

Faith Walk! - Sermon Discussion

Date : 21 Nov 2021

Sermon Title : Pride

Speaker : Rev Reuben Ng

Text : 2 Chronicles 7:14

INTRODUCTION

We started the 'Turn Around' series with a foundational verse, 2 Chronicles 7:14. God has called us to humble ourselves, pray, seek His face and turn from our wicked ways so as to turnaround from anything that blocks God's goodness from reaching us. In the sermon on "Power", we have heard how we should turnaround from relying on our own power, influence or ability, and turn to rely on God's power; His ways and ability. In another sermon on "Possessions", we also heard how we should not have a growing desire for things we own and not to compare with others. Although it is not wrong to be blessed by God with possessions, we are called to be channels of blessings, not hoarders of blessings. We now come to the concluding sermon of this Turn Around Series on "Pride".

Pride is the final thing we want to address as a church to turnaround from, but if God prompts us on any other things that we should turnaround from that is causing pain to His heart, we should surely obey that.

God opposes the proud

"God opposes (resists) the proud, but he gives grace to the humble." (James 4:6)
This verse tells us that we can put ourselves into a position where God opposes us. This is a scary thought but sometimes, we are so familiar with the term God because we sing, talk, read, and hear about God, that when we talk about God opposing us, we tend to think it is no big deal because He is invisible. Let us put this into perspective:

The earth's diameter is 40,000 kilometers around the equator. The sun, being much bigger can contain 1.3 billion earths. There are 2-3 contenders for being the largest star in our galaxy and each of these largest stars can fit in four billion suns. Our Milky Way Galaxy is only one of about 125 billion galaxies.

It is God who created all these!

Therefore, when God opposes us when we are proud, there is no chance or way we can evade the tackle by God. He does not need to expend an ounce of energy to oppose us.

For we walk by faith, not by sight. 2 Corinthians 5:7

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- When our plans in our lives or desires to do things for our family, someone or God are unsuccessful, we often say it is the devil's fault. It is true that the devil exists and he does bring troubles to believers, making things difficult and closing doors. Other times, we may blame the problems on our bad circumstances or on the people we are surrounded with; toxic people who make things difficult or always sabotage our plans for God or for ourselves. All these may be true, but there may be moments when it is not the devil, our situations, or the toxic people around us, but our pride.
- When we fall into the definition James 4:6 says about the proud, it is not the devil, the situation, or people, but God who opposes us. That is why we want to get away from pride because God opposes us when we are proud but gives grace to the humble.

God detests/hates the proud

In the Old Testament, Proverbs 16:5 says, "the LORD detests the proud", and in some translations, it is, "the Lord hates the proud". This means the Lord opposes the proud because He detests or hates the proud. These are strong words and the Jewish rabbis reference this verse to Psalm 101:5, "a haughty look and an arrogant (proud) heart I will not tolerate." In some translations, "endure" is used instead of "tolerate."

The Jewish rabbis interpret this as "a haughty look or an arrogant heart, I would not live with". It makes sense because when you cannot stand someone that you detest or hate, there is no way you can endure the presence of that person.

If God hates or detests the proud, He cannot endure or live with that person.

It causes us to think why God uses such strong language against the proud when He did not say He cannot tolerate the murderer, thief, gossip, adulterer, the liar and other sinners.

Why does God only say He cannot live with the proud?

- When someone is proud; it means he/she is so full of himself/herself that there is no brokenness or space for God to enter to live with the person.
- Even the worst sinner, on occasion may feel remorseful, guilty, regret and brokenness. When there is brokenness, there is space for God to enter in to live with, to endure and tolerate.

Pride is a dangerous thing, and we should always stay far away from it.

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It is worthwhile to reflect if there is something that we are proud of? It may start very innocently, with being proud of being able to do something, to thinking we are better than others as we compare with others in certain areas. This thought can grow into pride, and we may start putting others down. We may also not stop talking about it because we are just so proud. If that is the case, it is better for us to turnaround soon because God will oppose the proud.

