

Faith (Part Six)

Pride

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Remember that the themes of the sermons that I have been giving the last couple of weeks have been drawn from Luke 17 and 18. What Jesus is teaching about are the steps that need to be taken in order for one to be prepared for the time of the end. We have seen that faith is critical for that time, and now Jesus turns His attention in a different direction. But we are going to see, in one sense, it is not really all that different.

Luke 18:9 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others:

Think about "trusted in themselves" in relation to what the instruction was in the parable just before that. It was about enduring, persevering faith. That concluded with, "When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on earth?" He is speaking about people who trust in themselves.

Luke 18:10-14 Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector [or a publican]. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men - extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God be merciful to me a sinner!' I tell you [Jesus said], this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be abased, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Why is it so critical that Jesus would zero in on this subject, which is a contrast between pride and humility, directly after the admonitions on faith and persevering in prayer? Well, the reason is because humility is essential to right relationships - most importantly with God, but with men as well.

Notice some things in particular about this parable about these two men. In verse 9 it says that the Pharisee - this certainly refers back to him - was a man who despised others. What we are dealing with here is religious egotism. "Despised others" means to count as nothing. If you despise something, you count it as nothing. How can I have a good relationship with somebody that I despise? Can I have a good relationship with God if I am one who exalts himself against Him? Can I have a good relationship with somebody in my neighborhood, somebody at work, maybe even my wife or my husband - can I have a good relationship with them if I despise them, if I exalt myself over them?

Can we have strong faith in God if we despise Him, if we do not have a good relationship with Him? I think if you begin to think about this question, you will find that the parable is intimately related to the subject that goes before - "shall the Son of Man find faith on earth?" - because now we are dealing with something that is going to determine whether or not there is going to be a good relationship with God and, therefore, faith with God.

What this begins to show is that we are dealing with a misguided confidence in the self which causes a person to magnify himself and actually brings a person at war against God. So on the one hand we have a self-applauding law-keeper. That is what he says here. He said, "I do not do as other men. I am not an extortioner. I am not unjust. I am not an adulterer."

You see, he is saying, "I keep the law." He is not like the abased publican, who is the other one. Yet, I want to bring to your attention that even though the publican was obviously a sinner, even he admitted it, both of these men, though there is a contrast, they are very much the same in another area and that is that they are both sinners. They are simply sinners in different areas. It is not that Jesus is talking here about one who is simply good and the other bad. Both were alike, but the outward form of their sin or sins was different.

The proud one, the one who exalted himself, deluded himself into believing that he had a righteousness that he did not possess. His prayer is full of self-congratulations: "I am not as others." You see, "I . . . I . . . I . . ." He says it five times. It is kind of a circle, his prayer is, with him at the center. There is no lowly feeling expressing what he owed God, no thanksgiving for what God had given him, no praise for what God is. He asked for nothing in the

prayer. He confessed nothing and, of course, he received nothing. He did not get justified. But there is a very pronounced comparison with others. The man was filled with conceit and totally unaware of it.

The publican on the other hand, did not delude himself into thinking that he was righteous, and he was not. Remember, though, something as we go on here - Jesus, in another place, said the publicans and sinners go into the Kingdom before the scribes and Pharisees. A great deal of it has to do with the fact that the publicans can see that they are sinners and the scribes and Pharisees cannot, and this hindered their relationship with God, as we are seeing very clearly here in Luke 18.

What made the difference was the true evaluation that the publican and sinner makes of himself in relation to God as compared to the evaluation that the scribe and Pharisee made of himself in relation to God. So the difference in this parable is that the one found himself only good, the other found himself only bad.

How different in approach to God the two are! Anyone who thinks that he is going to supply anything of worth to the salvation process is deluding himself. The one flattered himself and was full of self-*commendation*. The other sought mercy and he was full of self-*condemnation*. Their approach and attitude toward God and self were poles apart. One may as well have been at the North Pole and the other at the South Pole.

The one stood apart because he was not the kind of man to mingle with others who were sinners, or I might say, inferiors. I really think that applies better to the overall sermon. The other stood apart because he considered himself unworthy to associate himself with others. The one haughtily lifted his eyes to heaven; the other blushed to even look up. The one was puffed up with merit, the other pleads for mercy.

Are you beginning to see why the publicans and sinners with go into the Kingdom before the scribes and Pharisees? The hallmark of true Christian character is humility, and a person can be truly humble only when he sees himself in proper comparison to God. Then, he can see himself in proper comparison to other men.

