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| **Slide** | **Sermon** |
| 1 | It’s Hard To Be Humble Luke 18:9-14 (Title slide) |
| 2 | Country song – “Its Hard To Be Humble” is a comic look at humility. It is hard for someone so good and talented!  Humility doesn’t play well these days, does it?  Sounds weak and spineless in a world that touts winning at all costs. |
| 3 | Yet, Jesus teaches – Be humble.  All who exalt themselves will be humbled.  All who humble themselves will be exalted.  But we don’t know how to be humble and still be strong and radiant. |
| 4 | Picture Jesus: To the world, looked spineless and weak. He frustrated disciples and zealots because he wouldn’t use his power to smash Rome and other opposition.  2 Thieves on cross – one wanted Jesus’ power to be freed – other saw Jesus and humbled himself and received eternal life.  Jesus gained ultimate power over death by humbling himself before God.  For us to have real power, Godly power – we must humble ourselves before God. |
| 5 | What is humility? Humility - is voluntary choice to take the back seat – to let others go first – to compare yourself not with others but with God.  ex: Preacher working in fast food restaurants and other places to show care and love. |
| 6 | Ex: Abraham Lincoln  In Carl Sandburg’s biography of Abraham Lincoln, he describes Lincoln in great depth. Lincoln is at one plain spoken yet can weave together a sentence of masterful prose or poetry. He can make a joke with the best of them while at the same time make the most insightful statements of truth. Abraham Lincoln was a great debater, statesman and eventually became one of the greatest presidents of the U.S. Yet Sandburg says Lincoln was a humble man and showed it in different ways.  “When he(Lincoln) was in Washington as a Congressman, his wife wrote letters addressing the envelopes “Hon.”, the abbreviation for Honorable, before his name. He wrote her: “Suppose you do not prefix the “Hon” to the address on your letters to me anymore. I like the letter very much, but I would rather they should not have that upon them.” |
| 7 | Distinction between humility and humiliation. Humiliation – forced humility from the outside using shame and put downs.  ex: Play with cousins and aunt in yard.  Jesus taught we are to humble ourselves – between you and God – your choice.  I can’t, nor should I try to humble you. Humiliation is not what Jesus is discussing here. |
| 8 | Our story today, only found in Luke - but the theme is found in numerous places in the Gospels. Blessings from God come to those who humble themselves before God.  [Audience: some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and regarded others with contempt]  We have 2 characters, each praying, each representing a particular kind of heart: two ways of approaching God.   1. The Pharisee:   Respected Religious leader – tells the truth about what he did:   * Did fast 2 times per week, probably Mondays and Thursday as was tradition – also these were market days when there were many folks around to see it. * Did tithe, 10%, even on income not included on tithing requirements. * Did have an exemplary life by the Law.   Pharisee approached God boldly and appear to address God with a ‘Psalm of Praise” A Psalm of Praise begins, “I thank you, Lord . . . and usually thanks God for something God has done or some blessing God has provided.”  But the Pharisee is grateful for himself! – he’s not like other people , robbers, evil doers, rogues, adulterers even like the tax collector!  Distorts the familiar Psalm of Praise form – to “I thank God I am so great. I know you are honored to have me on your team and in your temple”  Focus of Pharisee’s prayer is himself. In the 2 verses of his prayer he uses the personal pronoun 4 times. He prayed with himself; shared his checklist of accomplishments. Pharisee is an example of humility’s opposite – Pride!  Pharisee’s prayer:  *I thank thee, Lord, my God that thou has given me a place among those who sit in the house of study, and not among those who sit at the street corners; for I rise early and they rise early, but I rise early to study the words of the Law, and they rise early to engage in vain things; I labor and they labor, but I labor and receive a reward, and they labor and receive no reward; I live and they live, but I live for the life of the future world, and they life for the pit of destruction*. |
| 9 | 1. Tax Collector – leech of society, traitors for working for Rome.  * Does not come forward * Does not look up – both a sign of reverence * Beats his chest – sign of penitence, awareness of being unworthy.   Simple prayer – “God be merciful to me a sinner”  No self-congratulations  No summary of deeds  No sense God should feel honored by his presence  Only one recognition – His need for God’s mercy.  Jesus says: The tax collector went home justified  i.e. – received God’s forgiveness and love. |
