

# Humble leaders and humble people

by Anton Bosch

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*This sermon from 1 Peter chapter 5 emphasizes the importance of humility and submission in the church. It highlights the role of elders as shepherds who lead by example, not by force, and the need for all members, regardless of age or position, to submit to one another. The sermon delves into the dangers of pride, God's resistance to the proud, and His grace bestowed upon the humble. It calls for a genuine, deep-rooted humility that recognizes our spiritual poverty and dependence on God for His grace and guidance.*

**Scripture:** 1 Peter 5:1, Matthew 20:25, Isaiah 66:2, James 4:6, Proverbs 3:34, Philippians 2:3, Psalm 25:9, Luke 14:11

**Topics:** "Humility", "Submission in the Church"

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## Description

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## Transcript

And we're in Peter. We're drawing to the close of Peter. I think we're going to be another maybe three weeks in Peter.

And so 1 Peter chapter 5, once we're done in Peter, we're going to go across to 2 Peter. So 1 Peter chapter 5, and we'll read verses 1 through 7. 1 Peter chapter 5, reading verses 1 through 7. The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory, there will be revealed. Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion, but willingly, not for dishonest gain, but eagerly, nor as being lords 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 does not fade away. Likewise you younger people submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be closed with humility.

For God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon him, for he cares for you. And

so we introduced the passage last week, and we spoke about the elders, the presbyters, or the overseers, and shepherds, that these are all the same thing.

And so he's in this passage firstly addressing the elders, and then he's going to address those who are part of the body of Christ. So the elders who are among you, I exhort you, am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, also partaker of the glory, they will be revealed. Shepherd the flock of God, which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion, but willingly, not for dishonest gain, but eagerly.

So these are the attitudes, these are the ways in which the elders, or the shepherds, or the pastors, or the bishops, or the presbyters, whatever you want to call them, all the same thing, how they need to function. Now the last thing, which we didn't get to last week, is he says that they must not be lords over those entrusted to them, but be examples to the flock. The word lords here is a word that relates to a dominant despot.

It's not a benevolent ruler, this is a ruler who rules with force, or with vigor. And of course this is a real problem in particularly cultic churches, but in many churches this is a problem, where elders lead or rule with force, and they have all sorts of verses from the Bible that they like to use, which I'm not going to deal with tonight, particularly from the book of Hebrews, where the King James speaks about the fact that that elders need to rule, and it's a bad translation, the word shouldn't be rule, the word should be lead. That's the correct translation of that word.

Prohistomai, meaning to stand before, not to stand over. And so they are not to be lords over those entrusted to you. This is interesting, this word entrusted, I'm going to get the understanding of the whole thing, I just want to deal with the words quickly.

This word entrusted is the word from which we get the word clergy. Now you'll recognize that we have this thing called the clergy and the laity. The clergy are the ministers, and the laity are the people.

But in fact in the Bible the word clergy is used of those who are the flock, not of those who are the ministers. And yet you can see how easily we just twist these words. The word minister, instead of being servant, which is literally what the word means, becomes a boss, or a master, or a chief, or something like that.

So we somehow through our tradition, and you recognize why Jesus warns, that through your empty or vain traditions you make the Word of God of no effect. He says that to the Pharisees, but that applies to the church just as much. And so we, through our tradition, change the word servant and it becomes a master.

We change the word flock and it becomes the word clergy, which is a set-apart class of those who are in the ministry. And you remember the context, if we go back a couple of verses, the elders who are among you, for those who weren't here last week, the elders who are among you, not the elders that are over you, that are among you. And Peter says, I who am a fellow elder, even though he was an apostle, he sets himself amongst the other elders, not in a position of superiority or of authority, even though they do have authority.

So shepherd the flock of God, which is among you, serving as overseer. So the same idea again. This is a very real problem.

This was a problem in Jesus' time with the Jews. The Pharisees and the rabbis set themselves up as rulers and as leaders, or not leaders really, but rulers who ruled the people. And Jesus says, you lay heavy burdens on people's shoulders, but you yourselves will not lift one finger to pick those burdens up.