Jesus draws attention to humility in other places and one that comes to mind right here and now is that it is the very first of the beatitudes that is listed, only called there being "poor in spirit." The Pharisee is shown here praying to himself or within himself. His god was himself as revealed by his pride.

Pride is a sin that all of us are guilty of, and it is going to take a lifetime - or as long as God gives us - to overcome it. I think everyone of us loathes it when we see it in others, but we having a very difficult time admitting that it is a part of us as well. And yet the very first step to overcoming it is the honest recognition of its lodgement in our personality.

C.S. Lewis, the English scholar and writer - he wrote a great deal on moral issues - (I do not know that he was actually a theologian but he wrote a great deal on moral and religious issues) said, "Nothing can be done about overcoming it until one first sees it in himself. If you think that you are not conceited, it means you are very conceited."

Dante Alighieri in his "Divine Comedy" listed seven deadly sins. Listed first by this man was pride because, according to him, it was the father of all the others, and incidentally there is biblical indication of this as well, as we will see as we go along. Pride is the father of much stubbornness, vanity, conceit, anger, temper tantrums, self-righteousness, fighting, judging, impatience, persecution, self-confidence, competition, lying, and presumptuousness.

Let us turn to the book of Proverbs where God through Solomon makes an interesting statement.

Proverbs 21:4 A haughty look, a proud heart, and the plowing of the wicked are sin.

Some Bibles may refer you to the margin where it says in regard to plowing, the "light." A light is that which gives guidance. This verse seems to confirm much of what I said above because what it is saying is that as plowing prepares the way for the production of the earth, so does pride prepare the way for the production of other sins. Another way of looking at it is that pride is the guide, you see, that leads the way to other sins.

The haughty look is put here in order to show comparison. It occurs on a person's face when he is looking down in terms of an attitude towards another, and so the haughty look is put there to show comparison because perverted comparison is at the heart of this sin, pride.

Do you know that a person who has this problem is greatly hindered from knowing God because he does not have the right comparison to make between God and himself? Unless we can perceive God as so high above us that He is beyond adequate comparison - God Himself says, "Who will you liken Me to?" He challenges us to try to make a comparison and there is nothing adequate that we can come up with.

He is so holy, so righteous, so pure, so intelligent, so great, so awesome, so powerful, so much of everything, that man is way in over his head when he begins to try to make an adequate comparison to God. We are only in His image, and maybe there is a greater difference between us and the reflection that we get of us in a mirror than there is between God and us. And we know that the reflection that we get of us in a mirror that we look into, we know that it is not us and it does not even begin to compare with what we are. We are only in the image of God. But yet we are going to see that the proud exalt themselves against God and that is what hinders the relationship with God. A man's perspective of God ultimately is what determines his perspective of men, including himself.

Pride in the dictionary is defined as "an undue sense of one's own superiority, importance, or worth." It means "inordinate self-esteem." That is a word that is in pop psychology today - self-esteem. Everybody needs self-esteem. That is what they are saying. Well, pride is an inordinate self-esteem, according to my dictionary, and its synonyms are self-esteem, conceit, vanity, and vainglory. Its antonyms are humility and modesty.

Look at these comparisons: pride manifests itself in disdain or haughtiness and arrogance toward others. Now look at these shades of differences: pride manifests itself in disdain or haughtiness or arrogance toward others. Self-esteem gives more deference to one's opinions than others grant. Conceit is an exaggerated opinion of one's ability or worth. Vanity is seen as an excessive desire for admiration and praise. Vainglory is undue boasting

about ones' accomplishments. But all of them can be encompassed within the single term "pride," as we are going to see as we go along here.

Let us go back to the New Testament again in the instructions in I Timothy 3, regarding what to look for in ordaining an elder. It says to not ordain,

I Timothy 3:6 . . . a novice, lest being puffed up with pride he fall into the same condemnation as the devil.

There is a little bit of disagreement over the word "condemnation" here. Some commentators say that it ought to be translated "criticism" or "snare," but I think from what it says in Ezekiel 28, we can be safe in saying that Helel was created far different from the Satan that he became, that pride was what led to Helel's downfall by providing motivation. It plowed the way, and it completely obliterated his knowledge of God and His power, and eventually it produced rebellion.

