

“NOT ABOUT YOU”**Pastor Mike Corwin****TEXT: LUKE 14:1, 7-14****GOD’S WORD: HEBREWS 13:1-8, 15-16****I – BAD EXAMPLE:**

Just when you thought it was safe to go back into the church we find there’s another shark swimming in the pulpit. I’m talking about Pastor Carlton Funderburke. He is the pastor of the “Church at the Well” in Kansas City, Missouri, which he founded with his wife. A couple of weeks ago a TikTok video surfaced with the pastor expressing his frustration with his congregation. He said:

“You see that's how I know you’re still poor, broke, busted and disgusted, because of how you been honoring me," he told them. "I’m not worth your McDonald’s money? I’m not worth your Red Lobster money? I ain’t worth your St. John Knit — y’all can’t afford nohow. I ain’t worth y’all Louis Vuitton? I ain’t worth your Prada? I’m not worth your Gucci?”

Funderburke later tells the congregation the wholesale store Sam's Club sells luxury Movado watches, according to the video.

“And y’all know I asked for one last year!" he said. "Here it is all the way in August and I still ain’t got it! Y’all ain’t said nothing. Let me kick down the door and talk to my cheap sons and daughters.”

He says he apologized to his church people and those who oversee him, but I’m guessing he has fewer members today than he had two weeks ago. I know that would have been the last sermon I ever sat through in his church. As I read this I had to wonder what Bible he was reading that would lead him to speak in such a way. Better yet where did he get the idea that he was on such a pedestal that the people owed him a designer watch to wear on his wrist.

II - HEBREWS:

I see just the opposite in passages such as the one you heard read this morning from the book of Hebrews. I see an exhortation to live with one another in love. I see that vital in a Christian Community of faith is mutual love. The foundation of Christian ethics is unreserved, self giving care, respect, service, regard, and acceptance of one another.

From this base flows hospitality, especially to visiting believers. It calls for empathy, concern, and support to those who are suffering – especially for their faith. It then lays out some other rules to live the Christian life. Things like fidelity in marriage, objection to greed, and simplicity of lifestyle.

Then I see the author telling his readers that taught them about their faith. Those who shared the Gospel with them were giving them an example for living their faith.

So someone please tell me what kind of example this pastor was to his congregation. What kind of shepherd was he to his flock? What did they learn about their faith and following Jesus in his actions? What kind of a legend must he be in his own mind to think that he could demand they buy him a designer watch so he could feel high and mighty amongst his church and peers?

If they wanted to buy him one on their own I'd be fine with that. Some of you have been generous to me and Pastor Becky in some gifts and actions but I would hope you know we would love you without this. That we didn't ask for any of it. You did it out of love and that's the way we accepted it – out of love. The day we come across that we are better than any of you and that we are deserving of special treatment, the only treatment you should give us is to tell us goodbye and make sure the powers-that-be know about our actions and their need to knock us down a step or two and move us on.

III – TEXT:

I have that philosophy based on the teachings of my Lord and Savior like this morning's text about humility:

Luke 14:1, 7-14 (NLT)

¹ One Sabbath day Jesus went to eat dinner in the home of a leader of the Pharisees, and the people were watching him closely.

Jesus Teaches about Humility

⁷ When Jesus noticed that all who had come to the dinner were trying to sit in the seats of honor near the head of the table, he gave them this advice: ⁸ “When you are invited to a wedding feast, don't sit in the seat of honor. What if someone who is more distinguished than you has also been invited? ⁹ The host will come and say, ‘Give this person your seat.’ Then you will be embarrassed, and you will have to take whatever seat is left at the foot of the table!

¹⁰ “Instead, take the lowest place at the foot of the table. Then when your host sees you, he will come and say, ‘Friend, we have a better place for you!’ Then you will be honored in front of all the other guests. ¹¹ For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”

¹² Then he turned to his host. “When you put on a luncheon or a banquet,” he said, “don’t invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. ¹³ Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. ¹⁴ Then at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you.”

Jesus has been invited to a dinner on the Sabbath at the home of one of the high and mighty Pharisees and he goes. Jesus knows that they are watching him closely. That their invitation and hospitality was just another chance to trick him and condemn him. None of this deters him. If you look at verses 2-6 he gives them something to complain about and find fault with. He heals a man whose extremities are all swollen and making it hard to live. He heals him and tells the Pharisees that they would do the same if their cow or son fell in a pit on the Sabbath and he put forth a lot less effort than they would. It tells us that they were left speechless.

Then he takes it a step higher. He knows he’s taking a risk, but he has all these esteemed religious leaders there together so he pushes the issue and gives them a lesson in humility. He pushed on, he didn’t let up.

Feasts at the time in Palestine were served on reclining couches arranged in groups of three. The most important seats/groupings were those in the center. These seats were reserved for persons of wealth and prestige. People coming early were told these seats were reserved for these important people and they could be asked to move later as the special guests arrived. This would be embarrassing to say the least.

Jesus says they should take these lower seats and get asked to move up later. This made perfect sense but Jesus was chiding the Pharisee’s, scribes, and priests who habitually claimed the seats of honor, especially in the synagogue and demanded respect in the marketplace and wherever else they went.

Part of Jesus’ teachings concern the day that’s coming where the high and mighty would be reversed with the meek and lowly.

He tells them that in the future they shouldn’t throw parties and only invite those on the same level as they were. Those who could repay them by throwing a party and inviting them. But

they should invite those who can't, but would certainly appreciate such kindness. Then they will be truly blessed.

IV – JESUS:

How can we not understand this? Jesus said it and modeled it numerous times.

- He told his disciples that in heaven they would find out that the first would be last and the last would be first.
- He humbled himself to the point he wrapped a towel around his waist and washed all their feet at the last supper.
- He taught that even he didn't come to be served, but came to be a servant.
- He humiliated himself to the point of a shameful death on the cross to save us from our sins.

How much more of an example do you need? How many more lessons in humility must you have before you finally figure out it's NOT ABOUT YOU?

V – NOT ABOUT YOU:

The end of this morning's lesson from Hebrews said:

¹⁵ Therefore, let us offer through Jesus a continual sacrifice of praise to God, proclaiming our allegiance to his name. ¹⁶ And don't forget to do good and to share with those in need. These are the sacrifices that please God.

In other words...IT'S NOT ABOUT YOU! We are called to bring glory to God as we serve those in need. Those less fortunate than ourselves. That folks could be people already inside the church as well as people outside.

You need to check your ego at the door and put people above yourself...put Jesus above yourself...and put God above yourself. It's not about you, it's about the Kingdom of God and loving people into it.

A Timex will do as long as it tells God's time!

AMEN