

March 10/2019

## Pride & Humility

Good morning everyone! Today I will be preaching on a subject that God's Word speaks much about. We will be searching the scriptures through the Old Testament and through the New Testament. The title of this sermon is Pride and Humility. I hope to show you a good Biblical view of pride and humility and some practical application for our day-to-day lives. Honestly, it has been a joy to prepare and to study this subject. I hope that what have prepared is fruitful for you, because I know it has sure been fruitful for me.

Bow with me as we pray for God to grace us with understanding in this subject.

**Proverbs 8:13 "The fear of the Lord is hatred of evil. Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate"**

**Proverbs 11:2 "When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with the humble is wisdom."**

**Proverbs 13:10 "By insolence comes nothing but strife, but with those who take advice is wisdom."**

**Proverbs 15:33 "The fear of the Lord is instruction in wisdom, and humility comes before honor."**

**Proverbs 16:5 "Everyone who is arrogant in heart is an abomination to the Lord; be assured, he will not go unpunished."**

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

**Proverbs 16:19 "It is better to be of a lowly spirit with the poor than to divide the spoil with the proud."**

**Proverbs 18:12 “Before destruction a man’s heart is haughty, but humility comes before honor.”**

**Proverbs 21:4 “Haughty eyes and a proud heart, the lamp of the wicked, are sin.”**

**Proverbs 21:24 “‘Scoffer’ is the name of the arrogant, haughty man who acts with arrogant pride.”**

**Proverbs 26:12 “Do you see a man who is wise in his own eyes? There is more hope for a fool than for him.”**

**Proverbs 27:1-2 “Do not boast about tomorrow, for you do not know what a day may bring. Let another praise you, and not your own mouth; a stranger, and not your own lips.”**

**Proverbs 29:23 “One’s pride will bring him low, but he who is lowly in spirit will obtain honor.”**

**Psalm 10:2-4 “In arrogance the wicked hotly pursue the poor; let them be caught in the schemes that they devised. For the wicked boasts of the desires of his soul, and the one greedy for gain curses and renounces the Lord. In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek him; all his thoughts are, ‘there is no God’.”**

**Psalm 138:6 “For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly, but the haughty he knows from afar.”**

**2 Timothy 3:1-5 “But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of difficulty. For people will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, heartless, unappeasable, slanderous, without self control, brutal, not loving good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having the appearance of godliness, but denying its power. Avoid such people.”**

This is what God’s Holy writ says of pride. What does the world say of pride?

First off, the world has disregarded God at every turn and at every opportunity. God has been brought low and man has been exalted and praised. Man in his proud heart scoffs and says, "There is no God", as we just read in Psalm 10. Man says, "I am not accountable to God's law, I will be judge my actions for myself". Society, as a whole, has ceased to give God thanks and has stolen the credit that is due to him and him alone. We take all of the credit when things are going in our favor, but when things go sour; we put the blame on God. We, with raised chins, shake our fists at God and say "Why are you so against us? Why are you cruel and so aloof? How can you just sit back and watch people suffer and die? The truth is: we all deserve to die. We have no right to even be alive right now. God, in his perfect justice, should wipe all of us out of existence. But in His grace, we stand with breath in our lungs and a hope for a future with Him in eternity. Praise God for His never-ending mercy upon our lives!

A.W Pink once said, "This is an age of blatant irreverence. Wherein lumps of animate clay dare to prescribe what the Almighty ought and ought not do"

Pride is defined as "a feeling or deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's own achievements, the achievements of those with whom one is closely associated, or from qualities or possessions that are widely admired". Even within this definition, we can see that God is excluded or not even mentioned. Man is puffed up and elevated, while God is not even in the picture. Truthfully, we do not deserve any recognition when it comes to any achievements in our lives. We should always be looking to God, giving credit, honor and praise to Him for any good in our lives. Why is this such a battle within us? When we look at God in His faithfulness and in His sovereignty, why would we want or even desire to be recognized? It should be our deepest joy to see the Lord high and lifted up. God is not in Heaven watching to see how everything is going to play out. This world, all of creation and all that takes place in existence are not open to chance. God knows that we will fail. He knows that He is needed. God does not need us! Do you know what He rightly desires? He desires for us to recognize Him, for us to praise Him and for us to give Him thanks- for us to come to Him in humility, with nothing in our hands.

