TODAY'S ORDER OF WORSHIP

Welcome by: Bobby Rader Opening Prayer by: Daniel Balch
Morning Assembly Song Leader: Danny Balch

#444 Anywhere with Jesus
#659 I Love To Tell the Story

Scripture Reading by: Rock Cary
#509 I Will Sing the Wondrous Story

Communion Devotional by: David Smith
Lord's Supper and Contribution

#611 Heavenly Sunlight
Sermon: "Almost Doesn't Count"
Luke 23:13-25

Almost Persuaded
#874 Walking Alone at Eve
Closing Prayer by: James Scott

Small Groups

Our Small Groups will meet tonight.
Ken Coleman's group will meet at the building at 5:00 p.m. If you have signed up and not been contacted, get with Bryant or one of the Elders.

Other Opportunities For Spiritual Growth

Sunday: 9:00am — Bible Study Classes, 10:00am — Worship, 5:00pm — Worship
Wednesday: 6:30pm — Bible Study Classes

Apr. 2, 2023

"Stand Firm in…Liberty"

Galatians 5:1

God Opposes the Proud

Last week, we wrote here about the problem of temptation. Today, we want to discuss what is in many ways the root of all temptation: pride. The 18th century Anglican clergyman Thomas Adam declared, "Pride thrust Nebuchadnezzar out of men's society, Saul out of his kingdom, Adam out of paradise, Haman out of court, and Lucifer out of heaven." Even if I'm not entirely sure about that last one, it is no wonder that Scripture repeatedly calls pride a sin. To foreshadow our sermon series a bit moving forward, James writes, *Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you* **(Jam 4:10).** Citing **Proverbs 3:34,** he says, *God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble* **(4:6).**

Augustine called pride the greatest of all sins, because it means we displace God and worship ourselves. C.S. Lewis has an entire chapter devoted to pride in his classic word, *Mere Christianity,* entitled "The Great Sin." He writes: "According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison…Pride leads to every other vice: it is the complete anti-God state of mind."

Pride is an insidious thing. It invades every facet of our lives. We can be proud of ourselves. We can be proud of our accomplishments. We can be proud of our possessions. We can be proud of our country. We do all these in a way that robs glory from the one who deserves it—God. We can even be proud of our humility! Like a fellow I knew who, without a shred of irony, once told me, "You know, I'm one of the most humble people I know." That's something, but it's not humility.

So how do we deal with this issue in a culture that tends not merely to not view pride as a negative, but, in fact, celebrates it as a virtue? It is true that pride can be used in a good sense, even in Scripture. Pride in the sense of self-respect and dignity is admirable, even necessary. We are created in God's image, and so we should never disparage ourselves; we have worth. We cannot love our neighbor as we love ourself if we don't have a healthy self-love!

But Scripture usually sees pride as an evil. It is synonymous with arrogance, self-importance, conceit. And it is repeatedly called a sin. It is something that God hates (**Pro 6:16-19**). *Haughty eyes and a proud heart…are sin* (**Pro 21:24**). It is one of the sins that characterizes degenerate society in **Romans 1.** In fact, if you recall from last week, the *pride of life* is one of the avenues used in temptation.

What are some of the negative consequences of pride that we might have to deal with? For one thing, it causes us to overvalue material things. We are plagued in our society with trying to keep up with the Joneses. We buy things we do not need, with money we do not have, to impress people we do not know. We end up trusting in our possessions, talking about ourselves and taking care of our own, all the while forgetting that we don't really have anything—all of our blessings are ultimately from God and belong to him. We would have nothing if not for his goodness. Of course, we can also be proud of our poverty: if we make a show of our humble circumstances, that's not humility. True humility allows us to put material things in their proper place: blessings from God to be enjoyed for what they are.

Family News & Notes

WHAT'S HAPPENING WITH YOUR CHURCH FAMILY

Our Sick

Russell Godby had surgery last week to remove one 0f his legs above the knee.

