

SERMON TRANSCRIPT

DATE

January 1, 2017

SPEAKER

Brian Frost

SERIES

Fully Alive

PART

35

TITLE

Descending Into Greatness

SCRIPTURE

John 13:1-20



© 2017 Providence Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)

Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.

Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.

Well, they said early it's always a joy to sing with you, and if you're a guest here at Providence, welcome we're glad you're here. Just confessed right now that I have a little bit of cold, and I absolutely realize how irritating it is, well, to sit and listen to somebody with a cold. And so I would ask you to pray for me, and if you want a short sermon, you can pray in one direction, if you want the whole thing like [inaudible 00:00:34] then you can pray in the other, we'll see who wins, okay? But it is great to see you.

And I would also ask you to pray here at 2:30, we'll actually leave on a plane, so I promise you I'll be done by then and for the next 12 days, we'll be in Asia, in Europe, a lot of opportunities to go and just be a blessing and a help. A lot of families from Providence who are all over the world, who are there very ... well, for one purpose and that's to see that the Gospel of Christ is made known to the ends of the earth, and so we would ask you to pray for safe travel, and maybe even physical wellness.

But I love the new year, always have. I'm a type A goal-setter. And so this really gave me opportunity. Back in my 30s, I use to make a bunch of them. There was one year, I think I was 30 years old, I made 86 resolutions. And I'm not quite that way anymore, I'm hoping for two this year. But as you find yourself in a new year, it's a fitting time for us to sort of take stock of our life and see sort of where we're at and where we want to be, and then to make any changes that we might deem necessary, or that God might show us, is if the change that is really needed.

It's fitting because we drift in life. Life with all of the busyness, with all of the schedule, it's interesting that even with that taking place, life is sort of like a float trip on a river, where you're on raft and even when you relax, you're still moving.

And what's interesting is life is sorta built, in this fallen world, that when you drift, you and I, we never drift towards health, we never drift towards greater physical health or emotional, or spiritual, social. We never move without effort towards places that are good. And that's why it's important every now and then to honestly evaluate ourselves, and then to, with courage, seek to say, "You know what? I wanna make that change."

And so as you think about your new year and think about sort of where you're at, one of the things that I wanna just encourage you with this year, if you don't do so already, is to try to make plan to where you read some of the Bible every day.

Psalms Chapter 1 tells us that the man or woman who meditates and reads and thinks upon God's word every day is like a tree that's planted by streams of water, and that tree, it says, is strong and it's fruitful and it doesn't wither when it gets really hot outside. That's what we wanna be.

And I found that when I set aside the first moments of my day for the lord, to read and to open up his word to read it and to think about it, and then to pray even through what I'm reading. And that's kind of how I do it, I read it, and then when I see things in there, I'm like, "I don't wanna be like that." Then I pray God, would You forgive me for the things in my life, 'cause I see that, and that, and that in my life, and that's not right.

And there's times when I look at it and I say that's who I wanna be, then I pray towards those ends. But what's interesting is that when I do that and I set aside those moments of my day, and particularly at the beginning of the day, I find that throughout that day, God is building my faith and he's expanding my love for people. But I also find that he's informing the way that I make each of my decisions, that I'm seeing things the way that he sees things in His word.

So if you have a plan, then that's wonderful. But if you don't have a plan, I wanna just invite you, all right? To join me in a plan that I'm gonna actually do this year, and it's to read through the Bible in the year, the whole bible.

In fact, we have made a card for you. It's next [inaudible 00:04:50] in the back and literally it has every single day and what to read. This is also on the app at Providence and it's also on our website. And if you read through each of this days, then you actually read through the whole Bible in a year.

And why I've found that to be important, not as important as enjoying God and His word, and so if you're just starting and you think I just don't think. "I could read three chapters in a day." And that's okay, you just read of it each day, that's fine. But I've found is that when I do carve out about 20 minutes a day, which is what it takes me, and I'm actually a slow reader, okay? And I read these things, and I read through the Bible in a year, what I find is that the big picture of the Bible and its many themes, it becomes clear, and clear and clear each year. And so however you choose to do that, I pray that God would make you like a tree that's planted by water.

