

Walking in Lowliness

by Alan Martin

The sermon emphasizes the importance of walking in lowliness, embracing grace, and fostering unity within the church community.

Scripture: Psalm 34:12-14, Isaiah 58:8, Matthew 11:28-29, Colossians 3:12-13, James 3:10-11, James 3:18

Topics: "Lowliness"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher addresses the issue of speaking both blessings and curses from the same mouth. He emphasizes that this should not be the case, as a spring cannot produce both fresh and bitter water. The preacher also highlights how the law can lead to strife and judgment, but those who are full of the grace of God should not speak evil or treat others with ignorance. The sermon emphasizes the importance of controlling one's tongue, avoiding deceitful speech and strife, and instead turning away from evil and doing good. The preacher also emphasizes the need to learn from Christ, who exemplifies meekness and lowliness, and encourages believers to avoid quarreling and striving.

Transcript

Well, uh, this evening I asked Brother Alan Martin to share. If you would, I guess maybe I could pray here. I just thank the Lord.

You know, I've been blessed all day long to be fellowshiping with many of you, and we serve a wonderful, wonderful God. Father, we love you tonight. Thank you for Jesus.

We know that apart from you, we can do nothing. Teach us the truth of your word, Lord, that we have not yet resisted sin, we have not yet resisted this world, we have not yet resisted the devil to the point of shedding our own blood, at least most of us here. Pray, Father, that you just shed abroad your love in our hearts tonight.

Give us a greater revelation of your love, and teach us to love. Father, teach us to be patient in affliction, to be joyful in trials. Help us to look, look toward Jesus so that the things of this world will grow so strangely, strangely dim.

We love you, Father. Thank you so much for allowing us to gather here and for bringing those whom you will bring here, Lord. We thank you.

Pray that you bless Brother Alan. Give him words to share. Give us ears to hear.

And we want to be changed, Father. We want to be changed with ever-increasing glory into the image of your Son, the Lord Jesus. It's in His name we pray.

Amen. Well, I kind of feel like one of the disciples coming back from the road to Emmaus. Hopefully what I share with you tonight is just what it took someone foolish of heart and slow to believe to hear, but yet I really truly believe that the Lord has opened my eyes to this.

And I believe it's been despite myself. It's been despite my own efforts and despite my own striving to know it. I still find myself hearing of Christ's resurrection and bitterly disappointed at times, you know, seasons of my life.

But the Lord has been faithful to come alongside me even when I didn't recognize Him. And speak to me and open the Scriptures to me. And I didn't even realize it, you know, what His mysterious work at times.

And then hopefully how it relates to you and I is hopefully I'll be coming like running back excited to share with something you've already seen. But if that's the case, praise the Lord. Then it'll be confirmation to you.

But it goes along with what was on Jason's heart this morning about unity. You know, believing that Christ desires to be glorified in the church and that through the unity of the Spirit that we strive to preserve. And I think we should know the Scripture says, what Paul says, that what is going to bring about the unity of the body of Christ? Till we all come to the unity of the faith and the full knowledge of the Son of God, becoming mature, attaining to the whole stature of Christ.

What's going to bring us about? Let's read in Ephesians chapter 4. There's a movement, brothers, I think we need to be careful of that perhaps myself being one, a bad leader, I can say that. Perhaps my own failings as one who's tried to lead has caused others to not believe we need leadership in the church, that all the brothers are equal. But if we believe what Paul says, speaking by the Spirit of God, look here in Ephesians chapter 4, and look at how he says the unity of the body of Christ is going to be brought about.

Verse 11 of chapter 4, And he himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, for the equipping of the saints, for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, that we should no longer be infants. And if anything is upon the heart of God, I believe, it would be that among all of us, there would be no longer any infants. Because if the church is going to achieve unity in the Spirit, it's going to be from mature saints, that by the grace of God have grown up into the fullness of the stature of Christ.

