

Honor

This week we celebrate our independence from England and the birth of our nation on the 4th of July. We use words like freedom, liberty, independence, courage, sacrifice, when we talk about our nation and those who have fought and even died to secure and preserve our freedom. Another word we use is honor. We talk about honoring our flag because of what it stands for, the ideals of freedom and liberty and justice for all, equal rights and protections under the law for the citizens of the United States. Those ideals are worthy of honor.

This morning we took time to honor some deserving people. We chose to honor our veterans and those in active military service. We recognized them for their service and sacrifice on our behalf. We honored Pastor Brittany for her ten years of faithful and dedicated service to the Lord and His church and our children at Carbondale. We honor ideas and ideals and we honor people. What does honor mean?

Honor means to fix value upon, to prize, to esteem highly, to revere or respect. In the Old Testament the word translated as honor is from the Hebrew word that meant weight. We say “that person carries a lot of weight around here.” It means they are important, significant. That person is deserving of our attention, our respect, our tribute. We place high value upon them and upon the contribution they make to us and our lives. It can also be honor and tribute paid not to a particular person but to the office. We honor the office of the President, the office of an elected official, an officer in the military, the office of pastor or parent, even if the person in the office is not honorable or the decisions they make are not honorable, the office they hold is to be honored. It carries weight and we are to respect the place of authority it holds.

Paul speaks of showing honor to the governing authorities in Romans 13. He says the authorities that exist have been established and put in place by God to help slow the tide of evil. We are to honor the office of those in authority over us. In that context he writes, **“Give everyone what you owe him: If you owe taxes, pay taxes; if revenue, then revenue; if respect, then respect, if honor, then honor.” Romans 13:7.** Give honor to whom honor is due. To whom are we to show honor? What does the bible say?

Honor Your Parents. The bible makes it pretty clear about this one. It made God’s top ten list. **“Honor your father and your mother, so that you may live long in the land the Lord your God is giving you.” Exodus 20:12** Paul quotes this passage in Ephesians 6 and mentions this is the first commandment with a promise – that you may enjoy long life on the

earth. Honor your mom and dad. How? By showing respect, by recognizing and bestowing value on them and the position they hold in your life. Recognize how important they are. You wouldn't be here without them. They've sacrificed on your behalf. They work to provide for you. Honor them. Honor them in your actions by doing what they ask of you. Trying doing what you know they want you to do without them having to ask – clean your room, make your bed, help your siblings. Honor them by the way you talk to them. Honor them by the way you talk about them to others.

And this isn't just for children. There is no age limit placed on this commandment. Honor your parents when you are in your twenties and thirties and forties and fifties and sixties. Speak well of them, treat them as you would want to be treated! Perhaps they haven't lived honorable lives. You can't honor their actions, but you can honor the place and importance of a parent in your life.

Honor Those in Authority. We've already mentioned from the passage in Romans we are to show honor, to show respect to those who have authority over us. We honor the office of the president, regardless of who occupies the office or whether we like the person or not, whether we think they are honorable or not, them or their party, it is right for us to honor the office. The same applies to other elected offices. I quoted it a moment ago, but Paul writes in Romans, **“The authorities that exist have been established by God...this is why you pay taxes, for the authorities are God's servants, who give their full time to governing.” Romans 13:1-6.**

We are to honor those in government, but how about others that are in authority over us? If you are a student, honor your teachers. If you play sports, honor your coaches. If you are an employee, honor your boss or manager. You may figure you know more than all of those folks but you need to learn to show honor to those in authority over you so someday God will be able to place you in authority. Jesus said whoever wants to be greatest in the kingdom, whoever wants to be in a place of authority, must first learn to be servant of all! Honor those God has placed in authority in your life.

Honor Your Pastors and Church Leaders. Paul writes to Timothy, **“The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.” 1 Timothy 5:17** You did well by honoring Pastor Brittany this morning. I always feel a little awkward talking about honoring pastors when I am one, but I can tell you there is a big responsibility that goes with being a pastor of a church or part of a

