

Abbey Baptist Church, Reading
Sunday Worship Service - 10.30 am 25th October 2026
Led by Jill Bird and Simon Bird preaching

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JESUS WASHES HIS FRIENDS FEET

Humility – what a powerful word in the bible but not a word that is valued in present day culture or society. Are any of our present world leaders humble??

We will be looking at this quality today from God's perspective

Now the man Moses was very humble, more humble than anyone else on the face of the earth

Numbers 12.3

Jesus humbled himself taking the form of a man and becoming obedient to death even death on a cross

Philippians 2.8

He took the place of a servant washing his friends feet John 13

Father in heaven we bring ourselves so humbly into your presence – **you are so big, we are so small**

Jesus we bring ourselves humbly into your presence – **you did so much for us and we are often just indifferent and ungrateful. We are sorry.**

Spirit we bring ourselves humbly into your presence – **we live our lives thinking we can do it without you. We are sorry. Come cleanse us and fill us again this morning. AMEN**

Song MP378

Jesus shall take the highest honour
Jesus shall take the highest praise
Let all earth join heaven in exalting
The Name which is above all other names
Let's bow the knee in humble adoration
For at His Name every knee must bow
Let every tongue confess He is Christ God's only Son
Sovereign Lord we give You glory now
For all honour and blessing and power belongs to You belongs to You
All honour and blessing and power belongs to You belongs to You
Lord Jesus Christ Son of the living God

Song BPW 58

Meekness and majesty Manhood and deity
In perfect harmony The Man who is God

Lord of eternity Dwells in humanity
Kneels in humility And washes our feet
Chorus Oh what a mystery Meekness and majesty
Bow down and worship For this is your God This is your God

Father's pure radiance, Perfect in innocence
Yet loves obedience to death on a cross
Suffering to give us life, Conquering through sacrifice
And as they crucified, prays Father forgive

Wisdom unsearchable God the invisible
Love indestructible in frailty appears
Lord of infinity Stopping so tenderly
Lifts our humanity to the heights of His throne

Family time What can humility mean for me?? Hard heart to soft heart

Song MP 1086 *During the song the collection will be taken*
Light of the world You stepped down into darkness
Opened my eyes let me see
Beauty that made this heart adore You Hope of a life spent with You

Chorus So here I am to worship. Here I am to bow down
Here I am to say that you're my God.
You're altogether lovely. Altogether worthy. Altogether wonderful to me

King of all days, oh so highly exalted
Glorious in heaven above
Humbly you came to the earth you created all for love's sake became poor

Children and young people leave for their classes

The Lord's prayer

**Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread,
and forgive us our sins,
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours now and for ever and ever. Amen.**

Song MP 69

Change my heart, O God, Make it ever true;
Change my heart, O God, May I be like you.
You are the Potter, I am the clay;
Mold me and make me, This is what I pray.

Bible Reading 1: Philippians 2. 1-11 **Bible Reading 2: 1 Corinthians 6:1-11**

Sermon Our sermon series is on dealing with disagreements and tensions in churches, based on marks of respect found in 1 and 2 Corinthians. Last week we looked at keeping unity and not taking sides. This morning, the key message is, **'Better to be thought of as wrong, and so keep a**

relationship. That means things like not trying to win, not having the last word, not defending your actions or blaming others. Those all mean we lose friendship, we break relationships, rather than heal them.

The theme of our service has been **humility**, and this is the key attitude underlying all this. In our first reading, Paul wrote, 'In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Jesus Christ' (Philippians 2:5). Paul sees Jesus' attitude of humility as the example for a church's fellowship. He explains how Jesus successively lowered himself: he left God's side, he made himself nothing, he became a servant, he humbled himself in death, even death on a cross (6-8). But God exalted him (9-11).

Now this could sound like a hard message. In terms of our relationships, it means we must be prepared to swallow our rights, our dignity and say sorry. But the good news this morning, like most difficult things in the Christian life, is that God gives us the grace. And we have the examples of Paul and Jesus to inspire us, which I will come back to, and the power of the Holy Spirit to help us live this out.

