

## **6 Habits of Effective Christians: Get Over Yourself**

by Pastor Kurt Hoover

### **Litany adapted from Romans 11**

**Pastor:** who has known the mind of the Lord

**All:** or who has been his counselor?

**Pastor:** Or who has given a gift to him

**All:** that he might be repaid?

**Pastor:** For from him and through him and to him are all things

**All:** To him be glory forever.

**Pastor:** We worship You Lord in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**All:** Amen

**Jeremiah 1:4-7** <sup>4</sup> Now the word of the Lord came to me, saying,

<sup>5</sup> “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you,

and before you were born I consecrated you;

I appointed you a prophet to the nations.”

<sup>6</sup> Then I said, “Ah, Lord God! Behold, I do not know how to speak, for I am only a youth.” <sup>7</sup> But the Lord said to me,

“Do not say, ‘I am only a youth’;

for to all to whom I send you, you shall go,

and whatever I command you, you shall speak.

**Romans 12:3, 14-16** <sup>3</sup> For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned.

<sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse them. <sup>15</sup> Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.

**Luke 4:31-44** <sup>31</sup> And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, <sup>32</sup> and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority. <sup>33</sup> And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, <sup>34</sup> “Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have

you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God.”<sup>35</sup> But Jesus rebuked him, saying, “Be silent and come out of him!” And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm.<sup>36</sup> And they were all amazed and said to one another, “What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!”<sup>37</sup> And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region.

<sup>38</sup> And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house.

Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf.<sup>39</sup> And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them.

<sup>40</sup> Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them.<sup>41</sup> And demons also came out of many, crying, “You are the Son of God!” But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

<sup>42</sup> And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them,<sup>43</sup> but he said to them, “I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose.”<sup>44</sup> And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

*They were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority. – Luke 4:32*

**Allow me again to paint for you the picture of this 30 year old rabbi at the beginning of His ministry. He had been kicked out of His home church. He willingly leaves the synagogue in Capernaum after just one day of healing. And Luke records that he was preaching in any and every synagogue throughout the region, even in Judea. Judea is on the other side of Israel from the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum and Nazareth. You follow the Jordan river flowing out of Galilee down through the hill country until you finally come within a mile or two of Jerusalem. That would be Judea.**

**Jesus was preaching as far away as Judea. Which is not surprising. Luke dug up the family history, talked to the people of Jesus hometown. He verified that Jesus family was the good Jewish family that would have gone to Jerusalem on a regular basis, most likely at least 3 times a year for the 3 major festivals. But for sure *his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover.* (Luke 2:41).**

**It is going to be fun to walk with Luke this year in the lectionary. He does a great job of giving you the extra details, the firsthand accounts. *Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, <sup>2</sup> just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us, <sup>3</sup> it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, <sup>4</sup> that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.* (Luke 1:1-4)**

**Jesus would not have been a stranger to some of these synagogues along the pilgrimage route. And to some he would have been a complete surprise.**

**But regardless of his history with each of these communities it is clear they all regarded him (except his home town) in the same way.**

***They were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority. – Luke 4:32***

**This verse in scripture cannot be understated. All 4 gospel writers go out of their way to help us see the way in which the religious people of the day were not just amazed with Jesus, and his healings, and miracles ... but to begin with – and if you**

read closely you will see at the center of Jesus ministry was the way in which he talked to people. Jesus words were powerful!

Mark describes the begging of Jesus ministry in this way:

*<sup>21</sup> And they went into Capernaum, and immediately on the Sabbath he entered the synagogue and was teaching. <sup>22</sup> And they were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them as one who had authority, and not as the scribes. – Mark 1:21-22*

Matthew gives his first description of the way in which Jesus speaks later in his remembrance of Jesus Ministry. Matthew doesn't attach it to the early circuit through the synagogues. Matthew is focused more on the gentiles and the crowds and He saves this 'authority' statement to describe how the gentiles and the crowds had the same reaction as the religious people.

