

**The Gospel According to Luke**  
Luke 9:37-56  
Reading: Luke 9:37-56

Sermon #42  
June 30, 2019

## **Pride, Foundation of Sin**

In our passage found in chapter 9, Luke is showing us that the disciples are not the heroes of the Gospels, they are men and like all men they are broken and in need of Christ and the Holy Spirit, they may be heroes in the future from a human point of view, but not at this point in time. They will go on in the years following the crucifixion to do great things; performing miracles and writing Scripture, but they are not the heroes. There is but one hero who rescues all who call upon him and His name is Jesus.

In this segment of his Gospel account, Luke groups together four separate accounts of the disciple's failings. They were not worthy, they were not powerful, nor are they special and they are not even all that much help. In fact, they were often an impediment to the ministry of Jesus. However, these men, these disciples were the ones chosen by Christ to be his foundation upon which his church would be built and begin taking gospel to the lost both in Israel and beyond. He loved them and they were among His elect and called to serve the kingdom of God.

Their biggest problem and shortfall was their sin of pride. They were self-centered, proud and sought to elevate themselves. The reality is that the disciples are not out of the ordinary when it comes to the sin of pride. Every human, including everyone here today at some level is prideful. We must constantly be in battle to kill the reigning pride that is in each of our hearts. Pride is behind every sin we commit. Think of a sin and you will find self-centered pride is in the mix. If we could kill pride, we could greatly reduce sin in our lives. Luke gives us 4

examples of the sinful pride of the apostles and we will explore each. We will end our time in Luke this morning with the way to battle pride in our own lives.

To prepare to engage in God's Holy Word this morning we begin with prayer. Father, help us learn from the mistakes of the disciples and the instruction of Christ, so that, we might slay the pride in our hearts and surrender more fully to our Lord and Savior Jesus. Lord help us die to self, surrender to the Holy Spirit and live for the glory of Jesus, God the Son. May your words penetrate our hearts and minds this morning and change us forever. Amen.

### **Pride Hampers Spiritual Wisdom**

Let's begin by identifying what pride looks like. Go to verse 41, "Jesus answered, 'O faithless and twisted generation...'" Continuing in verse 44, "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men."<sup>45</sup> But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying." The disciples were too consumed with where their place of prominence in the coming kingdom to understand Jesus was speaking about his betrayal and crucifixion. They lacked spiritual wisdom, for they had not received the Holy Spirit and thought Jesus was getting ready to reign in the new Davidic Kingdom and he would overthrow all who opposed Him beginning with the Romans. Their minds lacked spiritual wisdom, so they saw no other option, other than, the one that included them leading alongside of Jesus. Their pride of being chosen by the Messiah shut out the reality of Jesus' mission and impending death and they did not have a clue that beyond death was the resurrection and resurrection brought God's plan for redemption to the world. I have met people so ingrained with a thought or tradition that the facts will not penetrate them with the

truth. Two of the most obvious examples are the Mormons, of which I use be, and Muslims, which Joyce and I worked among, but also the Jews are the example of this blind pride blocking the truth; from before Jesus was crucified and certainly since his resurrection the Jewish people have been blind to who Jesus is. Our passage includes those who were blinded and did see the truth of Jesus – it includes the disciples prior to Pentecost.

Jesus' words did not fit into the disciple's template or paradigm of the Messiah. Even though we can look at what Jesus taught from the advantage of 2000 years of history, for the disciples the truth was not yet revealed and they simply did not envision the Messiah Jesus as he taught that he was. A prideful person lacks spiritual perception. At this point the disciples did not understand nor believe Jesus' reality, they were locked into their own version of false reality and therefore, the disciples were blinded by pride and lacked faith.

### **Pride Puts Self First**

Pride seeks self-promotion and leads people to be self-serving. Reading at verse 46, “An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest.<sup>47</sup> But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side<sup>48</sup> and said to them, ‘Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great.’” Is it not amazing that the disciples no sooner have Jesus bail them out of their predicament of failing to exorcise the demon - that they quickly want to fight and argue about who is the greatest. Who is the greatest disciple? That was the topic of their discussion. I can hear Peter, James and John arguing; *Peter saying, “I am the greatest because I was up on the Mountain with Jesus when all His glory could be seen.” “That may be true, but Peter you have*

*big mouth and never think before you speak,” John might say, and then adds, “at least I know when to be quiet.” Peter responds to John saying, “At least I’m not afraid to say what I am thinking, you were thinking the same thing but were too scared to say it.”* This type of argument reminds me of when my kids were still at home and the trite arguments that occasionally happened. Mark’s account says that Jesus knew what they were talking about and asked them about it but they were afraid to answer...even quick to speak Peter did not respond, why because they knew it was not right. This was not the only time this discussion is found in the Book of Luke. Right after Luke records the Last Supper again an argument breaks out as to who would be the greatest and again Jesus corrects them. I find it very odd, just something I noticed, that each time they deviated into self-focused delusions of grandeur; Jesus had just finished telling them something about His coming death.