We have nothing special to offer to Him. What He desires is confession, and recognition of our sinfulness and our deep need of a savior.

**Romans 1: 18-23 shows the state of this world so clearly. It says, "For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things".**

Charles Spurgeon once said, " Oh how ten-thousand fold merciful is God, that, looking down upon the race of man, he does not smite it out of existence."

Do you see this haughty attitude in our society? Do you see this iniquity within yourself? At each moment of sin, we disregard God and His Word and we look to our own interests. We can see that reality, from the beginning of time, starting in the Garden of Eden. In the book of Genesis, we can see this wickedness played out with the fall of man. Turn with me to **Genesis 3:1-7. It says, "Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, 'Did God actually say, 'you shall not eat of any tree in the garden?' And the woman said to the serpent, 'We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden, but God said, 'You shall not eat of the fruit of the tree that is in the midst of the garden, neither shall you touch it, lest you die.' But the serpent said to the woman, 'you will not surely die. For God knows that when you eat of it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil.' So when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was to be desired to make one wise, she took of its fruit and ate, and she also gave some**

**to her husband who was with her, and he ate. Then the eyes of both were opened, and they knew that they were naked. And they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves loincloths.”**

Adam and Eve sinned against the Lord because they did not trust His one and only command. They believed, in that moment, that their decision was wise and that God’s command was subpar. They came to believe that God was withholding something good from them. They had misguided confidence that the Devil’s promise would come to pass and that they would reach an understanding apart from God. **Proverbs 14:12 says, “There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way to death.”** And **Jeremiah 17:9 and 10 says, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately sick; who can understand it? I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.”** We can see that both Adam and Eve followed their own reasoning and hearts desires, which led to death. **1 John 2: 15-17** lines up so clearly with their actions, **“Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the father is not in him. For all that is in the world- the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and the pride of life- is not from the father but is from the world. And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.”**

We, like our first parents, have a sinful bent to put our trust and confidence in what we can taste, what we can see and what we can feel or discern. We desire an immediate reward or a particular visible outcome that feels right to us. When we make decisions, if the outcome seems right we assume that the decision was correct. But if the outcome fails to line up with our expectations, we believe that we made the wrong decision. This logic is so dangerous and misleading. We must base everything on the Word of God. As the Apostle Paul states, we must separate ourselves from a confidence based on the flesh. **Philippians 3:3 says, “For we are the circumcision, who worship by the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh”.**

We have to remember that any confidence that we may have comes from God himself. We must place our trust in God’s Word and what He said is true, no matter the outcome.

A.W Pink said this, which fits so nicely here. "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths (Proverbs 3:5,6). To acknowledge the Lord in all our ways means that instead of acting in self-sufficiency and self-will, we seek wisdom from above in every undertaking of our earthly affairs, beg God to grant us light from His word on our path, and seek His honor and glory in all that we attempt."

Why is pride so sinful? Like I stated previously, it aligns with the mentality of the world and its passions. It disregards God and what He said is true. What else? It aligns with the attitude and fallen character of the Devil.

**Isaiah 14:12-15 says, "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star, son of Dawn! How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low! You said in your heart, 'I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; I will sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north; I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.' But you are brought down to Sheol, to the far reaches of the pit".**

**And Ezekiel 28: 12-19 says, "Son of man, raise a lamentation over the king of Tyre, and say to him, thus says the Lord God: 'You were the signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering, sardius, topaz, and diamond, beryl. Onyx, and jasper, sapphire, emerald, and carbuncle; and crafted in gold were you settings and your engravings. On the day that you were created they were prepared. You were an anointed guardian cherub. I placed you; you were on the holy mountain of God; in the midst of the stones of fire you walked. You were blameless in your ways from the day that you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you. In the abundance of your trade you were filled with violence in your midst, and you sinned; so I cast you as a profane thing from the mountain of God, and I destroyed you, O guardian cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Your heart was proud because of your beauty; you corrupted your wisdom for the sake of your splendor. I cast you to the ground; I exposed you before kings, to feast their eyes on you.**

**By the multitude of your iniquities, in the unrighteousness of your trade you profaned your sanctuaries; so I brought fire out from your midst; it consumed you, and I turned you to ashes on the earth in the sight of all who saw you. All who know you among the peoples are appalled at you; you have come to a dreadful end and shall be no more forever.”**

