

July 26, 2009

Introduction

The issue of pride is addressed quite extensively in the script.

The history of pride brings us back right in the garden of Eden

Diff. kind/forms of pride are addressed & described; it presents itself in the form of

Self-determinism, self-sufficiency/independence from God (in the Garden)

Self-ambition & promotion reaching out the gates of heaven & “making a name for Oself” Tower of Babel

Stubbornness & self hardening –Pharaoh & people of Israel (stiff neck)

Fame-boastfulness-Arrogance -Nebuchadnezzar

Stubbornness in the people of Israel (not ready to change my ways)

Self-sufficiency & self-centeredness –the rich fool Lk.12:15-21)

Today; religious pride → self righteousness

Turn to Luke...

What is this kind of pride/spirituality? What kind of spirituality does it produce, what does God think of the proud, this kind of spirituality?

In the heart of every believer, there a place for pharisaianism, we all have some pharisaic tendencies we have to be careful of.

Religious pride?

A pride that comes as a result of one’s spiritual/religious achievement

= pharisaic spirituality, pharisaianism. → High regard for self, little regard for others

Wrong view of Hself, wrong view of Others, wrong view of God’s grace

Characterized by;

Wrong view of himself

Saw himself as righteous as a result of is own achievement → self-righteous

And he was quite confident about that

An attitude of self-righteousness when it comes to one’s own achievements

An attitude (that is consumed w/, concerned w/, centered on...Self-achievement, do’s & don’ts, one relational level.

a) Measure spirituality/righteousness in terms of self-achievements/accomp.

(they are an expression of our faith) rather than in terms of character & humility which is the pre-requisite for, being led/filled by spirit of God. I have done this by your grace...

v.9 “confident in one’s own righteousness”

v.11 “I am not like”, v. 12 “I fast...I give a tenth of all I get”

Put emphasis on what one does in order to gain righteousness, rather than receiving righteousness from above)

Like to be seen & put emphasis on appearances rather than authenticity, doing works w/ trumpets in public settings ((giving, praying, fasting, etc, (Mt.6: 1-18)

Phil. 2 says: have the same attitude that was in Christ → humble servant

b) Measure spirituality in terms of do's & don'ts as a source of righteousness rather than in terms of attitude, character, and of love for God & care for others (read bible at work...). Put a lot of importance in doing certain things & not others, instead of putting the importance in "being" prior to doing

Like to hold tradition & do the right thing even when it is irrelevant, or has no spiritual value. Measure spirituality in terms of holding tradition...confuse newness/freshness & relevancy w/ worldliness

Major on minor, minor on major (Mt.23:23- faithfulness, justice & mercy)

c) reduce spirituality to one relational dimension rather than 2 relational dimensions; my own relationship w/ God only rather than including his relationship w/ others...

Very self-centered/oriented in nature; little room for others, what counts is me & my own purity but not community, even less outreach

v.9 "confident in one's own righteousness"

v.11 "I am not, v. 12 "I fast..."I" give a tenth of all "I" get"

It is limited, concerned, consumed w/ "one's own relationship" w/ God, personal sanctification for personal righteousness purpose, not for love/relational purpose

Very individualistic in nature...the relational aspect is missing. Afraid of mingling w/ others especially non-believers; yet Jesus was "friend of sinners:

Very little room for others, community.

Very limited regard to others, it does not center or include relationship w/ others

Overly consumed w/ personal righteousness, little regard for caring, especially for those beyond inner circle. relationship/loving others, no concern for outreach & mission and reaching out those in need of a saviour.

d) Measure spirituality in terms of Knowledge rather than relationship, obedience, transformation. Knowing the Scripture, believing the right thing as oppose to character & attitude, practicing/living the Word, love & action (Ro.12:1-3, James 1:22 "do not merely listen to the word, do what it says...")

Wrong view of others;

When it came to other, the Pharisee

a) -An attitude of superiority (v.11 "I thank you that I am not like other man...")

Saw himself better than others on the basis of accomplishment... based on one's perceived personal spiritual status & achievement

b) -attitude of condescendence toward other (v.9 "looking down" to others...or even this tax collector)

snobing towards others (the publican) based on one's perceived personal spiritual status... especially those seen as inferior because they are weak, non-spiritual, less spiritual

As a result, he would not associate w/ people of lower spiritual standing, or even sinners, unlike Jesus

-lived in a bubble by fear of being defiled

c) quite a contrast w/ Jesus attitude

“friend of sinners” Lk.7:34, 15:1-2

“welcomes sinners & eats w/ them”

- Jesus who was righteous & had all the reason in the world to look down on us did not look down on others; , he was not afraid of associating w/ the sinner & did not saw Hself as to good to be their friends

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Wrong view of God’s grace/favour

It is not directly said but it is implied in his way of prayer & way of life

He thought God’s grace & favour could be earned by personal achievement

He thought he deserved God’s grace & favour on the basis of his merits

God’s grace cannot be earned/merited; it is a gift obtained by faith w/ an attitude of sincerity & humility

The condition to obtain it is humility; recognizing failure & need & asking

Quite a contrast w/ Tax collector

The tax collector understood that; he came empty handed, in simplicity/humility of heart to call on God’s mercy for his life

Phariseanism produces a spirituality that is very self-centered in nature and very judgmental on the other hand.

Transition;

Jesus was not too impress w/ the Pharisees

The world hate self-righteous people there is nothing more damaging that spiritual pride for our testimony...and guess what God hates it too

James/Peter also tells us that God hates pride...

God’s reaction/thoughts toward religious pride

Ipe.5:5-6

Specific instruct to specific group elders/young men, , then to all give instruction about a command to obey & an attitude to practice/adopt

Be humble, clothe Yself w/...

Then gives the reason for it; “God opposes the proud but give grace to humble”

Why? Because God does not like pride (in general/religious) & takes action against it

May take the means that justify the end to rid us off (oppose, mighty hand)

Pride is against the very nature & character of God
It misrepresents who he is when we are
God is humble
Pride stands in the way of grace

True spirituality surpasses the one of the P (Mt.5:20)
Confident in one's own righteousness, looking down on others

The basis of one's focus/assurance is one's own righteousness/work not the work of Christ. Confidence in personal merits/achievement in terms of winning God's approval

Conclusion

The tax collector":

Quite a contrast w/ the Pharisee
He is the sinner, un-spiritual, the loser, irreligious
But who understood more about
God's grace than the Pharisee → cannot be earned
humility than the Pharisee

He didn't hide behind his self-accomp, K, self-R
He came emptied handed, in sincerity of heart, in simplicity, in humility
This is the way to be & approach God and relate to other.

Paul's exhortation not to have too high of an opinion of Oselves Phil. 2:3 or Ro.12:3

Need to strive for a spirituality of humility, authenticity, of the HS.