And so that is typical of this kind of wrong kind of leadership, is that the leaders have one set of rules for the people, they have another set of rules for themselves. Now we can easily turn this thing upside down and end up with the same but inverse error. In other words, that we end up with a situation where there is one set of rules for the people and one for the leaders, and the rules for the leaders are onerous.

The leaders have to do everything, and everybody else does nothing. And so you can turn this thing the other way around. Now we'll find a balance in that in a moment, but I want to go to Matthew.

And in Matthew chapter 20, and Jesus deals with this on a number of occasions in his ministry, but Jesus called them to himself and he said, you know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it, there's that same word, lord it over them. They are lords over the people. And those who are great exercise authority over them.

And we say, well don't leaders have authority? No, leaders really don't have authority. I have, we have authority, I have authority based on the Word of God, but that is my authority. At the end of the day, many choose not to submit to my authority, and there's nothing I can do about that.

That's just the sad reality of modern-day church, is that people will do whatever they choose to do. And unless we're in a cult, we can't force people to do the right thing. And of course that's very, very sad.

And so he says that's the way the Gentiles do it, that's the way the world does it. Then he says, yet it shall not be so among you, and he's talking to the twelve, but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And right here is the whole problem.

Those who aspire to leadership aspire to greatness. They want to have some kind of position. Right now we're watching the politicians vying for the White House, and I guess everybody wants the job.

I don't know why you'd want the job, but never mind. But that's the way the world works. The world is about power, the world is about authority, the world is about who is the top dog.

And that's a very apt description, because little puppies, when they are born, even before their eyes are opened, you can see they're already bossing each other around, trying to figure out who is the top dog, who has the seniority, and who's going to call the shots, literally before they open their eyes. And so my daughter has just gotten a new kitten, and they have another cat which is not that old. And I can just imagine the goings-on, as these two animals are fighting and trying to establish dominance, establish who is more important than the next one.

That is the way the world works, and yet we bring exactly that mindset into the church. And pastors grade themselves by one another, to determine whose church is bigger, who has a better education, who can speak better, who can whatever. And even in the congregation, there is this kind of stuff going on.

Who gets to do this, who gets to do that, who is more important. That is the way the world works. When I was in the military, it was prescribed to the nth degree, so that when I graduated from officers college, there were 72 of us who graduated at the same time.

And when we graduated, we all became second lieutenants, or lieutenants here. Second lieutenants, one star in that setup. All got the same rank, but within all of them, there was a very clear picking order.

Whoever ended first in the class, top of the class, had seniority over the guy who came second at the end of the course. And he had seniority over the next guy. So when you got to the elevator, because we worked in a high-rise building, when you got to the elevator, you knew exactly, even that the guy who graduated with you at the same time, whether he was senior to you or junior to you.

And you did not go into the elevator before the other guy if he was senior. When you had formal dinners, you would be seated in rank order. And so you would have the captains sitting together, and the first lieutenants, and second lieutenants, and they would be sitting in strict order as to who was more important, closer to the head of the table, further away from the head of the table.

That's the world. And yet we bring that same mindset into the church, and we try and figure out, you know, am I more important, have I more authority, am I more favored, am I whatever it is, than brother so-and-so. And we look at one another, and we try and figure out where we fit in.

God help us. That is the world's way of doing things. Jesus says, it will not be so among you, but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant.

You remember that was exactly the problem. And Jesus had already taught this, and he had taught it on at least two occasions, from what I can work out. And yet when they came to the upper room, they have exactly this argument.

And you remember the problem. The problem was the washing of the feet. There was no servant, so one of them had to do it.

And each one is looking at the next one and saying, well I'm more important than you are. I'm one of, I'm closer to Jesus than you are. You know, you have this background, and I have that background.

And whatever the arguments were, in the end nobody washed the feet. Because everyone thought that he was better than the one before him. And in fact, just before they got into the upper room, there was a dispute between the two sons of Zebedee, you remember, about who was going to sit on the right and who was going to sit on the left hand.

