

## **The Wisdom of Grumpy Jesus (and dogs)**

Matthew 15: 10-28

#24 in Jesus Stories series

Peter Hiatt

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### **Prayer**

Lord God, we thank you that you choose to be born in lowly manglers—humble manglers because, I think so much of the time, I feel pretty lowly. I pray that you would help us not to despise those lowly places but to look for you in those lowly places. And I pray that you would be born, that your life would be evident, in us this morning, that you would speak your Word into us, just as Jesus your Word was placed in that lowly manger. It's in his name that we pray, Amen.

### **Message**

The text this weekend reminded me of a story that had a huge impact on me as a boy growing up in the 60's. Somebody actually came to our church and read the story, and preached a sermon on the story. The story is titled, "A Warm Fuzzy Tale." It's about a land where everyone was happy for everyone had a bag of warm fuzzies. And whenever someone was given a warm fuzzy, that person felt warm and fuzzy all over.

Well, a witch comes to this land and hates warm fuzzies. She tells people that the warm fuzzies will run out and starts handing out cold pricklies. People start giving cold pricklies instead of warm fuzzies. Warm fuzzies are affirmations and cold pricklies are criticisms. The story continues like this:

Not long ago, a young woman with big hips came to this unhappy land. She seemed not to have heard about the bad witch and was not worried about running out of warm fuzzies. She gave them out freely, even when not asked. They called her the Hip Woman and disapproved of her because she was giving the children the idea that they should not worry about running out of warm fuzzies. The children liked her very much because they felt good around her, and they began to follow her example giving out warm fuzzies whenever they felt like it.

I remember that the guy preaching had actual warm fuzzies.

For months people were handing out warm fuzzies and saying, "I need a warm fuzzy," or "Gosh, that was a cold prickly." I figured that Jesus was like the big hipped woman, and it makes sense that the gospel of relentless grace would be like a bottomless bag of warm fuzzies.

So, people often assume that's what I preach. The story ends like this:

The struggle spread all over the land and is probably going on right where you live. If you want to, as I hope you do, you can join by freely giving and asking for warm fuzzies and being as loving and healthy as you can.

So, in 1969, at First Presbyterian Church, everyone was into warm fuzzies, and I loved it . . . at first, but then it started feeling kind of oppressive. I mean I needed warm fuzzies. I'd

manipulate people to get warm fuzzies and others would manipulate me, patronize me, for warm fuzzies. We became addicted to warm fuzzies. Maybe all addictions start out warm and fuzzy. I was addicted, oppressed, and then insecure, because the warm fuzzies were dependent on people like me. And I wondered if warm fuzzies were just warm fuzzy lies. I wondered if warm fuzzies were the solution.

Well, "God is Love" and "Jesus makes Him known." And so it's easy to think that Jesus is just like the big hipped woman handing out warm fuzzies. Yet, even if God is the ultimate warm fuzzy and will never run out of warm fuzzies, God's word, Jesus, doesn't always feel warm and fuzzy.

Matthew 15:21-26

*And Jesus went away from there (that is Israel) and withdrew to the district of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a Canaanite woman from that region came out and was crying, "Have mercy on me, O lord, Son of David; my daughter is severely oppressed by a demon." But he did not answer her a word. And his disciples came and begged him, saying, "Send her away, for she is crying out after us." He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." But she came and knelt (proskuneo – worshipped, knelt and kissed his feet) before him saying, "Lord, help me." And he answered, "It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs."*

Does Jesus ever seem mean to you? That wasn't very warm and fuzzy, but rather cold and prickly. This desperate woman follows Jesus around literally screaming, "Have mercy on me," and Jesus doesn't "answer a word." Do you ever feel like that? Like the Lord speaks to everyone else but doesn't "answer you a word?" This appears to have gone on for a while, for the disciples finally come to Jesus saying, "Get rid of her," and Jesus says, "*I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*" Then she falls at his feet and worships him saying, "*Help me, help me.*" And Jesus says "*It's not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.*" Wow!

In Scripture, "dog" (with possibly one small exception) is always a very negative term. Dogs were not usually pets...but scavengers. Gentiles, and particularly Canaanites, were called "*dogs.*" The Canaanites were the people that the children of Israel were to drive from the promised- land or, in certain cases, devote to destruction – as offerings to God. They were unclean.

