

Series: When the going gets tough

Topic: Stay humble

Text: 1 Peter 5:1-14

Speaker: Kevin White

Date: April 10, 2022

Welcome to the last message in our series, "When the going gets tough." We've been going through the book of 1 Peter. So far we've talked about being chosen exiles, living hope, being holy, transformed community, the good life, family makeover, redeemed suffering and last week - the end's in sight. Some powerful messages, if you missed them, definitely check them out on demand on our youtube channel.

As I said, this is our last message in the series but before we wind it down I have a question.

Did anyone watch the Oscars?

Even if you didn't, I'm sure you heard about the slap heard around the world. Comedian Chris Rock, one of the hosts of the Oscars, made a joke about Jada Pinket Smith's hair being like G.I. Jane because it was a buzz cut. Jada suffers from (aluhpeeshua) alopecia which is a hair loss condition so she didn't take to the joke too kindly. Neither did her husband Will Smith. Will and Jada were both seated in the front row. Will got up, calmly walked towards Chris Rock and then slapped him across the face.

Then he sat down and proceeded to unleash swearfest 2022.

Now I love Will Smith. His show The Fresh Prince of Bel Air is my favourite of all time - the old one, not the new one.

I read his book. I've watched his movies. But man, I couldn't stand up for him at all on this one.

What made it worse was his acceptance speech (in my opinion). Instead of apologizing to Chris Rock, he basically defended and excused himself.

I thought the whole thing lacked one word...

Humility.

Now, like I said, I've read his book and think there's a lot more to his story and I don't think it's my place (or ours) to judge him by one act on his worst day.

To be honest, as we wrap up this series on 1 Peter, I kind of see some similarities between Will Smith and Peter who wrote the book of the Bible we're studying.

Do you remember when Jesus was arrested?

Even if you don't, you might have heard about the chop heard around Jerusalem. Judas, one of the disciples, betrays Jesus to the Pharisees. It's night, Jesus is in a garden with the disciples and Judas comes with the Pharisees and soldiers. Judas leans over and kisses Jesus to signal that he's the one they want. Peter doesn't take to the betrayal too kindly. Nor the arrest. Peter, along with the disciples were in the front watching what was happening to Jesus - who by the way is innocent. Peter gets up, walks towards the high priest's servant and cuts off his right ear.

Now I love Peter. I love how bold and courageous he is. I love how adventurous and fearless he is. I love how he rises to "protect" Jesus.

I read the books he wrote in the Bible. I'm preaching out of one of them today. But man, I can't stand up for him at all on this one.

What made it worse was that moments later he denied Jesus. He swore up and down that he didn't even know him.

I thought the whole thing lacked one word...

Humility.

I guess you could say that at the time Peter was the Fresh disciple :)

Peter didn't seem to be very humble.

I have a question for you. How humble are you? On a scale of 1-10, 1 being I'm so humble (cause it's the low number, see what I did there?) and 10 being not so much - how humble are you?

Here's a clue. If you're online and you put 1 in the chat, you're not humble. If you're in person and you turn to someone next to you and say, "yeah, I'm pretty humble..." you're not.

Back to Peter. To be honest, I think it would have been hard for Peter to be humble - especially after Jesus' death and resurrection. Author of the Message Bible Eugene Peterson writes that Peter had the personality, the influence and was acknowledged by everyone as the most powerful figure in the Christian community with regards to the early church. So how is it that Peter goes from all of that to writing our text for today, which centers around humility?

What's our text for today you ask?

No.... ask me, "What's our text for today?"

I'm glad you asked. It's 1 Peter 5:1-14. We're not going to go through the whole thing, so I encourage you to read the rest at home. It's quite riveting.

1 Peter 5:1-4

To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed:

We can stop right there. Peter identifies as a fellow elder. He's humble. How did he become humble?

He witnessed Jesus' suffering. He watched Jesus take the humble route. He was there when Jesus washed all the disciples (including his) feet. Actually, Peter remembers, when that happened, he was like, "Jesus I'ma let you finish, but you can't wash my feet fam"

He didn't want Jesus to wash his feet because he thought Jesus was above that. It was a servant's job. But Jesus' example taught him that a true leader serves. A true leader is humble.

He witnessed Christ suffering when he was on trial unjustly. He watched soldiers mock him and hit him and he watched Jesus not defend himself even though he was totally in the right.

He watched Jesus die - the ultimate defeat - and then come back to life - something we'll celebrate more next week at Easter. So he witnessed Jesus' glory.

