



Sermon Series: Character Counts

To be used with Session 3: Humility

Sermon Title Possibilities: How Deep is Your Love?

Scripture: Philippians 2:1-11

Connection To Unit Theme: This sermon is designed to complement the Bible study “Humility.” When one hears the word, “humility,” we tend to confine it to simply not being arrogant or conceited. In the context of godly character, it should be clear that humility is something God expects, as the bulk of biblical testimony indicates that God in no way favors the proud, the haughty, or the egotistical. However, there is an aspect of humility that is rooted in love. It requires humility to love someone despite themselves. As we examine this next session, invite your congregation to consider the level of the love they have in their hearts. Only them and God can truly speak to where their hearts stand and if humility exists.

Introduction: Whether we know it as the 1977 ballad released by The Bee Gees, or the 1987 hit released on Keith Sweat’s debut album, many of us have heard this question, “How Deep Is Your Love?” While both versions are strictly referring to the romantic type of love, (eros in the Greek), the gist of the question is, “How much do you love me? Are there limits to this love? How do you really feel about me?” These are questions that are regularly asked in the context of romantic relationships, but there’s another type of relationship that requires this question as well, our relationship with God. Our obedience to God, or lack thereof is one of the primary indicators of our love of God. That’s why Jesus said in John 14:15, “If you love Me, you will keep my commandments.” The way we regard His commandments says a lot more about our love for God than any words we can speak.

Philippians 2:1-2 – Is Love Your Goal?

What type of goals do you have in life? Do you desire a particular type of career? Do you have to one day become a millionaire or billionaire? Do you desire to get married and have children? Whatever the case may be, all of us have goals and aspirations. And each of these aspirations are driven by someone or something. If we were to ask anyone who is on a pathway to a particular goal, most, if not all of them should be able to identify and articulate their, “Why?” In short, there is a motivation behind every goal that we have.

Paul tells his audience that having a common goal is crucial, specially as it pertains to living for Christ. In verses 1 and 2 of Philippians chapter 2, we see the apostle teaching God’s desire for

the manner in which we conduct ourselves. The fact is that if we are truly committed to God, we should love what God loves and hate what God hates. Not only that, but our agenda ought to match His agenda. We should want exactly what He wants. And since as I John 4:8 tells us, “God is love,” love ought to be our primary agenda and focus. As we talk about Godly character, we cannot pursue said character without love as our motivation. We should want to live godly because we love God and because we love God’s people. There is absolutely no middle ground.

Philippians 2:3-4 – A Love that Sees

One common thing that people in romantic relationships say is that they want to be with someone who sees them. This doesn’t strictly mean a person that looks at them and can visually perceive their likeness, but someone that pays attention to them. One that knows them, hears their heart, and understands their feelings. This idea of seeing a person is at the root of what produces this idea of love languages that Dr. Gary Chapman uses in his book, “The Five Love Languages.” As is the case with the love languages, our love for a person should drive us to see them.

In a likewise manner, Paul instructs the church at Phillipi to love one another in a way that pays attention. Verse 4 says it this way, “Everyone should look out not only for their own interests, but for the interests of others.” One cannot look out for anyone’s interests without paying attention to them. God is teaching us that it is dangerous to only be concerned about our needs and desires, but rather we are to make room in our hearts for others. We cannot claim to be persons of love and Godly character and not have concern for the well-being of people other than ourselves. We love it when people see us, but do we have the character to see others. Here’s a hint; others deserve it too.

Philippians 2:5-11 – “Assume the Position”

Those of us who have traveled by plane know what it is to be searched. No one can board a flight without first going through security, and some occasions call for a more in-depth search, at which time the security officer will say, “Assume the position.” This typically means to put our arms up, empty our pockets, or some other stance that makes it easier for them to search us and discover any unauthorized contents. More often than not, when one is instructed to assume the position, they know exactly what that means.

Paul tells us in this text that the day will come in which all of us will be instructed to assume the position. This will be when we all stand before Jesus. Verse 10 of Philippians 2 says, “So that at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow...” This comes after he instructs us to take on the Christ like attitude of humility. Taking on the attitude of Christ requires continual effort and continuous humility. This is what God expects of all of us. The reality is that whether we do it voluntarily or not, all of us will one day bow. It’s not a question of if, but rather a question of when. God grants us the opportunity to humble ourselves, but He has no problem doing it for us if necessary.

Conclusion: My hero is the late, great Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. There is one video in particular that I count as one of his most powerful moments. There's a video of Dr. King arriving at a voting rally in South Carolina in 1966, and as he approaches the stage, crowds of people reach out to shake his hand. Without hesitation, he stops, smiles, and shakes each person's hand as they approach him. It is apparent how genuinely friendly he was and how happy the people were to see him. I have always appreciated that as it showed that Dr. King wasn't just a man of powerful and stirring words, but he was truly a kind, humble, and loving soul that cared for people. He cared about the people that he was preaching to, and he knew that to be the apostle of love that he sought to be, he had to model love in his treatment of others. May we do as Martin did in his life. Martin was inspired by Jesus's example of love and refused to only let love be a word that he used. He put just as much effort into the action. We have both the chance, as well as the responsibility to do the same.

Author Bio

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