The Canaanites were pagans, and this woman's daughter was severely demonized. The demon probably gained its power through pagan rituals. So the mother and daughter may have been culpable, but we don't know, and maybe it doesn't matter, for "*we've all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.*" And we all feel guilty and aren't sure exactly why, and maybe that's the worst part. In desperation, she cries out to Jesus, "*help me, help me.*" And Jesus says, "*It's not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.*"

Well, who are "*the dogs*" and who are "*the children*?" Jesus had just left the children. Surely, he wouldn't be so grumpy with the children.

In the verses immediately preceding these verses, Jesus is in Galilee, in the land of Israel, with the children of Israel.

Matthew 15: 10 – 12

*And he called the people to him and said to them, "Hear and understand: it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but what comes out of the mouth; this defiles a person." Then the disciples came and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this saying?"*

"Pharisee" means *"the separate."* For God had called his children to separate the clean from the unclean and so gave them detailed instructions about clean food and unclean food. The Pharisees were those that worked extremely hard to make themselves clean and thus earn the warm fuzzies of God, the love of God. Well, Jesus said, "it won't work" and they were offended. "Did you know you offended the Pharisees?" say the disciples. And Jesus says,

Matthew 15: 13-20

*"Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be rooted up. Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit." But Peter said to him, "Explain the parable to us." And he said, "Are you also still without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth passes into the stomach and is expelled? Literally: "expelled into a latrine.") But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this defiles a person. For out of the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false witness, slander. These are what defile a person. But to eat with unwashed hands does not defile anyone."*

So Jesus makes it clear: *"Your good works are crap."* That's a cold prickly. *"You eat clean things and literally turn them into crap that's crapped into a crapper. The thing that defiles you is already in you and you won't admit it, even though you constantly excrete sin. You constantly excrete evil thoughts: murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, lies and slander. Your good deeds are shit."*

Sorry if you're offended, but that's pretty much the biblical word for what we're describing (Philippians 3:8) Sorry if you're offended. The Pharisees were deeply offended.

Next verse...

Matthew 15: 21

*"Jesus went away from there (Israel) and traveled to the region of Tyre and Sidon."*

You have to wonder, "Why is Jesus going to the region of Tyre and Sidon?" In Matthew 10:6 he told his disciples to only go to *"the lost sheep of the house of Israel."*

Matthew 15: 22

*"And look a Canaanite woman."*

So Jesus gives cold pricklies to the children in Israel, and to this desperate Canaanite woman he says, *"It's not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the little bitches."* So, are you offended? I'm sorry if you're offended, but I'm not called to preach the warm fuzzy tale, I'm called to preach The Gospel. And in the gospel of Matthew, Jesus uses the word, *kunaron*, it means little female dogs—bitches. So are you offended?

The Pharisees were offended. They were offended at Jesus. St Paul, who had been a Pharisee, taught that Jesus was the “*offense of the world*,” loosely translated, the “cold prickly” of the world. The Pharisees were offended.

Jesus said, “Blessed is he who is not offended at me.” The Pharisees were offended, and this woman appears to be *not* offended.

Matthew 15: 26-27

*And he answered, “It is not right to take the children’s bread and throw it to the dogs.” She said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.”*

Does this woman have any “self-respect?”

Does she have any sense of “human dignity?”

Does she have any “pride?”

Well, maybe not, for without pride you become impossible to offend. Rick Joyner claims that he heard Jesus say, “The humble cannot be embarrassed.” This Canaanite woman is humble.

Humility is not shame; shame wants to hide. Humility has nothing to hide. Humility does not mean hating yourself, but something more like losing your self.

She’s worshipping Jesus, not her ability to worship Jesus.

She worships Jesus, not her self.

She’s very unsure of her self, but very sure of Jesus’ self.

See? It didn’t matter who she was, it mattered who Jesus is.

She was humble and there are benefits to being humble:

1. You can’t be offended, for there’s nothing to offend. <sup>1</sup>
2. If you can’t be offended or embarrassed, you’re not easily slandered or extorted. You know devil means, “accuser” so if you’re humble, the devil has lost his game. The devil says, “You’ve failed, you’re inadequate, you’ve sinned, and now you better cover your shame and hide from the truth.” But the humble say, “Why hide from the truth? That is the truth – I’ve failed, I am inadequate, I have sinned, so I need a helper – a savior.

You know, Jesus didn’t accuse this woman. (I’m sure Satan had already accused this woman.) Jesus simply pointed out that the children’s bread shouldn’t be thrown to dogs. She must’ve thought, “Maybe I am a dog, but so what? The Master is kind to dogs.” If you’re humble, you really can’t be embarrassed, offended, slandered and extorted, AND you can see the truth.