And you remember exactly how that story ended. How that Jesus then washes their feet. And he says, what I have done, this is what you need to do.

So Jesus puts into a practical example this very teaching. And you know, that's the amazing thing, is that within the context of any church, brothers will vie for the opportunity to preach. But you don't often see brothers fighting to clean the toilets.

And I thank God for John, who's faithful in cleaning the toilets. I used to do it, but John's helping me out these days. But that's our mindset.

That's not, you know, that's not my kind of work. You know, I need to be on the pulpit. Jesus says, if you want to be anything in the kingdom, you need to be willing to be the servant.

And this is not in a theoretical sense, this is in a real practical sense, because Jesus washes the feet. He doesn't just say, well I'm your servant, I've come from heaven and I'm going to serve you by dying on the

cross. No, he actually gets down on his knees and he girds himself around and he washes their dirty feet.

Including Peter, who was writing the letter, and of course Judas was there as well. And then verse 27 of Matthew 20, And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave. King James says your servant, but that's a bad translation.

The Greek word here is doulos, slave. Let him be your slave. A slave has no rights.

Remember, there's a huge difference between a servant and a slave. A servant has certain rights. A servant works for wages.

A servant can resign his job and go and find another job. A slave has no rights. And Jesus says, if you want to be great in the kingdom of God, you need to be willing to be the slave.

And of course that's very, very hard. That's something that we don't do easily. Last verse in Matthew 20 that I want to look at, Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.

So he is not asking us to do what he has not done. Remember who he was, that he was the king of glory. He thought that being like God was not something worth holding on to.

But he humbled himself and became obedient. And he takes upon himself not the form of a king. He doesn't come as a priest or as a rabbi in that sense, but he comes as a servant.

And he's obedient even to the death of the cross. Wherefore God has highly exalted him. So the exaltation comes from God.

When we exalt ourselves, God will put us down. That's just the reality. And so, and we'll see that in the passage.

So let's go back then to 1 Peter 5 verse 3. Not as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. Those who are entrusted to you. Elders are trustees.

We've spoken about this word before. They are trustees. A trustee has responsibility to take care of that which has been put in his trust.

And normally we use that in a financial sense. So you have a trust. You have a certain amount of money, or you may have a property, or you may have, you know, whatever it is.

And that is part of a trust. And over the trust is trustees. Their responsibility is to take care of that which has been, it's not theirs.

They don't own the money. The money belongs to the trust. They are simply trustees who manage and take care of and protect that which has been put in their trust.

The church is not mine. The church is not that, does not belong to elders. When elders speak and pastors speak about my church, that is the furthest thing from God's intention for us.

We simply have people who have been put in our care, in our trust, but they are not ours. The same way as if I lent you my motor car and I said, I'm going overseas, please will you look after my motor car? You can't sell it. You can't abuse it.

You've been given a responsibility to look after it. It is mine. And when I come back, I want my car back.

The church belongs to the Lord Jesus. He purchased it with his own precious blood. And when he comes back, he's going to ask for the elders to give an account and to give back to him that which is his, that which he has purchased.

And so elders have never bought any church with their blood. The church, and I'm not talking about buildings, I'm talking about, obviously, about people. And so they are entrusted to you.

He says, don't be lords, but be examples. We spoke about that last week. The shepherd leads by, and the sheep follow.

Unfortunately, the wayward sheep choose not to follow. And so the shepherd spends his time trying to get the wayward sheep in line, trying to get the wayward sheep to be with the rest, and to do what they're supposed to be doing, and be where they're supposed to be. So being examples to the flock.

Now verse 4, and when the chief shepherd, and I made reference to this last week because other shepherds, so in our setup here, Henry and I are under shepherds. He is the shepherd. He is the great shepherd.

He is the chief shepherd. He is the good shepherd, David says in Psalm 23. And here he says that he is the chief shepherd.

In other words, if there is a chief shepherd, there are other shepherds. And we commonly refer to them as under shepherds. So you can again see the problem with the language.