Proud people fight for greatness and will have nothing less, even at the cost of others. This fight often means pushing others down to elevate oneself. The disciples appear to have been good at this. But, notice what Jesus does in this passage. He takes a child and places him beside Himself and makes an amazing point. By placing the child next to Him, at His side, He is giving his arguing prideful disciples an object lesson. Remember, in Matthew chapter 20, the mother of James and John wanted her sons to sit on the right and the left of Jesus in heaven. Mothers have often had ambitions for their children that are not the best or appropriate. Jesus takes the child and makes the point that it is humility and childlike faith and trust that is the key. It is the child that is at the side of Jesus not one of the disciples.

Remember in Mark’s account James and John asked to sit on the right and the left in Jesus’ kingdom and he responds, “**You do not know what you are**

asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I drink, or to be baptized with the baptism with which I am baptized?' <sup>39</sup> And they said to him, 'We are able.' And Jesus said to them, 'The cup that I drink you will drink, and with the baptism with which I am baptized, you will be baptized, <sup>40</sup> but to sit at my right hand or at my left is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared.' <sup>41</sup> And when the ten heard it, they began to be indignant at James and John. <sup>42</sup> And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> But it shall not be so among you. But **whoever would be great among you must be your servant,** <sup>44</sup> and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. <sup>45</sup> For **even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.**" (Mark 10:38-45) According Jesus, the greatest traits one can have is humility, faith, trusting God and serving others.

When we strive for greatness there is a dynamic at work in our hearts. Pride and a desire for greatness, according to the world, are fueled by *a high view of man and a low view of God*. If your life is a struggle to always have the last word or to prove you are right or to fight for self-promotion - you have moved from seeing the Lord high and lifted up - to seeing yourself high and lifted up. Hopefully as we come to the end of this message, we will all see what true greatness is based on – Jesus gives the definition beginning with a child.

### **Pride Breeds Jealousy**

I take up our passage in verse 49, "John answered, 'Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us.' <sup>50</sup> But Jesus said to him, 'Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is for you.'" I cannot think of a sin that does not have pride as its root.

That certainly includes the sin of jealousy we see here in chapter 9. The disciples cross the path of another man casting out demons in Jesus' name and they want to stop him. Their thought is - this man is not one of us and we are the ones called by Jesus, we are special, we are the true follows of Jesus, therefore, this man is not one of us and should be stopped. Further, this man does not have our permission to cast out demons. I have often seen this in denominations, which in my opinion, have done more to separate the Church of Jesus Christ than bring unity. You are either one of us or not and if not, you are one of them. As long as a church preaches the true Gospel, we should be encouraging them and praying for God's blessings to come to churches so the blessings of God might be used in service of His kingdom and to reach the lost.

There is a 2<sup>nd</sup> issue here that smites the pride of the disciples; this unnamed man was casting out demons and this is something the disciples recently had not been able to do. Their jealousy over this man's ability is rooted in their pride and desire for self-success. Often in America - churches exhibit pride, they often speak that they have more people, bigger complexes and larger cash flow than others. They equate success with worldly elements of self-promotion. ***Pride seeks the god we want but this is not the God who is.*** Changing the scriptures to the god we want is often motivated by the worldly desire to be successful – more people, more power, more money and to show they are special in God's eyes and therefore elevated and separate from others.

One final note; some people and churches and denominations will use verse 50 in an attempt to say all paths and all religions, who claim to believe in God, will get one to heaven. “But Jesus said to him, ‘Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is for you.’” However, this is not what Jesus was saying. This man had the same goals as Jesus did - the glory of the one true God. It does not matter what

name a religion uses, for many use the name Jesus, but if it is not the Jesus of the Bible then it is a false Christ leading people to a false salvation and leaving them damned. Unfortunately, the disciples, being the true followers of Jesus had set themselves up as the experts and their pride said no one could do what they did. Jesus reminds them that his kingdom has been set into motion and is moving forward and there are others involved that the disciples are not even aware of. The kingdom of God is all about Jesus and not about how special the disciples or we are.

### **Pride Judges**

We finish this passage by reading the last 6 verses, verse 51, “When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he set his face to go to Jerusalem. <sup>52</sup> And he sent messengers ahead of him, who went and entered a village of the Samaritans, to make preparations for him. <sup>53</sup> But the people did not receive him, because his face was set toward Jerusalem. <sup>54</sup> And when his disciples James and John saw it, they said, ‘Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?’ <sup>55</sup> But he turned and rebuked them. <sup>56</sup> And they went on to another village.”

