

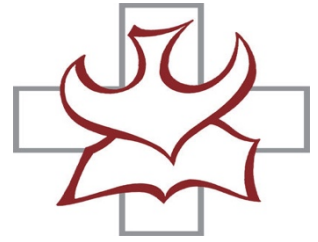
Pick-up Your Cross

Luke 9:22-26

Colossians 3:1-17

March 10, 2019

Pastor Dave Bolte



How do you define **humility**? When you think of being **humble**, what comes to your mind?

You will never find **humility** in the world; the way of the world is pride, self-exaltation, and self-importance. The world considers **humility** as a lack of assertiveness or shyness or even a lack of confidence, and so the world abhors humility. The Bible defines **humility** much differently than the way the world does.

Humility is seeing yourself as God's Word teaches you to see yourself. **Humility** is realizing your sinfulness and your *complete dependence* on the Lord and His love, grace, and mercy. It is a *constant awareness* of His presence, help, and goodness in your life. When you are *focused on God's presence, power and goodness*, then you will not be focused on your own ego, accomplishments, status, rights, or pride. **Humility is seeing yourself as God's Word teaches you to see yourself.**

For the next few weeks, through the season of **Lent**, we will be looking at how the Bible teaches us **humility**. We want to take some time to think about **humility**; and for you to *examine yourself* and see if you are a **humble** person or not.

God's Will is that you live in humility, that you are a humble person. In today's Gospel lesson, Jesus teaches us about humility in this verse:

Jesus said, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Luke 9:23

Humility is defined as “**denying**” yourself, taking up your “**cross**” and “**following**” Jesus. This is Jesus’ way of teaching about a humble life of repentance and discipleship.

You **deny yourself** when you renounce any effort or any merit *within yourself* to earn your own salvation. You abandon your *self-centered pride* and whatever it is that you consider good, worthy, and meritorious *within* you. You echo what Scripture teaches, such as

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
a broken and contrite heart,
O God, you will not despise.

Psalms 51:17

Humility realizes that we are poor miserable sinners who cannot save ourselves. We need a savior. We realize that our own efforts fall short of the glory, perfection, and righteousness of God. **Humility is seeing yourself as God's Word teaches you to see yourself.**

You turn away from yourself, confess your sins to God, trust in His mercy. Denying yourself is looking to the cross of Jesus as your **only hope of salvation.**

Jesus is the One who took up a cross for you. He suffered and died for every sin you commit; He is the Savior who bled and died on the cross for us and our salvation. In His resurrection from the dead, you are forgiven and given new life.

In humility, you deny yourself and abandon your own effort and trust in Christ alone for salvation. Humility means that you believe that your only hope of salvation is found in the Lord Jesus Christ. You deny yourself; and then each day, you carry your cross as you follow Jesus.

Picking up your cross means living for Christ each day as you follow Him. It is a picturesque way of describing discipleship. You follow Jesus. He is a part of your life. You listen to His Word. You are concerned about His Kingdom. You desire His Will. You hallow His Name. **Taking up your cross and following Jesus is a way to describe discipleship.** We follow Jesus as He leads us through life and ultimately through death and into the Kingdom of Heaven.

Humility understands and realizes that life is about following Jesus; it is not about following your own sinful desires. You deny yourself and renounce your sinful and wayward ways; you take up the cross of Christ and follow Him as you live holy and Godly lives in faith.

Our Scripture lesson today from Colossians 3 gave a good overview of the Christian faith and life: *of what it looks like to take up the cross and following Jesus*. Pull out the insert and let's read **Colossians 3:1-17** responsively.

- 1 If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God.
- 2 Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth.
- 3 For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God.
- 4 When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.
- 5 Put to death therefore what is earthly in you: sexual immorality, impurity, passion, evil desire, and covetousness, which is idolatry.
- 6 On account of these the wrath of God is coming.
- 7 In these you too once walked, when you were living in them.
- 8 But now you must put them all away: anger, wrath, malice, slander, and obscene talk from your mouth.
- 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices
- 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator.
- 11 Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all.
- 12 Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience,
- 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.
- 14 And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
- 15 And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful.
- 16 Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teaching and admonishing one another in all wisdom, singing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, with thankfulness in your hearts to God.
- 17 And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

*Denying yourself,
taking up your cross,
and following Jesus
is a way to describe discipleship!*

This a good overview of the Christian faith and life: *of what it looks like to take up the cross and following Jesus*. These verses help us to understand Christian humility -- as you deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow Jesus. Spend some time this week working through these verses and thinking about your life. God's will is that you live a humble life, denying yourself, taking up your cross, and following Jesus.

ONE OTHER THING about taking up the cross of Christ and following Him. Notice that Jesus did not say “take up your pillow” and follow Him; nor did He say, “sit in a nice comfortable chair” and follow Him. He said “take up your cross.”

The Christian life is not easy.
The cross implies pain, trouble, hardship, and persecution.

Just as Jesus was hated, despised, and persecuted, so too, if you live a public Christian life, you can expect to be hated, despised, and persecuted as well. People will insult you, exclude you, and speak all kinds of evil against you simply because you are a Christian in public: because you picked up your cross and you are following Jesus. Many times, the “cross” that you pick up is persecution.

- † That might happen at your workplace.
- † That might happen in your school
- † That might happen in your circle of friends.
- † That might even happen in your own family. ☹

Persecution happens whenever you live a holy life and speak the truth about Christ and His Word. It happens when you share the gospel good news of Jesus Christ with other people.

**Many times,
the “cross” that you pick up is persecution.**

If that happens to you, and you were persecuted, remain faithful at all costs. Under no circumstances do you renounce the faith or put your cross down. **Humility is bearing patiently under the persecution. It is picking up your cross and following Jesus.** Remaining faithful to the Lord is the most important thing; even if it costs you friendships, opportunities, your job or even your life: remain faithful to the Lord. He is with you, and He strengthens you through it all, so that you will be able to patiently endure and even rejoice and be glad, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets before you (Matthew 5)!

God's Will is that you renounce your pride, and live a humble life a faith.

Jesus defines humility for us today as denying yourself and trusting only in Christ and His mercy for salvation; and then each day, picking up your cross as you live a holy life following Jesus. Picking up your cross means living for Christ each day as you follow Him in holy living; even if it means persecution.

On this first Sunday of Lent, may you humble yourself, pick up your cross, and follow Jesus!

Amen!