



OKOTOKS EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH

AT THE FORGE
HUMILITY, A ROAD LESS TRAVELED
MAY 28-JUNE 2, 2017

SERMON OUTLINE

Humility, a road less traveled
Matthew 27:11-18; Colossians 3:12-14

1. If I were humble I would not rely on status.

2. If I were humble I would be willing to relinquish my rights.

3. If I were humble I would be willing to embrace hardship.

What do I need to do with what I have heard today?

MAIN POINT

Being humble, while the keystone of our faith, is likely the hardest challenge we will ever face.

THINKING THINGS THROUGH

Connect the sermon to the study.

1. **What is the dirtiest job you have ever done for somebody else? Are you willing to do it again? Why or why not?**

2. Describe a time when someone served you in a profound way, doing something for you that you absolutely did not want to do. How did that make you feel?

Leader: We live in a culture that constantly encourages us to “look out for number 1,” to put ourselves first, and do whatever it takes to get ahead. We value the idea of the self-made person. We like to think that we are self-sufficient, that we don’t need the service of others. If we are honest before God, however, none of us got to where we are solely on our own effort. There have been countless people around us who took on lesser roles to serve us and our lives were never the same. Before going to the cross, Jesus did just this. He willingly took on a lesser role and modeled humility for His disciples.

DIGGING DEEPER

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

> [HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 13:1-5.](#)

3. How did Jesus’ washing of His disciples’ feet show the full extent of His love (v. 1)? Why are love and humility so often tied together?

4. Compare and contrast the description of Jesus in verse 3 with His actions in verses 4 and 5. Is this the sort of behavior we expect from people of tremendous power and authority? Explain.

Leader: By washing His disciples’ feet, Jesus taught that if you want to be the greatest, then you have to be the least. While His disciples bickered over which of them should be greatest based on their relationship to Jesus (Luke 22:24-25), Jesus modeled humility by washing the feet of His disciples. Jesus’ greatest demonstration of humility would come shortly thereafter, when He went to the cross and laid down His life in an unmatched display of humility.

5. What might have been going through the disciples’ minds as their Lord removed His outer clothing and began to wash their feet? What might such an act have done to the dynamic of the room during a shared meal?

> [HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 13:6-11.](#)

6. How would you describe Peter’s response to Jesus’ actions? How do you think you would have responded? Why?

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

7. Why was Peter offended by the idea of Jesus washing his feet (v. 6,8)? What does this say about his heart?

Leader: Often humility is not understood by others. In verse 8, Peter used a double negative to refuse Jesus' act of service. In Greek, a double negative indicates a strong and passionate refusal. Jesus existed in a shame and honor culture where bragging about yourself was important. The thought of Jesus bowing so low to serve him angered Peter. He was offended not only because he didn't think that Jesus should be doing such a vile task, but because Peter himself was full of pride. Peter was also ashamed of what Jesus was doing because it looked bad on Peter. Peter's pride and shame kept him from seeing his desperate need for divine cleansing. Though Peter initially responds with indignation, faith in and love for Jesus leads him to submit to Jesus' humble act. Jesus' statement to Peter in verse 8 broke Peter's pride.

8. Why are profound acts of humility frequently admired as much as they are despised? What might it say about the condition of our hearts when we refuse to let people serve us?

> HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ JOHN 13:12-17.

9. Re-read verse 17. How are we blessed by serving others? When have you experienced blessing from serving others?

Leader: The word "blessed" in verse 17 could also be translated "happy." Serving others should bring us happiness, because in serving others we are being obedient to Jesus. Jesus did not want His followers just to understand or know these things. Blessing comes not from what we know, but from what we do. Actions speak louder than words. If we would seek to be blessed by the Lord, we will act out His heart of humble service in our daily interactions with others.

DOING LIFE TOGETHER

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

10. What are some practical ways we can "take the lesser role" and serve those around us?

11. How do we cultivate a culture of humility in this group? Why is this often more difficult than we would hope for it to be?

12. Do you think most followers of Jesus are known as humble people? Why is a humble, loving, and service-oriented heart a great advertisement for the Christian faith to our non-believing community?

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

Leader: If you have time at the end of your group meeting and feel comfortable doing so, do a foot washing for the members of your group.

PRAYER

Thank Him that Jesus was willing to humble Himself in love for you. Ask God to help you reflect daily His humility as you live it out in your relationships with those inside and outside of the church.

MEMORIZE

¹¹ The greatest among you will be your servant. ¹² For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted. – Matthew 23:11-12

SPOTLIGHT ON THE PASSAGE

JOHN 13:1-17

13:1. The time had come, and Jesus would soon leave this world. This term for “world” appears 185 times in the New Testament; 8 times in Matthew; 3 times in Mark, 3 in Luke; but 78 in the Gospel of John. The other two key words are time and love.

13:2. Judas typifies a society in rebellion against God, but the Lord’s treatment also demonstrates God’s grace and compassion with that society. Though the disciples never grasped Judas’ true nature until after the betrayal in the garden, Jesus knew it from the beginning. Yet He gave Judas every opportunity to turn from his wicked ways, repent, and follow his Lord. John pulled no punches in his description of the betrayer and his evil master. In a few more verses (v. 27) we read that “Satan entered into him.”

13:3–5. Verse 3 reminds us that Jesus was the omnipotent God. Jesus allowed the full scenario to play out as the errant disciple made choice after choice leading to his suicide. Some interpreters take these words symbolically, making the water equal to the Word, the towel demonstrating righteousness, and so forth. That hardly seems necessary in light of the culture of the first century. An old proverb says, “Actions speak louder than words,” and the Lord’s willingness to wash the feet of His disciples, even Judas’s, reflects servant leadership at its best. People who are familiar with first-century culture will immediately recognize how socially inappropriate this behavior was. Never in Jewish, Greek, or Roman society would a superior wash the feet of inferiors.

13:6–7. Little discussions with Peter fill the synoptic Gospels, and John enjoys recording them as well. Shocked by the cultural reversal as he literally looked down at his Lord, Peter said in effect, “What’s going on here?” And Jesus replied, “You have no idea, but some day you will.” Presumably Jesus began the foot-washing with Peter, so he was the first to be shocked.

13:8–9. Peter was too humble to have his feet washed, but not too humble to command the Lord. As soon as Jesus emphasized that this symbolic act united the disciple with the Lord in some significant way, Peter took the full plunge. Let us not miss the practical theology of these verses. There is no place in the body of Christ for those who have not been cleansed by the Lord. Washing in this symbolic context cannot refer to baptism, but the atoning cleansing of sin.

13:10–11. Here we have a beautiful picture of forgiveness and one of the most important theological texts of the New Testament. How often does a person need to be saved? Once?

SERMON BASED GROWTH GROUP

Every time he or she sins? Just before death to make sure? These verses tell us that a person who has been completely cleansed once will only require regular washings after that. A full bathing depicts initial regeneration; the repeated washings symbolize forgiveness of ongoing sinful behavior.

13:12–14. The washing not only demonstrated humility and servanthood to the disciples, but also laid an experiential foundation for the teaching of verse 10. When the foot-washing ended, Jesus taught an important lesson about the relationship of believers—you also should wash one another's feet. Jesus emphasized the words Teacher and Lord in contrast with the way they had behaved toward Him. The Lord reminded them that He washed their feet as their leader.

13:15–17. Throughout the New Testament, we learn the importance of example, never more so than when Jesus refers to Himself. But here we are not focused on some great spiritual reality or doctrinal truth; the passage deals with how we treat other people. Since Jesus loved His disciples and loves us in the same way, we need to do for others what He has done for us.