So this is coming from experience. Peter doesn't just know about Jesus. He knows Jesus.

My prayer is that you would know Jesus - not just in your head - but in your heart. That you would experience Jesus. That you would see the trail he blazed, the example he set, and that you would follow in it.

Vs. 2-4

Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them - not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.

Who's the Chief Shepherd? Jesus. Look how humble Peter seems to be now. He's not the chief shepherd. He's a fellow elder. I'm not the Chief Shepherd. And neither are you. Not pastor Steve or Andrew or Jeremy or Kerri or whichever staff member you interact with the most. Jesus is the Chief Shepherd.

Peter remembers when James and John were fighting over who would sit at the right hand of Jesus when he came into power.. And he remembers what Jesus says in response,

“Whoever wants to become great among you must be a servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave - just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” (Matthew 20:26-28)

Peter remembers that Jesus was humble.

(Very grateful to the New Testament resource for youth workers for the structure for these three points)

True leaders are humble - TRUE LEADERS ARE HUMBLE

As Jesus followers we are called to go against the culture. We're like shepherds. The Greek word means to tend - to be tender, caring, leading, guiding and protecting. In John 10:15 Jesus talks about being a good shepherd and laying his life down for his sheep. At night, shepherds would literally lay their lives down - they would put their sheep in a cave and sleep at the mouth of the cave - so no sheep could get out or no predators would come in. A predator would have to go through them to get the sheep. That's what Jesus does for us. And that's what a humble leader does for others.

Jesus is God - he could have chosen to appear to us in any way, but he came as a baby - a human and he died on a cross for our sins. He modeled humility

Philippians 2:3-8

Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!

God is calling us to be humble leaders - whether a young person in the classroom, a young adult in college/university or starting out in the workforce, a husband or wife, a father/mother, son or daughter, a boss or employee... wherever you find yourself, God is calling you to be a leader and to be humble.

Humble leaders depend on God - HUMBLE LEADERS DEPEND ON GOD

1 Peter 5:5b

...All of you, clothe yourselves with humility toward one another.

One commentary says that it means to tie something around you with a knot or a bow. Like when a servant would put on an apron over their clothes to keep their clothes clean. It literally means lowly mindedness. Basically having the attitude that **you're not too good to serve.**

Someone has said, humility isn't thinking less of yourself. It's thinking of yourself less.

You are made in the image of God. You matter. There's verses that talk about how we are God's masterpiece.

So it's a dance. We matter. And so does everyone else.

It's not being proud. It's putting others first. That's different from what society tells us. It's the exact opposite.

The verse God on to say,

"... God opposes the proud but shows favour to the humble"

The Greek means “God sets himself against.”

Adam and Eve - original sin - pride - that they could do things their own way instead of God's way. God set himself against them. They could no longer be in his presence.

That would be a sad ending - if it ended there. But we know that God has been pursuing us humans ever since. But make no mistake, God is against pride.

Is there someplace in your life right now where you are doing things your own way instead of God's way? (take a couple of seconds to think about it)

I should also say that part of this verse talks about younger leaders submitting to elders (to older leaders). This alone could be a whole sermon but I want to take a sentence to remind older leaders to be humble enough to listen to younger leaders and younger leaders be humble enough to learn from older leaders. There's a lot we can learn from each other. But the safest way for an older leader to have a younger leader submit to for that older leader to be humble. And vice versa

But back to being humble.

Look at how God works.

Moses was in the wilderness for 40 years before God used him to lead - what was he like before? He wasn't very humble. He didn't depend on God. You talk about Will Smith slapping a guy. Moses murdered a guy. Did he have his reasons? Yep. Was it right? Nope.

Joseph was alone with God for at least 13 years before God used him. What was Joseph like before? Proud. He wore the special coat his dad gave him everywhere he went to rub it in his brothers' faces. He bragged about his dreams of greatness to his family.

If we're honest, we're like Moses and Joseph. We are impatient. We don't always depend on God. That's pride. We think we can do it better. Or that we know better.

What makes the church different from the world? Humility.

The whole book of 1 Peter has been talking about how Christians are supposed to be different from the world. We're saved by the grace of Jesus and so we should have

different values. We should respond differently to suffering. Humility is a Christ-like character trait that will make the church strong and show God's love to a world that needs it so badly.

One commentary put it nicely - first the cross, then the crown. First the suffering, then the glory.