And from my own failure, my afflictions caused by my own self-created difficulties, my own failure to understand, I've received comfort. And so I can say, Praise be to the God of comfort who comforts us in all of our afflictions, so that why we may comfort others with the comfort we ourselves have received. So this is my comfort.

I just want to share with you my comfort, and it has to do with why I was continually having strife and division in my own life and relationships. This was the comfort to me, and since these things have begun to be shown me, I see in part, I know in part, so I'm going to confess right up front, I'm only going to tell you part of the truth. That's all I know.

There's no way I can tell you it all. But this part has been enough to bless me. You know, Jesus said about faith, if you have faith, a grain of what? The mustard seed.

That would be enough to move a mountain. So if I can give you enough faith, if by the grace of God that's working in me, like Paul said, he said he longed to see the Thessalonians, that he might supply unto them that which was lacking in their faith. If you receive faith in this area, of striving to walk towards the unity of the Spirit and the bond of peace, then I will rejoice in the grace of God, and it will help me, knowing that He's not chosen to stick me on the shelf, that He has been very longsuffering and patient with me.

And this is kind of where it began for me. If you'll turn with me to 1 Corinthians 4, starting in verse 6. Now these things, brethren, I've figuratively transferred to myself and Apollos for your sakes. And of course the things he's talking about, he's talked from chapters 1 to this point of 1 Corinthians.

And here's the reason he's applied them to himself and Apollos. He says, so that you may learn something in us. See, they were having problems, and they needed to learn something in order for their problems to be resolved.

Well, the problems they were having was division and immaturity. And so he's going to address what it's going to take to solve these problems. So that you may learn, first of all, it says in verse 6, not to think beyond what's written.

And secondly, and more importantly what applied to me, that none of you may be puffed up on behalf of one against another. And then it's verse 7 that struck me when it hit me just this way, for who makes you differ from another? And what do you have that you did not receive? What first hit me is I didn't realize something. I stumbled many times and for many years in the thought that what I had made me different.

The knowledge I had. The scriptures I had. The standards I had.

The convictions I had. The what's deceived me. Because Paul clearly says here, who makes you different? And what do you have that ye did not receive? And if you received it, why do you boast as though you did not? What is the danger of thinking you have something because of what you've done, what you've studied, how you've prayed, the stances you have taken? What happens? Ye become puffed up.

One over against another. I'm a follower of Brother Jason. You can say that.

If I agree with what Jason agrees, obviously he's studied as hard as I have. Obviously he's read the scriptures as much as I see. If you think that way, you are carnal.

If you think you know what you know by your own discipline and diligence, ye are carnal. That's carnality. Not one of us here would pray apart from the grace of God.

Not one of us here would have a heart to study the scriptures apart from the grace of God. All we like sheep have gone astray, and each of us has turned to our own way. And God has placed upon him the sin of us all.

And in order for there to be unity in the church, first of all, something is going to have to happen in the hearts of all the believers. And what's going to have to happen is they are going to have to awaken to the reality of the grace of God. That it is Christ that makes us different.

Not convictions. It's Christ that makes us different. That is why 1 Corinthians is what it says.

Especially chapters 1, 2, and 3. Look back with me. Look in chapter 3. And I, brothers, was not able to speak to you as spiritual people, but as to carnal. As to mere infants in Christ, I gave you milk.

Indeed, not solid food, for you weren't ready to receive it. Even now you're still not. For are you not still carnal for where there are envy, where there are strife, where there are divisions among you? Are not you carnal and behaving like mere men? For when one says, I am of Paul, and another says, I am of Apollos, are you not carnal? What is carnal about thinking, well, I'm a follower of Paul.

I agree with Paul. What's carnal about that is not realizing it's one faith, one Lord, one baptism, one God, one Spirit working through whatever messenger He chooses. The messenger is nothing.

It is the Spirit. If truth comes through a man, it is by the grace of God and the Spirit of God. And the messenger is nothing.

