

Resistance

Victory over Pride • Message 9

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Prayer Points for Prayer Time:

1. Pray that we will recognize when pride is moving into our hearts.
2. Ask God to give the people of Brookwood strength to resist pride and focus on Him.
3. Pray that we will continue to keep Jesus at the Center.

Scripture Reading:

Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.'" Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Matthew 4:5-7 (NIV)

A. Introduction

Three Temptations of Jesus:

(Matthew 4:1-11)

1. **Lust of the Eyes. (greed, envy, jealousy)**
2. **Lust of the Flesh. (indulgence, sexual immorality)**
3. **Pride of Life.**

In 1864, a physician named Ignaz Semmelweis stumbled onto a theory we now call germ theory.

In those days, everyone thought diseases would spontaneously generate in the body because there was something wrong with the body, like having too much blood or getting too hot or something like that. Doctors would go between patients without ever washing their hands, and so doctors would go from working on the corpse of a dead person to delivering a baby, which is why death rates in the hospitals were so incredibly high.

Semmelweis began to suspect that they were carrying diseases with them in small particles, invisible to the human eye. He didn't know what to call them, so he called them "**microbes,**" literally "**little pieces of flesh.**" He tested his theory by having just the interns wash their hands with water and a little chlorine before delivering babies. He found the mortality rates went down dramatically.

But even then, the doctors wouldn't accept the theory because the idea that all this destruction was caused by something that small seemed crazy to them.

At a famous conference, he pleaded with these doctors, "*Gentlemen, for God's sake, please, just wash your hands!*" Nobody listened for about two decades until Louis Pasteur came along. Even his own wife didn't believe him! He died in an asylum. People couldn't believe again that something so small caused that much damage.

Let me suggest to you that there is a sin that seems small that many people will write off as a pardonable sin. But I think it has infected and caused more spiritual casualties, maybe more than any other sin.

Our church will never move forward to reach its full potential, and you won't experience the fullness of Jesus in your life until you deal with this issue.

This small, subtle thing I speak of is pride.

B. Victory over Pride

Today, I want to talk to you about finding victory in pride. So, let me ask you three questions about pride.

- 1. What is PRIDE?**
(Matthew 4:5-7. C/R: Genesis 3:5-6)

Pride is self-centeredness.

- a. Self-Inflated.**
- b. Self- Deflated.** (self-pity, low self-esteem, feeling sorry for self)

If we were to meet a truly humble person, we would never come away from meeting them thinking they were humble. They would not be always telling us they were a nobody. The thing we would remember from meeting a truly gospel-humble person is how much they seemed to be totally interested in us. Because the essence of gospel-humility is not thinking more of myself or thinking less of myself, it is thinking of myself less.

C.S. Lewis

Humility is self-forgetfulness. (I was wronged by someone at a previous church and a mentor said, "Humiliation would hurt less if we were more humble." ... I hate you)

If I were to give a phrase to a prideful person ... They walk into a room and say, "Here I am."

A humble person walks into a room and says, "There you are!"

Now Satan tries to tempt Jesus as well with pride.... notice what it says...

Then the devil took him to the holy city and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. "If you are the Son of God," he said, "throw yourself down. For it is written: "He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone." Jesus answered him, "It is also written: 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

Matthew 4:5-7 (NIV)

See, Satan tells Jesus, ... *Just exalt yourself. Test God.* ... He actually takes Psalm 91 and quotes it... so it's important to know that Satan knows this book, and he will even try to use it against you.

Do you know how many times people have taken a part of the word of God to fit their narrative?

But pride is elevating ourselves above others and God. See, we must not forget that God doesn't exist to serve us; we exist to serve Him. Sure, He loves us, but faith is all about keeping Jesus at the center, not us...

Now, this wasn't the first time the enemy attacked with these tactics. In fact, when you look at Adam and Eve, this is how they were attacked.

Adam and Eve were tempted in the garden by Satan...

