

"Pride Hates Jesus"

Text: Luke 14:1, 7-14

My prayer for each of you is simply that God would bless you richly with his grace, for if you have God's grace – the undeserved love of your Creator God – you will lack nothing. Amen.

Dear Fellow Christians:

Of all the sins known to man, arguably one of the most difficult to understand (let alone control) is pride. No one, for example, says, "I've got my adultery." No one says, "I've got my murder." No one says, "I've got my greed, covetousness, or idolatry." Many do, however, routinely say, "I've got my pride" – and they mean that as a good thing, more or less. Is that a good thing? Depends, doesn't it, and that is exactly what makes the sinful kind of pride so difficult to identify, and then drive from our hearts.

One of the things that makes this sin so challenging is the fact that we use the word "pride" to describe many different human emotions, not all of which are bad. Sometimes we use pride as synonymous with "work ethic" and its image is thereby cleaned up a bit. We all know that a good work ethic is God-pleasing, so pride used in that way must make it acceptable. Yes and no. It's all about motive. A good work ethic can be the result of greed (you work so hard because you love your toys) or vanity (you work so hard on your yard or your figure because you want others to envy and admire you). Sometimes we use pride in the sense of "responsible" or "patriotic" – as in "I take pride in my work" and "I am proud of my country." Again, such sentiments need not involve sin, but they can.

Still another problem with pride is that we find ourselves hoping (in a way) to see it in others – which again can be good or bad. You want your neighbor to take pride in the upkeep of his yard. If he can't do so with the good kind of pride, then a little bit of the bad kind of pride is better than having a dump next door that lowers your property value. Obviously there is a problem when we are willing to become sin's cheerleaders if that's what it takes to get what we want. No matter what the goal in life, sin is never a God-pleasing means to attain that goal.

All of which just serves to emphasize why the sinful kind of pride is arguably the most difficult to identify and eliminate from the human heart. Yet that is exactly what we need to do – because the bad sort of pride, *sinful pride*, hates Jesus Christ, and Christians by definition want nothing anti-Christian living within us.

The text that will guide us in our study this morning is found in Luke's Gospel, the 14th Chapter:

^{ESV} **Luke 14:1, 7-14** *One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully. ⁷ ¶ Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, ⁸ "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, ⁹ and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this person,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. ¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. ¹¹ For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." ¹² ¶ He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."*

This is God's Word. To the Author of these words we address this simple prayer: "**Sanctify us by your truth, O Lord. Your word is truth.**" Amen.

First, let's establish the need to do something here. Is pride really something we need to address. Doesn't it do as much or more good than evil? Though there are dozens of passages that do so, we can be sure of God's will with just two: 1 Peter 5:5 "**Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for 'God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.'**" In Proverbs 6:16-17 God the Holy Spirit identifies "**six things that the LORD hates, seven that are an abomination to him.**" The very first thing he identifies is "**haughty (prideful) eyes.**" As Christians we would certainly all agree that just hearing that God *hates* and *opposes* sinful human pride establishes for us the need to be rid of it.

What then is sinful pride? What is it *exactly* that God does not want to see in us? Is it an attitude, an action, or both? The danger here is that we define the thing too broadly or too narrowly – condemning what is

not wrong or justifying what is. The *sin* of pride always involves elevation of self. It starts with a feeling, a belief, that you are better or superior, and that's an attitude that no human being can ever truly hide, at least not for very long. It always reveals itself in words and actions, sometimes subtly, sometimes obviously. The fact that you, in your own mind, believe yourself better makes it right that you be noticed and praised. If others do not do so, you must do the elevating yourself. The fact that you are better means that you deserve special privileges. It means that rules don't apply to you, that you shouldn't have to wait for others or do what others have to do. Sinful pride shows itself when others are receiving praise, for it always seeks to step from the shadows and share in that spotlight, even to the point of crowding the other out. Sinful pride says, "*Look at me. Notice me. Praise me. I'm special. I'm better.*" It is, in the end, a manifestation of man's natural idolatry. It is worship of self.

Sometimes it's easier to really come to understand one thing by defining its opposite, thereby defining what it is not. The opposite of sinful pride is humility. Humility is that heart attitude that seeks to elevate others, beginning with God himself. It recognizes gifts in self, but it praises the Giver of those gifts, not the recipient, and it seeks to deflect all glory and praise accordingly. Because it recognizes the true Source of all good things, humility always acknowledges the need to be filled, protected, and preserved by God alone.

Understand then that humility is not an *optional* character trait. Humility absolutely has to be the basic condition of the heart. If it is lacking, something else – something very bad – will take its place. The alternative is almost always sinful pride, which will always move into any and every space that is devoid of humility. Know too that sinful pride and godly humility are opposites, and as such they just don't get along. At all. Ever. Pride cannot tolerate humility and humility cannot tolerate pride. That's why humility is not a luxury for the child of God. It is an absolute necessity, for if your heart is not humble, it will most certainly be steeped in sinful pride – and we were just reminded that God *hates* sinful pride. More to the point this morning – and worse still – pride hates Jesus Christ.

But how do we go about exchanging sinful pride for God-pleasing humility? What is the process that we have to go through to lose the one and have the other? We turn to our text for answers.

Maybe you've been in a situation like the one described here by Jesus, or some other instance of public humiliation. While the shame in being publicly asked to move to a lower position is rather acute, the point we need to establish is that *humility isn't just practiced to avoid being shamed*

before man. The avoidance of shame is just a happy byproduct. Humility is a heart condition that comes with simple honesty.

Using Jesus' parable/picture, a man who would choose the lower seat (all the while intending to be called up to the higher) knows nothing of true humility. He is a conniver and schemer – a fake who pridefully manipulates others for his own self-glorification.

Jesus demonstrates this general truth in the second part of our text where he talks about inviting those who could never repay your invitation. Note that there is nothing in it for the man who invites "***the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.***" The man who invites guests like that doesn't do so to be paid back. Again, the point is that true humility does not act with ulterior motives. A humble human being acts in accord with his convictions, never with a view toward "*what's in it for me.*" So also in Jesus' parable he isn't talking about subtle manipulation. He is, again, talking about the heart.

A note might be in order here concerning Jewish festivals and seating arrangements. Most of us here today know little of such things because we have few real parallels in our society. Eastern cultures routinely arrange seating according to social standing. The higher the standing, the better the seat. The parable in our text was prompted by the mad scramble of the Pharisees to seat themselves in the highest positions – an indication of the pride that filled their hearts.

Again here we find evidence as to just why this whole topic can be so difficult to master. Is it, for example, wrong for us to seek out good seats at a banquet or reception? The question misses the point. The key truth here is to recognize that humility is a condition of the heart, and that condition constantly gives rise to the attitude: "*I deserve no more and no better.*" Pride is the thing that tells you that you deserve just the opposite – ever more and ever better. Humility expects little or nothing.

How does this show up in life? We see it in ourselves whenever we are too proud to ask for or accept help, even when we are in dire need of such help. We see it in the sinful attitude that continually seeks out any way that I might have been slighted or disrespected, based on the simple premise that, of all the people in the world, I deserve better. It bristles and rebels at every correction, from the pastor on up.

Obviously as Christians we loathe all sin, and pride is no exception. Yet the biggest mistake that we make in fully understanding the words

from our Savior in our text is that we read them superficially. In fact all of this could well seem a bit trivial in the broader scheme of things unless and until these truths are plugged into the area of faith and salvation. Then it all becomes much more than just a case of good or bad manners and suddenly becomes a critical matter of eternal life and death. Jesus wasn't giving lessons on social etiquette; he was teaching us something about eternal life – and here is where we gain the clearest picture of just how dangerous sinful pride truly is.

The banquet in our text represents heaven, and the Banquet Master (the **"one who invited you"**) is God himself. While it would certainly be awkward and embarrassing to be assigned a lower seat in a public setting here in time, how infinitely, unimaginably worse it would be to be tapped on the shoulder by God himself on Judgment Day and told, *"You don't belong here."*

What role does sinful pride play in that worst of all scenarios? The prideful heart has several possible reactions to Jesus and the salvation that he offers. All are bad. All are damning. The first reaction of the proud heart is that I don't need Jesus and the perfection that he supplies *since I'm good enough all on my own*. Another reaction from a pride-filled heart is to acknowledge some sort of need for Jesus, but to imagine that I am somehow *deserving* of what Jesus has done. More than that, pride tells me that I am not only *worthy* of Jesus' great sacrifice, he *owed* it to me. Still others imagine that they can take care of their minor imperfections themselves by doing good.

Obviously none of this could be further from the truth – and true humility recognizes and eagerly accepts that fact. The truly humble heart freely admits that it does not deserve anything from God but justice, and justice calls for condemnation because of my sin. The humble heart rightly assumes its place in hell, and then is absolutely thrilled – *shocked* - when the Master walks up to you and says, *"Friend, you are at the wrong table. Your sins have been forgiven. You are therefore my child and my heir – an important, treasured guest. Move up to the table of Life."*

While sinful pride tells me I don't need Christ, Godly humility thrills instead to the forgiveness that has been given to me because of what he has done for me. It freely acknowledges that I am altogether unworthy; that I deserve nothing good from my God except to be condemned eternally because of my rebellion and sin. How amazed then is that same humble heart when God the Father calls us higher – all because Jesus Christ has washed us clean by paying the penalty for our sins.

Add this then to your daily prayer list – that God the Holy Spirit would first *identify* to you, and then drive from your heart, all sinful pride. Ask him daily to fill you instead with the Godly humility that recognizes your natural need and helplessness, how that need has been supplied by Jesus Christ, and therefore how good, right, and obvious it is to give all credit, praise and glory to him alone. Amen.

ESV **Genesis 18:20-33** Then the LORD said, "Because the outcry against Sodom and Gomorrah is great and their sin is very grave, ²¹ I will go down to see whether they have done altogether according to the outcry that has come to me. And if not, I will know." ²² ¶ So the men turned from there and went toward Sodom, but Abraham still stood before the LORD. ²³ Then Abraham drew near and said, "Will you indeed sweep away the righteous with the wicked? ²⁴ Suppose there are fifty righteous within the city. Will you then sweep away the place and not spare it for the fifty righteous who are in it? ²⁵ Far be it from you to do such a thing, to put the righteous to death with the wicked, so that the righteous fare as the wicked! Far be that from you! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do what is just?" ²⁶ And the LORD said, "If I find at Sodom fifty righteous in the city, I will spare the whole place for their sake." ²⁷ Abraham answered and said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord, I who am but dust and ashes. ²⁸ Suppose five of the fifty righteous are lacking. Will you destroy the whole city for lack of five?" And he said, "I will not destroy it if I find forty-five there." ²⁹ Again he spoke to him and said, "Suppose forty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of forty I will not do it." ³⁰ Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak. Suppose thirty are found there." He answered, "I will not do it, if I find thirty there." ³¹ He said, "Behold, I have undertaken to speak to the Lord. Suppose twenty are found there." He answered, "For the sake of twenty I will not destroy it." ³² Then he said, "Oh let not the Lord be angry, and I will speak again but this once. Suppose ten are found there." He answered, "For the sake of ten I will not destroy it." ³³ And the LORD went his way, when he had finished speaking to Abraham, and Abraham returned to his place.

ESV **Luke 11:1-13** Now Jesus was praying in a certain place, and when he finished, one of his disciples said to him, "Lord, teach us to pray, as John taught his disciples." ² ¶ And he said to them, "When you pray, say: 'Father, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come. ³ Give us each day our daily bread, ⁴ and forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And lead us not into temptation.'" ⁵ ¶ And he said to them, "Which of you who has a friend will go to him at midnight and say to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves, ⁶ for a friend of mine has arrived on a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; ⁷ and he will answer from within, 'Do not bother me; the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed. I cannot get up and give you anything'? ⁸ I tell you, though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his impudence he will rise and give him whatever he needs. ⁹ And I tell you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. ¹⁰ For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. ¹¹ What father among you, if his son asks for a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; ¹² or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? ¹³ If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!"

ESV **Luke 14:1, 7-14** One Sabbath, when he went to dine at the house of a ruler of the Pharisees, they were watching him carefully. ⁷ ¶ Now he told a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the places of honor, saying to them, ⁸ "When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, ⁹ and he who invited you both will come and say to you, 'Give your place to this person,' and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. ¹⁰ But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. ¹¹ For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted." ¹² ¶ He said also to the man who had invited him, "When you give a dinner or a banquet, do not invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors, lest they also invite you in return and you be repaid. ¹³ But when you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, ¹⁴ and you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you. For you will be repaid at the resurrection of the just."

*Everyone proud in heart is
an abomination to the Lord;
though they join forces,
none will go unpunished.*

-Proverbs 16:5

ST PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH

BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA

ST. PAUL EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH

2510 E. Divide Ave. Bismarck, ND 58501

Parsonage and Office: (701) 223-4885 Cell: (701) 425-5483

Website: www.bismarcklutheran.org

Mick Johnson, President Angela Pfennig, Organist

Michael Roehl, Pastor

The Seventh Sunday after Pentecost – July 24, 2022

The Opening Prayer by the Pastor

The Opening Hymn – 393 (1-4) (Red Hymnal)

"From God Shall Naught Divide Me"

The Order of Service – Supplement page 12ff. (Brown Hymnal)

The Scripture Lessons: (Printed on the back page of this bulletin)

The First Lesson: (Genesis 18:20-33) Our two Scripture readings this morning deal not only with prayer, but more specifically with the need for *persistence* in our prayers. Note as you listen to this first account how irritating it is to hear Abraham continue to ask more and more of God. God is not irritated. Learn from this to bring all requests to God – no matter how many or how trivial or how often. God loves to hear and answer the prayers of his children.

The Psalm of the Day – Psalm 30 (Page 34) Read responsively

The Second Lesson: (Luke 11:1-13) In this lesson, Jesus not only teaches his disciples (and us) the Lord's Prayer, he also teaches us something about persistent prayer. It could be argued that the reason we fail to pray as we ought is that we have come to doubt the effectiveness of prayer – especially when God does not immediately say yes to our prayers. God's message to you: "*Be patient and persistent. I hear you.*"

The Confession of Faith -

The Nicene Creed (Revised) (On screen)

The Pre-Sermon Hymn – 175 (Red Hymnal)

"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"

The Sermon – Text: Luke 14:1, 7-14 (Printed on the back page of this bulletin)

"Pride Hates Jesus"

The Offertory – (Supplement page 16 insert)

The Prayers

The Pre-Communion Hymn – 394 (Verses 1-2) (Red Hymnal)

"My Faith Looks Up to Thee"

The Preparation for Holy Communion (Brown Hymnal page 17)

The Distribution

The Nunc Dimittis and Thanksgiving (Brown Hymnal page 20)

The Benediction

The Closing Hymn – 393 (5-6) (Red Hymnal)

"From God Shall Naught Divide Me"

Silent Prayer

Welcome! - We warmly welcome any visitors worshipping with us this morning and invite you to join us each Sunday at this time. We are glad you are here! **To our Visitors seeking Holy Communion** – In obedience to God's Word, we practice "Close Communion." This practice stresses both our concern for others, not wanting anyone to receive the sacrament to their harm (1 Cor. 11:27-30) and the importance of unity in confession and faith (1 Cor. 10:16-17). For this reason we ask that anyone who has not established this unity through membership in a CLC congregation please meet with the pastor to discuss this Scriptural doctrine before communing. This is a practice that we follow out of love and concern for you, and out of obedience to God's Word, not in judgment of anyone's Christian faith.

Attendance – Sunday (27) Average (30)

This Week at St. Paul:

Today	-10:00 a.m.	– Worship Service w/Holy Communion
	-11:15 a.m.	– Fellowship Hour
	-12:00 p.m.	– Annual Church Picnic
Wednesday	-6:00 p.m.	– Elders Meeting
	-7:00 p.m.	– Church Council Meeting
Next Sunday	-10:00 a.m.	– Sunday Worship Service
	-11:15 a.m.	– Fellowship Meal
	-11:30 a.m.	– Quarterly Voters Meeting

CLC News – Pastor Samuel Naumann is considering the call to Immanuel of Winter Haven. Pastor Aaron Ude has returned the calls to both Ascension of Tacoma and Redemption of Lynnwood.

Church Picnic – Our annual church picnic is this morning. All are invited.

Elders and Church Council Meetings – The Elders are scheduled to meet at 6pm this Wednesday and the Church Council at 7pm.

Fellowship Meal and Quarterly Voters Meeting – A fellowship meal is planned for next Sunday after the Sunday service, followed by a Quarterly Voters Meeting. In accord with our constitution and as previously announced, Mr. Timothy Meyer has applied for voting membership.

Vacation Bible School – Our thanks to all of those who gave of their time and treasure to bring joy and instruction in the Word of God to our children this week at Vacation Bible School. Some of the crafts that they produced are displayed in the fellowship hall.

Convention Summary – Pastor Roehl will offer a brief summary of the CLC Convention summary after the service this morning.