Paul's warning here is that a converted person can fall into this snare, or this criticism, or this condemnation, if he is not mature enough to fight and overcome its influence. If he does not recognize it, he is really in trouble. There will not be any fight at all. If he does recognize it and he is mature, then it can be overcome, because he will do the things necessary to make sure that it is in check. As long as there is a Satan the Devil, and as long as we are human, and as long as we have this human spirit, and as long as that spirit can be triggered by Satan the Devil, then we can fall prey to this if we are not aware of its working within us.

Let us go back to that scripture in Ezekiel 28 where God weaves together a tapestry here. Sometimes He is directly talking about the king of Tyre, at other times He is talking about Helel, and at other times it seems as though the two of them are blended together. In verse 14 it is clearly talking about Helel.

Ezekiel 28:14-17 You were the anointed cherub who covers; I established you; you were on the holy mountain of God; you walked back and forth in the midst of fiery stones. You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you. [Notice God did not create Satan the way that he

is. He created the beautiful Helel.] By the abundance of your trading you became filled with violence within, and you sinned; [Interesting that he states that the violence was within first. In other words, it seems as though he is indicating turmoil on the inside of him, a battle going on.] Therefore I cast you as a profane thing out of the mountain of God; [He is still talking about Helel here] and I destroyed you, O covering cherub, [that is put him down] from the midst of the fiery stones. Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor; I cast you to the ground, I laid you before kings, that they might gaze at you.

Helel was not a snake. He was not a serpent. He was not a crocodile. He was not what men would like to picture him as being. He was a powerful, supremely intelligent, and beautiful, free moral agent - an angelic one. But because he could not control his thoughts in making comparisons, his intellect, authority, and his beauty led him to feel superior to others, to misuse them and circumstances solely for his benefit. Perhaps even the knowledge of God's plan affected him - just speculating a little bit here.

Perhaps he knew God was eventually going to create man into this kind of a being with these thoughts beginning to arise about how beautiful he was and how intelligent he was, and how powerful he was, and what an important position he had, and that he was going to have to serve these clay things made in the image of God, and prepare them to actually be higher than him? What a put-down! I do not know that it was that way, but it is certainly possible that it was and maybe, if this indeed was part of the mix of his thoughts, his pride motivated him to stop that plan. It was plowing the way, it began to move him in another direction. He felt that he had a better way and that better way began with knocking God off his throne.

Isaiah 14:12-15 How you are fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! How you are cut down to the ground, you who weakened the nations! For you have said in your heart: [See there is that internal thing where this battle was going on as indicated or implied there in Ezekiel 28.] 'I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars [the angels] of God; I will also sit in the mount of the congregation [way up there at the throne of God] on

the farthest sides of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High.' Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol. . .

Now ask yourself, have you ever had the thought that you know better than those in charge? All of us do. Watch out! I am not saying that you are wrong, but this is one of the things that lodged itself in Helel's mind: "I know better than the one that is in charge," and in this case, it was God. Do you begin to see how the pride was beginning to exalt itself against God? It was moving to break the relationship between the two of them. It was coming between Helel and God so that the relationship could not continue; he could not continue to serve God.

Have you ever felt that you have been overlooked? Have you ever felt that you have been neglected or abused? Have you ever felt that you have been rejected? Again I am not saying that of and by themselves these thoughts are wrong. I am only saying, watch out, because the thought is now there that can begin to generate the feelings of pride. This is what fed his feelings about himself. They were the simmering things that brought anger and the desire to be able to assert his will to control the governance of all that was going on. "I will ascend to heaven," and he tried it, and we have a pattern here so that we can see the process involved from where it begins to where it will end.

Do you see the picture? It ends in warfare against God, and that is why a person of pride cannot have a good relationship with God. A person of pride cannot have faith in God, at least not very much. I do not mean that there will not be some faith. It will be there, but it is definitely going to be a hindrance and that is why that parable in Luke 18 follows right on the heels of the one at the beginning of the chapter - "Will the Son of Man find faith on earth?" - because humility is essential to faith.

Ephesians 2: 1-3 And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience, among

whom also we all once conducted ourselves in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, just as the others.

Okay now, look out! Satan is the father of pride, and it is that spirit of his that he is pumping into us that is the father of pride, and therefore the father of all that pride begets: depression, frustration, self-centeredness, self-pity, and rebellion. Because they are going to be part and parcel of that other list of things that I gave you a little bit earlier. Only this time now we are talking more about feelings, emotional qualities, rather than qualities of a person's character.