Good leaders are humble. Good followers are humble. As Christians we do a dance where we at times lead and at times we follow. But we all, no matter what our role, sit together and follow Jesus. The Chief Shepherd.

Vs. 6

Humble yourselves, therefore under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time..

Do you trust God to take care of you? Humble leaders depend on God

Humility leads to victory over anxiety - HUMILITY LEADS TO VICTORY OVER ANXIETY

This is a tender one. There are some who struggle with anxiety in a crippling way. I myself have been dealing with anxiety for the last couple of years. I've been seeing my doctor monthly, am on medication, and I have a spiritual director and counselor who I also see monthly. So I'm right with you if you are saying, "I'ma let you finish, but it's easier said than done fam."

Anxiety is very real. If you are struggling with anxiety you may need to see a doctor. You may need medication. You may need counseling. For sure I can say that you will need prayer, supportive people around you and most of all - Jesus.

God has been good to me. He's given me strength, and help and support. I've also done hard work. I've read books. I've had the help of family and friends who have really journeyed with me. Together, with Jesus, it's given me the strength to live day by day.

There IS a victory that we can have - In Jesus name. It does require us to be humble though. Humble enough to admit we can't do it on our own. Look at this verse.

Vs. 7

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

The word cast means... to throw something on something - one commentary talked about it as the same word used to throw a blanket on a donkey. Today is Palm Sunday and if we went to Luke 19:35 we would see them casting their blankets and palm branches - this is another example of humility that Peter saw BTW - Lectio 365 says that kings would ride into a conquered city on their finest horses, and even today, leaders travel around in huge cavalcades but Jesus rides around on a humble donkey.

But back to our passage.

Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you.

It's an action word.

Then we move on to the word anxiety - it literally means being pulled apart.

How many of us are going through things that have us feeling pulled apart.

If you're in person, raise your hand and put it down. If you're online, hit the button in the chat.

If you're watching this on demand, say out loud - yep.

When we go through stuff, it's easy to feel pulled apart. Anxious.

Don't hold on to your anxiety. Give it to Jesus

BACKPACK EXERCISE

Start out by remembering times where God has cared for you.

What are you worried about now? What are you anxious about now? Take 10 seconds to think about it.

I want you to imagine that you had your own backpack filled with stuff. Whether you're in person or at home, imagine carrying around what you're anxious about these days. It could be a relationship, a health issue, something at school or home or work.

Imagine the weight of carrying it around all the time. Imagine if you had more than one thing that you're anxious about - imagine how heavy it would be? I don't think you have to imagine, for many of us, we are carrying so many things around right now.

The challenge today is to cast our discouragement, anxiety, our cares, our suffering to Jesus, and to trust that God knows what he's doing with our lives.

Close your eyes. Picture yourself taking your backpack off.

Inside that pack is every struggle you have right now. Look at every fear, anxiety, concern, or care inside your pack.

Name it specifically. Can you feel how heavy the bag is? Jesus wants you to go to him every time things get too heavy. He loves you that much.

Take your worries, hold them up and name them.

What are you anxious about - it could be a relationship, a health issue, something at school or home or work. Imagine it.

Then open your hands and say,

“Lord, I release these things to you.”

PRAYER

Thank you God for caring enough to take our anxiety whenever I give it to you.

Don't hold on to your worries, your cares, your anxiety. Don't let it pull you apart. Turn it over to him - cast it to Jesus.

This is quoting Psalm 55:22

Cast your cares on the Lord and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous be shaken.

We can be confident knowing that God actually cares for us

Warren Wiersbe talks about 4 things we get when we cast our anxiety to Jesus

1. Courage to face our cares honestly and not run away.
2. Wisdom to understand the situation.
3. Strength to do what we must do.
4. Faith to trust God to do the rest.

Eugene Peterson says humble people are confident people because they know God is the rock under their feet. That's what gives us strength.

When the going gets tough, stay humble.

Know that you are known and loved by God and that he cares for you.

As we end this series, there's so much you've been thinking about. We've given you challenges and tools to think about and wrestle with. What you're going through aren't things that are going to go away after one sermon or one series. It's ongoing, but as we give our burdens, our cares, our worries, our anxieties to God, it makes the burden lighter.

Amen? Amen

BENEDICTION

1 Peter 5:10-11 - the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen!

Thanks for being part of our worship experience today.

For those of you who are with us online, thanks for being here and have a great week!

For those of you here in person, feel free to stick around and connect with each other in the café.

Have a good week everyone!"