

## Location, Location, Location

1 Peter 5:5-7

The old adage with regard to real estate seems always to be true. When it comes to buying or selling a house, it is quite easy to identify the three most important considerations. They are, of course, location, location, and location.

In a similar sense, in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, John Calvin quotes the words of the church father Augustine: “When a certain rhetorician was asked what was the chief rule in eloquence, he replied, ‘Delivery’; what was the second rule, ‘Delivery’; what was the third rule, ‘Delivery’.” Then Calvin adds for himself, “...so if you ask me concerning the precepts of the Christian religion, first, second, third, and always I would answer, ‘Humility.’”

Beloved, that’s Calvinism, rightly understood and rightly practiced. Three things of primary importance, the three points of Calvinism, at least in Calvin’s own words, humility, humility, humility. First in importance in the Christian life, humility. Second in importance in the Christian life, humility. Third in importance, humility. All one and the same. Let me prove that to you with just a sampling of many verses from Scripture.

Prov. 15:33 “The fear of the LORD is the instruction of wisdom, And before honor is humility.”

Prov. 16:18 “Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall.”

In the New Testament, we read,

Col. 3:12 “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering.”

Perhaps most strikingly, at the very transition from the doctrinal teaching of Paul in his letter to the Ephesians to the practical applications of that doctrine in day to day life, we read,

Eph. 4:1 “I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, 2 with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, 3 endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”

There the word is translated “lowliness.” Literally, “lowliness of mind.” It comes first in Paul’s applications. It comes first in Paul’s exposition of how we ought to live our lives as Christian. With all lowliness, referring to a deep sense of your own littleness. A sense of being brought low in the attitude and thoughts of your own mind.

Do you want a more personalized example?

Phil. 2:3 “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. 4 Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. 5 Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, 7 but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. 8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.”

So lowliness of mind means that you esteem others better than yourself. And Jesus is the primary example. He took the form of a bondservant. He became obedient to the point of death. That’s humility. And that is our subject this morning from 1 Peter

5. So right at the outset a good, honest gut check is in order. Consider your own heart this morning as we begin. Consider your own sense of humility. I don't have anything new to teach you today. No doctrinal proposition. No objective truth that I want you to learn. Probably no great insight about the Bible that you haven't already discovered.

Today's sermon is addressed to your heart. And it is a call to humility. The world tells you to be proud. The world tells you to think highly of yourself, to esteem yourself. To exalt yourself. To promote yourself. To establish your own reputation and to seek your own honor. To advance your own interests. The Bible tells you to be humble, in lowliness of mind to esteem others better than yourself. Peter is very clear about,

### **I. THE NECESSITY OF HUMILITY IN YOUR CHRISTIAN LIFE.**

Peter calls it being "clothed with humility" in verse 5. It is to be your adornment, your covering. It is to be the characteristic definition of your identity and the dominant testimony of your appearance. You are clothed with humility.

Peter begins with a word to the young, younger men and women. He addressed the leaders of the church in verses 1-4, the Elders of the church, an office of authority and responsibility that is given to men of spiritual maturity and faithfulness. Typically, that would come with age and so they are called "elders." And then Paul addresses the "youngers." By contrast with the elders, he writes,

v.5

Do you see the close connection between the willingness to submit and the virtue of humility? Humility is expressed by the willingness to submit. Specifically,

#### **A. Humility is expressed by submission to elders.**

Why do you think he addresses the young with this call to humility? Maybe that is obvious. Because they need it. Young men and young woman, in the strength of their youth, so often think highly of themselves. And they offer disdain to those who are older.

Never was that more evident in our country than in that decade of the 1960s. It is called rebellion, the unwillingness of the young to acknowledge the authority and honor of those who are older. The unwillingness for the generation of young people to learn from those who have gone before them. Instead they cast of the old, and turned to themselves. They turned to their own generation. And the worship of youth was fully established in the American psyche.

So you who are young, the world teaches you that you ought to disregard your elders. You ought to learn all you need to know from one another. You need to gain wisdom from your peers, not from those who are older than you. That's what the world says. And such sinful and rebellious pride is precisely what Peter is addressing.

v.5 "Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders."

You youngers, submit yourselves to your elders. Honor your elders, their wisdom and their maturity.

So, according to the Bible, young mothers, learn about parenting from older, experienced mothers. Not from one another. Young couples, learn about marriage from older married couples, not from one another. Teenagers, learn wisdom and maturity from older adults, not from one another.