*<sup>28</sup> And when Jesus finished these sayings, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, <sup>29</sup> for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes. – Matthew 7:28-29*

John attaches this little detail about Jesus words to Jesus deceleration that He is the living water: *<sup>37</sup> On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. <sup>38</sup> Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'"*

*Some of the [Pharisees] wanted to arrest him, but no one laid hands on him. <sup>45</sup> The officers then came to the chief priests and Pharisees, who said to them, "Why did you not bring him?" <sup>46</sup> The officers answered, "No one ever spoke like this man!" (John 7:37-46)*

**In each of these references the disciples aren't talking about the parables and the logical arguments Jesus made to create belief.**

**These reference are to the way in which Jesus did not describe the work of God, but instead directly proclaimed to people the work of God in their midst.**

**In the literary world it is called Direct proclamation. If I want my wife to know she is loved, I could make a list of the reasons I love her. Probably not very effective. If I wanted to take it a step forward I might write a poem describing my feelings. That might communicate the message. Affect her heart. But if I really want to take any doubt away I would hold her hand, look deeply into her eyes, and directly proclaim – I love you!**

**Direct proclamation is deeply spiritual. It taps into the hope and understanding and history and promises ... to impress upon someone a reality they may or may not believe at the moment. A reality they may not have known they needed to hear.**

**If I doubt my spouse love for me, I can not repent of that, change my mind about it, debate with myself the reasons that is not true... often I must be repented of my doubt, by a simple touch, or eye contact, or direct proclamation of love that destroys the path of doubt and replaces it with confidence.**

**And think about this, often we say these things that give hope and trust and intimacy - to our spouses, or our children, to our family to a friend with out thinking about it.**

**This direct proclamation, this preaching with authority, is a deeply Spiritual thing.**

**God became incarnate to directly proclaim to you things that change your heart and set you free. I love you! I forgive you! I redeem you! You are mine!**

**And very quickly let me apply this to what Paul has to say in Roman's. *Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought.* (Romans 12:3) In other words get over yourself.**

**IF we are going to get over ourselves, and our agenda for the day. If we are going to get over ourselves and our well laid plans... If we are going to get over ourselves and our hard-earned achievements, or striving for achievements...**

**If we are going to get over ourselves we must have hope that the leap we are about to take is greater than the advantage, or the identity, or the accomplishment we are leaving behind.**

**In order to give up my dream to be a starving artist, I had to have hope that serving God as a pastor would be better for me, or at least the world, than what ever contribution I would make as an artist. For example.**

**Jesus did not hold onto the past, or his accomplishments, or the success of this world. He let go of his home congregation to be the Messiah. He let go of the ministry in Capernaum, so that he could directly proclaim the forgiveness and love of God to other synagogues. He eventually gave up preaching to the Jews, in order to reach the Gentiles. And Jesus gave up his mortal life and teaching and miracles ... to take your sins upon himself at the cross.**

**If we are going to get over ourselves we must have hope that the leap we are about to take is greater than the advantage, or the identity, or the accomplishment we are leaving behind.**

**It turns out your identity in this world has less to do with what you are able to work hard at and achieve. Your identity, who you are and who you will become is more closely related to what you are willing to let go of.**

**As C.S. Lewis and Luther agreed – the hardest thing we must do in life will not be striving to reach a goal, but letting go of a goal that was never meant for us in the first place.**

**~~(as the worship team comes forward)~~ Which brings us back to Jesus words spoken in church, through a preacher, through grandmas and grandpas, trusted friends... the right song at the right time, the sacraments and the care of family...**

**Jesus speaks into our lives to set us free from ourselves and our personal struggles to prove ourselves, to define ourselves, to project our own chosen identity.**

**Christ did not die so that you could prove, define or project yourself into the world.**

**Christ died to affirm every direct proclamation of promise he has made to you in Scripture. Christ died to set you free.**

**Christ died that you might be free to take your next leap of faith.**

**Your identity is not in what you achieve, but what you are willing to let go of to take a leap... that is what speaks to your family, and a lost world... that is Christ's appeal through you!**