

New Hope Lutheran Church

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October 23, 2022

20th Sunday after Pentecost

Coming Events

- Oct 25 2:00 Kammari **Impola**
7:00 Eng Bible Study **Zoom**
- Oct 26 10 – 1 Kahvi Time **Regent St.**
- Oct 27 6:30 Finnish Bible Study **Zoom**
- Oct 30 10:00 Finnish Worship Service † **Voima Hall**
2:00 English Worship Service † **Regent St**

In our prayers Leena, Eero, Ron, Ruth, Marilyn.

Remembering: Lahja Jussila 93 yrs.
Jukka Lahtinen 67 yrs.



Almighty God; you bring us hope in our times of grieving through the resurrection of our Lord Jesus. May this hope be spread to all those who grieve today, especially the friends and family of Lahja and Jukka, that they may find your comforting presence with them. In Jesus name we pray. Amen.

Prayer of the Day

Holy God, our righteous judge, daily your mercy surprises us with everlasting forgiveness. Strengthen our hope in you, and grant that all the peoples of the earth may find their glory in you, we pray through your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior and Lord. Amen.

Psalms 84:1 - 7

- ¹ How lovely is your dwelling place, Lord Almighty!
² My soul yearns, even faints, for the courts of the Lord; my heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.
³ Even the sparrow has found a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may have her young—a place near your altar, Lord Almighty, my King and my God.
⁴ Blessed are those who dwell in your house; they are ever praising you.^[a]
⁵ Blessed are those whose strength is in you, whose hearts are set on pilgrimage.
⁶ As they pass through the Valley of Baka, they make it a place of springs; the autumn rains also cover it with pools.^[d]
⁷ They go from strength to strength, till each appears before God in Zion.

First Reading “**Sirach 35:12 – 17**”

¹² Give to the Most High as he has given to you and as generously as you can afford. ¹³ For the Lord is the one who repays, and he will repay you sevenfold. ¹⁴ Do not offer him a bribe, for he will not accept it, ¹⁵ and do not rely on a dishonest sacrifice, for the Lord is the judge, and with him there is no partiality. ¹⁶ He will not show partiality to the poor, but he will listen to the prayer of one who is wronged. ¹⁷ He will not ignore the supplication of the orphan or the widow when she pours out her complaint.

Second Reading “**2 Timothy 4:6 – 8, 16 – 18**”

⁶ For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the

faith. ⁸ Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.

¹⁶ At my first defense, no one came to my support, but everyone deserted me. May it not be held against them. ¹⁷ But the Lord stood at my side and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed and all the Gentiles might hear it. And I was delivered from the lion’s mouth. ¹⁸ The Lord will rescue me from every evil attack and will bring me safely to his heavenly kingdom. To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

Gospel “**Luke 18:9 – 14**”

Glory to you, O Lord.

To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable:

“Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’ “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’ “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

*The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise to you, O Christ.***

Sermon

*By Rev. Charles Nolting
“An Attitude of Humility”*

It’s possible to be fooled by the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector, in that we may be led to believe

that the actions of the Pharisee were totally inappropriate – just going by the way Jesus spoke about him. But, in this parable, Jesus is not pointing out that robbing others, being evil, or adultery are okay. Nor is he saying that tithing and being generous is an unacceptable practice.

What Jesus is pointing to is the attitude difference between these two people. I think we can all admit that the attitude of the Pharisee is a bit pompous, especially thanking God that he's not like someone else. I would think it's an individual's decision as to how we act, and not God's.

The problem with such an attitude is that it leads one to believe themselves as superior. When we believe that we are religiously superior (such as the Pharisee), we tend to forget that it is God who is superior, and instead feel that we ourselves are the ones who are superior. And when we begin to believe such things about ourselves, it's pretty easy to wind up with an attitude that keeps others out, and they stay away from us.

Peter Marshall Sr., who was a Scottish-American preacher, pastor of the New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D.C. and at one point appointed as Chaplain of the United States Senate back in the day, put it this way: "*Lord, when we are wrong, make us willing to change. And when we are right, make us easy to live with.*" ⁽¹⁾

It is for just such a reason that Jesus points us instead towards an attitude of humility. The problem most people have with being humble is that we have skewed how we define it. Most people think that being humble means we are supposed to be meek, weak, and submissive. It is then looked upon as a trait that isn't helpful to society at all.