If we say the word shepherd is the same as the word pastor, as we have in Spanish, where the two things are one word, there's not a different word for pastor and for shepherd. They're both the same word, pastor. So if this is exactly the same thing, then how can someone call himself the pastor? How can he call himself the pastor, when in fact there is one pastor.

There is one great shepherd. The best that we can call ourselves is the under pastor, if you're going to use that word. The under shepherd.

But he is the shepherd of the sheep. We belong to him. He is the great shepherd.

And we are shepherds under him. He has delegated to us responsibility. Remember, the same Peter who is writing here, meets with Jesus at the shore of the sea after the resurrection, and after Peter had denied the Lord.

And Jesus says to him, Peter, do you love me? And Peter says, I have an affection for you. And the Lord Jesus says to him, feed my sheep. Feed my sheep.

And so Peter is going back to his first commission, when Jesus sent him with this commission, based on the fact that he loves him. Elders, or pastors, or shepherds who do not love the Lord Jesus, have no right to shepherd the sheep. Peter's commission is on the basis of, do you love me? And Peter makes that confession.

He says, Lord, I can't really say that I agape you, that I love you with a divine love. But I love you like a friend. I have an affection for you.

I fully owe you a brotherly love. But it's on that basis that he is commissioned. Too many shepherds, too many pastors love themselves, love the limelight, love the pulpit.

And that's why some of them won't preach outside like we're preaching outside, because they need the fancy pulpit behind them, and all of that. They don't love the Lord. They don't love God's people.

They just love themselves. And some preachers are absolutely masters at selling and promoting themselves. No, we are simply shepherds under the Lord Jesus Christ.

And when he appears, we will receive a crown of glory that does not fade away. So the reward is coming when he appears. And obviously when it says when the chief shepherd appears, it's referring to the second coming, when Jesus comes again.

I believe that this applies to the rapture, because between the rapture and the second coming for me is a period of seven years during the Great Tribulation. And during that time, there are two things that are going to happen. The first is the marriage feast of the Lamb.

Well, the first really is the judgment of rewards, the bema seat judgment of rewards, and then the marriage feast of the Lamb. At that point, we will receive our reward. Now, it's very hard when you've been preaching for 50 years and there's no reward.

And yet we need to have the long view and understand that the reward is coming when Jesus comes. And by the way, I'll watch the Republican one also. But during that, they played a clip last night of President Obama bestowing on Joe Biden the highest civilian honor.

I can't even remember. Anyone remember what it was? Anyway, it's the highest civilian honor that any civilian can get in America. And in fact, what he got was, I think it's only been bestowed three or four times in the past with distinction.

And I was moved by that, not because of the man, but because of the pageantry and because of this incredible honor that this man is given an award, an honor. And obviously, we see the same thing when a soldier gets a Purple Heart or gets some medal of honor, that the President of the United States has bestowed on this man the highest honor that anybody in the country has ever received. That is quite something.

And, you know, something carnal in me just stirred, and I just said, well, where's my reward? And I was reminded, no, the reward is coming. The reward does not come from the church. The reward does not come from the President.

The reward comes from the Chief Shepherd, the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. And there are many pastors who are discouraged right now, and I'm just absolutely overwhelmed by the pastors that I'm in contact with, struggling to not give in, struggling to not just quit. They've just had enough.

It's just become so hard to do the job. But we have to keep our eyes on the reward, on the day when Jesus comes, and He says, Well done, good and faithful servant. Enter into the joy of your Lord.

And this applies not just to the shepherds. This applies to everyone who does something, whether you're setting up the chairs or cleaning the restrooms or helping with the Internet or whatever it is that you're doing. The reward is coming.

It is not here. I know there are churches that make a big thing of giving people rewards. Some of you have been in a church like that.

And every now and then the pastor would have a pack of certificates under the pulpit, and he'd call people up, and he'd recognize them because they came to church without a break for three weeks or something. No, the reward doesn't come from me. The award comes from the Great Shepherd.

