

Sermon Notes August 23, 2020 **Focus:** Worship, Humility, Renewal and Action in Romans
[Lectionary Readings](#)

Worship (12.1) *present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship* We bring our whole selves to God - head and heart, skin and bones. I'm not saying that belief is unimportant; it's just not the most important thing.

Renewal v2 *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God- what is good and acceptable and perfect.* We show up to God with the bits that work and the bits that don't - all that is the fuel of renewal.

When you give God the whole mess of your life, then the outline of God's image is clearer in you.

Humility *For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of yourself more highly than you ought to think.* In Jesus, we live and move and have our being. Any wonderful thing you have become, or wonderful thing you have done does not warrant arrogance. Gratitude is the logical response. Arrogance is an insane response, even if common.

Humility music

My favorite "humble song" is *Humble and Kind* by Tim McGraw. It is a wonderful...I mean wonderful song worth [watching](#) as much for the video as the song. I find myself listening to it for the reminder to be humble and kind. The opposite of humble for me is not arrogance, but aggression. When I don't feel solid, I want to puff up and talk down someone, which looks like arrogance but that's not quite accurate. OR When I don't feel solid, I get a little weird, trying to show you that I see something you don't. But that is insecurity parading as arrogance. Humble and kind, when you find it, is a real superpower that is strong and magnetic and needs no defense or shield.

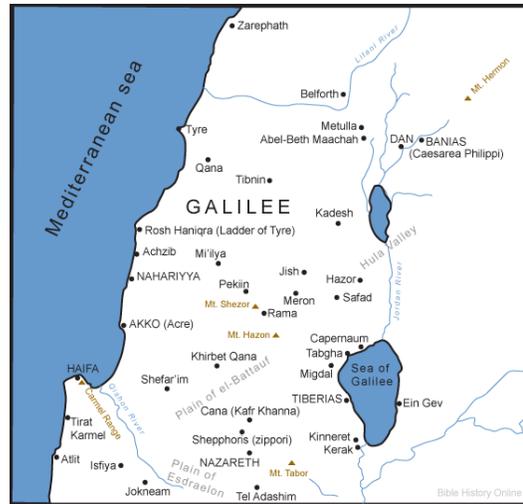
Romans exhorts us that when we get a little too full of ourselves that we shouldn't think of ourselves more highly than we ought. Humility is not some ethereal state of being, but a practice to return to often.

Action *but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.* When we humbly present ourselves as an act of worship, renewal will lead to action that comes not from us, but from every breath that proceeds from God.

So my take on Romans: *Worship* by presenting your whole body with *humility*, while turning to God for the *renewal* of your mind. Then you can take *action* with clarity and good judgement

Gospel location (this is sort of a jumping off point from “action” in my thoughts on Romans). Caesarea Philippi. Jesus is speaking in the heart of a city dedicated to Pan. In Jesus’ day, this city was rebuilt/rededicated to honor one of Herod’s sons (hence Philippi). It was extremely pro-Roman, pro-status quo. Jesus is speaking while surrounded by actual and symbolic imperial power.

Then he asks Peter *in that place* “who do you say that I am”. Peter answers correctly – God, not Caesar, not Herod, is in charge. In the middle of a city devoted to the propaganda for Roman power and heritage, Peter’s action is dangerous. It is often quoted in the black liberation movement, but we can also use it - We are the fulfilment of the wildest dreams of our ancestors...and we have work to do.



Sankofa bird The [Akan people](#) of Ghana use an Adinkra symbol of a bird with its head turned backwards taking an egg off its back. It symbolizes taking from the past what is good and bringing it into the present in order to make progress. Let’s move with confidence into the future, while cherishing the treasures of our spiritual mothers and fathers, sisters and brothers.

That emphatically does not include the confederate statues commemorating a government that *lasted four years*. Treasures of the past inform our future, but does not include a watercolor past from the 1950’s. The Late 1960s were incredibly formative for our American culture, but we can’t sit back singing we shall overcome, without actually trying to overcome.

We have a faith that is agile, responsive, and built on tradition, history, and faith. We are expected to create something new, and not just reminisce about a past that was never built to last in the first place. Your whole life is a gift. Offer it back to God with humility, so that you can use your past. Gracefully apply yourself to everything coming at you right now, preparing to take action when needed most.

Teaser about the sermon My favorite verse in the [Bhagavad Gita is 2:47](#). You will have to tune in to see how the heck I connect it to Romans calling us to Worship, Humility, Renewal and Action.

Todd