, have you, have you not yet brought before me? And so tonight, empty your pockets.

of your anxieties. Get your purse and turn it upside down and empty it and your bag. And take all your anxieties and all your burdens and you focus on humbling yourself under my mighty right hand.

Do you think that mighty right hand is strong enough to uphold you tonight in your anxieties? The mighty right hand that smote to the Nile River and turned into blood.

[ 31 : 37 ] The mighty right hand of God that parted the Red Sea and let the children of God escape. That brought manna to the children of God in the wilderness. That caused water to come out of a rock and defeated all their enemies and stopped the flowing of the Jordan River.

And he says, wherever you set your feet, I will give it to you. You see, he is more than capable, isn't he, of taking your anxieties. And so what is the key action point?

It's that you humble yourself. I asked if you are here tonight and you would recognize that you're not a Christian.

I asked you earlier, didn't I, what is the reason that you're not a Christian? And you might say, there's not enough evidence or I don't want to. And they are good reasons, but that's not the main reason.

Because the real reason why you're not a Christian is you will not humble yourself. Proud people carry their own problems.

[ 32 : 51 ] Humble people commit it to the Lord. The Christian life is, I can't, he can, I leave it to him. And the Lord gives grace to the humble and his grace is sufficient and abundant and he will exalt you at the proper time.

And tonight, if you will humble yourself before him, if you will humble yourself before him, he will exalt you.

Let's pray. Amen.