Proud people won’t allow themselves to see truth and their world becomes too small for beauty and wonder. Alice must grow small to enter wonderland. “If a man would make his world large, he must be always making himself small,” writes G. K. Chesterton. “Even the haughty visions, the tall cities, and the toppling pinnacles are the creations of humility. Giants that tread down

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<sup>1</sup> That makes you extremely low maintenance and easy to be around.

forests like grass are the creations of humility. Towers that vanish upwards above the loneliest star are the creations of humility, for towers are not tall unless we look up at them, and giants are not giants unless they are larger than we. “

God is giant, and so without humility no one will see God. To truly see God is to worship God, and proud people can't worship. Chesterton adds, “Without humility, it's impossible to enjoy anything.” And I would add, “especially grace” and God is grace. Without humility, grace burns pride so heaven must feel like hell, not warm and fuzzy, but hot and scorchy or maybe even cold and prickly.

So how do you get humble? You really can't humble yourself with yourself or you just get proud of your humility. You can't lose yourself with yourself, and if you hate yourself with yourself, it's just more self. In fact you're stuck in yourself alone and trapped in yourself. It's pride that makes self want to kill the self.

James 4:10 and 1 Peter 5: 6 say humble yourselves, but more accurately, aorist passive imperative, “*Let yourself be humbled before the Lord under the mighty hand of God.*”

We can't humble ourselves with our selves, so humility must come through humiliations, and at first they feel rather cold and prickly. “We learn humility through accepting humiliations cheerfully,” writes Mother Teresa, “Don't let the chance pass you by. It's so easy to be proud, harsh, moody and selfish, but we have been created for better things.” Someone said, “You'll know if you're a servant by how you act when you're treated like one.” And I suppose: “You'll know if you're humble by how you act when you're humiliated.” Are you offended . . . or are you grateful like Mother Teresa?

You say you want to die to yourself, then why do you spend so much time defending yourself? You say you're a sinner, “dead in your trespasses and sins” like Saint Paul. In 1 Corinthians, he writes, “We are the scum of the earth.” So, would it bother you if someone agreed with Scripture and called you “scum of the earth” or “Unspeakable slime?” You know Scripture says that Jesus “*humbled himself,*” which is weird, because I don't think he was ever proud . . . except of course when he bore your sin, which is to bear your pride. There “He humbled himself” or maybe he humbled us. He helped us be humble.

Philippians 2: 8

*Being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.*

And Paul writes, “*have this mind among yourselves*” (Philippians 2:5)

Well, a cross is designed to humiliate. You can pick up a cross, but you can't crucify yourself. Someone else must pound the nails. It's something that happens to you. A cross is designed to humiliate and the nails are cold and designed to be very prickly.

One of the most moving things I've ever read comes from Brennon Manning's book, *The Ragamuffin Gospel*. Manning struggled with alcoholism his whole life, but he writes about a group therapy session in 1975 at a Rehab Center that forever changed his view of grace.

A nominal Christian named Max sat in the center of the circle. The counselor asked, “How long have you been drinking like a pig?” Max winced and said, “That's quite unfair.” The counselor grilled Max, Max obfuscated and evaded. The counselor called him a liar. Max minimized, justified, and rationalized for twenty minutes. The counselor

called an old bartender and exposed the lies. Max leapt to his feet and defended his integrity. He was very proud. Finally, the counselor asked, "Have you ever been unkind to one of your kids?" Max said, "perhaps maybe" he didn't remember.

The counselor called Max's wife; her soft voice filled the room, by means of a speaker, connected to the phone. "It was Christmas Eve," she said. "Max bought Debbie, our daughter, a pair of shoes. She kissed him and told him he was "The best daddy in the whole world." "On the way home from the store, Max stopped at the tavern to congratulate himself." He told Debbie to wait, that he'd be right back and left her, locked in the truck. It was three in the afternoon. Max came out drunk at midnight." Debbie was frostbitten on her ears and fingers. They amputated some fingers and Debbie will be deaf for the rest of her life."

At that, Max appeared to have a coronary. He collapsed on all fours, like a dog, and began to sob hysterically. The counselor said, "Let's split." And twenty four recovering alcoholics stood up. Max's sobs had turned into shrieks. The counselor walked over to Max, put his foot on his rib cage, and said "You unspeakable slime" and pushed him over.

I'm not saying you should say that, but that the counselor did say that.