Peter wrote, 'Humble yourselves under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time' (5:6). In the Christian life, following Jesus' example, we first go down, in order to come up. The world would want it the other way: it says push up, climb, prove yourself right! But what do we find there? hurt, loneliness.

I will give a sad story of a broken marriage here. From the marriage preparation course some tips for reconciliation are: 1. speak gently about how you feel, using 'I' messages; 2. be the first to say sorry (in other words allow yourself to be thought of as wrong); and 3. choose to forgive. These take the power out of confrontation, so issues can be faced calmly together. Would these steps have saved this marriage? In all this, it does not mean being a 'door mat' or putting up with abuse. That was a marriage. Does the same apply in a church?

Paul faced many problems in the Corinthian church. In the passage we read, he focused on one area: they were dealing with disputes by taking these to the law courts (in front of non-believers and pagans) rather than dealing with them among themselves.

Now the Greeks of this time loved taking cases to the law courts. The law courts were even one of their chief entertainments. We could say that our society has gone the same way. Whenever there is an accident, people want to find someone to blame and seek compensation. People are focussed on their rights. In Corinth, this spilled over into the church, with church members taking each other to court.

Paul was shocked by this and used strong words. He fires out nine questions of amazement, 'If any of you has a dispute with another, do you dare to take it before the ungodly for judgment instead of before the Lord's people?' (1). He shames them and is sarcastic (5). He says they have been **completely defeated already** (7). Do you see the irony here? It means even if someone wins the case in the court, in God's eyes he has lost. He does not understand the truth of the Gospel – that we who have received the mercy and forgiveness from God should forgive others. We are to accept being wronged without bitterness. Jesus says, 'if anyone takes your shirt, give him your coat also' (Matt 5:40). It results in dishonouring the church in front of unbelievers. Jesus said, 'by this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another' (Jn 13:35). Few things impair

the witness of a church more than broken relationships. Nowadays, think of the anguish, bad feeling, expense of legal cases - especially a messy divorce. The only ones who win are the lawyers.

What is Paul's answer? **Let yourself be wronged**. He wrote, 'Why not rather be wronged? Why not rather be cheated?' (7). In God's economy, relationship is more important than winning. Think of the attitudes Paul wrote in that great chapter on love in chapter 13, 'Love is patient, love is kind...it does not boast...it is not easily angered...it keeps no record of wrongs' (4-5).

I just add an aside on the godly advice for settling disputes in churches from Matthew 18. Go first and talk to the person, if they listen, you have won them over (15). You have gained a friend, end of issue! That is victory, rather than being defeated. Only if this does not work do you involve others. Also, don't do it in by email or WhatsApp: talk first. And don't tell another first: no gossip!

So, the message today is to allow ourselves to be misunderstood, not to try to prove we are right, not to defend ourselves. That keeps, rather than loses relationships. That brings us back to humility.

This is how Paul behaved with the Corinthians. He practised what he preached. He could have been authoritative, but chose not to. He allowed himself to be wronged and misunderstood (see 2 Corinthians 10). His preaching was in humility, not with eloquence, depending on the Spirit's power (1 Corinthians 2:1-4).

And Paul uses the example of God's humility as a foundation to the whole letter (1:18-2:6). God chose foolish things to shame the wise. Jesus' humility on the cross, coming in weakness, resulted in us being included in Christ – he has become our righteousness, holiness and redemption (1:30). Therefore we do not need our own righteousness with each other. We all meet at the lowest common denominator. We were sinners, but have been washed (6:11). This is our point of unity, our identity, we need nothing else. We are forgiven and meet each other at the foot of the cross.

On bended knee I come. With a humble heart I come

Bowing down before Your holy throne

Lifting holy hands to You as I pledge my love anew

I worship You in spirit I worship You in truth

Make my life a holy praise unto You

Robert Gay [YouTube clip](#)

