

First Presbyterian Church of Birmingham  
Thy Will be Done: Believe  
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Exodus 4:10-17; Matthew 5:1-11

Covid has brought so many changes and has given those who are willing many teachable moments. Who knew you could work from home and get things done? Who knew schools would be closed and parents would have to stay home with their children? Who knew churches would be closed? Who knew that so many people would end up working from home permanently? Everyone has been affected by covid and those who were willing to be teachable learned and adapted. My daughter was one who had to learn.

She was blessed with a new job during the pandemic which required her to work from home. With no previous home office, this meant having to go buy a desk, and a chair and everything else. They don't tell you where to shop or give you money for it all, but they give office supplies, the desktop, computers and what have you.

So, we went shopping for an office desk and chair at Ikea; everything was nicely packed in an orderly manner. Everything put in place. All we had to do was follow the manufacturer's instructions to put the pieces together! We thought we had it under control, it seemed easy...but we didn't read the instructions, and as you can imagine, the table didn't look quite right and we had to start from scratch! Neither of us had a teachable attitude. We thought we could put the desk together without following directions. So, we ended up learning the hard way. The second time around, following instructions made construction easier, faster, and perfect. Being teachable sometimes seems like a waste of time, but skipping a step can end up in a disaster.

I wonder if Moses would have done any better with the desk, because he did not always have the most teachable attitude. His assignment was to free the Israelites out of Egypt by following God's instructions. God tried to teach him something. But Moses had excuses, he was stubborn. In our scripture reading we hear Moses saying, "O my Lord, I have never been eloquent, neither in the past nor even now..." "I am slow of speech and slow of tongue." The Lord asked him "Who gives speech to mortals?" God already knew where Moses came up short and that through Him, Moses was capable. God was going to be with Moses every step of the way. God kept on assuring him, "I will be your mouth and teach you what you are to speak!" And still Moses said, "O my Lord, please send someone else." In the end, Moses, like my daughter and I, was going to have to learn the hard way.

If Moses did have a teachable attitude, what would it look like? Maybe it would be like Matthew 5:1-11. I say this because these people were ready: they sat, they listened, they were open to learn from Jesus, and because of their teachable attitude they learned wonderful things. They learned that God blesses the merciful, the downtrodden, the humble, the hurting, those that seek his righteousness, the peacemakers the ones that heal, reconcile differences and sow peace.

They learned something the world would not have taught them. They learned new things they would not have learned from anyone else but Jesus. What they learned gave them hope. What they learned let them know they were loved regardless of how bad their situation seemed to be. This was all because they were teachable. And just like those people sitting at Jesus' feet, we too can be teachable.

Let me tell you one reason I know that being teachable matters today. I grew up with a Christian upbringing. My dad was a minister of religion and my mum, an evangelist. We started attending Sunday school at a very early age, learning to read, memorize Bible verses and to pray. My parents instilled the importance of God's word in our day-to-day lives. We had devotions in the morning before school and evening before going to bed. We had Bible study from day one! A foundation was laid down for me in a loving way by my parents and they set a very good example throughout their lives. Knowing God as a child and growing in his Word helped me in the decision to go into ministry. Even so, I knew there was more that I could learn.

That is why I enrolled in the seminary to expand my knowledge. It helps to have mentors in ministry, preparing one for future ministry opportunities. I am here as an intern to sharpen my ministry skills: preaching, worship leadership and more, and to learn what it takes to be a good and effective minister. I have learned so much in the short time I have been here, and I am looking forward to everything I have yet to learn.

Being teachable has nothing to do with how educated you are. It is an attitude that we can all cultivate. We must be humble to be teachable. I read some place that, "When we think we have things figured out, we're not teachable." There is always something new to learn, and you can learn from everybody and anybody. The teachable learn new things every day because they listen, learn, and grow. Reading books, keeping an open mind, talking less, and listening more, keeping up with what is going on around you, and having a desire for continuous improvement is important.

Being teachable in the Word of God involves reading the Bible and acting on what you learn. It involves Bible study and being taught the word of God and having your questions answered. Reading devotionals is another way. This helps us learn what God has in store for us. The Bible has so much for us to learn, it is not a book like any other that you read to the end, and you know everything. Every time you read it you learn something new, if you have a teachable spirit. You can never have enough of the Bible because God always has something new for us to learn.

Everybody's Church is blessed for having a teachable attitude. This attitude is shown in so many ways: Bible Study, being inclusive and welcoming, taking care of the community, Rejoicing Spirits, Faith Community Coalition on Foster Care, Matthew 25 initiative, just to mention a few. A teachable attitude makes a very big difference everywhere. The last question is: are you willing to be an eternal intern with me by having a teachable attitude?

Prayer: Lord I praise and thank you for your word and for the ability to learn, give us the humility to pursue wisdom and to follow your instructions. We are praying for an open mind and a teachable attitude. Thank you for your faithfulness and your promise to guide us, instruct us, correct us, comfort us and for being with us wherever we go. Help us to develop the commitment to study your word diligently. In Jesus' name, Amen.