

Humility

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[0 : 00] Open your Bibles up this morning to 1 Peter chapter 5. We're drawing very, very near the end of this book,! But we're going to pause this morning and spend our time really just in two and a half verses before we push to the last bit of this letter.

So I want you to focus there. In 1 Peter chapter 5, we're going to actually begin sort of in the middle of verse 5. In the middle of verse 5, we'll read on down through verse 7.

So I want you guys to stand with me as we read together. Beginning in the middle of verse 5, we read this. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another.

For God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God, so that at the proper time He may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on Him, because He cares for you.

Father, help us to be deeply affected by what we see here in Your Word.

[1 : 11] I ask in Jesus' name. Amen. I'm not sure how many of you have actually visited our website.

Probably most of you, because you're here, have visited our website before. And we have the convenient web address of humblechurch.com. Now, we all know that's because, technically, we're in Humble.

Our address is in Humble. This school is part of Humble Independent School District. We're in Humble. We could have, I suppose, gone with Atascacita Church, but nobody knows how to spell Atascacita, and so nobody would have ever gotten to the website.

So we went with humblechurch.com, which works pretty well here in the community and in the Houston area. But whenever I'm on the phone talking with people in other states and in other places who don't know that there is a city called Humble here in Texas, and I have to spell out for them on the phone what my email address is, chris.humblechurch.com, or what our web address is, there's always a little bit of a pause there as if they're sort of thinking, what sort of humble church names themselves an humble church on the internet?

I mean, what is that? And it kind of goes to the nature of humility. humility. It's hard to really, it's hard to feel as though you have obeyed Peter's command to humble yourself because the moment you begin to feel like you've obeyed that command, you begin to fear that you've become prideful because you've obeyed that command, and then you haven't obeyed the command.

[2 : 42] And so it's one of those, it's one of those strange traits and characteristics that is difficult, near impossible to identify within yourself without actually losing that trait or characteristic within yourself.

So it's a strange thing sometimes to approach the topic of humility. And yet Peter here, towards the end of his letter, calls us to a radical form of humility that if we rightly understand it, I think can really transform the way that we view our relationship with the Lord, the way that we view our relationship with others within the body of Christ.

It can really transform how we see things and other people around us and in fact, how we see ourselves. Now before we can get to that point though, we need to understand what does Peter mean by humble yourself?

What is humility in Peter's mind? What is he thinking of? Now we all kind of have just a default sort of understanding of humility that's not far from the mark.

We understand humility more in terms of what it's not than what it is. So we know humility is not boasting about yourself and your accomplishments. We know that humility is not talking about yourself all the time.

[3 : 58] Humility is not having a high view of yourself and a low view of everyone else. It's easy for us to conceive of what humility is not. But what is humility positively?

What can we say about it? And more importantly, what can we say about biblical humility? I mean the world has a concept of humility that to a degree is right, but it falls short of the biblical idea of what it means to be humble.

So I want us to ask the passage, ask the question from this passage, what does the Bible mean? What does the Apostle Peter mean by humility here when he talks about humbling ourselves? Well, the first thing that we see pretty clearly in verse 6 is that humility, biblical humility, has as its reference point our relationship with God. He says, Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God.

So that if I were going to define humility from a biblical perspective, I would want to define it in such a way that it relates who I am to who God is. Because fundamentally, we humble ourselves before and under God.

[5 : 11] And so that we don't see clearly who God is, and in the light of who God is, see clearly who we are, then real humility will always escape our grasp. We will never become humble people.

So here's how I would define biblical humility. Biblical humility is recognizing or acknowledging my sinfulness in the light of God's holiness.

Or, we might say, biblical humility is recognizing my weakness in the light of God's strength. Or recognizing my limitations in the light of God's infinite sovereignty.

Humility, biblically, is always recognizing and acknowledging who I am in light of who God has revealed Himself to be in His Word. And specifically here in this passage in 1 Peter, in the verse that we just read, Peter connects humility with the mighty hand of God.

Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God. And that's not a phrase, the mighty hand of God, that Peter himself coined. It has a very distinct, very clear, Old Testament background to it.

[6 : 28] And I want you to be able to see that so we can understand what Peter means by this. I want you to turn back all the way in the Old Testament to the book of Deuteronomy, near the beginning of it, all the way to chapter 5. Now, the book of Deuteronomy is an interesting book because the name of the book itself means second law.

Deutero, which means second, and nomos, which means law. It means the second law. And it means that because Moses, Deuteronomy, is the record of Moses speaking to the people of Israel before they cross over into the land of promise.

Moses is not going to go with them. God has told Moses he's not allowed to go into the promised land as a part of God's discipline upon Moses for his sin. Moses is not.

He knows he's not going to go with them. And so he begins to address the people in the bulk of the book of Deuteronomy as Moses addressed to the people there on the verge of going into the promised land.

And he's recounting for them God's deliverance of them from the land of Egypt and God's giving of the law to them there at Mount Sinai.

[7 : 36] Now, all of that is recorded for us initially in the book of Exodus, which is, in fact, the story of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt and the story of their receiving the law and part of their time in the wilderness.

So most of that is recorded in the book of Numbers. So Deuteronomy really is, in a real sense, it's the second time that we have the law recorded for us in these early chapters of the Old Testament. And if you dive in here at chapter 5 where we are, we're in the midst of the Ten Commandments. This is the second time the Ten Commandments are recorded in the Bible. First in Exodus and now here in Deuteronomy.

And in the midst of this, we come across this phrase, the mighty hand of God. Verse 15 of chapter 5, he says, You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm.

Deuteronomy chapter 6, verse 20, just down a little bit, he says, When your son asks you in time to come, what is the meaning of the testimonies and the statutes and the rules of the Lord our God has commanded you?

[8 : 42] Then you shall say to your son, we were Pharaoh's slaves in Egypt and the Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand. So not only is it true that these people who are hearing Moses

need to remember that God delivered them from Egypt with his mighty hand, he says, you need to pass that information on to your children.

Your children who were not there. Your children who spent no time in the wilderness. Your children who don't have a direct connection through their parents with the land of Egypt. You need to pass this on when they ask you, why did God give us these statutes?

Why did he give us these laws? You tell them that the Lord your God delivered you with a mighty hand out of slavery in Egypt. It's a reminder of who they once were, slaves, and who they've now become, God's people, about to enter into God's land.

We find this statement. You can turn over to chapter 7, one more chapter down. You find it in verse 6 where it says that you are a people holy to the Lord your God.

The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. And it was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you are the fewest of all peoples.

[10 : 01] But it is because the Lord loves you and is keeping the oath that he swore to your fathers that the Lord has brought you out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from the house of slavery from the hand of Pharaoh, king of Egypt.

Don't think for a moment, Israel, don't think for a moment that God has chosen you and that God loves you because of anything that you have done.

Don't think it is because you are better than the other nations, you are more numerous than the other nations, you are stronger than the other nations, you are more worthy than the other nations. In fact, quite the opposite. God picked the most unworthy, God set his love upon the most unworthy so that his power and his might would be magnified when he delivered them and when he blessed them and when he made them his own.

This is a theme that runs through the entire Bible. Go back to Genesis chapter 12 and you can see where God chose Abraham, Abram at the time and there's no reason for which God should have set his love upon Abram.

There's no reason, there's nothing in Abraham that should have caused God to notice him from among all the peoples of the world. He was just another moon worshiper.

[11 : 20] He was just another pagan. That's all he was. There's nothing special in him. There's nothing special in his descendants that should cause God to remain faithful to the covenant that he made with Abram.

And yet, God says, I chose you, I set my love on you to magnify my own might and my own power. Moving down a few more verses, verse 17 in the same chapter. If you say in your heart, these nations are greater than I, how can I dispossess them? You shall not be afraid of them, but you shall remember what the Lord your God did to Pharaoh and to all Egypt.