Satan is so slick; he is so subtle. Do you know that he will use pride to help someone overcome simpler vices? Have you ever heard the advice for the rebuke, "Where's your pride? Why if you had any kind of pride you would not be doing what you are doing." And so we begin to think, "Well, after all, a man of my station should not be doing such small, mean things" (by "mean" I mean small things, unworthy things). And so what it is, it can actually be a motivation of overcoming one evil by means of another evil that is far more difficult to deal with and one that eats away like a spiritual cancer. As I said, perverted comparison is at the heart and at the core of this sin, but it is not always very easily seen. Very frequently what is seen is that the fruits, the effects, of perverted comparison are more easily seen and this seems to be the approach that the Bible concentrates on in its instruction.

Now the Bible shows what pride does to a person and, in turn, what a man then does when he has it toward others. Let us begin this section of the sermon by going back to the book of Psalms.

Psalm 10:1 Why do You stand afar off, O Lord? Why do You hide Yourself in times of trouble?

The Psalm begins with a question. The person has evidently been observing something in life, and he is very badly bothered about it. Maybe he has been praying about it, thinking about it for quite a period of time and we find as we read on that what has been bothering him is: why is it that proud, evil people prosper? Why does not God take action? Why does it seem as though these people who are proud and wicked seem to get the good things out of

life? Well the benefit that we get from this person's musings, or his meditations, is instructions on the way the proud act. I think that it is instructive.

Psalm 10:2 The wicked in his pride persecutes the poor. . .

I told you in the past that poor in the Bible does not necessarily mean without money. It does not mean poverty-stricken. It is more likely to mean someone who is weak, someone who does not have power. Sometimes the two go together. Somebody who is poverty-stricken is also weak. There are other people - and most of us would be in the category - who are not starving, who are not poverty-stricken, but who are weak. We have little or no influence anywhere and you can see that politically. We have no power. I think that you feel, generally, taken advantage of by people who are in positions of power, whether in government or business, whatever it is you feel that you are taken advantage of, and in many cases, maybe most cases, it is true.

Psalm 10:2 Let them be caught in the plots which they have devised.

The first thing we see here is that the proud, the wicked, persecute the poor. It means hotly pursues after. It means takes advantage of. It means always has to get the best of, very competitive. It means that this will show itself in business dealings, in law courts. These people will be indifferent to the weak or the poor's need and are very adept with crafty and malicious plans. These people manipulate people to their own end. They use others.

Psalm 10:3-4 For the wicked boasts of his heart's desire; he blesses the greedy and renounces the Lord. The wicked in his proud countenance does not seek God; God is in none of his thoughts.

Now we see it as a form of idolatry. We see it generating boasting - he boasts of his heart's desire. He vaunts himself and he drives himself toward what he covets. Think of this in relation to Helel. Such a clear example. He drove himself to where he went to war against God, a war that anybody in their right mind could see that they could not possibly win. But his pride

obliterated the reality of what he was doing. And if it affects Helel that way who was able to see God with his own eyes, what is it going to do to a man? It will drive him in the same way against God and it will drive him toward what he covets.

We can see then very clearly what they seek is mammon - mammon not just being money, but material things. This is why Jesus said you cannot serve God and mammon, because the proud is actually serving the mammon. It has become his god. You cannot serve God and mammon because they are opposites. See how pride drives a wedge between a man and God? It is because it is plowing the way before the person, and opening up an easy path to go in the wrong direction. We see, then, this person renouncing or defying God while vaunting himself. Therefore he puts an inordinate confidence in himself and his abilities, but he plows right on without seeking God's counsel through prayer, study, or the counsel of others.

The commentators insist that even though it says there that God is in none of his thoughts that the person is not really an atheist. Where would you get an idea like this? It comes from things like the publican and the Pharisee parable. Was the Pharisee vaunting himself? Was the Pharisee exalting himself? Was the Pharisee full of pride? Did he go into the temple to pray? Did he believe in God? Yes he did. That is why the commentators can say that the proud does not put God out of his mind.

He is not really an atheist, but he has a perverted comparison of what God is. He renounces God, maybe not verbally, but he renounces Him in what he does, and his attitude toward himself and others, and it shows that he is really not seeking God. So the proud may openly express belief in God, but the proud also choose not to have Him totally in their lives. And so they are selective, especially in application to themselves - I am talking about the Word of God, anything that would reduce their self-esteem.

