

**ORDER OF WORSHIP with TEXTS**  
**Sunday, May 3, 2020**  
**Homework: Humility**

I. **Countdown** (Homework Square Graphic)

II. **Prelude** (Diane)  
*Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty*  
arr. Lana Kelley  
©1995 Lillenas Publishing Company

III. **Intro Reading: Philippians 2:3 CEB** (Brian)  
Don't do anything for selfish purposes,  
but with humility think of others as better than yourselves.

IV. **Song: Shelter Me** (Michael and Diane)  
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Words and Music: Michael Joncas  
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Shepherd and sheep, my God and I:  
to fresh green fields you led my steps in days gone by.  
You gave me rest by quiet springs  
and filled my soul with peace your loving presence brings.

Yet now I tread a different way;  
Death dogs my path with stealthy steps from day to day.  
I cannot find your peaceful place  
But dwell in dreary darkness, longing for your face.

I will look back in days to come  
and realize your faithfulness has led me home.  
Within your house I'll find my peace,  
trusting that in your mercy you have sheltered me.

V. **Welcome** (Rachael)  
A. Greet  
B. Please join me in our opening prayer.

VI. **Opening Prayer** (Rachael)  
**Holy God, even from a distance, our spirits are gathered together to worship you.**  
**Bless us with your presence and open our hearts to your Spirit. Hold us in grief,**

**sustain us in waiting, help us to consider the needs of others, and draw us always nearer to you. We pray in the name of Jesus. Amen.**

**VII. Video: WHAT IS HUMILITY** (Harris)

**VIII. Song** (Dave)

*Humble Thyself*

By: Bob Hudson

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*Awesome God*

By: Rich Mullins

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Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord  
Humble thyself in the sight of the Lord  
And He shall lift you up  
Higher and higher  
And He shall lift you up

Our God is an awesome God  
He reigns from heaven above  
With wisdom pow'r and love  
Our God is an awesome God

**IX. Reading: James 4:1-10 CEB** (Laura)

What is the source of conflict among you? What is the source of your disputes? Don't they come from your cravings that are at war in your own lives? You long for something you don't have, so you commit murder. You are jealous for something you can't get, so you struggle and fight. You don't have because you don't ask. You ask and don't have because you ask with evil intentions, to waste it on your own cravings.

You unfaithful people! Don't you know that friendship with the world means hostility toward God? So whoever wants to be the world's friend becomes God's enemy. Or do you suppose that scripture is meaningless? Doesn't God long for our faithfulness in the life he has given to us? But he gives us more grace. This is why it says, God stands against the proud, but favors the humble. Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil, and he will run away from you. Come near to God, and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners. Purify your hearts, you double-minded. Cry out in sorrow, mourn, and weep! Let your laughter become mourning and your joy become sadness. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.

**X. Offering Intro/Prayer of Dedication** (Laura...already recorded)

**XI. “Offertory” Music: *You Say*** (Choir w/ Emma Miller, 5.5.2019)  
Contributors: Jason Ingram, Lauren Daigle, Paul Mabury  
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**XII. Intro to time of Table Blessing** (Laura)  
As we worship together today, we especially miss being together for the sacrament of Holy Communion. We are hungry for God’s grace, we are hungry to encounter the real presence of Christ in a meaningful way. We are hungry for connection with one another, for the sharing of spiritual and physical food.

There is nothing more humbling than to come before the presence of God and receive God’s grace, God’s loving action in the world. This is where we are reminded, in one moment, how small we are in the scope of space and history and at the same time how loved, valued, and worthy we are. God offers us forgiveness in our confessions, redemption to live full, whole lives in Christ, and grace to accompany us as we figure out how to live together and honor one another.

At this time, please set before you something to eat and drink. If you have a candle, this would be a good time to light it. Know that although we cannot gather together for Communion, God is blessing our tables and our care for one another.

I invite you to join me in a simple table blessing, shared with us this week by Dave Peterson who remembers these classic, comforting words of grace:

Come Lord Jesus be our guest  
Let this food to us be blessed  
By thy hand we must be fed  
Thank you for our daily bread.  
Amen.

Before we eat together, let’s sing together.

**XIII. Song/Hymn - *All Who Hunger***  
The Faith We Sing Number 2126  
Contributors: Sylvia G. Dunstan, Bob Moore  
Tune: Bob Moore © 1993, GIA Publications, Inc.  
Text: Sylvia G. Dunstan © 1991, GIA Publications, Inc.  
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All who hunger, gather gladly;  
holy manna is our bread.