The great trials that your eyes saw, the signs, the wonders, the mighty hand, the outstretched arm by which the Lord your God brought you out. So will the Lord your God do to all the peoples of whom you are afraid.

So not only is the might and power, the mighty hand of God, not only is it a reminder for the people of Israel from whence they came, don't boast about yourselves, don't think highly of yourselves, God chose you and delivered you with a mighty hand for his own pleasure, for the fulfillment of his own desires, and now, understand this, moving further into the future, Israel, when you come against foes that are too big for you, do not be afraid because the same mighty hand that defeated Pharaoh will defeat the enemies that come against you as you go into the land.

[12 : 45] This is the mighty hand that Peter has in mind, I think, when he says to us, humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God.

Know and understand that God is the supreme sovereign of the universe. Know and understand that he has all power and all authority.

Know and understand that it is the very same God who defeated Pharaoh, decimated the armies of Pharaoh, split the Red Sea, came down on Mount Sinai, met with Moses, gave him the Ten Commandments, preserved his people through the wilderness for forty years, brought them into the land, defeated their enemies in the land of Canaan.

This same God who did all of those wonders, this mighty God, is the same God that we come to, the same God that we approach now.

I think far too often people come to the Bible and they bring with themselves an attitude that says that, well, you have God acts one way or there is one sort and type of God in the Old Testament and a completely different sort of God in the New Testament.

[14 : 04] but in fact, there is one God who has done all these things and the same God who worked mighty wonders in the Old Testament is the same God who has worked a mighty wonder for us and delivered us and rescued us as he did his people Israel.

And it is under that mighty, sovereign hand that we come to humble ourselves. We will never be humble people. We will never have humility take root in our hearts if we don't begin with an acknowledgement of God's sovereignty and God's power over us and over the world in which we live.

The essence of biblical humility is to view ourselves in light of God's greatness and power. We are finite and limited. He is infinite and without limits.

We are powerless. He possesses immeasurable power. We cannot save ourselves from our sins. We are hopeless. And yet He has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. If you want humility to take root in your heart and begin to grow, you need to begin by gazing upon God.

[15 : 32] In fact, it was the great reformer John Calvin who said in his well-known book of the Institutes of the Christian Religion, he says near the beginning of that book that we will never be able to have an accurate knowledge of ourselves if we don't first obtain a true and accurate knowledge of God.

In other words, if we don't see God for who He is and who has revealed Himself to be in His Word, we will never rightly look at ourselves. We'll exalt ourselves. We'll think too highly of ourselves. But once we turn our eyes and see God in all of His power, in all of His majesty, in all of His holiness, we, like Isaiah, will fall down and say, woe is me.

We'll see ourselves for who we are. I'm a man of unclean lips. I live among the people of unclean lips. You want to see yourself?

You want to understand yourself? You want humility to take root and transform your attitude and the way that you think about others in the world? Don't look inward. Look towards God who He has shown Himself to be.

[16 : 44] That's biblical humility. Biblical humility. But now, aside from rightly understanding God, aside from rightly seeing who we are, what motives is Peter giving us here for us to want to pursue that kind of humility?

Because it's not natural for us. We don't naturally want to be eclipsed by someone greater than ourselves. So what motive does he give us here so that we might want humility to take root in our lives?

Well, he begins to give us motive at the end of verse 5, which is why we began there, even though we covered that verse last week, where he tells us, all of us, to clothe ourselves in humility.

It's the same essential thing that he's saying in verse 6 when he says, humble yourselves. Now, clothe yourselves in humility, humility, and yet, he gives us a reason. Reason number one, for God opposes the proud.

He opposes. He is against the proud. He resists the proud. He's quoting from Proverbs chapter 3. God is against prideful people. He's against them.

[17 : 53] We've got to understand that to fail to be humble before God, to fail to embrace biblical humility, is to have God against us.