- The first step of the twelve steps of AA is to admit you're powerless over alcohol, and I suppose that discovery can be rather humiliating.
- The first step of salvation (or maybe this is salvation) is admitting you need to be saved, for you are powerless over sin. And I suppose that discovery can be rather humiliating.

Each of us is Max. Like Bob Hudson said last week, we were made for love, and we all desire love. It's hard to imagine anything more warm and fuzzy than love, so, of course, every sin and every addiction is an effort to take the life of love and possess love. So we become addicted to signs of love, and pieces of love...

Addicted to things because we long for the new creation,  
Addicted to wine because we long for communion,  
Addicted to sex because we long to be known,  
And Addicted to approval and warm fuzzies because we want love,  
Addicted to religion because we want God,

So we try to take God and so crucify God, and kill God. We try to take love and so crucify love (we try to take the good, like it's fruit hanging on a tree).

Listen closely:

Love that's dependent on me, and so conditioned by me, always becomes my addiction and I kill love. But love that's not dependent on me, love that's entirely unconditional is God.

Addicted to conditional love, I can't experience unconditional love.

Addicted to taking love, I sacrifice love.

So God, who is love, must kill that prideful, arrogant me, addicted to me, if I'm ever to know him, and he's so much more than just warm and fuzzy. That's why the greatest gift that can be given to a mortal man is the gift of being humiliated in the presence of love. I believe the Bible calls it Judgment. Truth sets us free from the prison of self, and "His kindness leads us to repentance." Grace does not enable sin. Grace annihilates the work of the Devil and sets us free from sin.

Later that day, Max begged to stay in treatment. Manning writes that it was the most striking personality change he's ever seen. The night before Max finished treatment, he looked up from a book and said to his friend, with tears in his eyes, "I just prayed for the first time in my life." He was beginning to see God, and Jesus had been in Max all along helping Max to see.

Maybe Jesus isn't mean. Maybe Jesus is always kind.<sup>2</sup>

So, Jesus looks down at this Canaanite woman kneeling at his feet crying, "Help me. Help me." He hadn't accused her of anything, but he certainly allowed her to be humiliated— to be born a Canaanite, to watch her daughter suffer, to experience his silence and to feel the pain of rejection. She kneels crying, "Save me.! Help me!" And he speaks saying,

Matthew 15: 27-28

*"It is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs,.." And she says, "Yes Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire." And her daughter was healed instantly.*

Do you realize what was just revealed?! Jesus said he was "only sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel," but he must've been sent to her, for he only did what he saw his Father doing. He was sent to her (that's why he went to Tyre and Sidon.) He was sent to her, and so she must be what? "*One of the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*" She is a child of God, and he not only gave her bread, he gave her himself. He gave "*the bread of life.*" And he gave the greatest compliment in all the gospels, "O woman, mega – great is your faith." Faith is the "*substance of things hoped for*" (Hebrews 11: 1 Nksv)

Ephesians 5: 17 "*Christ dwells in our hearts through faith.*" Christ was born in her heart as he had been born and placed in a humble manger.

Jesus said, "*Be it done for you as you desire,*" (*Thelo*) "as you will." Do you understand? She now has a free will. What she wills – happens, for she wills the good - in the image of God. Jesus said, "*whoever – whoever humbles himself* (submits to humiliations) *will be exalted.*" "She is now no dog." Writes Martin Luther, "but even a child of Israel."<sup>3</sup>

In Genesis 12 God tells Abraham that he is "*blessed to be a blessing and in him will all the families of the earth be blessed.*" Israel was blessed to be a blessing to Canaanites (Leviticus 19:33). They're even commanded to treat the foreigner living in their land as a native and love the foreigner as they love themselves. That's some hard core immigration reform. In Romans

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<sup>2</sup> Psalm 145: 9 *The Lord is good to all and his mercy is over all that he has made. . .*

Psalm 17 *The Lord is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.*

Mercy, righteousness and kindness are the same thing and that's Jesus – the word of God.

<sup>3</sup> All those trials of her faith sounded more like no than yes, but they're way more yea than nay. Indeed, there is only yes in them – while there appears to be nothing but no." writes Luther. Hosea 1: 10, Romans 9:26 in the very place it was said to them "*You are not my people, there they will be called sons of the living God.*"

11, Paul writes that the Gentiles would be grafted into the family tree. Israel was: "*blessed to be a blessing*" and Jesus is the promised blessing.