Three Temptations of Adam and Eve: (Genesis 3:5-6)

- 1. They saw the fruit. (Lust of Eyes)**
- 2. Longed for fruit. (Lust of Flesh)**
- 3. Thought they would be like God. (Pride of Life)**

Christians have always been, and will always be, lured by the same three temptations Eve and Jesus experienced. Satan doesn't change his methods; he doesn't have to because they continue to be successful.

2. Why is pride a PROBLEM? (James 4:6-7. C/R: Isaiah 14:12-15)

- a. Pride is hard to spot.**

As seriously dangerous as pride is, it's equally hard to spot.

In his essay on undetected pride, Jonathan Edwards points out seven sneaky symptoms of the infection of pride.

Seven Symptoms of Pride

- 1. Fault Finding. (complaining, slander, criticizing others)**
- 2. Harsh Spirit. (argumentative, cold love, manipulating)**
- 3. Superficiality. (image management, change to environment)**
- 4. Defensiveness. (offended easily, bitter, hold others in contempt)**
- 5. Presumption before God. (irreverence, lack of faith in God's power and goodness)**
- 6. Desperate for attention. (worth in others' opinions, feel constantly on, driven by success)**
- 7. Elevating powerful people. (long to be recognized by the powerful, neglect the weak, judge)**

- b. Pride is in opposition to God.**

... Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. ...
James 4:6b-7a (ESV)

This is a tough phrase. God is opposed to you. And who do you think is going to win between you and God? God.

Pride is a big deal...

Every one of us struggles with this... PLEASE, PLEASE, PLEASE don't make the mistake of thinking something small like pride doesn't cause all sorts of spiritual casualties.

Pride caused Adam and Eve to take and eat the fruit. Pride caused Satan to fall like lightning. Pride caused the removal of King Saul from power. Pride caused the Pharisees to crucify Jesus. Pride will cause the favor of God to fall from your life.

Jonathan Wesley preached 40,000 messages ... when he was in his late 80s, he was frustrated that his doctor only let him teach 14 times a week.... and this was his journal entry... *I feel laziness creeping in....*

Monument outside of his house about him...

Reader, if you feel constrained to praise the instrument.... STOP... and give God glory...

Compare that with Satan. Listen to what he says...

How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! You said in your heart, "I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High." But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit.

(Isaiah 14:12-15 NIV)

Satanism is really about worship of self. Notice how many times he says, *I will*. Satanism is a kingdom of I will.

Here's the scary thing for some of us ... Our Christianity looks a lot more like Satanism than it does Christianity...

It's not about us... it's all about him. That's why we say Jesus at the center... because you can't have Jesus at the center and have pride... only one of you can be King and Lord of your life...

3. How do you DEAL with pride?

(James 4:6-7)

Humble yourself, or God will humble you.

How many of you have ever said or had this said to you: *"I brought you into this world, and I can take you out."*

How many of you are in counseling because of that phrase?

Now, I will say this might not be the best parenting tactic, but when a parent says this, they are saying, *You need to change this now, or there will be consequences ...*

Thomas Aquinas once wrote,

"In order to overcome pride, God will punish certain men by allowing them to fall into sins of the flesh, which though actually are less grievous than pride itself, are outwardly more shameful . . . From this indeed, the gravity of pride is made manifest. For just as a wise physician, in order to cure a worse disease, allows the patient to contract one that is less dangerous, so that the sin of pride is shown to be more grievous, by the very fact that as a remedy God allows some of them to fall into other sins."

Thomas Aquinas

... Therefore it says, "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Submit yourselves therefore to God. ...

James 4:6b-7a (ESV)

I'm sorry. /I forgive you. (no excuses)

Not my will, but Your will. (you don't quit God when it doesn't go your way)

I'm happy for you. (celebrating others,)

I believe the best in you.

Self-forgetfulness isn't a bad thing. It frees you up to keep Jesus at the center; it frees you up for more peace and love and joy...

I'm convinced the only way you can truly love others and be humble is by the blood of Jesus. What I mean is that you don't try to change yourself; you let Him change you... He makes you into something new.

So, we don't fight for Victory ... we fight from it...

Next week, I'm preaching on what I consider an anchor passage.