

Empire Church of the Brethren

Sunday Service Sermons

09 July 2023

Pride: The Destructive Self

Text: "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall". *Proverbs 16:18*

Pope Gregory the Great (AD 590-604) divided all sins under seven headings.

He believed that every sin a person commits can be classified under these seven categories.

These seven words have come to be called "the seven deadly sins."

Sometimes they are referred to as "the seven cardinal sins."

They are pride, anger, envy, impurity, gluttony, slothfulness, and greed.

These are never listed together in any single passage, they are continually condemned in Scripture.

How about calling them the seven things that get in the way of our relationship with Father God?

Or: The seven things to avoid if you want to be God's person and find favor with him in how you live your life.

We are going to take the time to look at each one of these in detail and how they come between us and God.

Today's sin is at the head of the list because many think that all the other problems grow out of this one.

The Scriptures for today each make a point about pride.

They come from proverbs and warn us of putting ourselves first.

Pride is often the source of our troubles.

Proverbs 16:18 says, "Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall".

What all does pride include?

Arrogance, haughtiness, insolence, contempt, snobbery, presumptuousness, rudeness, sassiness, audacity, disdain, and impudence.

There are other attitudes and actions that can come from pride but the foregoing list covers the main problems with putting self first.

Unchecked pride alienates us from our fellow humans.

It may be a feeling of superiority based on racism, nationalism, intellectualism, social station, spirituality, or materialism.

Regardless of its basis, smugness that causes one to swagger before humankind and strut in the presence of the Almighty is a harmful detriment to anyone's future.

No one lives out his life without making mistakes.

Most of us make some serious errors that require our families or our friends' support.

When this happens, the boastful braggart is often left to stew in his own brew.

Pride is hated by God.

"The Lord detests all the proud of heart. Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished". *Pro. 16:5*

The pride that God hates is not a healthy self-respect.

Some Christians have the impression that it is a sin to believe in yourself, your talents, or your capabilities.

These people try to develop an attitude of false humility that denigrates or belittles their musical talent, wealth, intellect, or spiritual maturity.

Such efforts are many times a kind of reverse pride.

The more they play down their God-given abilities, the more others will heap praises on them.

These people are playing at humility in order to get others to build them up.

The pride that God hates is an arrogant haughtiness.

This is one who thinks more highly of himself than he ought.

Believing that God has given one the wisdom to always be right in judgments or leadership is arrogance.

Other members of the church are also guided by God's Holy Spirit, and their collective wisdom might be truer to God's will than one self-appointed leader.

The punishment of God is promised to the conceited, self-inflated soul.

The latter part of *Proverbs 16:5* says, "Be sure of this: They will not go unpunished."

The country expression that sums this up is: "The chickens come home to roost."

Whatever seeds one sows in life, he or she reaps.

Sooner or later there is a day of accounting.

Pride leads to humiliation.

"Pride brings a person low, but the lowly in spirit gain honor." *Pro. 29:23*.

Unhealthy pride is a form of self-deification.

"Every man would like to be God, if it were possible; some few find it difficult to admit that impossibility." Bertrand Russell.

Adam and Eve's sin was one of a desire to be like God, knowing the difference between good and evil.

Human's desire to control their own destiny leads them to believe, falsely, that they actually can control their emotions, attitudes, abilities, and intellect without God's help.

Such faulty reasoning has led to secular humanism.

Adam and Eve were brought low for their sin of pride.

God promises to do the same to all who do not accept their dependence on God.

Sadly, some churches have such a well-oiled, institutional machine that they can keep the organization moving temporarily even without God's leadership.

But the reverse is also true, that is, a truly humble person is elevated to leadership.

If you are talented, you seldom, if ever, have to tell people.

Admirable qualities usually find their way to the surface.

This last verse tells us that the humble man gains honor.

Jesus put it another way.

He said, "Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth." *Matt. 5:5*

We have seen that God abhors the common sin of pride and brings judgment on the one who lets pride become a lifestyle.

But God has many rewards for the one who is genuinely humble.

True humility is found in Jesus Christ.

He is a perfect example of intelligence, power, fame, ability, and leadership.

Yet he never used these qualities selfishly or in conceit.

Consequently, we are encouraged to become "like Christ" and this is done by believing that he is God and that he alone can guide our lives.

Will you surrender our life totally to him and let him bring you into the Kingdom of God?