And some people get a little frustrated with me. Brother, can't we get some recognition? I know nobody says it out loud, but it's in their hearts. No, the recognition is not mine to give.

The recognition is to come from the Lord Jesus. The approval comes from Him. The awards come from Him.

And we need to be patient because He is coming, and He will give a crown of glory that does not fade away. Those days you would get a wreath that you would put on your head, and we've all seen pictures of the various Caesars with a wreath of leaves around the head. And if it was a particularly prestigious award, it would be made out of gold or maybe even silver.

But most of it was just made out of leaves, laurel leaves generally. And they would fade. They would dry up, and you'd eventually throw them away.

Even the gold medals you get at the Olympic Games are not real gold, and they will eventually perish, and they will tarnish, and they will not always look good. But the award that He's coming with, the crown that He gives, will not fade away. Remember that Peter is the one that earlier in the book, and it's been a long time since we started this book, but earlier in the book he speaks about the fact that gold here will perish.

So even if you get a gold medallion or a gold wreath, it's in the end, while it is indestructible right now, it will melt up with fervent heat. But in fact, the award that He gives is eternal, and it will last for eternity. And that's the problem, is that we become short-sighted, and we want the award now, and we want some piece of paper, we want some kind of recognition.

But you know, whatever we get will fade away. And just to use that illustration, I actually remember when President Obama gave Vice President Biden that award. I remember it happening, but I'd forgotten that it had actually happened.

Now I'm sure he hadn't forgotten, but I'd forgotten. So it had faded away. But in fact, the award that He's going to give us will be present, and will be evident, and will be visible, whatever shape and form it takes, for eternity.

For eternity. Amen. So now he switches to the other side of the coin.

And I'm going to probably just introduce this verse, and then we'll move on next week. So, likewise you younger people, likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble.

Now, I want you to listen very carefully now. Some of you have heard this before, but others have not. And this is very, very important.

A few minutes ago I said that God does not give elders authority. And He doesn't. The same way as He does not give husbands authority in their homes.

There is no scripture. Entire doctrines have been built on this. Entire traditions and cultures have been built on this idea that God tells husbands to have authority in their homes.

There's not a single verse in scripture that says husbands have authority in your homes. What does it say? Husbands, love your wives. Wives, respect, reverence, submit, whatever word you like, to your husband.

And He has exactly the same thing. He is saying elders are not over, but amongst. He is saying don't be masters, but be leaders.

So where is their authority? The only authority that they have is the authority that the people give them by their submission. There are some of you who have never submitted to me, and there is nothing I can do about it except cry and pray. But the only authority, the only levels, and I spoke about this last week, the only extent to which I can help you, the only extent to which I can speak into your life, is the extent to which you are willing to open up to me.

The extent to which you are willing to submit to me. Submission on the one hand, and here's the problem, submission on the one hand does not imply authority on the other hand. That's the world's way of thinking.

The world says if one must submit, then the other one must have authority. No, that's not God's way. God's way says that we are all equal, but we need to submit to one another.

And we need to recognize the gifts that God has given amongst us. So now when He says, you younger people, all of the commentaries that I consulted are agreed, and that was my opinion before I looked at the commentaries, and by the way I form my own opinions before I look at the commentaries, I simply look at the commentaries to confirm my view, or to bring correction in case I'd gone astray. Is that when He is saying younger people here, He is not meaning the young people in the assembly, in the sense that there are young people, middle aged, and older people.

These are all those who are not elders. This is younger in opposition to, or apposition to elders, in the first three verses. In other words, if you are not an elder, then you are by definition, according to this passage, a younger person.

And obviously this has got nothing to do with physical age. And that's the problem, is when we see that word younger, we say, well, it has to do with physical age. When He speaks about elders, while I said that there is a connection between age and an elder, an elder is not necessarily older in age, but he is older in spirituality.

He is older in the Lord. And that also has nothing to do with how long you've been a Christian. Some people have been Christians for 30, 40, 50 years, and they're still teenagers.

They've never grown up. Others grow much faster, and they're elders, even though they're relatively young. So this has nothing to do with age.

