

**Series:** Live Well

**Sermon #8** – Pride & Humility

**Text:** Proverbs 29.23; et. al

MPT – Pride destroys, but God blesses humility with honor now and in eternity

MPS – Humble yourself and walk in grace.

**Start of service – Spence lead prayer around vote**

Open your bible to the book of Proverbs. Specifically today open up to **Proverbs 29.23**

Before I get into the sermon let me give you a little preview of what is coming. Next Sunday is November 15. Which means thanksgiving is on the near horizon. And normally I am one of those who sees thanksgiving as like an invisible damn, that is holding back the Christmas flood. I love a good turkey and everything that comes with it ok. BUT...as I began planning for our Christmas season I just felt how much I need Christmas this year. We all need it. So here's what we are going to do...we are going to begin our final sermon series of the year... next week. We call this series and really the whole season "ADVENT." Which is a latin word in Christian tradition that means arrival. We will spend 7 Sundays walking verse by verse through Luke 1 & 2. And the theme for Advent this year is simple: **Hope is here.**

And I'm telling you about it because I want you to think about the people in your life that need hope. Which is everybody.

Don't wait 'til Christmas eve to invite somebody to hear a message of hope. Start this week. Ok that's what's coming. Now let's talk about today.

Ok, today We are going to close our series in Proverbs looking at what Proverbs has to say about...you ready?... **pride and humility.**

This is a major focus in proverbs. Even the structure is a dad telling his son to listen. To humble himself and be taught.

In fact – Before we go any further let's practice humility together by asking God to teach us today. Don't go through the motion here. Be sincere before God. There is no point for you today if you are not open to hearing from God.

- First you pray – **"Speak to me Lord, I'm listening."** That's it. "Speak to me Lord, I'm listening." Give it to him.
- Spence Pray – God humble me. Humble us. Teach us. Speak to us. We are listening. Amen.

If you are new to us, as I'm preaching proverbs to you I'm preaching it differently than most books because it's written differently. **\*\*THREAD ILLUSTRATION\*\***

**23 A person's pride will humble him, but a humble spirit will gain honor. Prov 29.23**

Do you see the two paths? Over the course of this series we've seen two paths illuminated in Proverbs. The Path of Life and the Path of Death. Wisdom leads you down the path of life. Nowhere are the paths of life and death more vivid and

clear in scripture than in the contrast between pride and humility. Pride leads to death and humility leads to life.

Our main point of the sermon today is right in line with that.

**Humble yourself, walk in grace.**

Now here's the challenge...most of us will nod our heads in agreement with what king Solomon says in **Prov 16.18 – PRIDE ...old king james word...GOETH...before the fall**. Like even if you aren't a christian. This is your first christian worship service...you still know this to be true through life experience & literature. All good stories equate PRIDE and ARROGANCE with EVIL. That's the Bad guy's fatal flaw. Think of the GREAT stories in history – Lord of the Rings, Chronicles of Narnia, Despicable Me, & Die Hard. They all have villains who are filled with Pride...and their pride is their undoing.

You and I know real life stories of real people whose pride led to them financial troubles, or relationship troubles, or career troubles, or 6<sup>th</sup> graders trying to steal 3<sup>rd</sup> base cause they thought they were untouchable and the pitcher got em. And the common thing all their friends say is that their pride kept them from listening to wisdom and from seeing the destruction they were headed towards.

When it comes to seeing our pride, we are so easily deceived. That gets me right to our first point so let me tell you where we are going today: We are going to see how pride works, then we'll look at the promise of humility, and finally we'll talk about walking in grace.

**First, how pride works.**

**23 A person's pride will humble him, but a humble spirit will gain honor. Prov 29.23**

I'm going to give you my working definition of pride based on a general survey of scripture. The bible isn't a dictionary so instead of defining it, it depicts it. Over and Over. King Nebuchadnezzar in the book of Daniel is a great example. God puts him as king over the known world and the bible says God gave him glory and majesty. The bible has no problem with that man ruling the world. BUT, then it says

**20 But when his heart was exalted and his spirit became arrogant, he was deposed from his royal throne and his glory was taken from him -- Daniel 5:20**

It wasn't his position as king that was a problem. Kings can be in charge and acknowledge their own prominence. But when his heart was exalted...That's when he lost favor from the Lord. When he thought highly of himself. When he ascribed glory to himself and not to God. Pride is not being in a high position, pride is thinking highly of yourself.

**Pride - thinking highly of yourself.**

That's the biblical depiction over and over.

And the REAL problem today –Pride is deceptive. Very few people think of pride as a significant problem in their lives. It's a big problem for that person you know... not so much for you. That's why Jesus says in Matthew 7 before you go helping someone get a speck of dirt out of their own eye you better take the LOG out of yours. We tend to think THEY have the log and we have the speck. And Jesus says nope. You have eye log problems.