I have observed through the years that in many, many cases in marital problems, the man has a strong ego problem, and you know the way this tends to come out with me? He is very unwilling to seek help. The overwhelming majority of times it is the wife who is the one who seeks the help. The man thinks he can handle it himself. That is one reason. Also you see pride breeds the fear of exposure and that feeds on his self-image,

because then his image of himself would be damaged if he had to come to a minister to get some counsel in regard to his marriage. He would be less thought of by the minister and even less thought of by himself because, "I must really be weak." It is interesting to view these things.

Psalm 10:5-6 His ways are always prospering; Your judgments are far above, out of his sight [meaning God's]; as for all his enemies, he sneers at them. He has said in his heart, "I shall not be moved; I shall never be in adversity."

It is kind of interesting here. The indication is that he continually causes problems for others, and then there is again a reference to his self-confidence. We will get back to verse 6 in a little bit.

Psalm 10:7 His mouth is full of cursing and deceit and oppression; under his tongue is trouble and iniquity.

God is saying here that he uses his tongue to put down. What we would say here today besides "put down" is that the proud plays one-upmanship very well. Have you noticed in a lot of the banter that goes back and forth that many remarks we make are rather on the cutting side? That they are funny, amusing put-downs of somebody's looks, somebody's ways, habits, whatever? A little bit of pride, maybe a lot of pride showing through. It is one-upmanship. He is sneering at, putting the other down. And then you see the other side of that coin that as he puts the other one down, he elevates himself. Then he uses his tongue to make himself look good or come out on top, and if we carried this further, even if he has to lie or to distort. There's an interesting comment in Psalm 119:69 where the author there says that:

Psalm 119:69 The proud have forged a lie against me.

Now why lies? For two reasons: One is to better obtain whatever it is that he covets, and the second is to uphold and protect his image and to build it up to what he imagines it ought to be.

Psalm 10:8-10 He sits in the lurking places of the villages; in the secret places he murders the innocent; his eyes are secretly fixed on

the helpless. He lies in wait secretly, as a lion in his den; he lies in wait to catch the poor; he catches the poor when he draws him into his net. So he crouches, he lies low, that the helpless may fall by his strength.

What God is doing here, using metaphors, is showing the hypocrisy that results from pride - appearing one way, humble, while actually looking as acutely as he possibly can for any advantage to get the better of the other person. Back to verse 6 which we will tie together with verse 11.

Psalm 10:6 He has said in his heart, "I shall not be moved; I shall never be in adversity."

Psalm 10:11 He has said in his heart, "God has forgotten; He hides His face; He will never see it."

He is so presumptuous. He has become so oblivious of God just like Helel did. So oblivious that he thinks that God will not punish nor require any payment, that God simply is not going to care.

Proverbs 3:34 Surely He scorns the scornful, but gives grace to the humble.

The subject here is God and we find that God scorns the scornful. Scorn is one of the fruits that a human will have produced in him by pride. Scorn is a contempt, it is a disdain, and it is usually done in reference to somebody who is thought of as being an inferior. The way a human being will react is that he will have a tendency to avoid the person who is deemed to be unworthy, or there will be an immediate rejection or ridicule of the unworthy person's opinions. What is the effect of this? The effect of this is to break people into cliques. Scorn divides. It divides people away.

I want to go to Psalm 138 and add something that is given here in regard to God.

Psalm 138:6 Though the Lord is on high, yet He regards the lowly; but the proud He knows from afar.

It is interesting that God's reaction is exactly the opposite. He disdains, or He scorns, the proud. Whereas the proud scorns the lowly, the proud scorns the inferior, God scorns the proud. God accepts the lowly. God accepts the one that the proud rejects. And the one who is lowly, God unites with him by giving him grace, whereas the proud puts down, rejects, and disunites the one that he scorns. I think it is a very interesting contrast between God and man.

I was going to go into Numbers 27 just as an example of the humility of Moses. I will pass by it very quickly. Numbers 27 is the appeal of Zelophehad's daughters to Moses in regard to an inheritance. Their father died without any sons. He just had five daughters as far as I know and they were left without an inheritance. It is very interesting to do some reading about this because, again, any commentators who go into any kind of detail in regard to this say that it was something that was virtually unheard of considering the times because a woman's station in society was only slightly higher than a child's. The child was always on the lowest level, socially. That is why Jesus said you have to become as a child. A woman was just slightly higher, and all of society revolved around men.