Luke includes this account and groups it with the others to show us that the disciples are not the heroes of the Gospel accounts. There is only one who is great, Jesus the Christ. Yet, in this brief account we see that the disciples in their prideful state are ready to deal out death and judgment. Jews had always hated the Samaritans and the disciples were no different. The Samaritans as a result of this animosity built another worship center on Mount Gerizim (**gher·ee·zeem**).

I am sure you remember the encounter with Jesus and the Samaritan woman at the well. In the course of their conversation, Jesus was asked about the difference between worshipping in Jerusalem verses Mount Gerizim. It was a very

volatile topic for the Samaritans. At this point in time Jesus sets “his face to go to Jerusalem” and the age-old debate resurfaces. The village rejects Jesus and the disciples. As a result, James and John come up with a solution – “Lord, do you want us to tell fire to come down from heaven and consume them?” This is a pretty arrogant statement considering they had failed to cast out a demon and of course, arrogance is based in pride. James and John thought that Jesus’ mission was a mission of judgment much like Elijah in 1 Kings by getting rid of the opposing forces. Elijah confronted the Baal worshippers and priests and, in the end, called down fire from heaven to destroy their worship. However, Jesus’ mission is not a mission of judgment but a mission of reconciliation. His mission was not to destroy the enemy but to have the enemy switch his allegiance from the world and the prince of this world to the One true God and Creator.

We see that the disciples were basically proud and clueless – the Spirit had not revealed the eternal truth to them at this point, so they were spiritually blind and motivated by pride. Again, Jesus rebukes them. What is the solution to pride?

### **Pride Opposes Humility**

Humility is the opposite of pride. If pride leads us into sin, humility leads us into righteousness. Humility is seeing ourselves the way God sees us. It is the ability to see yourself for who you really are – it is not seeing ourselves through our prideful perception of who we think we are. As the prophet Isaiah wrote 800 years prior to Jesus’ ministry, Isaiah shows what the Lord desires, “All these things my hand has made, and so all these things came to be, declares the LORD. But this is the one to whom I will look: he who is humble and contrite in spirit and trembles at my word.” (Isaiah 66:2) Pride is the foundation of all sin. Humility is the foundation of righteousness. Pride is the foundation in which sin is built and leads



to wickedness. The opposite of pride is humility. The virtue of humility allows us to know God in an ever-increasing way.

I want us to take notice of the flow in this verse from Isaiah. Humility leads to real contrition and genuine humility and contrition deepens into trembling in awe at God's Word. Humility makes one sensitive to God's Word, motivating and equipping us to hear with heart and mind and this brings spiritual wisdom. Paul's humility led him to work out his salvation "with fear and trembling" as he tells us in Philippians 2:12. King David's humility led him to "rejoice with trembling" as he wrote in Psalms 2:11. Humility enhances and deepens our love for God's Word. Humility enables to let go of the world and ourselves and live by faith. Humility enables one to joyfully tremble at the greatest of God and the smallness of ourselves, it results in one being eager to obey and actively seeks God's encouragement and correction.

The key to learning humility is seeing yourself the way God sees you, and the key to doing that is to see Christ as glorious and the only hero of our faith. As we see Jesus in the right light, the bright light of his glory, then we will begin to see ourselves correctly. You see, my beloved, we are the disciples in this story, seeing ourselves through the eyes of fallen pride thinking that somehow, we could tell Jesus what to do. We do not command Jesus, we are to surrender to him.

As we read our Bibles, we see Christ in all His majesty. We see His person glorified and our selfish egos begin to disappear. We also learn about His work for us and this results in our seeing Christ high and lifted up. An indication that you are, in fact, progressing in humility is that you begin to take God's Word very seriously – and let its eternal truth penetrate you heart and mind to the point of

trembling before it. Trembling before a holy God who has given you the gift of salvation.

The disciples did not let God's Word of the Old Testament penetrate their minds and they did not recognize Jesus was speaking and teaching the Word of God to them until later. At this point Jesus' words did not make sense because they did not fit their ambition and desire for their own glory. ***Pride tries to conform God's Word to fit a person's desire but humility sees that we are the ones to conform to God's Word.*** The key to progressing in humility is to see God's Word as authoritative and conforming our lives to its doctrine and ethical teaching and this will lead to desiring that our lives bring God glory. It is that simple, but it is not easy – spend time in God's Word each day to empower you to slay pride and replace it with humility before a holy God. Amen and amen!