And that didn't work out well for Pharaoh and his armies. And it will not work out well for us. To have God against you, to have God to resist you, is to have omnipotent power opposed to you in all of your weakness.

And you cannot survive that. You will not survive that. So, reason number one, you'll not survive if you don't humble yourself before God.

You'll not live through judgment day. You'll not make it. You'll crumble utterly, finally, fully, and forever under God's wrath.

He opposes the proud. But then conversely, on the other side, we're told that he gives grace to the humble. Now, there's two ways that we can understand that statement. We can understand it to mean that by our humility, we thereby earn God's grace and favor.

[19:00] We can understand it that way. That it is in some way a work that we perform that earns God's favor. Or, if we understand humility rightly, I think that what it means is that humility by itself, by its nature, looks away from self and looks to God.

So that by its very nature, humility turns to and clings to the grace of God. That's what it does. So the reason that God gives grace to the humble is because the humble is automatically clinging to the grace of God.

To be humble is to admit that you are dependent upon God's grace, that you need His mercy. You need it desperately. So, just by definition, to be humble is to be dependent and acknowledge your dependence upon God's grace.

It doesn't earn God's grace. It is an attachment to God's grace. He opposes the proud, but those who are humble, those who are humble have become entwined, have become dependent upon, have latched on to the grace, the grace of God.

And that's how you survive Judgment Day. You don't survive Judgment Day by coming before God in all of your pride and saying, here are all the good things that I have done. To which Jesus says He will respond, depart from me, I never knew you.

[20:26] But we did all these things in your name, Jesus. We cast out demons. We healed the sick. We did these things. I don't know you, Jesus will say, because it's a prideful, haughty attitude that comes before Christ to say, I've earned it.

No. humility comes and says, I just need your grace. I just need your grace. I'll show you an illustration of this point.

I want you to turn over in the Gospel of Luke, where Jesus is going to say something very similar to what Peter says in Luke chapter 17. It's the second time in this Gospel that Jesus has directly addressed the issue of humility.

And if you look in verse 14, Jesus says that everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted. I think Peter is referencing back to that when he says that at the proper time God will exalt you.

But prior to that, Jesus has told a very well-known parable about these different Pharisees, different men who go to the temple.

[21:36] One, a tax collector, a sinner, who just cries out for mercy. The other, a Pharisee, who exalts himself. But I want you to look back just before the parable to the introduction to all this business in verse 9.

We're told that Jesus told this parable about the sinner crying out for God's mercy, the Pharisee proclaiming his own righteousness. Jesus told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous.

They trusted in themselves that they were righteous. That is religious pride. That is spiritual boastfulness to trust in yourself that you are righteous rather than humbly acknowledging your debt, your need, your dependence upon the grace of God.

So here's motivation. Be prideful. God will oppose you and you will spend eternity in hell. Be humble and acknowledge your need for grace that you are not righteous and trust in Jesus and his righteousness and at the proper time God will exalt you.

In fact, that's the other motive that I want us to focus on here in 1 Peter verse 6 again. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you.

[23:07] Now that sounds strange in a passage that's talking about humility to say that be humble so that someday you can be exalted but that's exactly what Peter says and Peter did not make this up.

He got it from Jesus Luke chapter 17 he says it another time in Luke he says it in Matthew chapter 23 this same statement is found over and over on the lips of Jesus that God will exalt the humble and so Peter says humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God so that when the time comes what is the proper time the word here means appointed time it's used throughout 1 Peter to refer to judgment day on the day when Christ returns on judgment day at that time at the very appointed right proper time at that time God will exalt you if you have humbled yourselves in this life under his mighty hand sounds like a strange thing but it's a glorious thing it's the inheritance into which we have been born again through the resurrection of Jesus it's it's the payoff for having been adopted into God's family by the mercy and grace of God to receive from him all that