Isn't that what Paul also writes in,

Titus 2:1 "But as for you, speak the things which are proper for sound doctrine: 2 that the older men be sober, reverent, temperate, sound in faith, in love, in patience; 3 the older women likewise, that they be reverent in behavior, not slanderers, not given to much wine, teachers of good things-- 4 that they admonish the young women to love their husbands, to love their children, 5 to be discreet, chaste, homemakers, good, obedient to their own husbands, that the word of God may not be blasphemed."

To the contrary, we live today with such a cult of youth, such a cult of influence ascribed to the young. And those who are old are marginalized as irrelevant and unimportant. What could an old person possibly teach me?

Oh, beloved, don't ever let yourself think that. And you young men and women, you children and young adults, don't ever let yourself think like that. Don't let the world squeeze you into its mold, the mold of thinking that since you are young, you ought to learn everything you need to know from someone who is young. What a dangerous, deadly spiritual peril that is. And teenagers, you are perhaps the most prone to this temptation, and the most in need of resisting it. The world teaches you that you can learn and you can grow only in the context of being with other young people. The adult world is boring. It has nothing to offer to you. It has nothing to do with your life. You need young and exciting. And the Scripture says, "No you don't. You need the wisdom of your elders."

v.5 "[So] you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders."

Honor those who are older. Listen to them. Talk to them to

get advice. Talk to them to get help and encouragement. Listen to them that you might learn from them. That's humility.

But Peter has more to say. Not just is this humility expressed in those relationships in which we must recognize proper authority, but there is a general sense of submission as well.

### **B. Humility is expressed by submission in general to one another.**

So humility is not just a part of those relationships defined by Scripture by the exercise of authority and the responsibilities of submission. Humility is not just defined by a wife submitting to her husband, a child submitting to his parents, a citizen submitting to his governing authorities, or a servant submitting to his master. Humility includes our general attitudes toward one another as a whole.

v.5 "Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility."

This doesn't cancel out the duties of submission in specific relationships that require it. Not too surprisingly, however, there are people who interpret the Bible that way. They quote Ephesians 5:21 as if it cancels out Ephesians 5:22.

Eph. 5:21 "...submitting to one another in the fear of God. 22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord."

I have heard it expressed that the Bible does not require submission of wives because Paul says, "submit to one another." But that's just bad exegesis. A bad explanation and interpretation of what the Bible says. It says both. There are specific relationships that require a specific commitment of submission. Especially in the family and in the church.

But there is also this general sense. And too many people miss that as well. Too many who have authority forget that they, too, are called to be in submission to one another. Even parents, to their children. And husbands, to their wives. Elders and pastors, to the congregation. Even those in authority, even those whose position and office requires them to be responsible in leadership and in the exercise of authority, even they are called to a general willingness to think lowly of themselves and to honor others. “Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility.”

And if you lose that sense of general submission, the exercise of authority quickly becomes abusive. So we saw last week the restraints put upon Elders,

v.3 “...nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”

Same restraint is put upon fathers, and husbands. The antidote to the abuse of authority is this call of mutual submission, general submission. In other words, that we all clothe ourselves with humility.

So as we live together as families, as we live together within the church, there must be this willingness to honor one another, to submit to one another in the fear of God. To consider others more important than yourself. To consider their needs and their desires to be more important than your own.

What is first in importance for your Christian life? What is second? What is third? Humility, humility, humility. What is most necessary for our health and life as we live together in the church? Humility.

Col. 3:12 “Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved,

put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; 13 bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. 14 But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. 15 And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful.”

Humility extends to our relationship with God as well, and Peter rightly emphasizes,

## **II. THE PRIMACY OF HUMILITY IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.**

All of this that we are studying this morning has ultimate reference to God, not just to one another. And so we read, v.5 “...God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.”

So God himself is brought to the forefront. This isn't just a social model. This is not just social ministry, in which our relationships with one another get all the attention. No, God gets the attention and your relationship with him is the focus. Your humility must have reference to him.

Specifically, Peter makes it abundantly clear in verse 5.

### **A. God himself opposes the proud.**

Peter is quoting Proverbs 3. James quotes the same verse in James 4:6. God opposes the proud.