So Paul says, so then, brethren, no more boasting about men. And then he says how he himself should be regarded. Look in chapter 4, verse 1. Let a man so consider us.

He's talking about those in leadership. Let a man so consider us as servants of Christ and stewards of the mystery of God. What is a steward? A steward is something given responsibility with something not his.

This truth is not mine. The words of truth are not ours. It didn't come from the steward.

It was given to him by the owner. God is truth. God is revelation.

And when He gives it to a man, the man is merely a steward of that truth. And he should hold it that way in a humble position. And Paul uses a word here, our English does not do justice to men ought to regard us as servant of Christ.

Most of the time in the New Testament, servant is doulos. But this time it's huperatus, an under rower. When the Greeks had their ships and the Romans had their ships, they had three rows of men rowing an oar.

And this is all they did. Heave, ho, heave, ho. It doesn't take a lot to do that.

And you don't even get credit for choosing your own timing to do it. When someone is standing there telling you, pull, back, pull, back, pull. All you're doing is simply following instructions.

And Paul is saying, until we come to this place where we so see Christ as being everything. And giving His knowledge to men. As a steward, just to pass on to His people.

And no one regards any man as anything. So you don't run across the country for a man. If God is with a man, it's so rare these days we do tend to do this.

We do tend to run because the word of the Lord is so rare these days. But it is the Lord, not the man. What happens? What happens when we fail to see the revelation that it is God Himself that gives all wisdom and is all wisdom and it only comes by His grace? It does not come by our study.

It does not come by our diligence. Because, back up in Corinthians again, just a little bit to chapter 3, verse 18. Let no one deceive himself.

By how? If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age, let him become a fool that he may become wise. What's he meaning by that? And he goes on to say, For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God, for it is written, He catches the wise in their own craftiness. And again, the Lord knows the thoughts of the wise if they are futile.

Not many were called noble, were they? Not many were called wise. Why is this? Why, if you consider yourself wise in the eyes of this world or in this age, should you become a fool? How do men become wise in this age? Study. Study.

Study, diligence, discipline. They read, they read, they read, they memorize, they organize, they put it in. And if that's what we think produces wisdom, we are carnal.

For the Lord giveth wisdom. And you know, I didn't know that. I thought to be a man of God, you just need to study.

And I'm not saying I don't study. Don't hear that. But I can fill the jars with water.

I can fill a thousand of them. I can't turn one into wine. There is no way any amount of our study will produce revelation.

No amount of our prayer will produce eternal life and minister a life-giving spirit to the body of Christ. And if we're not careful, and what has happened is when we attain unto knowledge, something happens. What did it say when we first read here? So that ye may not become puffed up.

We should all know that word. Where does that word come from? Especially brothers and sisters here that would probably study the Scripture. What puffs up? Can you look at your own spiritual life? Can you see when most of the problems begin? When in your excitement and your study, you begin to have your eyes awoken to how bad the church was? How ignorant they were? How bad the system was? And you discover this wrong, and this wrong, and this wrong, and this wrong.

Because you were reading your word, and you were seeing these Scriptures, and all these ignorant people were around you, and insincere people. And the more you grew in your knowledge, the more puffed up you became in your head. That's why Paul said, Let not a novice be put into a position of authority, lest... What happened? Lest, becoming conceited, he fall into the same condemnation of the devil.

See, it takes a while, I guess, by the grace of God. For someone to realize that it is the grace of God at work in them that is giving them a hunger and a desire to know the Father through Jesus Christ. It is not of themselves, it does not come from themselves.

It is the mercy of God at work. And if we were ignorant, didn't Titus tell us to think this way? For we too were what? Foolish, disobedient, deceived, enslaved, living in malice and envy, hating and being hated of one another. But when the kindness and mercy of God appeared, He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His own mercy and grace.

And yet we forget this, when we begin to grow in knowledge, we begin to think we grow in wisdom by our study. And when this happens, we eclipse the grace of God and we begin to boast in men, as we boast in knowledge. Look in Colossians, you'll see this in Colossians 2. I'm so weak in my own natural self, I forget things, so I have some reminders up here for me.