What we can do to ensure we do not fall into the category of “The proud”

1. Every good and every perfect gift is from above (James 1:17)

There is really nothing to be proud of if we remember that every good and perfect gift is from above. If we sing or dance beautifully, operate a machine efficiently, plan well, memorise texts perfectly, are of a certain race, have a pretty face, a place in society, succeed in business, as long as it is a gift or strength, the posture or attitude of our heart should be to remember that anything that we possess, every success or thing that we do well, is a gift from above. It is not just lip service where we may say, “Thank God” but in our heart, our posture is to think that the success is due to our abilities or effort and not God.

“Be not proud of race, face, place or grace.” - Charles H. Spurgeon

2. Remember we will die

In ancient Roman society, when a general won victories in battles, he would ride into Rome on his horse. The people would line the streets, celebrating, cheering, and lifting his name high. While the general soaks in all these honour for being victorious, powerful, and well loved, quietly, a personal aide would follow behind the general, constantly saying, “Memento Mori” which means, “Remember you will die” – all these things would not matter at all.

Let us not let all our success get into our heads, because there will come a day when none of this matters. As believers, when we see God one day, we are not going to say we have done this or that, how we have preached or run a certain program. The only thing that matters is whether we know Jesus Christ or not. Only Jesus matters.

CONCLUSION

God gives grace to the humble but opposes the proud. Let us remember there is no chance or way we can evade the tackle by God when He opposes us. May we never be counted among the proud but humble ourselves, pray, seek His face and turn from our wicked ways so nothing will block His goodness from reaching us. Let us pray that God will prompt us where we have been proud and may we acknowledge in our heart that every good and perfect gift comes from above, because in the end only knowing Jesus truly matters.

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As a group, spend some time to share your success and struggle in fulfilling what you/your group had committed to do at the previous meeting.

A. Review Sermon Content

Purpose: Reflect on one key takeaway.

Take a few minutes to memorize 2 Chronicles 7:14 and recite it together.

1. After reciting, say together, "This is the Word of the Lord. Thanks be to God."
- a. As you recite God's word, how has it impacted you after the "Turn Around Series"?
- b. What is the key takeaway for you from the sermon "Pride"?
- c. How will you align the way you live to your key takeaway?

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B. Relate Sermon Content

Purpose: Relate with the Truth and Resolve for Transformation.

- 2a. God opposes the proud, but he gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6)
How has knowing your “place” in relation to God who does not need to expend an ounce of energy to oppose us because He created the galaxies and everything in them and beyond, impacted you?
- 2b. Why does God oppose (resist) and detest (hate) the proud and cannot tolerate (endure) or live with them?
- 2c. How can remembering “Every good and perfect gift is from above (James 1:17)” and “We will die”, help you not fall into the category of “The proud”?
- 3a. Consider your relationships with others in your home, school, work, SG, ministry, church or community. On a scale of 1-10 with 1 being the least and 10 the most:
 - (i) How often do you think you are better than someone as you compare with that person in certain areas?
 - (ii) How often do you become impatient with the person you compare with or put the person down?
 - (iii) How often do you keep talking about your abilities, success or achievements?
- 3b. What is one thing you can do, to turnaround and do less of the above in 3a.?
- 3c. How can your group members encourage or help you to achieve 3b. above, for the following week(s) till your next meeting?

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C. Testimonies and Prayer

Purpose: Give glory to God and seek Him.

4. Share your testimony on how God helped you to turnaround from your pride, and now you can truly say that "Only Jesus matters".

OR

Give thanks to God for every good and perfect gift that you have received from above and share how you have been a channel of blessing with the gifts.

5. With a prayer partner, take time to pray for God to prompt you where there has been pride in your life and commit to obey God's prompting. Pray also for the concerns in 3a. above, asking God to give you strength and wisdom to fulfill 3b. by the empowerment of His Holy Spirit.

As a group, pray for our church that we may acknowledge in our heart that every good and perfect gift comes from above, because in the end only knowing Jesus truly matters.

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