This has nothing to do with how long you've been a Christian. This has to do whether you have come to a place of leadership, or whether you are still needing to be led. And again, this again has nothing to do with selfish ambition.

Because you say, well, you're contradicting yourself, because I'm now saying you need to come to a place of leading, and not just be led. But that's a biblical principle. Remember that the writer to the Hebrews says that when you need to be teachers, you have need that someone teach you again.

The first principle. In other words, we should all come to a place where we can be leaders, where we can be teachers at different levels, in different contexts. But some people never get to a place where, Paul says in Timothy, he says they're ever learning, but they're never coming to the full faith.

So there are those then who are spiritually younger, not because of the time they've been saved, but because they have not matured, because they have not grown. And he says those then who are not elders must submit themselves to the elders. And I want you to pay attention.

I know I'm emphasizing this point, but it's important because it is so contrary to what we are used to. He's not saying elders, you guys better take authority in your churches and get your church in line. No, he's saying the responsibility lies on those who are being led to submit to the leaders.

Husbands, you can never say to your wife, I am the boss and you better do it. You can never demand obedience from your wife. You can never demand respect from her.

If you've not earned anything from her, you have nothing. You can scream and shout and you can beat her up if you like, but you have nothing. And unfortunately, that's just the problem is that bullies have no authority.

That's why they bully, because they're trying to prove a point that there's something when in fact there's nothing. Brethren, you need to earn your wife's respect. You need to earn the right to speak in her life.

So, of course, the other side of the coin, we say, well, because he doesn't have authority, so I don't have to submit. No, you submit whether he has authority or not, whether he earned your respect or not, you still submit because that's what God requires of you. And here's exactly the problem.

People say, well, you know, right now people are saying the government's making bad decisions, so I don't have to submit to the government. No, the Scripture says you submit to the government whether the decisions are good or bad. It doesn't matter.

Your job is to submit. Yours is not to know the reason why. Yours is but to do or die.

We have no choice. And, folk, if we're part of the body of Christ, we have no choice but to submit to the elders and to submit to one another. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another.

So does that include elders and leaders? Yes, it does. Folk, there's a thing in some churches, and unfortunately it sneaks into other churches as well, where they have this thing that brothers are at this level and sisters are down here, and sisters must submit to the brothers in the church. No, that's not a biblical concept.

We submit to the elders, and all of us submit to one another. All of us submit to one another. You see, the problem is that if I think I'm somewhat, it becomes very, very hard to submit to someone else.

Did Jesus submit to his disciples when he washed the feet? Yes, he did. To submit means to put yourself under, sub, under. Jesus put himself under his disciples by washing their feet.

Did that take away from who he is? Not one moment. You see, it's only those who do not have true greatness, and I'm using it in a spiritual sense, who do not have true greatness, who are afraid of being seen to not have greatness. True leaders don't have to show that they're leaders.

Everyone recognizes that they are. But all of you, every single one of us, needs to be in submission to one another. And that's hard, because we are by nature proud, and arrogant, and self-sufficient.

But he says, be closed with humility. I'm going a little bit over tonight, so I want to finish this verse, because it all hangs together. Be closed with humility.

Wrap yourself up. Now, he's not talking here about a show. So, I put on a appearance of humility.

No, that needs to envelop my personality. That needs to envelop who I am. My whole being needs to be closed in humility.

And so, it cannot be something that I set aside. It needs to be something that is part of me. We're identified by the clothes that we wear, rightly or wrongly.

When we dress properly, people respect us. If we don't dress properly, people don't respect us. It identifies us.

Wealthy businessmen wear suits and long ties. The Christian's clothing needs to be humility. That needs to be what identifies us.

And we say, well, you know, that's a hard, that's a hard ask. That's a difficult thing to do. Well, the problem is that if we've never met with, if we've never really met with the Lord Jesus, we have reason to be proud.

But if we've seen him, if we've met him in a real way, we recognize that we have nothing to boast of at all. Remember Isaiah, woe to everybody else, but when he sees the Lord, woe is me, because I am undone. You cannot have seen the Lord in his word and through the Spirit and remain arrogant and proud.