The priests, scribes and Pharisees exalted themselves and thought they deserved the blessing, so should control the blessing, and so were offended by the blessing. So, in their pride, they would crucify the blessing and lose the blessing, like branches cut off from the family tree, for Jesus is the root of the family tree. "*Whoever exalts himself will be humbled. And whoever humbles himself will be exalted.*" So you see, this Canaanite woman was actually a lost sheep of the house of Israel. So, when Jesus left the Pharisees in Israel, and went to the region of Tyre and Sidon, he "*left the 99 in the wilderness to go find the one that was lost*" (Luke 15). And check this out: The 99 really are "In the wilderness" for they're proud, and therefore offended, and therefore have rejected the blessing.

To think you deserve heaven is to cast yourself into hell. For, you see, heaven isn't simply golden streets (You can have all the gold and be miserable as hell.)

It's not simply sex

It's not just wine.

Heaven is communion with God, and God is love. So, you're surrounded by heaven (heaven really is at hand). But you can't experience heaven if you think you deserve heaven, for that means you think you deserve God, which means you think you deserve love, which means you think you deserve grace, which means you can't even comprehend grace and God is grace.

So get this: The Pharisees try to take the life of love (that's what they do with all their laws and all their works.) Eventually they do take the life of love, on a tree, in a garden, at a place called Calvary. The Pharisees take the life of love, crucify love and can't know love. They're lost. They are "*the lost sheep of the house of Israel,*" yet they still belong to the house of Israel. But think about it: you can't be found unless you're lost. Jesus came "*to seek and save the lost.*" "*The branches can be grafted back in again*" writes Paul, "*and so all Israel will be saved.*" But as long as the Pharisees think they deserve love, they can't receive love and know love.

This Canaanite woman knew she didn't deserve love, and so she can receive love, and know love, for she is known by love. Actually, she's impregnated with the life of love, as if he, Jesus himself was her bridegroom and bound to her in a covenant. She doesn't hide her shame in fig leaves and fear. She doesn't hide her need in arrogance and pride. She cries, "Help me." And Jesus is her helper – her husband. He meets her in her place of shame. There he fills her with grace, and she has faith and receives all that she desires: Jesus and all things with him.

You see? It's not such a bad thing to be humiliated. Perhaps you were humiliated by the sins of another. Perhaps you were humiliated by your own sin. But we all deserve to be humiliated, for none of us ever deserved to be proud, for none of us created ourselves. If you're convinced you created yourself, you cannot see your creator, you cannot enter the kingdom, and you cannot discover who in fact you truly and eternally are: the image of God created by grace to love and be loved always in freedom.

Well, this Canaanite woman wasn't a dog. She is the bride of Christ and child of God. Or maybe she was a dog. Like I said, the term "dog" is always negative in Scripture, with one exception and perhaps – here. You may remember that Moses and that first generation of Israelites were not allowed to enter the Promised Land because they didn't trust in the power of God's grace. None were allowed to enter except two: Joshua and one other. Joshua is the Hebrew name for "Jesus" and so that made sense. But why the other guy, named "Caleb?" I



looked up the name Caleb and discovered it means dog – Caleb, (written in Hebrew, they are the very same word.) So, the only Israelites that make it through the wilderness and to the kingdom are Jesus and his dog. So maybe it's not so bad to be called, "a dog" I read *National Geographic* last year and discovered that all dogs are domesticated wolves. In other words, a dog is a wolf that's learned to live by grace – his master's grace.

That doesn't mean dogs are lazy, they'll work like crazy; they'll die for their master. It means they can be exceptionally loyal to their master. In other words, they seem to love unconditionally, and you know our master is unconditional love.



This was our family dog, Roxanne. I was grumpier with her than anyone else, and she loved me the best. I wasn't a dog person, and she turned me into a dog person. She waited to die until I put my hand on her side, and then she breathed her last. Like my friend Wendy Francisco points out in one of her songs: "Dog is God spelled backwards," and maybe that's not an accident, for they both love "no matter what." That's called unconditional love.

I read about a man and his dog who were walking along a road . . . when it suddenly occurred to the man that he was dead, and he realized his dog was dead. After awhile, they came to a high, white stone wall along one side of the road. And then a magnificent gate in the wall that appeared to be made of pearl. The street that led to the gate appeared to be made of gold. A man stood at the gate and so he asked,

"What is this?"

"This is heaven sir," the man answered.

"Wow! Would you happen to have some water?" the man asked.

"Of course, sir. Come right in, and I'll have some ice water brought right up."