Look how God deals with Lucifer in his iniquity. Lucifer was a signet of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty... And who are we? If you, sitting here today, are not hidden in the Lord Jesus Christ, please be reconciled to God! Do you believe that God sent His one and only Son to die in your place? Did Christ bare your sins on that cross? In particular, with what we are looking at now, did He bare your detestable pride on that tree? Do you trust in the finished work of Christ on that cross? Do you believe that He drank the wrath of God for you? People, God will not wink at your sin of pride. The sin of pride is so serious my friends. We all fall short in this area, more than we know. That's why it is so crucial that we are hidden in Christ. God the father is so opposed to those who remain under the curse that He had to send His perfect son to live life perfectly for us, to die for us and to raise from the dead for us! We must come to the Father in humble confession- this is how we combat pride in our lives. It's a daily laying down of our own wills and praying that His will would be done. Do we, like the Devil, believe that we can ascend above God and rule above His established, righteous throne? Do we have any right to play the judge or make any decision apart from the Lord's regard? This is absolute foolishness! Yet God will damn many to Hell because of this sin. For example, let's look at the book of Isaiah. This is what God has said to the house of Jacob concerning their iniquity.

**Isaiah 2:6-17 says, “For you have rejected your people, the house of Jacob, because they are full of things from the east and of fortune-tellers like the Philistines, and they strike hands with the children of foreigners. Their land is filled with silver and gold, and there is no end to their treasures; their land is filled with horses, and there is no end to their chariots. Their land is filled with idols; they bow down to the work of their hands, to what their own fingers have made. So man is humbled, and each one is brought low—do not forgive them! Enter into the rock and hide in the dust from before the terror of the LORD, and from the splendor of his majesty.**

**The haughty looks of man shall be brought low, and the lofty pride of men shall be humbled, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day. For the LORD of hosts has a day against all that is proud and lofty, against all that is lifted up—and it shall be brought low; against all the cedars of Lebanon, lofty and lifted up; and against all the oaks of Bashan; against all the lofty mountains, and against all the uplifted hills; against every high tower and against every fortified wall; against all the ships of Tarshish, and against all the beautiful craft. And the haughtiness of man shall be humbled, and the lofty pride of men shall be brought low, and the LORD alone will be exalted in that day.**

My friends let it be today that we exalt Him! Let us esteem Him to the highest level in our thoughts and in our lives. Right now, He is in His Holy Temple. Right now, He is enthroned in Heaven and He does whatever He pleases. He is absolutely sovereign in everything! We will be humbled and brought low before God, by our own volition or not. Let us not align our way of thinking with the ways of the Devil. Instead, let's look to Christ and His example that He has laid out for us to follow.

**Philippians 2: 3-11 so perfectly says, “Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the father.”**

Jesus Christ is our perfect model of humility. We are commanded to have this same mindset as we live the Christian life. It's a matter of thinking. This humble way of thinking is counter cultural. The world depicts humility as a weakness, as being powerlessness.

If we are humble, that means that we are opening ourselves up to be disrespected or to have our dignity and value stripped from us. We would be putting ourselves in a place where we will be used and taken advantage of. So, to counter these things, we become more self-reliant, more reserved and less trusting to those around us. We boast in our inner strength, a power that we've somehow tapped into. You just need to believe in yourself! And this is the complete opposite of what God thinks. We are supposed to empty ourselves- not rely upon ourselves.

There is never a time in our lives that we will need to commend ourselves. Do we, in the scriptures, ever see Jesus Christ brag, draw attention to or commend himself? No we do not, but what do we see? We see his Father commending him and exalting him. We see this at the Baptism of Jesus in **Mark 1:11. It says, "And a voice came from heaven, "You are my beloved son, with you I am well pleased."** We see this at the transfiguration in **Luke 9:35 It says, "And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!'"** We can see His humility so clearly through the way He spoke and the way He lived his life. He was very vocal about His dependence on the Father. His motivation was always pure and never self-seeking. He was never arrogant or proud. He took the form of servant, he rode into Jerusalem on a donkey on His triumphal entry, He washed the feet of the disciples and He was crucified and humiliated. Because of His perfect obedience to His Father, He is exalted above everyone else!

