

An antidote for pride - Sunday 30th August, 2015

“For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.” Romans 11:36

Beloved in The Lord,

“God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble.”(James 4:6)

It is of uttermost importance that we keep this truth fairly and squarely before us all of the time. In the previous two sermons, we have contrasted the attitudes of the first two kings of Israel – Saul and David. We saw that Saul was rejected by God, because of his disobedience and pride, and that David was described by God as “a man after my own heart.” David was humble and his heart was pliable and soft toward God. Because of this, he experienced God’s favour and blessing.

We also considered the fact that pride was the cause of Lucifer’s downfall. By lifting up himself, he fell and lost his position and became Satan and will end up in eternal punishment in the lake of fire. We also saw that Satan’s greatest weapon against man is pride.

We read in the book of Proverbs how God views pride: ***“Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; Assuredly, he will not be unpunished.” (Proverbs 16:5)***

These are very strong words indeed, but they are the truth. If we want to live in God’s presence, if we want the light of His grace to shine upon us, if we seek His favour then we must purge our hearts of all forms and traces of pride.

The Apostle Paul warns us: ***“Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed that he does not fall.” (1.Cor.10:12)***

It is so important that we look into our own hearts and check that there is no pride lurking there. We must make sure that the leaven of pride has not made an appearance. We know that a little leaven (yeast) affects the whole dough. Not much is needed to start the process and to affect the whole lump of dough.

Pride is very poisonous, and if we allow it to reside in our heart, then we will quickly fall from God’s favour. Pride is rebellion against God. When we are proud we rob God of the glory that is rightly His and His alone. When we are proud we take glory that is due to God and we take it for ourselves.

Our foundation text today reminds us that to God alone belongs all the glory, honour and praise. Paul writes: ***“Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! ³⁴ For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? ³⁵ Or who has first given to Him that it***

might be paid back to him again?³⁶ For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.” (Romans 11:33-36)

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. Here we have the antidote for pride. Write this truth into your heart with indelible ink. ***For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. (Therefore) to Him be the glory forever. Amen.***

John writes on this subject: ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.² He was in the beginning with God.³ All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being.” (John 1:1-3)***

All things came into being through Christ Jesus the Lord. Nothing exists apart from Him. So we have this truth restated that everything is dependent upon God who has revealed Himself to us through His Son Jesus Christ the Lord.

When, and if we grasp this truth, then we are free and on the right path in life. Everything is from Him, and we are to do all things through Him, and for His glory.

Jesus taught about this using an illustration from nature. He taught about the vine and its branches:

“I am the true vine, and My Father is the vinedresser.² Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit, He takes away; and every branch that bears fruit, He prunes it so that it may bear more fruit.³ You are already clean because of the word which I have spoken to you.⁴ Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.⁵ I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing.” (John 15:1-5)

Jesus makes it very clear and simple. We know that if a branch is broken off the vine, it will no longer be able to bear fruit, because the sap will no longer flow through it. If our life is separate from Christ the Lord, then we are not able to bear fruit because the Holy Spirit does not flow through us.

Jesus taught that apart from Him we can do nothing. Here we have another great and powerful antidote for pride. We need to remind ourselves that apart from Jesus we can do nothing so to Him be all the glory. If God decided to take away His breath from you, you will die. God can make your heart stop beating at any time, and there is nothing you can do about it. We are absolutely dependent upon Him.

This is why it is important to knowingly, willingly, humbly submit all to Him in faith.

When we humbly submit to Him in faith, then we are raised up and God can use us to bear good fruit for His kingdom. When we bear good fruit, God is honoured and glorified and we are blessed.

Jesus said that the Father, being the vine dresser, cleans out the vine so that it would bear more and better fruit. This is what God is doing with today's sermon. He is speaking to our hearts, so that with His Word, our hearts would be cleansed and purged of all pride, and that we would humble ourselves before Him and that we would go forth and bear much fruit for His kingdom.

Sometimes the pruning, the cleansing is painful. In nature, a vine dresser prunes back the vine very thoroughly, in order that it brings forth new growth and the fruit would be good. The Bible teaches us: ***"fixing our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.***

³ For consider Him who has endured such hostility by sinners against Himself, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

⁴ You have not yet resisted to the point of shedding blood in your striving against sin; ⁵ and you have forgotten the exhortation which is addressed to you as sons,

***"My son, do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord,
Nor faint when you are reprov'd by Him;***

***⁶ For those whom the Lord loves He disciplines,
And He scourges every son whom He receives."***

⁷ It is for discipline that you endure; God deals with you as with sons; for what son is there whom his father does not discipline? ⁸ But if you are without discipline, of which all have become partakers, then you are illegitimate children and not sons. ⁹ Furthermore, we had earthly fathers to discipline us, and we respected them; shall we not much rather be subject to the Father of spirits, and live? (Hebrews 12:2-9)

When God disciplines us, it is always because He loves us. He is shaping us and raising us to live a life that honours Him always. He loves us so much, and He desires for us to be like David: "A person after God's own heart."

So then, as we just read, we should submit to God's discipline. May we humble ourselves before Almighty God and ask that God The Holy Spirit show us what lies in our hearts. May He illuminate any traces of pride, any self glorification, anything that is not pleasing to God. Then may we repent and be cleansed and may we give God alone all the glory, honour and praise.

We read in Psalm 100:

Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth.

² Serve the Lord with gladness;

Come before Him with joyful singing.

³ Know that the Lord Himself is God;

It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;

We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

⁴ Enter His gates with thanksgiving

And His courts with praise.

Give thanks to Him, bless His name.

**⁵ For the Lord is good;
His lovingkindness is everlasting
And His faithfulness to all generations.**

This Psalm is a great antidote for pride. We should read it and meditate upon it often. We should engrave verse three on our hearts: ***“Know that the Lord Himself is God; It is He who has made us, and not we ourselves;”***

A constant reminder of this truth will keep us from pride. We saw last week that the road upwards is the path of humility. Today we have received teaching on how to remain on that path. May we remind ourselves everyday that:

For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen.”

Amen

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All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.