| 10 | Teaching: Blessing from God come to those who humble themselves before God.  Bravado and Appearance (may fool the world) but mean nothing to God. A polished Resume or social status may count for something here on this earth but mean nothing to God. Self-reliance may be American endorsed but mean nothing to God. What counts is a heart that appreciates what God can and does give – forgiveness and new life.  So - what’s the key to humility?  God honors those who look at themselves in the light of God’s law and Christ’s life and not by comparing themselves to others. (REPEAT) |
| 11 | The Underestimated, Secret Power of HUMILITY is…  ***GOD IS GOD. I am not.***  ***He is might, and I am not***  ***This is the most powerful realization***  ***you’ll ever come to in your life.***  ***It’s not about you.***  ***It’s about Him.*** |
| 12 | Pharisee valued himself and expected God to do the same because he believed he was so much better than others.  How often do we approach God on such terms? We make our checklist of all we do for God and the church and present them to God expecting a pat on the back and a ‘shower of blessing’!  Oh, we might look good when we compare ourselves to the alcoholic dependent brother or the homeless person begging at the stoplight or the rich CEO whose marriage and family has been destroyed by infidelity. But - - - - |
| 13 | Ex: Like W. Barclay’s example in his Luke commentary –  Traveling from Scotland to England through the Yorkshire moors – homes made of sparking white stucco and gleaming against the drab brown of the moor. Return trip – it had snowed and now the homes looked a dull gray compared to the brilliant white of the new fallen snow.  We can only be humble when we compare our lives to the ways of God and the example of Jesus Christ.  The tax collector realized without God he was doomed.  Do we have that same realization?  Paul says in Romans 3:10, 23: ‘There is none righteous, not even one - - - All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.”  Harsh words. Some would disagree with such strong words. They say - - “Compared to everyone else, I’m a decent person.”  You know a pig might say the same thing. He might look up and down the feed trough and announce, “I’m just as clean as everyone else.” Compared to humans, however, that pig needs help |
| 14 | Compared to God, we humans need help, too. The standard for acceptance is not found in our accomplishments or good deed but at the throne of God, himself.  Our God is perfect, untainted by sin.  We see nothing but murky waters  We dwell in darkness; He dwells in light.  God has never sinned.  We have never NOT sinned.  God has lived a sinless eternity.  We’d be thrilled with a sinless hour. But I’ve never had a waking sinless hour. Have you? Me neither.  But say you could manage only 1 sin per hour – 72 yrs. avg life x 365 days x 16 hrs./day=420,480 sins  For simplicity’s sake let’s say 400,000 sins. Now envision the moment you stand before God. He’s perfect, heaven’s a perfect place – And you? You’d be perfect except for your 400,000 failures.  Separating me and God, you and God is an insurmountable flood of imperfection and sin.  No matter how good we are.  We are foolish if we don’t humble our hearts and come before God as the tax collector did! |
| 15 | It’s an issue of pride verses humility.  Note: pride used in referring to our relationship with God and each other.  Not speaking of the positive uses of pride in this world. –   * Pride of doing a good job * Pride of raising your children well * Pride of being honest and caring * Pride of being clean and well groomed.   No, I am speaking of the pride that places us on an equal footing with God and therefore above everyone else. |
| 16 | |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Pride** | **Humility** | | Preaches our merit | Pleads God’s compassion | | Negotiates as an equal with God | Approaches God in need | | Separates by putting others down | Identifies us with others recognizing we all have the same need | | Destroys through its self-serving | Opens door with its power to sympathize with the struggles we share | | Turns up its nose | Offers an open and uplifted hand |   Pride says the tasks and work are more important that people.  Humility says we are all sinners and must come to God for the forgiveness to do God’s work. |
| 17 | Conclusion: Alex Haley – author of Roots – had a picture in his office – showing a turtle sitting atop a fence post. The picture reminded him of a lesson he learned long ago.  “If you see a turtle on a fence post, you know he had some help.”  Say Alex, “Any time I start thinking, Wow, isn’t this marvelous what I’ve done! I look at the picture and remember how this turtle – me – got up on that post.”  It’s hard to be humble – the world teaches that what we have and enjoy – who we are an what we stand for – we’ve earned. We are good enough ourselves. Yet Jesus teaches if we exalt ourselves, we will be humbled (humiliated) - if we humble ourselves (before God), God will exalt us. We only get to live in this exalted mercy of God, by the help of Jesus the Christ when we humble ourselves. Amen |