**James 4:5-10 says, "Or do you suppose that the scripture says, 'He yearns jealously over the spirit that he has made to dwell in us'? But he gives more grace. Therefore it says, 'God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble.' Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the Devil, and he will flee from you. Draw near to God, and he will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you."**

Practically speaking, before we act we need to ask two questions. One, what does God think and what does His word say about this? Secondly, how does this action affect those around me? Does it edify, build up and are my motives done in love?

We are far too concerned about our own interests, our own desires and our own recognition. When our minds are self-focussed, we often times miss opportunities to help others. Even when we are in conversations, do we pay attention to what the other person is saying? Or do we get side-tracked and selfish, thinking about our own affairs? How often do we have things foolishly settled in our minds because of some wall built in our prideful thinking? Pride can cloud our judgement causing us to not see the whole picture. For example, there have been numerous times that I have disregarded Karen's counsel and advice. Stuck in my pride, I wouldn't see her thoughts to have value. I would be disrespectful and indifferent towards her because her ideas didn't line up with my thinking. I was prideful to think that my thoughts were the only way; there was nothing for her to contribute. I didn't want possible criticism or correction, because my way was right without question. Now, I have been learning to be more humble in our conversations, allowing more input from Karen to in turn help make better decisions.

Now, lets move to the topic of marriage and how we can express humility through it. Lets take a look at **Ephesians 5: 22-33**. It says, **“Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its savior. Now as the church submits to Christ, so also wives should submit in everything to their husbands. Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, because we are members of his body. ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.’ This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.”**

In the created order, God has placed the woman in a supportive, helper role. Her role in marriage is not demeaning or unequal. Rather, it is a submissive one. God has placed the man as the head and leader of the home. To have this biblical understanding within marriage, will bring much blessing to us as we honor God's Word. Most of the time, this does not come easy. And why is that? Is it that God has given us some unfair mandate to follow? Have these roles, given to us by God, been somehow formed and created because of the fall back in Genesis 3? No, not at all. From the beginning of creation, God has purposed our roles to be of this nature. These roles are but a reflection of the communion that is evident between the Father and the Son. The Son was fully obedient and fully submissive to the Father. He did nothing of his own accord. Take a look at the Gospel of John with me and let's look at a few passages.

**John 5:19-20 says, "So Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of his own accord, but only what he sees the Father doing. For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.'"**

**John 8:28 also says, "So Jesus said to them, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he, and that I do nothing on my own authority, but speak just as the Father taught me."**

**John 12:44-50 says, "And Jesus cried out and said, 'Whoever believes in me, believes not in me but in him who sent me. And whoever sees me sees him who sent me. I have come into the world as light, so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness. If anyone hears my words and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world but to save the world. The one who rejects me and does not receive my words has a judge; the word that I have spoken will judge him on the last day. For I have not spoken on my own authority, but the Father who sent me has himself given me a commandment- what to say and what to speak. And I know that his commandment is eternal life. What I say, therefore, I say as the Father has told me.'"**

As we see Christ's submissiveness to his Father, do we see unfairness or a demeaning yoke placed upon him? No, let his life never be spoken of in his way. That's like when it comes to marriage; the wife's submissive role should never be frowned upon. It has a resemblance to the character of Christ. And for the husband, he is to lay his life down for the sake of his wife. We as husbands are to put our own interests and our own hobbies and desires on the back burner in our lives. The man is not put in a position of heartless dictatorship. He is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. When you have a mutual humility on display within a marriage, you will be blessed richly. This does not give license for us to say, "my wife is not submissive, so therefore I will withhold love." Or, "if my husband would just love me more, I would be more submissive." No, we are to be like Christ and empty ourselves. We are to have this type of mindset. Marriage is not a 50/50 deal. It's a 100%/0% idea. We act in a manner that is pleasing to the Lord, regardless of our spouse's obedience.

Do you know that our bodies do not belong to us? **1 Corinthians 6: 19-20 says, "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body."**

**1 Corinthians 7: 3-5 also says, "The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to her husband. For the wife does not have authority over her own body, but the husband does. Likewise the husband does not have authority over his own body, but the wife does. Do not deprive one another, except perhaps by agreement for a limited time, that you may devote yourselves to prayer, but then come together again, so that Satan may not tempt you because of your lack of self-control."**

Do you work hard to build up and encourage others? Or do you attempt to bring them down by elevating yourself? When you are wronged, do you withhold forgiveness from your spouse? Do you give them the silent treatment, to cause them grief? When you see others struggling, do you extend grace and mercy to them? How can we, who are in such deep need of a savior, withhold forgiveness?