But in Colossians 2, verse 18, it says, Let no one cheat you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into those things which he has not seen. What's he vainly puffed up in? His carnal mind. The carnal mind is simply the mind of the man who thinks he's discovering all these things by his study.

And what is he glory in? He begins to glory in the new things he's discovered. And he begins to preach these new things. And you know what they become? The Greek word is they become seekings, disputes.

What they do is they become things that you just need to know. Now that I've discovered this for myself, you just need it. And you begin to share these things, and what they do is they are not the things that lead to peace and mutual edification.

They are not the things, as the Apostle Paul learned, what did Apostle Paul say? I have resolved to know one thing. What's that? Christ. And Him crucified.

You see, Paul was a safe person to be given this revelation to for a reason. Why was Paul a safe person to be given these great mysteries to? Because he knew, he knew he himself was a persecutor, a blasphemer, and a violent man. And he knew when the Lord Jesus Christ appeared to him and gave him a revelation, it had absolutely nothing to do with his worthiness.

Instead, he says what it had to do with, look in 1 Thessalonians, or 1 Timothy, chapter 1, he tells Timothy what it had to do with, verse 16, I'll read verse 15 with it. This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. However, for this reason I obtain mercy, that in me Jesus Christ might show, what? All longsuffering, as a pattern to those who are going to believe on Him for eternal life.

It's amazing what happens when we lose sight that it is the longsuffering of God, and the grace of God, and the mercy of God that we know anything. We suddenly start acting and believing like the first time we communicate, or the first or second time we communicate truth with someone, they should wake up, hear it, if they have a sincere heart. Were we, were any of us really that way? None of us were.

And for maturity to happen in the body of Christ, we're going to have to mature in longsuffering, forbearance. Charity suffereth, what? Long. And if we listen to the Apostle Peter, what he has told us, he says, the Greek would say, fix it in your mind that it is the longsuffering of God that leadeth unto salvation.

The longsuffering of God means salvation for us. But if we forgot this, would this scare us? Do we show contempt for the riches of God's longsuffering and patience? Look in Romans. Are we afraid to look at this? I had to look at this in my own life.

Romans chapter 2, I'll read verse 2. But we know that the judgment of God is according to truth against those who practice such things. God is just to judge men for such things. And do not think this, O man, that you who judge those practicing such things and doing the same, that you will escape the judgment of God.

Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance? I'm assuming, as probably all of you would, that the Gospel, the book of Romans, the letter of Romans was written to believers. So is Paul saying that it is the goodness of God, the kindness of God, that leads us to repentance? If you seek this revelation from the Lord, and one of the reasons it caused me to go seek this is the words of Christ struck me so wonderfully.

But first go and learn.

Do you remember that statement? But first go and learn. That's what Jesus said when He was questioned about the fact that He was eating with probably those who repented at John's preaching, some of the publicans and Pharisees and tax gatherers. I believe they had repented at the teaching of John, and they were there to listen to Jesus.

But the Pharisees and the Sadducees could not see Christ with these people, and they struggled with it. Why is He interacting with them? And He said, first go and learn. Do you remember what He said? First go and learn.

I desire mercy. You see, God will judge. But why would He say, go and first learn, I desire mercy? Because He will judge, but He'll take no delight in it.

He will judge the world. And all the ungodly and all the wicked and all the sinners will be destroyed. All who refuse to come to Christ will be destroyed.

But it will not be His desire. He desires mercy. And if we have not learned, He takes no pleasure in judgment.

How much pleasure can He take when you separate yourself from someone and you have not learned? He desires mercy. And how is God in this? Have we really learned the Father in this way? Without compromising at all, look in Luke 6. Without compromising at all, look at how our Father is. And we want to be conformed to His image.