Moses did two things that are very interesting. He not only heard the appeal of these ladies, he humbly admitted he did not know the answer. He took it to God. God not only heard it, He gave more than the ladies asked for, which is an interesting response, because all they asked for was the land. God came back and said you can not only have the land, but you have the right to pass it on just as if you were sons of Zelophehad. It was in their power completely.

The point is this that no leader under God can afford *not* to listen with fullest attention to the lowly. He cannot afford *not* to listen to the counsel of the lowly. He cannot afford to be in a position of attitude in his mind where he is not listening to the people that he is supposed to be ruling. It is a very important lesson and a very important principle of law came out of Moses' humility, his meekness, his willingness to hear, where other leaders of his day very likely would have not even accepted those women before their presence. I wonder if you realize (I did not realize it until I was researching this sermon), that there are only two cases in the life of Moses where a woman came before him. I am talking about coming before him for either a judgment or accusation or whatever. This was one of them, the other one was

Miriam. You know what happened to Miriam. Just kind of an interesting little inset.

Proverbs 13:10 By pride comes only contention, but with the well-advised is wisdom.

Another way of stating this is that only through pride does contention last. Now remember we are still looking at the effects of pride because very frequently pride is difficult to detect. God has shown in His Word how to detect it. You detect it by looking at the fruits. How do you know false prophets? By their fruits. It is what they produce.

Only through pride does contention last. What he is saying here is that a quarrel that could be easily settled if both parties were humble continues indefinitely when parties are arrogant. Why? Because pride plows the way. It lights the way for contempt for the other's opinion. What it does is it inflames passion and it wounds feelings. Because of the competitiveness, which is also an aspect of pride, the person feels they have to fight back. And so it goes back and forth.

If you are ever involved in an argument or a quarrel that seemingly will not end, be well advised from God's Word that the problem is pride. It is somewhere in the picture in one or both who are participating in it. The quarrel will never stop until one person makes up his mind to stop it by stopping arguing back, cramming the feeling that they he has to win. I know I told a man in the Hammond church one time at a deacon's meeting that one of the greatest spiritual advances that I ever made in my life when it suddenly dawned on me one day, I did not have to win. God is on His throne, and because God loves me, and because God loves the other person, God will make available to us what the right decision is. If we ask patiently persevering without anger and continue to meditate and think and search and counsel with Him, the answer will come. So arguments stop.

Job 12:1-3 Then Job answered and said: No doubt you are the people, and wisdom will die with you! But I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you. Indeed, who does not know such things as these?

Interesting attitude, is it not? These four men were involved in an argument, brethren. It was three against one and Elihu was sitting off to the side listening to all this going on. Job continues,

Job 13:1-2 Behold, my eye has seen all this, my ear has heard and understood it. What you know, I also know; I am not inferior to you.

Job 15:1-4 Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered and said: Should a wise man answer with empty knowledge, and fill himself with the east wind? ["Job you old windbag," - that is what he said there.] Should he reason with unprofitable talk, or by speeches with which he can do no good? Yes, you cast off fear, and restrain prayer before God.

There are put-downs all over the place here indicating pride. "I know just as much as you do - nyeah, nyeah, nyeah, nyeah, nyeah, nyeah." Perverted comparisons are what we are seeing here. His argument raged on because pride makes a person stubborn and self-justifying and holding on to opinions and even in some cases, opinions that we know are wrong, but we just have to win. Human nature is really perverse.

It is interesting because God showed who was right in this case. I do not say that He is always going to do this, but He certainly showed in chapter 42 that Job was the one who was right in this case and the other three men were wrong. We do not have to go to it, but it is in Job 42:7-8.

Let us go back to the New Testament again, this time in I Corinthians as we continue to advance through the fruits that come from pride. In I Corinthians 8 we have instructions to a church that was proud to say the least. They were proud of their gifts. The fruit of it was that the congregation was dividing up, this group against that group. Apparently it had divided up - I am of Paul, I am of Apollos, I am of Cephas, I am of Christ - at least four or five different ways, maybe more. Those are the only ones that he mentions. But pride was having its evil work in the congregation.

I Corinthians 8:1-3 Now concerning things offered to idols: We know that we all have knowledge. Knowledge puffs up, but love edifies. And if anyone thinks that he knows anything, he knows nothing yet as he ought to know. But if anyone loves God, this one is known by Him.