Continued Prayers
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Geri Cryer, Steve Ward, Oscar Cantu, Caitlin Smith, Virginia Cole, Ka'Leisha Jones, Linda Frank, Ken Coleman, Joe Edd Stifflemire, Donna Wilson, Bryan Senegal, Cynthis Deblanc, Patricia Prater, Richard Prater, Edna Semien, Wilson Semien, Gloria Moore, Betty Spencer, Willie Spencer, James Wilson

Shut Ins
(Need cards, phone calls & visits)

Jim Smith, Winona Angelle, Myrtle Sheffield, Catherine Parker, Peggy McIntosh, Lois Watts, Willo Dean Ellis

Our Missionaries

Aaron & Marisa Bailey in Montepuez, Mozambique , Rod Kyle in the South Pacific

Upcoming Activities

Elders, Deacons, Minister meet Monday, Apr. 3rd at 6:30 p.m.

We will have a Houston Food Bank truck on Tuesday, April 4th at 8:00 a.m.

Primetimers will be meeting at Mike's BBQ and Steak in Dayton on Tuesday, April 11th at 6:00 p.m. A sign up sheet is on the bulletin board.

We will have a meal this Wednesday night at 5:30 p.m. in the family life center.

Elders	Deacons	Minister
Ken Coleman	Zach Arthur	Bryant Perkins
Bobby Rader	Daniel Balch	
Don Taylor	Danny Balch	
Robert Ward	Walden David	
	Gus Tristan	

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Pride also causes arguments. *Pride...breeds quarrels* **(Pro 13:10 NIV).** If you put 2 know-it-alls in the same room, you have the irresistible force and the immovable object; neither will back down or admit they might be wrong, and the arguments continue on and on. *Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be wise in your own sight.* **(Rom 12:16).** I like the way the Living Bible paraphrases that: *Don't try to act big ... And don't think you know it all.* Those arguments provoked by pride could be avoided if we would humble ourselves.

Most seriously, a lack of humility inhibits our relationship with God. For one thing, it will prevent conversion. We must humble ourselves *like a little child to enter the kingdom*, as Jesus says **(Mt 18:4);** meanwhile, Felix's stubborn pride kept him from responding to the gospel **(Acts 24:25).** Then, too, we have to humble ourselves to confess our sins. It's not easy to say, "I'm sorry—I was wrong." But we need to be able to say that to God **(1 Jn 1:8-10) a**nd to others **(Jam 5:16; Mt 18:15-17).** Perhaps most dangerously, we can be tempted to trust in our own virtues rather than the grace of God. The Pharisee in **Luke 18,** for instance, was guilty of this sort of pride. Whenever we find our religious life is making us feel superior, we can be sure that is the Devil acting on us—not God. He is perfectly happy to see us become virtuous, all the while filling us up with pride, because it is a spiritual cancer; it eats away the possibility of contentment, service, and love for God.

So how can we overcome pride? Well, first of all, we have to realize that we are proud. That's actually a big step! At least, nothing can be done before we do that. If we think we aren't—like my friend who boasted of his humility—it means that we are very conceited indeed.

Secondly, we need to remember our own fallibility. We all make mistakes, we make bad decisions, we say things that are stupid and do things that are embarrassing. One of the things that makes Paul admirable is that he never glosses over his past. Again and again he reminds himself and us, "I am the chief of sinners, saved by the grace of God." It's alright to feel good about yourself in a healthy sense. But we need to stop and remember our fallibility too; it will help us develop proper humility.

Thirdly, we need to remember God's sovereignty: He is in charge. As Americans, we particularly value self-reliance. We must reach the point where we will come before God and say, "God, I need help! I can't save myself. I can't change myself. I need you." I am as guilty of trying to do it alone as anyone. We must come to God and admit that He's in charge and in control.

Finally we need to develop a sense of service, of being willing servants. Jesus summed up his mission in **Mt 20:28** that, *The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many*. I think particularly of how he demonstrated that by washing the disciples feet in **John 13.** This was the most menial of tasks, yet he was willing to humble himself, to serve, to do it. The whole purpose of it was to teach them humility. They had just been arguing about who was greatest; he cleansed their feet to cleanse their hearts of pride. But how many in the church are still trying to be on top instead of reaching for the towel?

Bryant Perkins