Remember what our Lord Jesus said in **Matthew 6:14-15**. **“For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive you your trespasses.”**

When we evaluate our own lives, do we not see how wretched we are? We need grace, forgiveness and mercy each moment of our lives, just like everyone else. **Romans 3:23** says, **“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”** We are all on the same level, all in need of God’s grace. When it comes to certain sins, let us not boast and say with pride, that we would never fall in that area. We are not immune; it is by God’s grace that we may stand strong in a particular area of our lives. And it is by God’s grace that he restrains us and holds us back from certain sins. We must give thanks and praise God for any progress that we may see in our lives. **1 Corinthians 10:12** warns us by saying, **“Therefore let anyone who thinks that he stands take heed lest he fall.”** It is by grace that we are saved and it is also by grace that we are sanctified. And it is only by grace that we will persevere to the end!

**Romans 15: 1-3** says, **“We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up. For Christ did not please himself, but as it is written, “The reproaches of those who reproached you fell on me.”** And **Ephesians 4: 29-32** and **chapter 5:1-2** says, **“Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Let all bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor and slander be put away from you, along with all malice. Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.”**

Everything we have, is it not given to us from God? Apart from God, we have nothing and cannot do anything.

**1 Corinthians 4:7 says, “For who sees anything different in you? What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?”** How can we walk in love, without God giving us the power to love? We don’t even love on our own accord. **For 1 John 4:19 says, “We love because he first loved us”. And Acts 17:28 says, “for in him we live and move and have our being.”**

Charles Spurgeon once said, “We have reasons for almost everything, but we have no reasons for pride. Pride is a thing which should be unnatural to us, for we have nothing to be proud of. What is there in man of which he should glory? Our very creation is enough to humble us; what are we but creatures of today? Our frailty should be sufficient to lay us low, for we shall be gone tomorrow. Our ignorance should tend to keep pride from our lips. What are we, but like the wild ass’s colt which knoweth nothing? And our sins ought effectually to stop our mouths, and lay us in the dust. Of all things in the world, pride towards God, is that which hath the very least excuse; it hath neither stick nor stone whereon to build. Oh! Man, learn to reject pride, seeing that thou hast no reason for it; whatever thou art, thou hast nothing to make thee proud. The more thou hast, the more thou art in debt to God; and thou shouldst not be proud of that which renders thee a debtor. Consider what thou wouldst have been, even now, if it were not for Divine grace. And, consider, that thou will yet be lost in Hell if grace does not hold thee up. Consider that amongst the damned, there are none that would have been more damned than thyself, if grace had not kept thee from destruction. Let this consideration humble thee. That thou hast nought whereon to ground thy pride.”

It is fairly safe to say that most, if not all, sins stem from pride. Pride is either celebrated or widely ignored. It can slowly seep into our lives, quite unnoticed. I would say that at the top of the list, would be the idea that we could save ourselves, by our own righteous works. This is perhaps one of the most twisted ideas that we could conjure up. When we look at our salvation, do we have any reasons for boasting? Do we see ourselves as contributors in our salvation in any way? God will share the title of savior with no one.

God says, in **Isaiah 43: 10-13**, **“You are my witnesses’, declares the Lord, ‘and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me. I, I am the Lord, and besides me there is no savior. I declared and saved and proclaimed, when there was no strange god among you; and you are my witnesses,’ declares the Lord, ‘and I am God. Also henceforth I am he; there is none who can deliver from my hand; I work, and who can turn it back?”**

God’s sovereignty is one of the most despised doctrines of the Bible, even among those who call themselves Christians. I know for myself, that God’s sovereignty, especially in salvation, gives me assurance and confidence that I am actually saved. If my salvation or endurance depended in any way on my works, I would of given up a long time ago. The faith that He has given me rests on Jesus Christ and His finished work on the cross, not on my own works. As the apostle Paul states in **Galatians 2:21**, **“I do not nullify the grace of God, for if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.”**

Most people would not say that they are their own saviors outright. But in many more subtle ways, people will proclaim and boast that they played some part in the process. There are those who believe that they will be welcomed into the kingdom of God by their own works. They followed all their religious acts and jumped through all the right hoops. They might even say, ‘God must accept me, because I am a good person’. You will hear people say in a prideful manor things like: ‘we decided to live for Christ’, or ‘we accepted Christ’. But in reality, God decided to chose you and nowhere in scripture does it mention for us to accept Christ. We must have a humble attitude, especially when it comes to our salvation!