And so here this morning, we're gonna do just that. We're gonna jump into His word, John Chapter 13. So if you brought a Bible, if you wanna turn there. If you didn't, there should be one at a chair near you. And if you don't have one at home and you couldn't even read this, because you don't have one, then please take that home as a gift. We would love for you to do that, okay?

We're in a series called Fully Alive. And where we get that is John wrote this book intentionally, and he tells us his intent at the end of the book. He says that Christ did many of the things that I did not put down in this book, but these have been written so that you might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and in believing you might have life, full life, in His name. This is his intent.

And each month, we actually started a series in January of last year, okay? And it's gonna take us four months to actually finish up now. But each month, we've sort of set aside one little Verse or two Verses to memorize, to actually learn ourself, to make sure that it's in our heart. And for January 2017, as John Chapter 14, Verse 6. There's a lot of you who already know this, but if not, let's go ahead and say this as a church family, it should be on a screen here in just a minute. There it is, okay.

I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.

Now, why this is important is because you're not gonna be sharing the Gospel unless you believe this and remember this. I wouldn't be on a plane this afternoon with my wife [inaudible 00:07:27], if I didn't believe this to be true, that Jesus is the way the truth and the life, a apart from Him people will not stand before God.

And so toward that end, I would ask you to just plant that deep in your heart. So if you will, let's pray, okay.

Father, as we'll get ready to read John 13, and to move into what is such a colorful and important part of the Bible, I pray that you would give us the gift of belief and understanding in your word. I pray that you would give us the courage to put this into practice, not that you would re-orient our heart to see how you define greatness, that you would train our heart to see it the same way. So we're grateful that we pray this in Jesus's name. Amen.

Well, the speed with which John has moved through Jesus' life, the first 12 chapters really slams the brakes that it comes to a crawl when you get to John Chapter 13. John Chapter 13 starts, there's five chapters in a row, John 13 through the end of John Chapter 17, that'll actually only record a few hours that take place in the life of Jesus. These hours really are kind of precious hours. This is the night before Jesus is gonna go to the cross, it's just hours before he'll be in the garden, where he'll be separated from his 12 disciples where he's there praying. And these five chapters really show us this amazing picture of what Jesus was saying to his 12 disciples in private at the upper room, just hours before all this is taking place.

It's gonna take us about four months to get through all of the rest of the book, and about three months of those will be in those five chapters. It's an amazing amazing thing [inaudible 00:09:23] just be in a few hours, and what we find here in these five chapters is some of the most intense and concentrated displays of God's love and His authority and His humility.

You think about humility, and when I teach about it, it's a sobering thing, 'cause to be totally honest with you, there's no sin that I confess more to God than asking for forgiveness than the sin of pride.

Now, we know, at least in these little faith bubbles, like what kinds of pride are not approved and what kinds are, and so we all kind of train ourself well. And so we can even act in certain ways that are humble and actually be arrogant in the way that we're how humble we are, right? And this idea though of my own personal sin, that's actually the true of all of us. Because it says in first John Chapter II, that every single one of us, we struggle with three different kinds of sins. He says the lust of the flesh is the lust of the eyes and is the pride of life. Greed, lust, and pride.

And each of these serves almost like a tree. It's like a tree trunk that's growing in our heart, and all of a sudden it bears fruit, and the fruit are the things that we see with our eyes. The fruits of pride may look different among each one of us, but the tree's still growing within our heart.

For some of us it may look like boasting. For some of us it may look like self-pity. They seem opposite, and yet self is the basis of both of them. It may be impatience, it may be anger. It may be wanting to please people. And each of these things pride can literally choke us and render our worship, or our joy, our or friendships strict. It's an amazing thing how threatening pride is to our very life. And Jesus loves us so much that He wants to cut down that tree.

So what we find here in John Chapter 13, is Jesus lovingly is trying to do three things. He's trying to redefine, to demonstrate and then to invite us to pursue a different kind of greatness, a true greatness.

And so let's read it. John 13, Verses 1 through 20 says:

Now before the feast of the passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of, his disciple, Judas, Simon's son, to betray him, Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, he rose from supper.

He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" And Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." Jesus said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." And Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me."

But Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" And Jesus said to him, "That the one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

Now, When he had washed their feet and put on his outer garments and resumed his place, it says that he said to them, “Do you understand what I have done to you? You call me Teacher and Lord, and you are right, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet. For I have given you an example, that you also should do just as I have done to you. Truly, truly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. If you know these things, blessed that are you if you do them. I am not speaking of all of you; I know whom I have chosen. But the Scripture will be fulfilled, he who ate my bread has lifted his heel against me. I am telling you this now, before it takes place, that when it does take place you may believe that I am he.”

Truly, truly, I say to you, “Whoever receives the one I send receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.”

So three things I wanna show you this morning, first is Jesus lovingly redefined true greatness. It’s all done in love, you see it says that it says having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. Literally, he loved them to his last breath.

And then it says that Jesus knew that the father had given all authority to him in all of the world. In other words, at this table, not only did Jesus know it, but it was true. He was the foremost, he was the leader, he was the highest-ranking person at the table, and yet, it was the disciples, the 12 disciples, who were taking these hours, these precious moments before Jesus’ death to argue about who was the greatest.

Now, John, he doesn’t actually write this down for us, but if you look at this last supper from the lens of Luke, Luke chapter 22, Verse 24, it says that: A dispute arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest.

So these disciples, they’re acting like chickens who’ve been put together in a pin trying to determine pecking order. Now, I don’t know if you’ve ever seen this take place, but if you literally take chickens that don’t know each other and you put them in a pin, and they plan to live there, they will determine a hierarchy from first to last, and every chicken, within time will know where they stand on that list. And that list really determines when you eat, and if you’re eating, and if you’re chicken number four, and if chicken number three comes in and wants to eat what you’re eating, then you move out of the way, ‘cause he has rank. It’s an amazing thing.

And how it takes place is really kind of funny, right? The first thing they do is they start strutting about. So all of a sudden you have these little chicken and they’re walking about, and you have some like, “I just can’t strut that well, so I know that I’m less than that chicken.” Okay? And they’ll take their cues for the rest of their life of when they get to eat and where they get to eat on the basis of these things. First it’s ... They don’t all of a sudden, like, “You know what? Well, there’s still,” I mean it’s almost like a beauty pageant, like they all walk out and then what they do is they frame out their feathers, right?

And they're like wow, that's some feathers, that's some wing span, right? I'm less than that. And all of sudden, that starts to help clarify hierarchy. After that, they start squawking. And after that they start pecking and even fighting to the place to where eventually everyone knows where they land on the list.

And this is what the 12 disciples were doing. They were arguing who's number one, and who's number 12, and everybody in between. It was a tragic thing that actually did not start at this table, it just ended at this table.

See, we read in Mark, Chapter nine, one day that they were walking to Capernaum and they're arguing, they're a little bit separated from Jesus and he turns around and he comes back and he goes, "Guys, what are you talking about?" And they know what they're talking about, they didn't wanna tell him, because they're a little bit embarrassed, they've been arguing who's the greatest disciple, and so Jesus interrupts their argument, and he says this. He says, "If anyone would be first, he must be last and servant of all."

Well, they didn't learn their lesson, 'cause the chapter later, in Mark, Chapter 10, James and John, two brothers, they get Jesus alone and they ask him a really important question. Actually, they asked him two. I think the first one ... Well, it sounds sort of like my son sometimes, they're like, "Dad, we want you to do whatever it is that we ask of you." And that's what they say. Jesus, we want you to do anything that we're about to ask you, just say nice now, and then we'll tell you what we want. And he says, "What do you want?" He goes, "We wanna sit at your right and left when you rise in glory."

What a thing to ask? We want the places of prominence in your kingdom. Well, when the other 10 they get back, they get indignant that this has been asked, not because it's been asked, but because they didn't get to ask it themselves. And all of a sudden this argument reignites until Jesus speaks to them. And this is what he says, he goes, "Guys, you know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them ... but it shall not be so among you. Whoever would be great among you must be your servant ... for even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

In other words, greatness is found in humility. Now, I find it shocking and refreshing and fascinating all at the same time that Jesus did not snuff out their desire to be great. Instead what he does is he redefines greatness according to how he created the world, and how he will judge our hearts when we stand before him.

And he says this is what greatness actually is, and then he pushes them in the back to say, "Now, run after that. Go be great. I want you to be great. When you stand before me in judgment, I want to say you've been great. But make sure you run after the right target."