Come from wilderness and wandering.  
Here, in truth, we will be fed.  
You that yearn for days of fullness,  
all around us is our food.  
Taste and see the grace eternal.  
Taste and see that God is good.

All who hunger,  
never strangers;  
seeker, be a welcome guest.  
Come from restlessness  
and roaming.  
Here, in joy, we keep the feast.  
We that once  
were lost and scattered  
in communion's love have stood.  
Taste and see the grace eternal.  
Taste and see that God is good.

All who hunger,  
sing together;  
Jesus Christ is living bread.  
Come from loneliness  
and longing.  
Here, in peace, we have been led.  
Blest are those  
who from this table  
live their lives in gratitude.  
Taste and see the grace eternal.  
Taste and see that God is good.

**XIV. Table Blessing/Prayers** (Rachael)  
adapted from [www.katrinasmidney.com](http://www.katrinasmidney.com)

How wonderful it is, how pleasant, for God's people to live together in harmony!  
Welcome to this meal, in the name of Christ. We come to share in God's love.  
We come to share our food and our lives.  
We come to break bread together, and open ourselves to each other.  
We come to express our faith and our thanks.  
May God bless this food and this fellowship.  
As we share our food, we give thanks for this abundance, and we remember those who  
do not have enough. May God give food to those who are hungry. May God give us a  
hunger for justice, and a determination to serve those who hunger.

On our tables, scattered throughout neighborhoods and communities, we place symbols that remind us of God's promises to us:

A candle, to remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. We who follow Jesus will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.

Something to eat to remind us of God's sustaining love. We who follow Jesus have been given access to the bread of life, the bread that satisfies all of our hungers.

Something to drink, which reminds us that Jesus gives us living water to quench our spiritual thirst. We who follow Jesus are called to share this living water with all who thirst for connection, justice, righteousness, and peace.

Almighty God, we welcome your presence with us in our homes, at our tables, and in the community we are learning to build from a distance. Together now we eat and we drink. May the food and companionship we share nourish our bodies, hearts and minds. And may our spirits be refreshed as we live in the light of your presence.

There are so many prayers on our hearts, O God, that it becomes difficult to name them. We pray for those who are working to serve others, for those who are at risk of harm, for those who are in harm's way. We pray for those who are sick. We pray for those who are overwhelmed, exhausted, and feeling out of control. We pray for the lonely and the fearful. We pray for the hungry, for those experiencing homelessness, unemployment, or uncertainty about what the future holds. We pray for leaders who are making difficult decisions and carrying the weight of the world's criticisms and competing desires. We pray for those who are discerning next steps, searching for solutions. We pray for wisdom. We pray for humility in our interactions with one another.

We pray and we pray and we pray.

How long, O Lord, how long.

Lord in your mercy, hear our prayers. We pray in the name of Jesus, who is our risen hope, and who taught us to pray:

**XV. The Lord's Prayer**

**XVI. Gospel Reading: Luke 9:43b-48 Common English Bible (CEB) (Missy C)**

While everyone was marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, "Take these words to heart: the Human One is about to be delivered into human hands." They didn't understand this statement. Its meaning was hidden from them so they couldn't grasp it. And they were afraid to ask him about it.

An argument arose among the disciples about which of them was the greatest. Aware of their deepest thoughts, Jesus took a little child and had the child stand beside him. Jesus said to his disciples, "Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me. Whoever welcomes me, welcomes the one who sent me. Whoever is least among you all is the greatest."

## **XVII. Sermon Meditation: Humility**

Good morning, again!

I am filming this week's sermon on location at the Warner family's farm in Harris, Minnesota. I came out here to film today, first of all because it feels so good to get outdoors and have a change of scenery! And secondly, because this week our homework will be to practice humility and this is a place where I feel humbled.

We are taking a look, week by week, at aspects of the Christian life, or skills that we need to practice as followers of Jesus. Last week we considered what it means to practice patience, and this week we look at a close companion to patience: humility.

Harris did a great job of giving us a simple, working definition of humility. Humility is the ability to see yourself in proper alignment with God, other people, and the world around you. Not thinking of yourself as better or more valuable than others, but also recognizing that you have value and something meaningful to offer to the world.