Luke 6, verse 32. And if you love the ones loving you, what credit is that to you? For sinners love the ones loving them. If you do good to the ones doing good to you, what credit is that? Do not sinners do the same? And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive it back, what credit is that to you? For sinners, do sinners lend so that they may receive the same things again? Love your enemies.

Do good and lend nothing, hoping to receive back nothing in return. And great will be your reward. And ye shall be sons, mature ones, of the Most High.

Because how is He? Look how He is to the unthankful, the ungrateful and the wicked. How is He? Hmm? He's kind. God is kind to the wicked and the ungrateful.

So evidently, it does not disturb Him at all, though He regards them as wicked, though He is angry with the wicked every day, and though that those who do not have the Son, they have not life, and that the wrath of God abideth on them presently, those upon whom His wrath is abiding, those whom He considers wicked and disobedient, deceived and foolish, He is kind to every day. And He causes the sun to shine upon them. And He causes the rain to shine upon them.

And He actually, it says this in His Word, what does it say about Israel? What did He do to a disobedient and obstinate people? What did He do? All day long, He didn't tire Him to hold out His hand. All day long, to stubborn and disobedient people, God is willing to hold out His hand. Isn't that awesome? It doesn't disturb heaven.

It doesn't take away, He doesn't compromise an ounce of His holiness or His character. He doesn't change one bit of His Word. But He shows Himself blameless in His kindness.

His tender mercies is over all His works. And if we want to walk worthy, if we want to walk worthy of the calling we have received, what did Paul tell us? What were the first things on his list? He said, I urge you, brothers, to walk worthy of the calling you have received. And if you know the Scripture well, and I know I'm sure many of you know the Scripture well, it should be conspicuous what is absent from the first of the list.

For He did not begin with, I urge you to live worthy of the Lord in all holiness. Not on the list. Neither is righteousness on the list first.

In all lowliness. The first thing on the list to walk in worthy of the Lord is to be lowly. Is to think nothing of yourself.

Is to realize I've learned nothing but what the grace of God has not enabled me to learn. I've received nothing but what the grace of God has given me. I know nothing of myself.

I have nothing of myself. This must be learned. Because what comes to the lowly? Grace is given.

Why are we wrestling sometimes without the grace of God? Because when the grace of God is abounding in a life, joy is abounding, peace is abounding, freedom is abounding. There's no more strife. It takes two to strive.

And if you don't strive, it's not possible. When the grace of God is in your heart, you're cursed, you're blessed. James made it very clear to us.

With our mouths, who do we bless? And with our mouths, who do we curse? The word for curse is speak against. Whom? And what do they follow that by? Brethren, this ought not be. How can out of the same mouth come blessing and cursing? The same spring cannot produce fresh and bitter water.

But see, law has no problem gendering strife. Because law rewards men according to their what? Deeds. And so if they don't study, you can treat them like they're ignorant.

You can speak evil of them. Not a person full of the grace of God. What Isaiah said, how will our healing quickly appear? One of the ways he said your healing will quickly appear is when you put away the pointing of the finger and malicious talk.

Isn't that what it says? How many of you would see good life? Psalms 34. Whoever of you would love life and desire to see good days, keep his tongue from evil and his lips from deceitful speech or strife. Let him turn from evil and do good.

And then what does it say? Let him seek peace and pursue it. Why is it when we hear this verse quoted from Hebrews, without this, no man shall see the Lord. What's the this? That's why every man quotes it.

And that's not the verse. That's not the verse. It says pursue peace with all men and holiness.

Holiness is second. Pursue peace with all men and holiness. Without which? No man shall see the Lord.

We're quick to say no one's going to see God without holiness. Why don't we put it upon all of ourselves without peace? No one shall see the Lord. The Prince of Peace.

He came and preached peace. He came and preached peace. And it didn't bother Him at all to preach peace to wicked, stubborn, deceitful, disobedient, foolish men.

His message was peace. Because when He came, He said, for God sent His Son into the world not to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. Look what it says in 2 Corinthians 5. It says, for God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself.