Now, it's interesting in our culture today, there's a lot of people, they get this idea of humility mixed up. The Verse that I've asked you to memorize in January seems pretty arrogant to people who don't believe that Jesus is the only way. So some people, they assign humility to sort of a lack of a back bone, or just a general acceptance of everything.

But we have to understand something, when Jesus says, "I am the way and the truth and the life, no one comes to the father except through me." I recognize that that's very exclusive, and yet the most humble we can do is to believe that because he said it, the most arrogant thing is to say, "No, God, you're wrong, there's 2 ways or 10 ways." We've always had a math problem with God, always, He says there's one, we say, "Well, we want more than one." If he gave us 10,000 ways to the Father, we would want 10,001. We always have resisted God's provision to bring us back into his presence. It's an amazing thing.

You see, I'll be just totally honest with you. If it was just up to me, I don't want anyone to be separated from God's presence. Let's say man, let there be 10,000 ways, but it is absolute arrogance to look God in the face after he's given us one He's told us there's one and to say, "I don't believe that." It's actual humility to say, "God, I'm just gonna trust you, this is the one way, and I'm gonna yield underneath what you say."

And so this idea of humility, it's not a lack of conviction, nor is it a lack of strength. Some people think, "Well, if I'm gonna be humble, that means I gotta be the weak one, I have to be treadled upon all the time." That's not what it means either. What humility really means is that where we take our God-given strength, and in order to glorify God with them or use them to serve other people, which includes going to other places, and neighborhoods and nations with a Gospel in order to serve them so that they too can know Christ.

And this is what God does. This is what Christ did. He redefined it, and then he said, "Now, go be great." Providence, let's be great this year. Let's be a great church, be a great husband, be a great wife, a great sibling, be a great friend this year, be a great boss, be a great CEO, great employee, by humbly serving the people around you.

By way of application, I just wanna encourage us just to take a moment, let's examine how our heart is currently truly defining success. I think we all have to ask that. His 12 disciples had been with him three years, and they're still arguing the not before he's going to die, who's the greatest.

You see, he had an idea of what greatness was about, and they had an idea of what greatness is about, and it wasn't the same idea. You and I are going to a line with one of those two groups. And so I would encourage each one of us to really ask the question; does your category of greatness, does it meet and reach and hold on to Jesus category? Because he is the final judge, when you stand before God, you're gonna stand before this Christ that says, "This is what I consider greatness."

So how do we know what we consider great? Well, let me give you three questions, maybe for you to consider yourself, okay? When you daydream, what role do you play? Are the hero? When you're great in your daydreams, are you serving people, or are you the hero?

It's interesting that sometimes for me, even when I'm the servant, it's still really proud, 'cause I just want everybody to feel sorry for me. How do you daydream? Your daydreams are the windows into the definitions of your heart.

Let me ask you something else. When you're in a group of people, if you perceive yourself to be the strongest or maybe the prettiest or the highest-ranking person in that group, how do you look upon those other people? How do think about those people? How do you talk to those people? How do you treat those people?

And then maybe one other thing to ask, and that is that think about your own funeral. You have the opportunity to write what you wish would be true of you, how would you finish this sentence at your funeral? His or her greatness was truly put on display every single time he or she did this.

And these kinds of questions, they're intended to really say, how are you defining being great on this earth? You see, Jesus did this for us, and with I found is this, at least in my own life. There was a time when I really thought that God's gifts that they were on shelves one above the other, and the higher that we make it and life, the more that we can reach. But the more that I read the Scriptures, and the more that I live, the more that I see that God has placed His greatest gifts on shelves one beneath each other, and the more humble we are to kneel, the more we enjoy. And so He lovingly redefined true greatness.

Second thing He does, is He lovingly demonstrated true greatness. You see in first century Palestine, the roads were dirt, and they walked in sandals, and it was hot, and so their feet are sweaty, and all of the sudden they'll be caked, literally with dirt and would turn into mud, and they would get gross, right? And the fact is then they got down and the said, "All right, let's eat."

Well, how they used to eat was a little different than how we eat. We eat at tables standing up on our feet are directly under us. But you read throughout the scripture that they ate reclining at the table. They have these little short tables, there was no chairs, you sat down on the ground and you leaned upon one of your arms everyone leaning in the same direction, which means that your feet went towards somebody else's head. Yeah, that's nice, isn't it? It's exactly what happened.