The gate began to open.

"Can my friend," gesturing toward his dog, "come in too?" the traveler asked.

"I'm sorry, sir, but we don't accept dogs."

The man thought a moment and then turned back toward the road and continued the way he had been going with his dog. After another long walk he came to a dirt road leading through a farm gate that looked as if it had never been closed. As he approached the gate, he saw a man leaning against a tree.

"Excuse me!" he called to the man. "Do you have any water?"

"Yeah, sure, there's a pump right here."

"How about my friend here?" the traveler gestured to the dog.

"There's a bowl under the pump."

The traveler took a long drink, then he gave some to the dog.

"What do you call this place?" the traveler asked.

"This is heaven," the man answered.

"Well, that's confusing," the traveler said. "The man down the road said that was heaven too."

"Nope." he said, "that's not heaven, that's hell."

"Doesn't it make you mad, for them to use your name like that?"

"No, we're just happy that they screen out the folks who would leave their best friends behind."

Well, that's just a silly story - and it's not true. And yet in a way it is true, for heaven is literally constructed of unconditional love, and in a way, it is true because our Master will not leave his friends behind. He was called, "*The friend of sinners.*" And if you remember, he even called Judas "friend." And so, I think he even descends into hell for his "friends" the "lost sheep of the house of Israel." He said, "whoever exalts himself will be humbled and whoever humbles himself will be exalted." I think that statement is true, so after all have been humbled – all will be exalted, and all will see God – unconditional, limitless and relentless love – all will have faith in grace.

Matthew 15: 27-28

*She said, "Yes Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Then Jesus answered her, "O woman, great is your faith! Be it done for you as you desire."*

## **Communion**

So the master sat at his table, took bread and he broke it saying, "This is my body broken for you. Take and eat in remembrance of me." And in the same way, after supper, having given thanks he took the cup and he said, "This is the covenant in my blood poured out for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of it, all of you. And do it in remembrance of me. This will humble you and then exalt you. (Peter points to the communion table.)

## **Prayer**

Let's pray:

I want you to think of your humiliation. Think of a time when you were humiliated. Do you understand Jesus was there with you in your humiliation? They may have intended it for evil, but God intended it for good. Say this silently in your heart, "Lord God, in the name of Jesus, I surrender my humiliation." So now you're no longer ashamed of it. It's his, right? "I surrender my humiliation." And now, by the power of the Spirit, say "And God, I thank you for my humiliation for through it you give me the gift of humility and yourself. You are the one that's born in a humble manger.

## **Benediction**

So thank you Lord God for making all things work together for my good. And so, with just, like, a mustard seed of faith, because I struggle to really mean this, I just want to pray publically and say thank you for the humiliation, or arranging for the humiliation, of Peter Hiatt. Thank you Lord God, that I'm not my own creator so I can see the Creator. Thank you for showing me that

I'm not my own savior so that I can meet my Savior. Thank you Lord God, for freeing me from the prison of my own arrogance and pride and self-centeredness. Thank you Lord, that you have done it and now you're asking me to walk in it. Thank you Lord God, that it is finished. Help us Lord, Jesus to believe that, in Jesus' name. Amen.

And now by way of benediction, sit down and watch this:

Music clip "God & Dog"

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**God and Dog**, written and sung by Wendy Francisco

I look up and I see God  
I look down and see my dog  
Simple spelling G-O-D  
Same word backwards, D-O-G  
They would stay with me all day.  
I'm the one, who walks away.  
But both of them just wait for me.  
And dance at my return with glee.

Both love me no matter what,  
Divine God,  
And canine mutt . . .  
I take it hard each time I fall.  
But God forgives,  
Dog wags his tail.  
God thought up and made the dog  
Dog reflects a part of God.

I've seen love from both sides now.  
It's everywhere, bow-wow.  
I look up and I see God.  
I look down and see my dog.  
And in my human frailty...  
I can't match their love for me.

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[The clip ends and Peter addresses the congregation]

So, next time someone calls you "a dog," and there are nasty words for that, for a female dog particularly. The next time someone calls you "a dog," in the name of Jesus and through the power of the gospel may you say, "Thank you!" Alright? Believe the gospel. Amen. And we'll see you next week.

*Disclaimer: This document is a draft and has not been edited by the author. Therefore, there may be discrepancies. Some discrepancies may be minor; some may have to do with theology. When in doubt, please refer to the audio version of the sermon on this website and don't be shy about informing us of errors.*