Christ the only begotten son of God all that he has earned and all that he deserves to receive from the father all that belongs to the son because you yourself have been counted and reckoned as a son of God he will exalt you at the proper time he will give you eternal life he will give you pleasures forevermore at his right hand he will give you these things if you humble yourself now you want motive here's your motive heaven and hell God's pleasure and God's wrath hang upon whether or not we are boastful prideful people or whether or not we are humble people who come in faith and trust in Jesus there's your motive heaven hell eternal pleasure and joy eternal wrath and pain it's very simple it's not complex

God opposes the proud he gives grace to the humble and those who humble themselves under his mighty hand at the right time on that day will be exalted by God this is a pattern that Christ himself has set for us Jesus humbled himself we're told in Philippians chapter 2 he humbled himself and because he humbled himself he has therefore now been exalted at the right hand of God he humbled himself he became a man he humbled himself Paul says all the way to the point of death and now because of that God has given him the name that is above every name God has exalted him and we as his adopted children if humbled now will be exalted then not to the degree that Jesus is exalted not to that degree but we get to share in and participate in the glory of Christ on that day there's nothing that compares there's nothing better than that all that we might accomplish all that we might cling to all that we might hold up as valuable in this life is like a drop of water in the ocean compared to the glory to be received on that day there's motive humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God so that when that day comes you won't receive wrath you'll receive grace and be exalted how does this work itself out practically in our lives how does this impact the ways in which we relate to other people it obviously by its very nature impacts the way in which we relate to God because we have to come before him humbly!

trusting in Christ and Christ alone with nothing of ours to offer him but what has it to do with my relationship with you or your relationship with the person sitting next to you or across the room what has it to do with those kinds of relationships well take a look look what he says in verse 5 clothe yourselves all of you with humility toward one another clothe yourselves with humility toward one another so humility is essentially and primarily a vertical relationship with God recognizing our utter dependence upon him but humility works itself out horizontally into the ways in which we see and think about one another so humility by recognizing my utter dependence upon God does not look at my neighbor as someone who's worse than I am because at God's throne we are equally poor we are equally beggars we are equally apart from

[28 : 44] Christ condemned it's it's a great leveling to view yourself and your neighbor yourself and your spouse in the light of who God is because whatever minor blips you have on your scale of goodness and whatever minor ways that you may think that you are better than them and maybe you are maybe compared to your next door neighbor maybe you appear to be a saint to everyone else in your neighborhood that's like that's like taking a fist sized rock and a thumb sized pebble and tossing them up next to a mountain and saying look how much bigger I am than you makes no sense you begin to see in the light of who God is you begin to see all things begin to be leveled out among ourselves and we no longer look at the person next to us and think of how much better than them we are or how much they ought to recognize us they ought to be nicer to us they ought to treat us better because of

X Y and Z no we recognize that both of us stand before a mountain humbled brought low and nothing in comparison clothe yourselves with humility toward one another means you don't view others within the church and others within your family and your life you don't view them in comparison to who you are you view one another in the light of who God is and when you begin to do that you no longer see people that frustrate you and anger you people that don't measure up to your standards you just see people who are in the same boat as you are and they have either received mercy and you rejoice with them or they have not received mercy and you plead with them to receive it that's it those are the only differences so it may very well be that someone in your family your sister or your brother or cousin or one of your parents it may very well be that they've been pretty nasty to you they've been mean and they've said ugly things about you and you feel perfectly justified in your attitude toward them but in the light of who God is they have either received mercy and you rejoice that both of you have received that mercy and you begin to forgive one another for whatever it's been because of how much you've been forgiven or they desperately need mercy and you were adopted by God and his family when you

were a wayward orphan slave deserving nothing and so nothing would give you more pleasure now than to see this mean vindictive relative adopted into the family of God you see how humility levels everything and we no longer view other people by how short they fall of our own personal standards our own lifestyles we only view people as received mercy rejoice with them haven't received mercy plead with them very simple one last thing one last practical question humility works itself out practically in our lives by the ways we treat each other and how we see others but how do we practically other than our faith in Christ how do we practically everyday express our humbleness before