church staff. You see us on Sunday or Wednesday but what you don't see is the work that goes on behind the scenes. What you don't see is the hours spent in prayer and preparation. What you don't see is the weight of the spiritual burden that rests on your pastors as we do our best to lead and shepherd the people of God. The Apostle Paul understood what I'm talking about when he said, **“Besides everything else, I face daily the pressure of my concern for all the churches. Who is weak and I do not feel weak? Who is led into sin and I do not inwardly burn.” 2 Corinthians 11:28-29.** In other words, we feel the weight and responsibility of the church. We feel the burden of trying to share truth and lead people in the right way, to lead people to Jesus. We feel the pain when people make wrong choices and go the wrong way after we've done everything we can to help them make right choices and follow Jesus. We pour into the lives of children and youth and adults and then watch them walk away from the Lord and from church. We sacrifice and do all we can and then read that letter or email that says, “what you do is not enough for us and we are going somewhere else” and it is heartbreaking. Every pastor knows it and feels the weight of it. Ultimately, it's that feeling, that burden that “I'm responsible” and yet it's out of your hands. The pastoral staff of this church that cry and pray and labor for you and your family, the deacons and spiritual leaders of this church that sacrifice and give of their time and effort for the sake of the church, the teachers and workers and leaders and volunteers, together they are worthy of respect and honor, even double honor Paul suggests.

Honor Yourself. Does the bible say to honor yourself? The bible says of us, **“What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor.” Psalm 8:4-5.** God bestowed honor and value and worth upon us as human beings when he created us in his own image. You have value. You are worthy of honor because you are God's creation. That's why it matters how you live; how you treat yourself and how you allow others to treat you. The bible says, **“Flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a person commits are outside the body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body. Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your body.” 1 Corinthians 6:18-20** Honor God by honoring yourself, your life, acknowledging who you are.

Honor yourself by living according to God's word. Respect your body as the temple of the Holy Spirit and show honor to your body by saying no to sexual immorality. Honor God and

yourself by living a holy life; honor your boyfriend or girlfriend by abstaining from sex until marriage. It's what the bible tells us to do. Honor yourself by honoring God with your body.

Honor One Another. Because we have been created by God in his image, we are to show honor to one another. And because we have been redeemed by the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, we are not only his creation, we are his possession and his children. We have been bought with the price of his blood and we have been adopted into the family through our faith in Jesus Christ. We are now heirs of God, his children, and that makes us brothers and sisters together in the family of God. That means we are to love and honor one another. The English Standard Version of Romans 12:10 reads, **“Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor.” Romans 12:10.** Go out of your way to show honor to each other. Go beyond in showing honor to someone today! Thank that nursery worker that took care of your infant or toddler. Thank a children's worker or a youth sponsor. Honor a choir member that sang. Honor a veteran today. Show honor to those workers on Wednesday night that served your meal. Send a note to someone thanking them for what they said, what they did, how they encouraged you. Tell your Sunday School teacher that worked so hard to prepare that lesson that you appreciate the time and effort that went into the lesson. Go out of your way to show honor to the waitress or waiter that serves your lunch today. Tip them generously. Outdo one another in showing honor. Let others know how you value them. Family members, church members, friends, employees, especially fellow believers and followers of Christ. Love one another and show honor to one another.

Honor the Lord. Above all, the Lord our God is worthy of our honor, our love, our service, our praise, our devotion, our everything. Honor the Father who gave his only Son that whosoever believes in him would not perish but would have eternal life. Honor the one who loved us and gave himself for us when we were still dead in trespasses and sins. The triune God, Father, Son and Spirit are worthy of our honor, our devotion, our love and our praise.

John in the Revelation saw worship being offered in heaven. **“In a loud voice they sang ‘Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!’ Then I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and on the sea, and all that is in them, singing: ‘To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power for ever and ever!’”**

Revelation 5:12-13

He is worthy of honor and worthy of praise. How do we show him the honor he is due? Through the prophet Isaiah the Lord said, **“These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.” Isaiah 29:13** It is not just with our lips. We dishonor him when we say “I’m a Christian and I love Jesus” but then we allow sin to dominate our lives. We dishonor him when we live as we choose rather than living a life surrendered to and pleasing to Jesus. We honor him when we surrender our lives to him and truly live for him and obey him. Remember that verse again from 1 Corinthians 6, **“You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.” 1 Corinthians 6:20**

Let’s honor God with our choices, with our bodies, with our words, with our actions, with our whole hearts and lives surrendered to him. And when we are surrendered to him and honoring him, I believe we will want to honor those around us. We recognize we belong to him and he wants to use us to honor others. He wants to use us to bless others and point others to Jesus!

Honor to whom honor is due. Let’s live honorable lives. Let’s live lives that bring honor to Jesus. Stop and ask yourself, is there someone I should be honoring in my life but I’m not? What can I do to change that and begin showing them honor? How can I best show honor to my parents, to those in authority over me, to my pastors or spiritual elders? How can I show honor to others around me? If you are married, are you honoring your husband, your wife with your words, your actions, the way you talk to them or about them? And what about your relationship with God? Are you honoring him with your lips only, or are you truly honoring him with your life, with your body, with your choices? Is there something you need to change?