As we explore more deeply what humility means and how we might approach the world as followers of Jesus with more humility, let's start with Scripture. Pastor Laura read for us this morning from James, which is one of those short letters close to the back of the Bible.

Except, it's not really written so much like a letter as it is like a thesis. It's a series of discussions and warnings to early Christians, less about who Jesus was and more focused on how to live in the world as people who believe in and choose to follow Jesus. This book of the Bible is a deeper dive into what kind of life a follower of Jesus will live, and rotates around a core theological question. If Christians are saved by faith in God alone, and that faith comes to us only by God's amazing gift of grace, then does it matter how Christians behave, or only what Christians believe? James makes the case that when a person follows Jesus in belief and faith, that will have an impact on how that person lives and how that person *wants* to live in this world.

In today's reading, James is asking the community of believers what is the source of their conflicts and disputes? Why are they fighting with one another? He goes on to suggest that the underlying cause of their discontent with one another and with God is an unhealthy competition, the rules of which have been set by the world's values instead of by God's values. He warns them not to take pride in winning competitions based on being the best in the world, but to instead look to submit their lives to the best in the universe: God.

It's helpful that James reminds these early Christians to wash their hands – let me not miss this opportunity to remind you to wash your hands regularly! And wear your masks when you go out! And support local businesses whenever you can! And say thank you more often than you ever have before! Keeping one another safe, showing gratitude to one another, adding some inconvenience to our own days or sacrificing a bit of personal comfort for the sake of the common good – this is the fundamental underlying principle of humility. I'm willing, whether I agree or not, whether I think I should have to or not, whether I want to or not, to give a little for others.

Now back to James. Lament and mourn and weep, he writes. Practicing humility can be painful for our egos and our desires. Grieve what is being lost and also grieve that we have gone so far down the road of pride and arrogance that we have so much to lose in turning with humble hearts back to God and our neighbors. And God will lift you up. God will lift you up! What could be more fulfilling in this world than to be lifted up by God? Not by our own egos and competition and pride, but by God.

Have you ever known a really, truly humble person? I want you to think about it for a minute. And as you do, offer you a description from mid-century Christian writer C.S. Lewis, who wrote about pride and humility in a chapter of his book Mere Christianity.

*Do not imagine that if you meet a really humble man he will be what most people call "humble" nowadays: he will not be a sort of greasy, smarmy person, who is always telling you that, of course, he is nobody. Probably all you will think about him is that he seemed a cheerful, intelligent chap who took a real interest in what you said to him. If you do dislike him it will be because you feel a little envious of anyone who seems to enjoy life so easily. He will not be thinking about humility: he will not be thinking about himself at all.*

*If anyone would like to acquire humility, I can, I think, tell him the first step. The first step is to realize that one is proud. And a biggish step, too. At least, nothing whatever can be done before it. If you think you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited indeed.*

from Mere Christianity by C.S. Lewis, First Touchstone Edition, 1996, page 114.

I'm standing here in the trees at the Warner farm to connect with a really, truly humble person. A person I've never met, but whose legacy impacts my life every day. This is the Warner farm, my husband's family's farm. And these trees I'm standing in were planted by Jon's grandparents, Holger and Hildegard Warner.

When I stand in the forest here at the farm, I feel transported from the worries and burdens of the world. Walking out here is a balm for the soul. It's humbling, isn't it, to stand in a space that makes you feel so small at the feet of massive trees and the sounds of wildlife, and at the same time so blessed to live on an earth with this kind of beauty to behold?

It gets more humbling. These trees were planted, by hand, by Holger and Hildegarde. I'm standing here in this forest today because someone else, generations before me whom I've never even met cared about the future enough to plant these trees.

I'm standing here in this forest because Holger, the picture of humility, was committed to giving back to the world more than he took from it in his life.

Holger died in 1998 at the age of 93. I want to share with you an excerpt from his obituary, to prove that I'm not making these details up:

*Holger was always willing to participate and encourage any undertaking his family members chose to be involved in. He was not an argumentative person.*

*Holger was a multifaceted person who had an interest in a great many things. His greatest enjoyment was the pine forests he and Hildegarde planted over the years.*

*He always had a positive outlook and enjoyed every day without ever complaining.*

And this, from an article written about Holger in a magazine called Country Extra:

*Holger's property used to belong to a logging company that removed a lot of timber. "Hildegarde and I have made up for that by planting more than 14,000 spruce and Norway pines," Holger says with pride. Unless the snow is too deep, Holger walks his timber every day, notebook and pencil in his pocket.*

Holger experienced pride, not in being praised or putting himself first or being the best, but in working hard to contribute to the common good. That, my friends, is humility. Standing here, in these trees, inspires me to remember the humility in others and strive to become humbler myself.