Octavius Winslow said, “In predestination we see the everlasting love of God to, and his most free choice of, His people, to be his special and peculiar treasure. What doctrine is more emptying, humbling, and therefore sanctifying, than predestination? It lays the axe at the root of all human boasting.

In the light of this truth, the most holy believer sees that there is no difference between him and the vilest sinner that crawls the earth, but what the mere grace of God has made.”

As we have been studying through the book of Ephesians in our Bible study home group, we have come to see a clear reality. God has left no room for boasting when it comes to our salvation.

Lets read a portion in **Ephesians together. Chapter 2, verses 1-10. It says, “and you were dead in the trespasses and sins in which you once walked, following the course of this world, following the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now at work in the sons of disobedience- among whom we all once lived in the passions of our flesh, carrying out the desires of the body and the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, like the rest of mankind. But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ- by grace you have been saved- and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”**

Okay, now after reading this scripture, lets make a list of our credentials.

1. We were dead.
2. We were following the course of the world.
3. We were following the Devil.
4. We were spiritually cursed and bankrupt.
5. We were given over to the desires of the flesh, both body and mind.
6. We were Children of Wrath.

Wow, that doesn't leave much hope for us does it? Even the good works that we do, God prepared them advance. From that dead state of mind, spirit and body- how can we even attempt to commend ourselves to God? How dare we even try? But as you and I can see in mainstream “Christianity”, there is a constant downplaying of sin and our total deprivation. Why is this? Because pride has crept into the church, just like it has the world. There is irreverence towards God's Word, particularly in its inerrancy and in its sufficiency.

A good example is: looking for new revelation from outside of God's word. Saying things like, "God told me" or "I sense that God is saying to me" can be very dangerous and misleading. What is the need for this? God's word is absolutely sufficient.

**In 2 Timothy 3:16-17 and chapter 4:1-4 it says, "All scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching. For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths."** This is where we need to pray for discernment. Are my thoughts just feeding my own prideful passions or are they lined up with the Word of God? Another good thing that we can do is humbly ask for council from a brother or sister in the Lord. These thoughts must be weighed out and brought under the rule of Christ. **2 Corinthians 10:5 explicitly says, "We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ."**

Its good to challenge our own thinking! I hope that each one of you here today is a student of the Word. We must be consistently learning and humbly asking the Divine Author to open our minds and hearts to the truths of His Word. Do not be too proud to grow and learn, even from those who you would least expect. When we read the Bible, we need to be careful in our ways of interpretation. Me must not cram a text into a theological system that we hold. We must look at the author's intent, the context, and the scripture's own interpretation. We must let the Holy Spirit bring us understanding. Sometimes that takes time- we need to be patient and in the meanwhile, keep studying.

Costi Hinn said it so wonderfully, "When interpreting a passage of scripture, we don't myopically ask, "What does this text mean to me?" We humbly ask, "What does this text mean?" Personal preference, opinion, or implication must not skew our interpretation. We submit to Scripture. It doesn't submit to us."

In closing, let me reinstate this one thought. If we are to be proud or boastful, may it be in our Lord and what He has done for us! God deserves all of the honor, all the praise and all the thanks- from our day of birth to our time of death.

**Jeremiah 9:23-24 says, "Thus says the Lord: 'Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom, let not the mighty man boast in his might, let not the rich man boast in his riches, but let him who boasts boast in this, that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord who practices steadfast love, justice, and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, declares the Lord.'" And in Galatians 6:14 the apostle Paul says, "But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world."**

Let us humbly serve our King, knowing that he is sovereign in all things. Let us remember Christ and how he modelled humility for us. And finally, lets always give thanks to God and give him the recognition that's due him in all circumstances.

Lets pray-

Read all of Psalm 51. Create in me a clean heart, O God and renew a right spirit in me... A broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise