

grow and foster Christ-like humility when I stand justified before God. Then I have a confidence that I can rely on because it is built on Jesus, and Jesus is reliable.

If my confidence is built on me, then it is on shaky ground, because I know how easily I fall, how easily I can get the wrong end of the stick, how easily I can jump to a conclusion and really make a mess.

Thank God we can find our confidence in Jesus, knowing no one can pull the rug out from under our feet. Jesus is totally reliable.

This week let's be focused on growing and fostering Christ-like humility in each other;

as we admit we can act with 'arrogant pride'. As we make time to be there for each other, holding each other accountable, so we're encouraged, kept focused, standing side by side with each other. Let's daily thank God for the gifts he has blessed us with through Jesus and continually ask how we can be using them according to his will, so that his kingdom comes, to his glory, honour and praise. And let's find time to boast to others about Jesus. And let's watch our posture and speech, so that they also exhibit Christ-like humility. And daily focus on the justification Jesus has won for us so that you can live with a confidence that no one can take, and which

won't sap anyone else's confidence as you try to feel good about yourself.

Let's pray.
Jesus, sent the Holy Spirit to show where we are acting with 'arrogant pride' so that we can change. We don't want to live that way, but our desire is to be a reflection of you, to live out Christ-like humility. Help us this week to focus on growing and fostering Christ-like humility in ourselves and in each other, so that you are given a great reputation among the people we live and work with. Amen.

24 October 2010

HUMILITY

Luke 18:9-14



If I asked you for a definition of 'arrogant pride' what would you say?

I'm sure none of us would hold 'arrogant pride' as a virtue, something to be strived for. What is the virtue that Jesus commends in this parable about a Pharisee and a Tax Collector? To which we all answer; 'humility'.

Clearly Jesus doesn't want us to be 'arrogant' but 'humble'. That's a message we find throughout the bible. In fact the first sin is an act of 'arrogant pride'. That is also the cause of the Devil's fall. In Isaiah we read; "You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; I will raise my throne above the stars of God... I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make

myself like the Most High.'" (Isa. 14:13,14)

So 'arrogant pride' has to do with me leaving God out of the picture in favour of what I can do. I take centre stage. That was the very thing the Devil tempted Adam and Eve with. Don't let God tell you what to do, you decide for yourself. You don't need God to tell you what to do, you can reason it out, you're not stupid. I end up with 'arrogant pride' when I become self-reliant.

So how can we foster and be growing in Christ-like humility?

The first area to foster from this parable is; don't think it can't happen to me. Of course the moment I start believing that it won't happen to me, what am I doing? I'm

being arrogant. The moment I believe that I can't fall for the oldest trick in the book, I've already fallen. I've already been arrogant. Step one in fostering and growing Christ-like humility; admit you are susceptible. Yes it can happen to me. Yes I can look down on others, feel that I know more and so they should listen and do what I say. The first area to foster Christ-like humility is to be constantly alert because I can fall for the oldest trick in the books and live out 'arrogant pride'.

The second area I notice is that the Pharisee stood by himself. I'm a recovering 'arrogant' person. To think I can do it on my own, without the support and encouragement of other

Christ Church Lutheran

Worship Times - 9.00am & 10.45am
Pastor: Tim 0427326553



Reaching Out with the Love of Jesus that All my Know, Worship & Grow in Christ

Christians would be 'arrogant'. Or at the least unloving, because if I keep to myself who am I supporting, who am I encouraging and helping to foster and grow Christ-like humility?

I need you. I need your love. I need you to hold me accountable; encouraging me when I get things right, pointing me in Jesus' direction, tapping me on the shoulder when I start to go astray. I need to be part of Jesus' community of faith. I need you.

So isn't it great that we have various opportunities to support and encourage each other; Sunday worship, weekly groups, meals together, opportunities to foster and grow Christ-like humility. We have the opportunity to read the bible together, being open to the Holy Spirit's leading, so that together we can

develop and foster Christ-like humility.

The next area that jumps out at me is the Pharisee's attitude, which is reflected in his prayer. There's no thanking God for growing him into the

person he is. There's no asking God to use these gifts to further God's

I need you.
I need your love.

kingdom, to God's praise and glory. He simply celebrates not being a loser like all these other poor unfortunates.

What word would you use to describe this attitude where he holds himself apart, believing he's above these others. After all he's listening to God, not like this woeful tax collector. What word would you use to describe this attitude of superiority, of being full of his own

self-importance? How would you describe this attitude where he thanks God that he's not like the rest of these poor unfortunates, whom he condemns, and keeps himself separate from?

Yet we know that Jesus doesn't keep himself separate from us, but amazingly becomes at one with us, opening the door for us to be at one with God. Jesus is labelled by the Pharisee's as 'friend of sinners'.

Which I'm always thankful for, being a recovering sinner.

Jesus isn't my friend because I'm perfect and have got everything together. Not at all. Rather Jesus has humbled himself, as we read in the wonderful letter of Paul; "(Jesus) Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own

advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a human being, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death – even death on a cross!" Now that's what I'd call a good definition of Christ-like humility.

The Pharisee ends up bragging, which definitely isn't how you grow and foster Christ-like humility. Jesus used his life to serve God, doing his Father's will, trusting his Father with his life. He didn't brag, and being God he probably does have lots to brag about, with good reason. But he doesn't, he seeks to trust his Father and do his will, that the Father's kingdom grows, and that the Father is brought praise, glory and honour.

So I'm reminded that the opposite of boasting about myself is boasting about Jesus, and all that God has done for us through Jesus. So Paul writes; "But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the

We can find our confidence in...

strong... So that no one may boast before God... Therefore, as it is written: 'Let those who boast boast in the Lord.' (Jer.9:24) (1 Cor. 1:27,29,31)".

What can you boast to others about Jesus? What great things has Jesus done for you? What great promises has Jesus made to you?

The Tax Collector in a sense is boasting about God when he prays; "God, have mercy on

me, a sinner." (Luke 18:13b) I think we could all boast about Jesus' mercy, his amazing grace, where he gives us what we need and never what we deserve. I'm a recovering sinner, so what I deserve, I don't want. I'd much rather celebrate and rely on Jesus' mercy.

The posture of the two men also tells me something about how to foster and grow Christ-like humility. In the way

I stand, the way I talk, the posture I hold, do I talk down to people, do I stand above them. The Tax Collector wasn't threatening anyone. He was approachable. He spoke softly. He spoke words of hope. He spoke words that showed he was one with us, at our side.

Jesus concluded; "this man (Tax Collector), rather than the other (Pharisee) went home justified before God." (Luke 18:14a) I