

AS ONE AT 10

SERMON – Values: Humility and Boldness 2nd August 2020

As we continue to look at our values this term, we come to two this week that might seem incompatible. Humility and Boldness. From a worldly point of view many will consider humility to be a characteristic to be admired, but not necessarily a characteristic to be of any use if you want to get on in life or be an achiever. Yes, it's good to care for others, but if you want to be a success in business, to make money, or perhaps manage a big team humility can be one of the least promoted values.

Boldness, on the other hand is often associated with making it to the top – think for a minute of The Apprentice. Boldness is one thing most of the competitors have a great deal of as they assert their rights, exaggerate their CV's, trample over each other to be a success in the boardroom, and put others down for their own benefit.

Both these limited views of Boldness and Humility are somewhat stereotypical and I know I have given extreme examples just to highlight their differences. They may seem so opposed, but can they both be biblical values that we at St Swithin's can promote?

Let's begin by considering a biblical view of HUMILITY.

Rick Warren, an American Pastor said that "humility is not thinking less of yourself but thinking of yourself less."

A biblical view of humility is one that focuses not on self but on SELF - SACRIFICE. Jesus is the ultimate example of this. His selfless concern for

others lead him to death. His life and death were marked out by humility in every way.

These beautiful verses in Philippians 2 offer us some wonderful insights into his humility and sacrifice..

1. Jesus sacrificed HIS GLORY. Verse 6 affirms that Jesus is fully God. All the qualities that make God, God, are in Jesus and therefore all the status and privilege that follow belong to Him. He is the Lord, the Creator of all things, one with the Father, the supreme ruler and sustainer of life. He was there at the beginning of time with His Father in all majesty. And yet, he does not consider the status he has to be something to be used for his own advantage, asserting his rights in a demanding way. Instead, he humbly gives up his high position and his status to make himself nothing, a servant for the sake of humankind.
2. Jesus sacrificed his PERSONHOOD. In making himself nothing, Jesus takes on flesh, becomes the humblest of men and lives amongst the people that he made, without sin and yet like us in every way. He is born in poverty, grows up in obscurity and lives as we live, facing the daily pains of everyday life, the highs and lows of family life. He faces temptations as we do, and understands and experiences the pains and sorrows of human existence. There is nothing that we have experienced that Jesus has not experienced before us.

3. Jesus sacrificed his LIFE. In humility, Jesus becomes a servant of all, giving up everything for us and ‘becomes obedient to death – even death on a cross.’ There is no sacrifice greater. There is no humility more profound than the King of the Universe being obedient and willing to die a brutal and undeserving criminal’s death in place of sinful people, taking the punishment that we deserve.

So you see, Jesus was all about others and never about himself. He humbly gave up his rights and his power out of love for us.

Imagine for a moment that the doorbell rings. You open it, and there standing in front of you is the Queen, dressed in her overalls with a mop in one hand and a bucket in the other – She has come to clean your house! It’s completely nuts to imagine that ever happening. And even more so that the Lord Jesus should set aside his majesty in order to serve us, to die for us.

Paul writes that the Philippian church are to have the same mind-set as Jesus. To serve others like he does. That is true for us too. True that we are to follow the example of our saviour and sacrifice who we are, our rights, and our desires to put others first. Even when it hurts and perhaps makes us feel foolish! That might mean with our time, with our money and with our energy. It might mean going out of our way to offer care to those we find difficult. It might mean serving in an area of church life that we wouldn’t naturally want to serve in to benefit others. The Christian life is not about us. It is about serving other people and that is deeply humbling and very challenging!

So, what about BOLDNESS?

Boldness in the world's terms tends to be about asserting ourselves, my rights and power, but in the Bible's terms Boldness is about relying on the promises of God and obeying Him because we trust Him. That's what gives Joshua boldness in our second passage. One writer wrote that "Boldness is acting by the power of the Holy Spirit on an urgent conviction." If this is the case then it is possible for all Christians to be Bold for God, convinced of what he wants us to do and acting on it

Take Joshua for a minute. God called him to boldness, to be courageous and to lead Israel into a dangerous land. Joshua didn't brag about it, or push himself forward as God's leader. He didn't assert his power. Instead in humility, he was obedient, bold as he stepped out in to the unknown because God told him to.

You see,

1. **BOLDNESS COMES FROM TRUSTING GOD'S PROMISES.** Joshua was bold because He knew the one who was calling Him. He trusted that God would give Israel the land he had promised to Abraham many years ago; he trusted that God would be with Him just as he was with Moses. He trusted that he would not be left alone and that he would give him all he needed to lead the people. He trusted that the Lord "would be with him wherever he went." Trusting God was what made Joshua bold and it was what convinced him to act and to be obedient. The same is true for us.
2. So, secondly **BOLDNESS COMES FROM OBEDIENCE.** God knew Joshua must obey his word if things were to go well. He knew he needed to take it seriously, to not veer from it, and to mediate on it

daily not just so that he would know it with his head, but so that he might be familiar with God's ways, his promises and his character and trust Him. Success for Joshua was not guaranteed – but obedience to God, taking seriously his word was what would bring about success God urged Joshua to have courage and to trust Him.

Joshua's boldness came from trusting and obeying the one who had called him. There's humility in that and he knew it wasn't by his own ability and strength that he could lead the people into Canaan.

When this church family stepped out years ago and trusted that God would provide all that was needed to re-order the building that was boldness and when, again we step out in the future and face new challenges, whatever they are...that too will be boldness for Him.

When we trust God's promises, we are not only practicing humility, but also boldness. As we trust we come humbly to God knowing there is nothing we can do to be saved and that Christ has done everything. And as we live a life following Christ, obeying his word then we step out for God, demonstrating courage and strength through the work of the Holy Spirit in us.

CONCLUSION

Yes humility and boldness are compatible for us at St Swithin's and important as we seek to be a church that displays God's splendour in Walcot. The question is this....Are we a people of TRUST? Do we trust our God? Do we trust his promises fulfilled in Christ?

IF we trust Him with our lives fully, then we will come before him daily in humility grateful and willing to do as he calls and bold for him in ways we can never imagine as we obey his word, stand up for Him, loving others before ourselves.

As I finish let me share a quote from a Christian writer with you.

“Courage without humility leads to martyrdom. Humility without courage leads to spinelessness. But together, courage and humility can shake the very foundations of hell, advancing the Kingdom of God into the most unlikely of places.”

Father God, may we be a people of humility and courage, with the loving sacrificial mind-set of Christ, putting others first and boldly taking his good news into our parish, into Bath and wherever God calls us.

We pray that we might come before you daily trusting that it is by Grace that we have been saved through Christ. Give us a love for others that goes beyond what we are naturally capable of and make us bold as we seek to stand for you in our homes, neighbourhoods and workplaces.

We ask that by the power of your Holy Spirit you would help us and remind us of your constant presence with us. AMEN