God how can we do that we know that we do it by trusting in Jesus and depending totally upon him for our salvation but in terms of just the daily grind and the things that we face everyday how can humility how can it ooze out of our lives how can it actually impact the ways that we think of just our daily duties and tasks and things that lie in front of us how does it do that well Peter doesn't leave us guessing on that point either in fact he says in verse 7 that the means by which we humble ourselves how we humble ourselves is by casting all your anxieties on him because he cares for you casting all of those anxieties all those cares all those worries all of those burdens upon him because we know and trust that he cares and it matters to him and he has the power to do something about it you understand that clinging to worry clinging to anxiety is the antithesis of trusting in Jesus it's the exact opposite trusting in

Jesus is not simply about trusting in him to save me from hell trusting in Jesus is about trusting in him every moment of every day to help me to take the next step and move on to the next event and the next day and the next part of this relationship that trusting in Jesus is not just about eternity it's about right now and tomorrow and the day after that and Peter says if you want humility you want to know how on a daily basis to humble yourself before God then cast your anxieties on him give them to him hand them over God is not greatly glorified and exalted when we come to God to offer up to him all of the good things that we can give him well here are the ways that I can serve you God use them up here's all the things that I'm capable of doing for you take it and do something with it here are my gifts to you

[35 : 01] God God is not exalted by our gifts to him God is exalted when we humbly acknowledge our utter dependence upon him and that happens each moment of every day when we're struggling in our marriage rather than stew and sit in the worry and anxiety we come to God and we lay it down before him and we say it's yours do something with it I don't know what to do take it and do something with it and trust that he'll do something with it when you're struggling to find work don't sit and worry and fret about it bring your cares and concerns to the Lord and lay it down before him and then trust him to do something about it to fail to do that is in essence to say I would like to trust you to meet this need but because I have yet to be able to solve this problem myself I'm worried about it it is in essence to say if I can't fix this if I can't find a solution to this then all hope is lost to which

God says I parted the sea wasn't a big deal just told Moses to set a staff out there whole sea just parted I rained down fire not a big deal Elijah just asked and I said okay and I just rained down fire from heaven that's who I am that's that's what I do in fact there was nothing here and then I spoke and the universe leapt into existence and there wouldn't be anything here now if I weren't continually holding it all in existence this is just this is just who I am I sent my people into a land filled with people who were stronger than them more powerful than them more experienced in warfare with them and I cleared the playing field just cleared it out gave them whole cities not a big deal for me it's easy for me to do said I was going to do it and I did it and you somehow feel that if you're not able to fix the problem the problem is hopeless

I say recognize my power I have a mighty hand and hand it over to me give it to me because I'm not only infinitely powerful I actually love you and I actually care about what happens to you whether or not you believe those two truths God is infinitely gloriously powerful and for some reason he loves sinful people like us whether or not you believe those two truths determines whether or not you're a humble person and whether or not you're a humble person determines where you will spend eternity God has through his son made available a way for us to have eternal life to daily hand our cares over to him and he has not made a way by providing us with a list of things to do and check off so that at the judgment day we can say we did it all now give us what we earn he has provided a way that requires us to come empty handed humble

I got nothing here but I'm trusting in you to save me and I'm trusting in you to help me tomorrow to take the next step let's pray it's sometimes really hard for us to connect eternity to today and my prayer father is that as we meditate on what it means to be humble before you that that connection will begin to form in our minds and we'll begin to really see and understand that the trust that saves us on judgment day is the trust that can relieve us of our anxieties today that we would that we would so humble ourselves before you that our worries our frustrations would begin to melt away not because the causes of those things disappear but because we're trusting in you to deal with the cause and I pray father that we would begin to see one another not in comparison to what we've done and they failed to do but in the light of who you are and what you've done for us I pray this in Jesus name amen amen