So now here's the setting, okay? These 12 disciples with Jesus, they've gotten there, and there's no servant who's there. Jewish law that they can't start the meal until their feet are washed. The act of washing the feet was so demeaning that Jewish law says that no Jew would ever be forced to wash another Jew's feet, and so it was always for the slaves or the servants of the homes.

But the Bible tells us that they got there and there was nobody there, it was just them. So they're looking around and they're having an argument over who's the greatest? Who's gonna stand up and go get the water?

And while they're arguing, Jesus stands up, he raises when they're still arguing. He lays aside his outer garments, and then it says, that he takes a towel and he wraps this towel around him. That's exactly what a servant would do. And then taking a basin of water, he began to go to each of the 12 disciples washing their feet. And most of these man, they just sat in their awkward silence. Most of you have probably experienced some kind of awkward silence. I don't know if you've ever had your feet washed, but I would rather do the washing than having my feet washed. It's very vulnerable, it's almost humiliating to have somebody else wash your feet in this way. There's an awkwardness there's an invasion of your space to have another man grab your feet and say, "Let me wash these." It's awkward.

And so most of them, it's recorded, they don't say anything except one man. There's one man who's gotta talk every time, and it's Peter. And Peter says, "Look, Jesus, you'll never gonna wash my feet." And the reason he's saying that is because I know where you rank, I know you're the Lord, I know I'm under you. I just think I'm over all the rest of these guys. And Jesus says, "Unless, I wash your feet, you have no pardon." And he says, "All right, if that's the case, here's my head, here's my hands, here's my body, what else do you want?"

You see, little did Peter know that this cleansing only foreshadowed a cross that would make him completely clean.

Now, Providence, eventually, he came to Jesus. I want you to imagine this interaction between Jesus and Judas. As Jesus held his feet, Jesus knew that his betrayal would only be a few hours later. He knew it, we're already told there in Verse two that the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas to betray Him.

Imagine Jesus, kneeling before Judas and taking his dirty feet, beginning to wash. See, Verse 11 says that He knew who would betray Him. And to be sure, there had to be traitor at the table. Verse 18 says that Scripture had to be fulfilled. And you say, "Well, what Scripture?" Well, right there in Verse 18, he actually quotes Psalm 41 Verse 9 that says, "He who ate my bread, has lifted his heel against me."

There was another prophecy about Judas, and it's Psalm 55, Verse one and two, and it says, "For it is not an enemy who reproaches me ... but it is, my companion and my familiar friend." But notice that Jesus' knowledge of Judas future demonstrates not only His deity, but also the very reason the Book has been written.

If you remember, the Book was written so that we might believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and then believing we might have life in His name, and look at what Verse 19 says. Jesus says, "I am telling you this now before it takes place, I'm telling you what's gonna happen in the future, that when it does take place," what? "You might believe that I am he." And in the Greek text, the pronoun He is not there.

The English translation has putted in there, literally where he's saying that you might believe that I am, I am, where did we get that? Exodus.

When God called Moses to go to his people, lead them out of Egypt and Moses says, "Well, what's your name." And He says, "I'm the great, I am. I am is sending you, and this would be the name that I'm remembered through all generations." And Jesus so here is saying, "I can tell you what is not only in a man, but what the man is going to do tomorrow. And I'm doing this so that you might believe that I am the promised one."

And so, Providence, by way of application here, let's believe that Christ is the promised one. See, Jesus wants more than admiration for washing feet in this text, he wants belief. He came from heaven to earth as a baby, and then grew up, and He live a righteous life, and then He went to a cross to die for our unrighteousness. He was buried in a grave, and then he rose from the dead, and when he did, he extended invitation to us that if we would believe in him, that there would be this transformation, this exchange where he would take away our sin, and He would give us his righteousness. He would take away our poverty and He would give us riches.

This is what He says, He goes, "For you, know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ that he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich." In other words, the highest became the lowest so that the lowest could be raised high.

If you've never trusted Christ as your savior, not only would he serve you, he'll save you. He will forgive you, and you can trust him today. So he redefines greatness, he demonstrates it, and he does one other thing, that's he lovingly invites us to pursue true greatness.

