

## International House of Prayer of Greater Fort Wayne

...a day and night , city-wide, multi-church prayer and worship ministry

### The Way of Humility

I remember the day well over 15 years ago when I was meditating on Psalm 18 and reading these words - *'The Lord is my strength, my rock, my fortress, my deliverer - in You I take refuge in You I take refuge...'*. Honestly I had always looked at these verses to rehearse the strength of our God, images of strength in the face of weakness, safety from the forces that opposed me. Then I got to verse 35 and, because I was meditating on the chapter, I stopped and rehearsed it over and over and it just wrecked me, *'You have also given me the shield of Your salvation, And Your right hand upholds me; **And Your gentleness makes me great.**'* Wait it is gentleness that makes me great - say that again - Your gentleness makes me great. Oh my goodness, of all the things we use to measure greatness seldom do we think of gentleness!

As we find ourselves in the Advent season I am struck by the simplicity of Jesus coming to earth - not with princely pomp or worldly wealth- but in utter meekness, in gentleness. The King of Kings is born in a lowly cave to a young poor couple. His birth is a literal expression of what He would later proclaim: 'blessed are the gentle and meek for they will inherit the earth' Matthew 5:5. Jesus' arrival confronts our accepted way of assigning value and worth in our world- doesn't it? You know that almost instinctive impulse that even children learn very early as they walk into a room, sizing up and comparing who is the smartest, the tallest, the strongest and even more assigning value and worth to ourselves and others based on what we discover. "So who is the most powerful?" we ask and "Am I less than or greater than you?", comparing and competing to assign value based on what we see or don't see. Beloved that form of math, while 'common' to man, reveals our weak understanding of our own worth and the worth of others. It can be an exhausting place to live from, comparing competing, and always doing our best to see ourselves as better than others or worse concluding that we will always be 'less than'. This is why Jesus' arrival is so very remarkable - because it was so unremarkable! He arrives in meekness to proclaim another way of living. He demonstrates the way of humility as no other human has ever shown before or since -right up to His death.

John 13:1-4 In the hours before Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion - Jesus is in the upper room with His disciples who, according to Luke 22:24, are having a dispute among them *'...as to which one of them was regarded to be the greatest...'*. John gives us this powerful account in verses 1-4. I want you to notice what John says; Jesus knows **where He came from** - He knows **where He is going** and **what the Father had placed in His hands**. So while His friends are measuring each other up...He does not set the record straight...**He uses His strength to serve!** He chooses the Way of Humility and invites them to the same.

**Jesus' confidence was in the Father's love towards Him and He embraces a posture of humility by washing the disciple's feet - using His strength to serve the worth of others!**  
***Blessed are the Meek.*** The Good News Jesus proclaims in this beatitude is actually another way to live that moves us from competition and comparison to humbly honoring inherent worth. In the end, it won't be the proud strivers who inherit the earth but those who embrace the reality that their worth and the worth of others is found when they use their strength to serve. Its called the Way of Humility.

The Way of Humility does not even need to step onto the stage of competition or comparison because it is busy using its strength for the sake of others. Jesus revealed the Way of Humility that actually began not in comparison but in settled awareness! *Blessed are the Gentle and Meek for they will inherit the earth.* He knew His inherent worth to the Father! He knew from where He had come and where He was going. What Jesus reveals about the way of Meekness - the Way of Humility- is that it begins with recognizing our own inherent worth and value. If we know, as the Psalmist proclaims in Psalm 139, that we are fearfully and wonderfully made and that the thoughts of God are towards us, the need for competing and comparing falls to the wayside. It will find no home in us.

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And the secret is simply this: **Christ in you!**

Yes, Christ in you bringing with him the hope of all glorious things to come. Col 1:27b, JB Phillips

Jesus also knew where He came from and where He was going - to the community of the God head! The community of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit lives in gentleness. The Psalmist described recognizing the interdependence of the Godhead which reveals something so incredible that there is no longer a concern to compare or compete but to live settled in the awareness of their worth. So as a result Jesus gets up in John 13 and does what no one in the room wanted to do or seemed to even be aware of, He recognizes the value and worth of others by washing their feet.

What does it look like to recognize the worth of others? Washing feet - maybe? It means that we honor the dignity and worth of others. It means we see, hear, and value 'others', even the 'others' who seem to be against us. It means that we say to the person sweeping the floor 'thank you'. It also means that we are prepared to give and receive help.

The way of Humility is the way of Jesus that looks like gentleness and meekness and invites us to another way to live that moves us from competition and comparison to humbly honoring inherent worth in all those around us. In the end it won't be the proud strivers who inherit the earth but those who embrace the reality that their worth and the worth of others is found when they use their strength to serve.

William Barclay Prayer for Humility

O Father, give us the humility which  
 Realizes its ignorance,  
 Admits its mistakes,  
 Recognizes its need,  
 Welcomes advice,  
 Accepts rebuke.  
 Help us always  
 To praise rather than to criticize,  
 To sympathize rather than to condemn,  
 To encourage rather than to discourage,  
 To build rather than to destroy,  
 And to think of people at their best rather than at their worst.  
 This we ask for thy name's sake.  
 Amen

This message can be heard in full on our website [www.ihopfw.com](http://www.ihopfw.com).

With gratitude and integrity we steward your gifts. Thank you for partnering with the mission the Lord has given us in this hour as we partner with Him for His kingdom to be established.

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Ben and Denise, Please agree with us over these prayer needs for the next month...

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