We get another perspective on humility today when we check in with Jesus and the disciples. Missy read for us from Luke 9, about a time when Jesus catches the disciples competing and arguing. Their competition erases their humility and they are vying for the title of The Greatest Disciple!

What we heard this morning might feel like two disconnected moments in time. First, Jesus announces to the disciples that his death is coming. Then, in a separate paragraph without much transition, they begin to argue amongst themselves about who is the greatest.

In the first, everyone continues to be amazed at Jesus, who has just cast out a demon, and Jesus pauses to tell his disciples that he will be betrayed and handed over. They didn't understand. The meaning was being without of their reach. We understand, but we have the benefit of knowing the rest of the story. We know Jesus was telling them that he would be killed.



They didn't understand, and their reaction was one that is common for we human beings when we don't understand something that seems serious. They were afraid to ask him about it.

That's when the argument breaks out among them. I wanted us to read these two short exchanges together this morning because doesn't this make sense? How many times in your life...No, scratch that...how many times in the last two months have you witnessed arguing break out among people who don't have a full picture of what is happening?

Confusion, worry, and competition distract us from humility. Feeling confident, like we know what is going on, helps us feel safer. We manufacture arrogance to hide our fear of the unknown. We proclaim untested theories as facts. We're quick to believe and share unchecked information. We puff up and huff and fight about how it should be, what one another should believe, and make lots of judgements about how poorly others are doing their jobs. These are human stress responses.

I'm not sure if it makes it better or worse to witness the disciples exhibiting similar behavior, right there in the presence of Jesus, thousands of years ago.

In the wake of a confusing statement from Jesus that suggests something dramatic, life-changing, and scary is going to happen, instead of humbly admitting to Jesus that they are confused and afraid, the disciples puff up, act tough, and begin arguing amongst themselves.

The argument isn't about what Jesus has said, though, it's about which one of them is the best disciple. And based upon Jesus' response to their bickering, I don't think they were calling one another the greatest. This was not a contest in humility; it was an arrogant jockeying for status and position.

Jesus seizes the opportunity, drawing a child into their circle, to redirect the disciples. Greatness isn't about status or accomplishment or trophies or toughness. The most important quality that leads to greatness is humility. The willingness to go last. The ability to welcome others and put them first. The child now before them is a visual example of where greatness lies.

The kind of greatness we seek as followers of Jesus is to have humbled ourselves so completely in service to others that God will raise us up together. This is a counter-cultural way to live. We are called to this way of living. May we be so confident in God's love for us, so assured of our own belovedness as children of God, that we feel no competition with others but are instead moved to step to the back of the line, to offer ourselves in service, to share whatever we have to share.

I'm standing in a forest of 14,000 trees planted by hand.

May we be moved to practice such humility and inspired to live our lives in such a way that what we leave for others is far more than what we have taken for ourselves. Amen.

**XVIII. Hymn: *Blessed Assurance***

Words: Fanny Crosby; Music: Phoebe Palmer Knapp, Public Domain

Blessed assurance, Jesus is mine!  
O what a foretaste of glory divine!  
Heir of salvation, purchase of God,  
born of his Spirit, washed in his blood.

This is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Savior all the day long;  
this is my story, this is my song,  
praising my Savior all the day long.

Perfect submission, all is at rest;  
I in my Savior am happy and blest,  
watching and waiting, looking above,  
filled with his goodness, lost in his love.

**XIX. Spoken Benediction, Share Practicing Humility**

This week make 3 phone calls. Before you call, pray for the person you are calling and pray for a spirit of humility and listening. Ask the people you call to tell you about how they are doing. Don't respond with your own stories about how you are doing. Just listen. Affirm their experiences. Value what they offer. Thank them for sharing with you.

After each conversation, write a little bit about what they shared with you, what was different from what you're currently experiencing or something they see differently than you do. Note something you learned by listening to them.

**XX. Sung Benediction: *The Lord Bless You and Keep You* (already recorded)**

**XXI. Postlude**

*Grand March* by William Stickles