It's unfortunate that people might think that way, because humility actually has little to do with all that. While a dictionary definition might be: *a modest or low view of one's own importance*, no dictionary is going to

tell you the benefits of such an attitude when applied across society. It might be more accurate to define humility as: *an honest and accurate understanding of our strengths and weaknesses*.

To be humble, in other words, means that we have given ourselves an honest look, and accept that we are not perfect, or capable of every human feat. Doing so gives us an ability to acknowledge our mistakes and limitations in this world.

Humility also relates to the degree the we value and promote our own interests above others. As we have seen in the past, putting our interests first seems like a great idea, but can be disastrous in the long run. The 2nd World War was won once the United States realized that if they continued to put themselves first – staying out of the conflict - they could be the next target of the Axis powers. Being humble then means looking out for others.

There are other benefits to humility. It brings about compassion, forgiveness, gratitude, and empathy in people – all traits that God looks for in us and desires us to have. When we see ourselves as we really are (such as that tax collector in our gospel), God is pleased.

Something I like very much about being a Christian is that the things that please God are also good for me and my own wellbeing. I guess that's because God, like any loving parent, wants the best for us and attempts to steer us in good directions.

As one example, humble people are better and more willing to learn and grow. In my Toolbox video for today, I used the example of the student who arrogantly believes they have a firm grasp on a subject and feel it unnecessary to seek help when they have problems, often causing them failure. Opposed to that is the humble student who recognizes they have difficulties, seek out help, and wind up being successful in their

studies. Humble people know where they struggle, and strive to become better, even if it is step by step.

Some studies have shown ⁽²⁾ that the most outstanding leaders are humble people. They do not crave credit but give credit where it is due, allowing others to feel good about their part. They don't need to show others how great they are, or undermine the efforts of others in order to feel powerful. Instead they are always attempting to learn from their failures and improve the performance of the entire group in the process.

Another place humility is helpful is in relationships. When we put aside our own importance, we are able to be sympathetic to others in a relationship and more carefully consider their fundamental needs.

To practice humility, it is good to remember that, to others we are just another object in the world. Realizing that we are only a part of something that is larger than ourselves helps us to adjust our perspective of ourselves. It also helps to stay curious and be open to learning, especially in today's world where things change so fast. And humble people often have a good sense of humor, and are able to laugh at themselves and their imperfections, moving on and adjusting their outlook.

Humility then is not just something God desires for us, but something that also benefits us. It is connected to learning, to outstanding leadership, good social behaviors, and an ability to make deeper bonds with others. Walk humbly then, with God. Amen.

- (1) Edward K. Rowell Ed.; 1001 Quotes, Illustrations, and Humorous Stories; pg 80
- (2) What Is Humility & Why Is It Important? (Incl. Examples) (positivepsychology.com)

Prayers

In gratitude and humility, let us join together in prayer on behalf of all of God's creation.

God of mercy, you are in the midst of us and we are called by your name. Inspire your church to serve and love all people with the unceasing grace you extend to us. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of all creation, you formed a world where even the sparrow finds a home. Preserve the beauty and diversity of all creatures with who we share the earth. Lead us to protect all living things. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of peace, you are an ever-present help in time of trouble. Rescue families and nations torn apart by violence and warfare. Unite all people toward common goals of reconciliation and peace for every person. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of hope, you stand with the suffering and give strength. Comfort your people filled with fear or anger, anxiety or shame. Bring healing to all who are sick in body, mind, or spirit. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of restoration, you call us to trust in you and not ourselves alone. Make this congregation a community of humility and repentance, ready to encounter you in love and follow in your ways. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

God of eternal life, to you be the glory forever. We give you thanks for all who have fought the good fight, finished the race, kept the faith, and now live with you. Hear us, O God. **Your mercy is great.**

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial and deliver us from evil. For the

kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. **Amen.**