Today is eye log extraction Sunday at mercy church.

But first, we have to see pride as the source of evil that it really is. Think of it this way - It's like perfect fire-pit weather right now. I've got a new fire pit out back and we are gonna be making fires a-lot. And my neighbor Mike across the street I've told him man, come over anytime you see the smoke. So even though he can't see the fire, he knows there's a fire because he sees the smoke.

Listen – When it comes to sin in your life...pretty much all of our sins are smoke that billow up from the fire of pride. If we want to deal with our sins we have to go to the source and put out the fire of pride.

Nothing is more dangerous to our relationship with God than our pride. It was pride that led Adam and Eve to think “maybe I know better than God here.” That's pride. The biblical story is God's people thinking highly of themselves...exalting their own hearts...God allowing destruction to befall them...then they humble themselves and turn back to God.

Whether you realize it or not your greatest problem in this world is your pride because it is your pride, your ego, that leads you to say “Maybe I know better than God.” That leads you to agree with statements like “God loves me” but then use that love as a license to do whatever you **want** to do instead of what he **commands** you to do. I'm telling you pride is deceptive. So let me show you the smoke and how it comes from the fire.

**Anger** – You know why you are angry? Because something isn't going the way YOU think it should go. You are saying in your heart...I know how this should go. And it's not going that

way. The cure to your anger isn't to “Calm Down.” It's to go underneath and tell you to get off God's throne. You need to humble yourself. Your anger isn't righteous, it's smoke from the fire of pride.

**Worry** – You know why you keep worrying? It's because you don't have the power to control what is going to happen...but you think you know what outcome would be best. Maybe you think the health of you and your family would be best...so you worry they will get sick and you triple worry if they do get sick. This is a huge one for me in life. I worry when my family's health, or my finances, are uncertain. You know what is causing that? I'm trying to sit in God's seat but I don't have God's power. Worry is smoke from a flame.

**Jealousy** – Oh Jealousy. Gonna need a minute here. Because the flame of pride creates the smoke of comparison. you constantly compare yourself to others and compete with them to win at life.

There's this parable Jesus tells in Matthew 20 – Kingdom of heaven is like a vineyard and the owner goes and hires some workers first thing in the morning and agrees to pay them a denarius. They are like...sweet. Then the owner hires some guys at noon, and then some more like an hour before quitting time. Well they all go to get paid and the guys who worked for one hour got paid the SAME as the guys who worked all day. All day workers get indignant. “That's not fair.” And the owner says...Hey I'm not doing wrong by you. If I want to give this guy something, it's my money. Then he says in verse 15...Are you JEALOUS because I am GENEROUS?

Let me ask you something...is it possible you are jealous of how God has been generous towards someone else? See the all day worker felt fine...until he saw what somebody else got. THEN, as soon as he compared himself to someone he thought deserved LESS...boom he's unhappy. He's enraged. All of the sudden what he has...is an injustice.

Are you jealous of God's generosity towards someone else? Because you think...if you are honest...you deserve more than them? Maybe you are 32 and you are looking at the 23 year old who just got engaged to be married. "I deserve that." Maybe it's the couple who can have kids when you cant. I deserve those grades, I deserve those looks, that girlfriend, God why would you give THAT to THAT PERSON? Are you jealous because God is generous? That is smoke from a fire.

Listen let me be real 2020 current with you. I'm telling you this is such a hard sermon because Pride built out a deep nest in my soul long ago. And I keep trying to take it to the Lord and he keeps revealing more pride. In fact, in prepping this sermon I had a great Exchange in the office this week:

- Me to Jessica & Jack – I'm preaching on humility
- Jessica – you should fast & pray and journal all the ways you are prideful
- Jack – Wouldn't it be faster to just ask his wife?

It's so true. She knows. She sees it. She saw it in me here in 2020 when...around early April...I was super chill. I felt so calm and I thought...man, the Lord is giving me peace in the Covid storm! And while I do think that was true, I've since realized something else was happening...I was calm because for just a

few weeks...no pastor on earth knew what to do. So...listen...I had no one to compare myself to. And I realized in that time something dark about myself. The reason I work so hard is not so I can be a good pastor...but that I can be a BETTER pastor than the guy down the street.

And then the first comparison metric that began to emerge was giving. How is the church doing financially? And you guys at that time were being so generous and some friends I have had churches who were struggling. And do you know how I felt? I felt GOOD. How twisted is that? A friend talking about his churches financial troubles and I feel GOOD!? Some of ya'll are like...spence you are messed up. YES. I AM. But so are you.

I know because I pray with you. How many times have you tried to out-pray somebody? Like you aren't even agreeing with their prayer because you are thinking about your prayer? Gotta be holier in prayer? Even though Romans 8 tells us the spirit is the one interceding? Comparison is the thief of joy ya'll. Smoke from a flame.

Let me flip this...Some of you have **an inner critic**. You don't resonate with us competitive people...Because you feel like a constant failure. You are always down on yourself. You feel worthless. Let me be gentle here because you don't need me to knock you off your high horse. You hear me define pride as thinking highly of yourself and you are like...that has never happened once.

Well, let me ask you something. How does God think about you? God sees you as a sinner, and he loves sinners. He says he has redeemed you. He says he approves of you in Christ. He says he has given you his holy spirit. He calls you son or daughter. He has good works for you to walk in.

So my question is: Do you believe you are a royal child of God? Set apart by him as a testimony of his grace and redemptive power? Loved, Cherished, Valued, and being transformed into his image?

If you are constantly down on yourself... that is smoke from a flame. **Your pride is saying you know the real you better than God does.** Like if God only knew how depraved I really am. HE DOES! He knows you better than you. Or is he completely infinite in knowledge EXCEPT when it comes to your secret thoughts and desires? No, every time you have a self discovery where you are like...Man I can't believe I'm really this bad...God is already there like "I CAN. And that aint all" And I still love you. You thinking worse of yourself than God does...that's pride.

And you need to repent of your self-loathing and receive & stand in God's word about you. He loves you!

I'm not going to take the time to unpack Lust, Greed, Apathy but if I did...you'd see they are all smoke from the flame of pride.

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<sup>1</sup> Ortlund Jr., Raymond C. . Proverbs (pp. 142-143). Crossway. Kindle Edition.

And left unchecked, Your pride will humble you. Either through destroying your life or enslaving you to itself. But of course the proverb doesn't leave us in a pit of despair. We are all proud. All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. But the proverb says there is a better way.

**23 A person's pride will humble him, but a humble spirit will gain honor. Prov 29.23**

Let's talk about **promise of humbling ourselves**

A humble spirit will gain honor. I think we who agree with all this pride stuff might wonder if it is ok to desire honor. Doesn't that run the risk of falling into pride? Well, the reality is God did make us with the intent to glorify us. Our hearts long for what Peter calls "praise and glory and honor" (1 Peter 1:7). The Apostle Paul validates our desire for "glory and honor and immortality" (Romans 2:7). And according to Romans 8.30 God is out to glorify us. So the thing in us that longs for the mountaintop...its put there by God. **The eternal promise of humility is that you will live in the full glory of God in heaven forever!!**

This eternal glory is found through humility. this is the message not just of proverbs, but of scripture. It is the 101 to the ways of God. Pride will humiliate us and humility honors us.<sup>1</sup>

- "Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, but whoever humbles himself will be exalted" (Matthew 23:12; Luke 14:11; 18:14).

- “God opposes the proud, but gives grace to the humble” (James 4:6; 1 Peter 5:5).
- “Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:4).
- “Exalt that which is low, and bring low that which is exalted” (Ezekiel 21:26).
- “Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low” (Isaiah 40:4).

In fact Proverbs goes so far to say...

**4 Humility, the fear of the Lord, results in wealth, honor, and life. -- Proverbs 22:4**

And right there...in Proverbs 22.4 you see the key phrase that guides all of proverbs. Solomon equates humility to the fear of the Lord. Proverbs 1.7 told us that “The Fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge.” Proverbs 3.7 told us be not wise in your own eyes but instead fear the Lord, and turn away from evil.

The Fear of the Lord is humility. Our main point today is to humble yourself and walk in grace. Ok this is how you humble yourself.

**You worship the Lord.** That is what it means to humble yourself. To SEE GOD RIGHTLY...FEARING HIM BECAUSE HE IS HOLY. He is alpha and omega, he is THE ETERNAL I AM. THE CREATOR AND SUSTAINER. He upholds the universe AND at the same time knows the number of hairs on your head. He IS PERFECT. HOLY. HEBREWS 12 CALLS HIM A CONSUMING FIRE. And like Moses before the burning bush when you see God rightly you fear him not in terror but in REVERENT AWE.

You remember you are a sinner who rebelled against THIS GOD! YOU ARE HIS ENEMY. SO YOU STAND IN JUDGEMENT BEFORE THIS RIGHTEOUS GOD AND THEN YOU REMEMBER...

Jesus! YOU REMEMBER HIS GRACE. THE GRACE OF CHRIST IS THE MOTIVATION AND POWER AND FOCUS OF YOUR WORSHIP THAT WILL TEAR DOWN THE POWER OF PRIDE.