Pride makes those who have it bold and rash. It makes them, or renders them, careless of the feelings of others. It leads them to openly ridicule and condemn others, others who do not believe exactly as they do. Again you are seeing that it is an aggressive self-confidence. There is an old saying: "When people learn a little, they imagine a lot." It is the tag end of this saying that we remember most frequently. "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing."

Now I will read them together. "When people learn a little, they imagine a lot. A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." That is the whole quote. Thus proud people are often hair-splitting, hypercritical, setting people one against the other, dividing congregations and families. Paul is asking, "Is this love?" No, it is not. And so what Paul is doing here is warning against dependence on simply knowing something since a person never knows all that he ought to know about a given subject. Such an attitude then exhibits a complete dependence on one's own self-sufficient knowledge. The person is puffed up.

We are leading to something here. Let us go back a couple of chapters. We see another fruit of pride.

I Corinthians 5:1-2 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and such sexual immorality as is not even named among the Gentiles - that a man has his father's wife! And you are puffed up [proud, arrogant] and have not rather mourned, that he who has done this deed might be taken away from among you.

Pride takes sin lightly. It produces complacency because in the proud person's eyes the perverse comparison makes the self better than others. In this same situation the humble would be filled with shame, remorse, and grief over what hardly stirs an emotional chord, a ripple, in the proud. It did

not seem to affect them at all. Paul said they were yet carnal, and that is what they did in relation to pride. Let us go back to Proverbs again as we continue to move along here.

Proverbs 25:27 It is not good to eat much honey; so to seek one's own glory is not glory.

Remember how Jesus warned against this on the Sermon on the Mount when He told us to do our spiritual devotions, I will call them, privately. To fast privately. To pray privately. We do not have to let all kinds of people know that we are studying God's Word. We do not have to blow trumpets when we do good deeds. But the pride that is in a person leads a person to make sure that he is recognized and honored for what he does.

I want you to notice that it does not say that what the proud did is not a good work. You see, it may indeed be a good work. But for him to make sure that he gets the glory does the same to him spiritually as eating too much honey does physically. It tastes awfully good going down, but it erupts in serious consequences later on. That is the lesson. For one to seek his own glory is going to erupt in something that is not going to be good for the person.

This next verse is a neat one:

Proverbs 26:16 The sluggard is wiser in his own eyes than seven men who can answer sensibly.

A lazy person is proud? We have a saying: "Poor but humble." Well, all too frequently a reason that a person is poor is because he is proud. That is what God is saying. It is just the opposite. Do you know why many wealthy people become wealthy? It is because they are willing to take advice and apply it. They humbly listen to the counsel of those who are experienced and say, "Well, what should I do?" They take the advice from those who are already successful and they follow that advice and they become successful. Their humility led them to seek counsel and then follow the advice. On the other hand, the poor are frequently poor because they either will not seek the advice, or if they do seek the advice they find reasons not to apply the advice.

That is what God is talking about here. God is saying that laziness is a sign of pride. The person thinks so much of himself that he thinks things should come to him without working, and so he justifies. He says, "Well, the conditions really are not quite right." "If I am going to do that job I need a new car." "Well, that job is too far away." "Well, the pay really is not enough for all that I would have to do." "Well, if I go there I am going to have to move." You see what I mean? He is wiser in his own eyes than seven people who can render a sensible reason. And at the root of it is pride. We would hardly think of a person doing that who is out of a job and needs one desperately. There it is. At the root of it is pride.

Isaiah 3:16-25 Moreover the Lord says: "Because the daughters of Zion are haughty, and walk with outstretched necks and wanton eyes, walking and mincing as they go, making a jingling with their feet, therefore the Lord will strike with a scab the crown of the head of the daughters of Zion, and the Lord will uncover their secret parts." In that day the Lord will take away the finery: The jingling anklets, the scarves, and the crescents; the pendants, the bracelets, and the veils; the headdresses, the leg ornaments, and the headbands; the perfume boxes, the charms, and the rings; the nose jewels, the festal apparel, and the mantels; the outer garments, the purses, and the mirrors; the fine linen, the turbans, and the robes. [It is quite a listing, is it not?] And so it shall be: Instead of a sweet smell [of beautiful perfume] there will be a stench; instead of a sash, a rope; instead of well-set hair, baldness; instead of a rich robe, a girding of sackcloth; and branding instead of beauty. Your men shall fall by the sword, and your mighty in the war.