And if you say you have, you've not looked into your own heart to see what is there. Clothed with humility, because here's the reason for, remember these little words for, because God resists the proud, but he gives grace to the humble. Folks, proud Christians, God is their enemy.

You say, but they're Christians, they're preachers. Peter says God resists them. What does it mean to resist? God pushes against them.

God pushes against them. He is not identified with them. He does not help them.

He does not support them. He does not give them aid, because they don't need those kinds of things from him. And unfortunately, sometimes God has to wait for us to fall on our faces.

And I don't mean that in worship, but fall on our faces, making a mess of things before he can get involved. It's only once we realize that, in fact, I have no reason to feel self-sufficient, to feel good about myself. Blessed are the poor in spirit, the first of the Beatitudes.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. When we've understood our bankruptcy, when we've understood our poverty, when we understand that, in fact, I am wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked, I have nothing to boast of. It's only then that God gives grace to the humble.

Now, this is not, and I'm almost through, but this is not a fake humility. Some Christians are very good at faking humility. They speak with a soft, gentle voice.

They look bristled, and they say, you know, I'm sorry that I live, you know, I'm just so humble. The problem is I'm proud of my humility. That's not humility.

Humility is a deep understanding of how poor I really am. And it's then that God gives grace. You see, because the proud don't need grace.

Many of you, before your time, but some of us will remember Blue Eyes and remember his favorite song, I did it my way. I did it my way. God resists them.

But when we come and say, Lord, I can't. Help me, Lord. I think I shared with you before about one of the great preachers of Scotland, Murray Machine.

He only lived to about 28, I think, before he died. He only preached for about five years, but brought revival to Scotland. But all over his notes before he would preach would just be the words, help me.

Help, Lord. Help, Lord. He recognized his poverty, and no wonder that God gave grace to him.

And used him in an unprecedented way, so that in the four or five years that he preached, he became one of the greatest names in Scotland, brought about tremendous revival in the Scottish church. God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble. Folks, may God do a work in our lives.

May we come like Isaiah and see the Lord, recognize who we really are, and come to him, take his yoke upon us, because he is meek and lowly and gentle in heart. Those are the ones that God walks with. Those are the ones that he honors.

Those are the ones that he respects. And, folk, on that great day, many great preachers will be humiliated, and many simple folk who just prayed, never preached a great sermon, but faithfully prayed, will receive a greater reward, because God gives grace to the humble. Father, we thank you for your word.

Lord, these are things that we talk about. These are things that we know. Lord, I've not said anything new today, and yet, Lord, these are things that we find so hard to put into practice, because our carnal nature just rises up within us.

And, Lord, we just feel that we are somewhat when, in fact, we are nothing. And so, Lord, I pray that you would help us to understand our need of you, Lord, that unless you do something in our hearts and in our lives, Lord, we are nothing, and nothing can happen. And, Lord, unless you do something in our church, nothing will happen.

Lord, we cannot cause things to happen through advertising or my charisma or through preaching or through publicity. We can only do that which you do through your Spirit. And, Lord, you only work with those who are humble and who are broken and of a contrite heart.

And so, Lord, I pray that this may be real and that this may be a work that you would do within our hearts, Lord. And we acknowledge, Lord, that this is not something we desire in the flesh, because in order for us to come to this place, it requires that you break us. And, Lord, unfortunately, we resist that breaking process, and we try and heal ourselves instead of casting ourselves upon you and upon your mercy.

And so, Lord, I pray that we may be a biblical church in the sense that, Lord, that elders lead and that others follow and submit themselves. And, Lord, that we are all in submission to one another. We pray that this may be real in Jesus' name.

I pray, Lord, that you would go with us, keep us, and protect us, and bring us together again safely on Sunday. I pray for those who are not here who can't come for good reasons, Lord. We pray that you administer to them according to their need.

We ask this in Jesus' name.

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Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/wfV1qooVVWs.mp4>

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