That's not a very safe position to be in, is it? How foolish is pride, for it makes you think that you are invincible. Pride makes you think that you are the best, that you are the most important, that you are the most dominant. But God opposes you.

Pride is like playing tug-of-war with God. There you are on

one side, with all your proud accomplishments and achievements with you. There you are, so confident in your own strength and ability to achieve success. And there, on the other side of the rope is God. He's pulling the other direction. And beloved, in that context, you are doomed! God is pulling on the other side of the rope. God resists the proud.

In fact, we read,

Prov. 6:16 "These six things the LORD hates, Yes, seven are an abomination to Him: 17 A proud look, A lying tongue, Hands that shed innocent blood."

Prov. 15:25 "The LORD will destroy the house of the proud, But He will establish the boundary of the widow."

Prov. 16:5 "Everyone proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD; Though they join forces, none will go unpunished."

God resists the proud. God himself opposes the proud. God is their adversary, and he will be victorious. People of God, don't ever forget that.

Prov. 16:18 "Pride goes before destruction, And a haughty spirit before a fall."

There is a contrast, though, isn't there?

### **B. God rewards the humble.**

I'll finish verse 5 and then read verse 6,

v.5 "God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble. 6 Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."

Jesus says the same thing, doesn't he?

Mat. 5:5 "Blessed are the meek, For they shall inherit the earth."

Similarly,

Mat. 20:25 "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. 26 "Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. 27 "And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave-- 28 "just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

"Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant."

v.6 "Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."

Let God exalt you, beloved, rather than exalting yourself. Let God bring you honor, rather than seeking it yourself. And if that would seem hard, if that would seem contrary to your nature and inclinations, then remember, "God gives grace to the humble."

Isaiah says something so marvelous in,

Is. 58:15 "For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, With him who has a contrite and humble spirit, To revive the spirit of the humble, And to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

People of God, when you are humble, when you have a lowly mind, God will dwell with you. The one who inhabits eternity will make his presence known to the humble. And dear friends, that is what matters the most.

So please, people of God, examine your own hearts for any evidence of pride. And put it to death. By the power of God at work within you, put aside this temptation to think more highly of yourself than you ought to think. Resist the inclination to exalt yourself at the expense of others. "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God."

And then, with encouragement, read on in 1 Peter 5, and understand,

### **III. THE NECESSITY OF HUMILITY IN YOUR FAITH IN GOD.**

The necessity of humility as you walk by faith. And that humility is the very opposite of a confident and proud self-trust. It is, rather,

#### **A. The faith of confident trust.**

Here is the effective outworking of humility, and this is important because it identifies a weakness that many of us might experience. You don't think of yourself as proud, but you are very self-reliant. You don't think of yourself as proud, in the sense of arrogance, but you live through all the trials and troubles of life depending upon your own strength and the effectiveness of your own efforts. You handle your own burdens yourself. That's pride. A self-trust.

Peter calls you to abandon such pride, "casting all your care upon Him." Jesus' familiar words express the very same thing,

Mat. 6:31 "Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?'" 32 "For after all these things the Gentiles seek. For your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. 33 "But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to

you. 34 "Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about its own things. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."

That's the faith of confident trust. That's humility. It is the ability to hear Jesus when he says,

Mat. 6:25 "...do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? 26 "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? 27 "Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 28 "So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin; 29 "and yet I say to you that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. 30 "Now if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is, and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will He not much more clothe you, O you of little faith?"

Beloved, it takes humility to heed that exhortation, the humility of your willingness to trust God, to seek first his kingdom and his righteousness. The humility to rely upon him, acknowledging that your own anxiety can accomplish absolutely nothing. It takes humility to exercise your faith and to trust God in the midst of the concerns and trials of your own life.

It is also,

#### **B. The faith of trusting in his goodness.**

In other words, trusting in God means that you believe that he is good. And Satan will always be seeking to get you to question that very thing. But look at what Peter says,

v.7 "...casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you."

Trusting him, because you believe that he will take care of you. That's the humility of faith. "Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they?"

God will take care of you. Because God is good, and he has shown us his goodness so perfectly in the person and work of the Lord Jesus Christ. Such faith is built on nothing less than humility. So if you are a Christian, if you trust in Jesus Christ for your eternal salvation, then what is most important for your life here and now is humility. The three most important things are humility, humility, and humility.

Let me end with a word from the prophet Micah.

Micah 6:8 "He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?"