Remember this section began with a description of haughtiness of the Israelite women. God describes the pride of Israel's women as showing in the way they walk, the way they dress, in the way that they use their eyes. Instead of being modestly well-dressed and dignified, the dress, the walk, the whole appearance is used to impress others. It is on the one hand, a put-down. It is designed to bring glory, attention, prestige, and publicity, too.

It is a very common thing today in society - hopefully not in the church - for parents to passively encourage their young daughters to grow up too soon

through clothing, shoes, and other pieces of apparel that are designed to draw attention to the wrong things for the wrong reasons at the wrong time. Because they give into their children's pressure, and in turn their children are giving into the pressure of their peers. So they put the pressure on the parents. God says the problem is pride.

Isaiah 3:16 is an almost savage denunciation. Why is it so hard? It is interesting to consider this in the light of when it was written, because it was written not too long before Israel fell, maybe about the same time and maybe several decades before Judah fell. Isaiah was a prophet to Judah, but before they fell, society was disintegrating badly. Morality was at a very low ebb. The reason, I feel, that it is such a hard denunciation is because of the influence that women have over the morality of the nation - because God expects them to be the primary instructor of their children on a day-to-day basis. If the character of a nation is going to be largely determined by the women in their home, and the instruction in morality and spirituality and ideals that are being passed on to their children, then a woman holds a very critical position in the future of a nation because she pretty much determines whether ideals of purity, integrity, unselfishness, and faith will prevail or fall.

It ought not to be that way because the weight of this should fall at least fifty percent equally on men. But the reality of the situation is that there is such a double standard. The weight of this has fallen very largely on women. So when that line of defense is broken, and the morality of women is dragged down, then there is no hope for the nation.

Pride distorts a person's thinking into misconceiving one's own function. In this context here, I am thinking about what is going on in the United States of America. Which will it be? Will women fill the role God designed for them, or will they fulfill the role that the world has designed for them? God is going to punish women by taking away men. That is what He says, because the next chapter begins,

Isaiah 4:1 And in that day seven women shall take hold of one man.

It is quite a punishment.

Let us conclude with this thought because I think it is important that if you are going to study into this that you begin to see this.

Isaiah 2:6-12 For You have forsaken Your people, the house of Jacob, because they are filled with eastern ways; [transcendental meditation, Indian religions, New Age religions, that are coming out of the Far East. Do we have a nation that is becoming filled with eastern ways?] They are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they are pleased with the children of foreigners. Their land is also full of silver and gold, [as he describes Israel] and there is no end to their treasures; their land is also full of horses [we may as well say automobiles], and there is no end to their chariots. Their land is also full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made. People bow down, and each man humbles himself; therefore do not forgive them [God says]. Enter into the rock, and hide in the dust, from the terror of the Lord and the glory of His majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled. [Here we are getting to the crux of the issue. Why there is such a gap between God and His people Israel. Because the pride in Israel has risen up and cut them off from God, so they form their own way that pride has plowed for them.] For the day of the Lord of hosts shall come upon everything proud and lofty, upon everything lifted up - And it shall be brought low.

Isaiah 2:17 The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be brought low; the Lord alone will be exalted in that day,

Everywhere that I could find in the Bible, it showed the same principle: pride has its roots in a feeling of wealth or accomplishment. And when I say wealth, I do not necessarily mean money, although that is included. Pride has its roots in a feeling of wealth or accomplishment. Please remember Helel and his intelligence, his beauty, and his power. But there are other things like money, position at work, skill at doing something, natural ability, social status, knowledge, strength, hair, clothing, a house, an automobile—the list, brethren, is virtually endless that can motivate this feeling of being elevated.

In the New Testament it is from the Greek, *huperephanos*, which means to show oneself above. It does not mean one that others look up to, but one who stands on his own self-created pedestal. Psychologists tell us that pride is actually a mark of inner inferiority and uncertainty, and such people compensate by over emphasizing, flaunting the qualities they think they possess that will make others think well of them.

This feeling of wealth or strength in a given area is highly relative because each person is capable of setting his own standard of comparison, regardless of what his real accomplishments are. Like the sluggard who in his conceit is wiser than seven men to render a reason, we are able to do with ourselves in areas that we think that we are good about.

Now you can think on these things until the next sermon in this series.