

## Evotional

**Sermon title: "Bessels vision, mission and values: Practice humility."**

**Speaker: Neil Durling.**

**Bible passage: James 4:10.**

**Date: 26.10.14.**

### Message:

**We have an awesome God:** Someone once said: "God created us in his own image and we returned the favour." It is so tempting to try and shrink God down to our size to fit our plans and needs. But our God is awesome and mysterious!

**We have an awesome God who humbled himself:** The Dictionary definition of "practise" is "The actual application or use of an idea, belief, or method, as opposed to theories relating to it." One of our church values is to "practise humility" and we have a God who did this through his son Jesus.

There are two Greek words linked to humility:

1. *Praytes*: Largely translated as meekness. It is a gentle self-control that takes all of life in its stride, especially in relationship to God.
2. *Tapsinophrosyne*: Translated as lowliness or humility: This was seen as a weakness by the Greeks who revelled in their human wisdom.

Jesus became nothing so that God could become everything. He came from heaven to earth and humbled himself by becoming a man. His incarnation is heavenly humility. But let's be clear; Jesus being humble didn't mean he was a wet drip. It meant he said and did what the Father called him to do (John 5:19, 30, 41; 6:38; 7:16, 28; 8:28, 42, 50; 14:10, 24). Jesus taught a reversal of world norms as well as embodying them in his own life. His humility is our salvation. Interestingly, the only place Jesus describes himself in Matthew 11:28-30 he says he is "gentle and humble in heart".

**We have an awesome God who humbled himself and commands us to do likewise:** Jesus made it clear in parables such as the one about the priest and tax collector (Luke 18:14) that God longs for us to be humble. In Matthew Jesus told us "The greatest among you will be your servant" (Matthew 23:11) and "The meek (seek nothing in themselves) shall inherit the earth." (Matthew 5:3) James, quoting a favourite Early Church chant wrote: "Humble yourselves in the Lord's presence, and he will raise you up." (James 4:10) Andrew Murray, in the book entitled "Humility", wrote: "Humility, the place of entire dependence on God, is, from the very nature of things, the first duty and the highest virtue of man. It is the root of every virtue."

**We have an awesome God who humbled himself and commands us to do likewise but we find it hard!** As the old country song goes: "It's hard to be humble when you're perfect in every way." There is a constant battle within us between humility and pride that goes back to the Fall in Genesis. In the New Testament pride means: "Loud boasting by someone who has no basis for bragging – empty conceit, vain glory, to exalt." I think pride assaults in at least three ways:

- *Cultural pride*: It's all about me and my rights! There is a constant self-exaltation through my ability, status, history, etc..
- *Spiritual pride*: Some of us want to be humble, but are afraid we'll end up being too humble! We often pray, if not in word then in wish, to be spared the things that make us humble.
- *Reverse pride*: There's a difference between being humble and having an "I am nothing" attitude. Humility is not self-rejection and confidence isn't pride or arrogance.

**We have an awesome God who humbled himself and commands us to do likewise but we find it hard so how can we practise humility?** "Practise humility" is one of our church values. So how can we do it? Humility is:

1. Acknowledging our "spiritual poverty" (1 Timothy 1:15).
2. Depending to God (Romans 5:20).
3. Becoming like a child to enter God's kingdom (Matthew 18:4).
4. Washing each others feet (John 13:14).
5. Seen in our love for others (1 John 4:20).
6. Honouring one another (Romans 12:10).
7. Being "rooted" in Jesus (Colossians 2:7) and clothing ourselves in him (Romans 13:14).
  - a. This final one is the foundation for all the others in my humble opinion! How can be rooted in Jesus? Read about him, drench ourselves in the gospels. Not started? Why not open Mark's gospel this week?

**"What would happen if believers were to become permanently guided by the humility of Jesus?" Andrew Murray**

### Questions:

1. "Jesus' humility is our salvation": What does this mean to you?
2. "Humility, the place of entire dependence on God, is, from the very nature of things, the first duty and the highest virtue of man. It is the root of every virtue." (Andrew Murray) Do you agree with this?
3. Which of the three prides mentioned (cultural, spiritual, reversal) are you most susceptible to?
4. Which of the seven ways to be humble do you struggle with the most and why?

### Prayer:

Lord Jesus, Thank you that you humbled yourself. Please help me be inspired to do the same. Amen.