See, when Jesus finished, he sat back down where he was and then he said this. He goes, "Do you guys understand what I've done for you? You all come me teacher and lord. In that you're right, for that what I am." In other words, it is true, I am the highest-ranking person at this table, 'cause I'm also the highest ranking person in the universe.

If I then your lord and teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example that you should do just as I have done for you.

In other words, since you are not above me, you can't say that this doesn't apply to you. If I have gone low, being the highest, then you too should go low.

And then he tells us why in verse 20. You see the words truly, truly I say to you, this is what he's ramping up to. This is his point, this is what he's trying to get across the very end, and this is what he says, "Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever receives the one I send receives me. Whoever receives me receives the one who sent me." What's he saying? He's saying I am building in these men and in us as a church family, a ambassador, a group of ambassadors representatives, they're gonna go into the word, they're gonna represent me and my heart and my kingdom and definition of greatness. And we cannot represent this kind of king if the demand for superiority reins within our heart. We must be humble as he is humble.

And so two points of application here on this last point. First is let's liberate our humility by resting in our new identity. I know that's kind of a mouthful, but it's really important. Let's liberate our humility. Your humility is actually imprisoned right now, and it can be liberated. And how it's liberated is by resting in our new identity.

I want you to notice that before recording anything that Jesus does, we're told the four things that Jesus knew. He knew about himself. Verse one and verse three, it says that he knew that his hour has, that mean he knew his purpose in life.

It says in verse three that he knew the Father had given him all authority, so he knew his place. He knew where he came from. He came from the Father, and he knew where he was going, he was going back to the Father.

And you see, this is the very thing that allowed him to do the most humble thing on the earth without threatening his own personhood or his own deity. This is what you find in Philippians 2, isn't it? "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped." That means something to be stolen. He didn't run around trying to steal proofs of deity 'cause he just knew he was. And that allowed him to do what's next, but made himself nothing taking the very nature of a servant.

You see, why does this matter to us. This is why: if we do not understand and rest in our purpose, our origin and our destiny, then humbly serving people this way will always be incredibly threatening. It'll threaten our personhood, it'll threaten our dignity. If we are not sure about who we are and whose we are.

You see, insecure people with rank will say, "You need to serve me 'cause I'm better than you, and that's gonna make me feel important." And insecure people without rank would always ask, "Why are you asking me to serve?" Feeling threatened that every time somebody would ask them to do something.

You see, in Christ that we find a new identity. He calls his sons and daughters, and blameless, and holy, and more than conquerors. He calls us heirs and co-heirs with Christ. And this gives us confidence to serve without fear of losing ourselves.

We cannot be humble people unless we understand our identity is already sealed and secured in Christ so that when we do humble ourselves, we don't have to feel threatened, we can feel thankful.

And the last is this, is let's look to sacrifice for the benefit of others. Washing feet clearly is not the example, unless of course somebody has that need, because Jesus says, "I have set you an example." The point is to take our God-given strengths and in order to glorify God, we go low and serve people what they need.

And so, pastors, elders, deacons, life leaders, owners, CEOs, managers, and bosses, parents, older siblings, A students, star athletes, I would encourage you to go low. For Isaiah 66 Verse 2 says, "This is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word."

Let's pray together. Father in heaven, we thank you for your kindness. It really is amazing, God, how far we have moved away from what is true and what is right, and admirable. And when we look at the definitions of greatness that flow out of our own heart, God, that's a little distorted. And so thank you God for riding this ship and helping us to see what true greatness really is. Thank you Jesus for demonstrating this kind of humility, for showing us, Lord, just the power of our resting our identity in you.

I pray, Father, that as we begin a new year, that in our relationships, and in our homes, in our workplace, in our schools, in our friend networks, in our families, you would help us to go low, that you would help us to serve people at a point of their need, not feel threatened in doing so.

God, we love you and we thank you that we get to continue to sing to you, you're worthy of it. We love you. In Christ name, Amen.



© 2017 Providence Baptist Church (Raleigh, NC)
Sermon transcripts may be used for preaching and teaching purposes, but may not be published or sold. While generally accurate, parts of this transcript may contain errors.
Providence reserves the right to correct and/or remove a transcript at any time.