And it goes on to say, not imputing their sins against them. That's the key. No one sees sin more clearly than Christ.

But He did not come to count men's sins against them. And we had better all be grateful He didn't. In the word there is legitimized.

He did not impute. The same word is imputed righteousness. And it was credited to Him as righteousness.

He did not credit our sins against us. And that's what it says in 1 Corinthians 13. The same word.

Love does not impute a wrong suffered. It doesn't even take it into account. Can you see why it says this? Look in Colossians 3. Verse 12.

Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and longsuffering, forbearing with one another and forgiving yourselves, if anyone has anything against anyone, just as Christ forgave you, so also... What? You forget? That's one of the reasons division is in the church. Because we have not been clothed with. We have not put on the bowels of compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering, forbearing with one another.

Particularly in this way. This is one of the areas I feel I fail so miserably. But look in Matthew.

And you've heard this. This is not new to you. I know it's not new to you.

But still, may the Lord make it real to us tonight. Matthew 11. Verse 28.

It's interesting that this follows his pronouncement of woes and unrepentant cities. That was always the most interesting part to me that he was pronouncing his woes on the unrepentant cities. I like verses 20 through 24.

I knew them real well. I didn't know this very well. Verse 28 of chapter 11.

Come unto Me, all ye who are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me. And what do you learn? When you really learn Christ, if you are really going to learn Christ, why did the Sovereign Son of God name these two things about Himself that you're going to learn? Learn of Me.

For I am, first of all, meek. And second of all, I am lowly. It's very difficult to get someone who is walking in the meekness of Christ and in the lowliness of Christ into an argument.

He'd rather be wronged. He'd rather be wronged. He knows that God must grant repentance.

And he remembers how stubborn, how foolish, how disobedient he was for how long. And like Paul told Timothy, the servant of the Lord must not quarrel, strive. It's logos machia.

He must not word fight. Word fighting is putting faith in your words as if God needed your mouth for anything. God may use us as messengers, but what you need is not the knowledge my puffed-up mind has come with.

Instead, He must be kind to all in meekness. In meekness instructing. I've just done so poorly at this.

I've just not known the lowliness of Christ. And I know that the Lord has given me His mercy so that I can share through confession. And they overcame Him by the blood of the Lamb and the word of their testimony.

Well, I want to tell you what the Lord has done for me in His mercy. He's shown me that I did not know lowliness of mind. You see, it says in Proverbs, Brother John, help me know this.

When pride cometh, then cometh shame. But with the lowly is wisdom. And when God says who is the man that He esteems, who is esteemed in God's eyes? He that is of a broken and contrite heart and who trembles at the Word of God.

I think maybe we have the wrong view sometimes of how the prophets were. I don't believe that it took aggressive men to speak the Word of God. I believe that when your faith is in Christ and you know that He must grant repentance, if repentance is going to be received by anybody, you can keep yourself as simply a witness and not a lawyer.

What does a lawyer do? A lawyer uses words to try to convince people of the truth. A witness just simply testifies to what he has seen and heard. I want to learn to be a witness myself.

It says something about the virtuous woman. It says it in the King James. And may we learn it if we want to be the kind of crown to our Lord Christ, the kind of bride that He's worthy of.

What does it say about the mouth of a virtuous woman? The law of kindness is in her mouth. And oh, that we would have the law of kindness, brothers, in our mouth. Yes, the truth of it is the world is walking in wickedness.

Rebellion, sin, self-deceived, ignorant. It's true. But what does that have to do with us except an opportunity to seek redemption, to stand in the gap and plead for their souls? And so I just want to encourage you.

Look at our Apostle Paul, and I'm done. Acts 20. Verse 19.

I'll go ahead and read from verse 17 so we don't come right in the middle of a sentence. And from Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the elders of the church. And when they had come to him, he said to them, you know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I have always lived among you.

And look what he puts first. Serving the Lord with all lowliness. May we learn this.

May God in His great mercy mature us in this area.

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