Song BPW 529

From heaven you came helpless babe

Entered our world, your glory veiled

Not to be served but to serve

And give Your life that we might live

This is our God, The Servant King

He calls us now to follow Him

To bring our lives as a daily offering

Of worship to The Servant King

There in the garden of tears

My heavy load he chose to bear

His heart with sorrow was torn

'Yet not My will but Yours,' He said

Come see His hands and His feet

The scars that speak of sacrifice

Hands that flung stars into space

To cruel nails surrendered

So let us learn how to serve

And in our lives enthrone Him

Each other's needs to prefer

For it is Christ we're serving

Prayer of Intercession Adenor and Doris

Almighty Father, thank you we can gather at your house today, thank you for the words of the sermon. May our church family learn from Christ Jesus' example, whom being in very nature God, took the very nature of a servant, humbled Himself by becoming obedient to death (Philippians 2:6-8). Amid the changes in the structure of leadership and ministries of our church, make us completely humble and gentle in supporting our leaders, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace

Father, during this time of rising cost of living, we pray for wisdom and humility for the leaders of our country in managing budgets and financial plans, and to make policies that support populations, especially the deprived, through the difficulties. We also pray for your guidance for leaders in Health Care. With the current crisis in manpower and finance, some smaller maternity units are being forced to shut down. We pray that the authorities will make wise decisions to ensure safety and sustainable care especially in maternity services. Lord Jesus, grant peace to our town and nation. Bless the recovery of the police officer being shot in Nottingham, heal the trauma of the community, have mercy on all those affected

Guard our country against a coming storm over this weekend. Our Father in heaven, how mighty is your power, how great and beautiful is your creation that came to be only through your Word. How great is the purpose you gave us to take care of all you created. Yet, we recognise we have performed this duty very poorly. We ask for your mercy and forgiveness. Grant us wisdom to look after all your creation, the fish, the birds, the plants and trees. Grant us humility to let go of greed and the desire for power and money. We know that, in your infinite mercy, patience and grace, You have given us time to revert the damage done. Lord, pour out your power and love and soften our hearts.

Everlasting God, we lift up to you the **European countries with ongoing protests**. Many of them are turning violent with people injured and properties damaged. We see riots, looting, and violent confrontations and with all the rising tensions, we fix our eyes on Jesus. Grant us the humility to show compassion and kindness. Humility to love our neighbour as we love ourselves. Humility to see that in Christ we are all brothers and sisters.

Lord Jesus, you are the Prince of Peace, and with so many conflicts happening in our world, we come to you and ask for your intervention. Have mercy on the families who have lost loved ones in the wars, either during active conflicts and bombings or in the aftermath due to injuries or hunger. Have mercy on the ones who have lost everything they had, who had to flee from their homes, flee from their countries to find safety and security in a foreign land. **Restore peace in the Middle East, in Africa and Eastern Europe.**

Merciful Father, as **the Ebola outbreak** quickly spreads in Congo and Kenya, we pray that you keep people safe and provide your healing to those in need of treatment and immediate help. Resources are limited, and global health support is diminishing. Only You can intervene. Lord have mercy.

Most Holy God, we ask for wisdom for the population of the countries about to have **elections**. May wise and humble leaders be elected, so they can lead with humility and look after the needs of every citizen, for there is no authority except that which You have established. Heavenly Father, we praise You and worship You, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. **Amen.**

Song MP 25

All to Jesus, I surrender; All to Him I freely give;
I will ever love and trust Him, In His presence daily live.

Chorus I surrender all, I surrender all, All to Thee, my blessed Savior, I surrender all.

All to Jesus I surrender; Humbly at His feet I bow,
Worldly pleasures all forsaken; Take me, Jesus, take me now.

All to Jesus, I surrender; Make me, Savior, wholly Thine;
Let me feel the Holy Spirit, Truly know that Thou art mine.

All to Jesus, I surrender; Lord, I give myself to Thee;
Fill me with Thy love and power; Let Thy blessing fall on me.

Blessing **Jude 24-25** To him who is able to keep you from falling and to present you before his glorious presence without fault and with great joy, to the only God our Saviour be glory, majesty, power and authority, through Jesus Christ our Lord, before all ages, now and forevermore! Amen.

**The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all.
Amen**

Events this week

Wednesday 28th Oct 10.30 Renew Wellbeing

Thursday 29th Oct 10.30 Toddlers

Friday 30th Oct 4.30 Table Tennis Club cancelled

6pm -8pm Light party for families – alternative to Halloween

Sunday 1st November 10.30 **Worship with communion**
Connect group coffee times after the service

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