### **YOU WORSHIP YOUR WAY OUT OF YOUR PRIDE!**

And that leads us to the blazing center of the Christian faith. The gospel of Jesus Christ...the core of our faith...is the announcement of the greatest act of humility in history. Look how Paul summarizes it in Philippians 2:

**5 Adopt the same attitude as that of Christ Jesus, 6 who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited. 7 Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity. And when he had come as a man, 8 he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death —even to death on a cross. 9 For this reason God highly exalted him and gave him the name that is above every name, 10 so that at the name of Jesus every knee will bow — in heaven and on earth and under the earth — 11 and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. -- Philippians 2:5-11**

This is humility. While we keep trying to make much of ourselves and lift ourselves up...The perfect son of God humiliated himself. He made himself nothing.

**\*\*HE WAS BORN INTO A NOTHING TOWN\*\***  
**\*\* BORN TO A NOTHING FAMILY\*\***  
**\*\*HE GOT DOWN AND WASHED THE NASTY FEET OF HIS  
NOBODY DISCIPLES\*\***  
**\*\*Rode into town on a stinky nothing animal\*\***  
**\*\*HE ALLOWED HIMSELF TO BE ARRESTED, MOCKED, BEATEN  
by Nothing sinners\*\***  
He became obedient to God to the point of death on the  
cross! And this humble savior God did this so that we could  
share in his glory. And instead of dying for our sin all we have  
to do is die to our foolish pride! WHAT GRACE! WHAT MERCY!

Do you know this grace? Do you, like the author of Hebrews  
12 tells us...fix your eyes on this savior? That's the way out of  
your pride. See the secret to humility is not to think less of  
yourself. That slips us into the inner critic space. The secret of  
humility...unlocked by the white hot love of God for us found  
in the death and resurrection of Jesus...is to think about  
ourselves LESS. You fix your eyes on Jesus and consider his  
love for you and as you do he will fill you with the security and  
peace that transcends all understanding. **WORSHIP YOUR  
WAY OUT OF YOUR PRIDE.**

Obey him TOTALLY. PRAY RELENTLESSLY. GIVE GENEROUSLY.  
SHARE PASSIONATELY. SING FROM YOUR TOES WHEN WE  
GATHER.  
Why do you think we gather for worship every weekend? It  
isn't just a routine...It is a necessary heart and soul exercise to  
MAKE WAR on our pride.

And his eternal promise to you is that the security and peace  
and purpose you find in him here and now is only a foretaste  
of what eternity with him will be like.  
I think tangibles in this is really important so let me break it  
down real practical like proverbs has done so much for us in  
this series.

### **How to walk in grace**

Remember

**REVERE** - but he who reveres the commandment will be  
rewarded. (Proverbs 13:13). Pride despises the commands of  
God. Pride likes to do its own thing. Pride says "You do you."  
That is a nice sentiment...and terrible advice. Don't do you.  
You are a proud, arrogant, easily deceived sinner. Instead,  
follow Christ! And that begins with cherishing,  
valuing...revering his word. Is the bible a sacred relic to you or  
a HOLY source of life? Do you OBEY his word? Even when it  
calls you to do that which feels like death? The Bible warns us  
away from death that feels like life and toward life that  
sometimes feels like death. But for our good. And there when  
you obey God in a way that might hurt...that's where you  
show who is really in charge. **What does my time in God's  
word say about how much I submit to him in my life?**

**LISTEN** - The ear that listens to life-giving reproof will dwell  
among the wise. (Proverbs 15:31) I want to go ahead and pose  
this diagnostic question for you:

**How well do I receive correction from others?** Like you need  
to ask that to some friends. Some friends, and maybe your

boss too. Like if the collective silent opinion about you is that “you can’t tell him anything.” That’s a problem. That’s immaturity and its heading for a humbling. This was me for far too long. And I got a real wake up call at age 27. Far too late in life. Realized I was not superman and I did not know everything and I had some severe blindspots that were destroying me personally and professionally. So I started listening. I stopped trusting all of my instincts so much. Because my instincts were serving my ego. 10 years later – I’m wrong a lot more. I apologize more. I listen more. I don’t like it. But I trust God that I’m a more faithful husband & dad & pastor for it. If you are like “no way I’m doing that...” the reality is you really need to. And trust God with the result. Remember – you are secure in Christ. And that security frees you to humble yourself before others.

**CONFESS - Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy. (Proverbs 28:13)**

The surefire sign of someone who is walking in the path of humility is that they confess their sins. They confess to God, they have a close friend they confess to, and they confess to those they sin against. The one who confesses his sins and then turns from them...that is the one who obtains mercy. This is the part of the gospel that, when left out, leads to a version of Christianity that is so shallow I really don’t understand it. Grace is amazing...because it saved a WRETCH like me. 8 If we say, “We have no sin,” we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. -- 1 John 1:8-9 (CSB)

Confession is a part of whole life worship. And as long as you have this human frame you will sin. And so you can either confess and worship, receiving God’s grace fresh again...or you can stand in your own pride.

Revere, Listen, Confess. This is what walking in grace looks like. This is the way of Christ.

This series has pursued the wisdom of God that begins in the fear of the Lord. Wisdom comes.