

Respectable Sins: Pride

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[0 : 00] Welcome here for this Sunday, October 3rd. We had a young adults gathering at our place on Friday night and it was cold. Outside that ring of fire, we were all, felt like Johnny Cash.

We were singing Ring of Fire, leaning right in close because it was cold outside that fire. But it was a good time of fellowship together. So as we continue in our series, The Respectable Sins this morning, let's refresh a few of the things that we've considered so far.

Over the past three weeks, we've had a review of the concept of sin. We've begun to look at specific sins so far, including worry and discontentment.

And remember, as I sound like a broken record, if you've missed any of those, they are available on our website, bramarbaptist.com, through Bramarkast on Spotify or Apple Podcasts.

So they are always available. Or the phone line. So we've considered that sin can be defined as any failure to conform to the moral law of God in act, in attitude, or in nature.

[1 : 15] So I see people taking notes already and I completely forgot. Connor has the sermon note sheet basket and pens. So if you want to raise your hand, if you'd like that, he will come and facilitate your note-taking needs.

One commentator, you may remember, I read in our series introduction, suggested that at its root, sin is essentially selfish disregard.

You may remember that. Choosing what we want over anything else. Seeking to fulfill our selfish desires over the needs of another person or the will of God in our lives.

And guess what next week's topic is? Selfishness. Sin isn't something we can brush off or minimize as we've considered before.

It has serious and eternal consequences. But thankfully, as I've said before, we recognize that our sin can be forgiven by God.

[2 : 18] But only one way. Only in confessing our sin and receiving forgiveness. And that forgiveness, we've recognized, was made possible only through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross.

So as we continue in this series over the coming weeks, we're going to be looking at some specific sins we may commit in our lives. And we're going to explore ways to identify and address them.

And as I've said before, if it's helpful to think of it in this way, respectable sins are the ones that we may tend to minimize or disregard or at the very least tolerate.

So I want to begin with a story this morning. A pastor, a doctor, sounds like a joke, might be. A pastor, a doctor, a politician, a scientist, and a young boy were traveling on an airplane.

When suddenly the plane's engine started to fail, the pilot desperately tried to fix the problem but without success. He told his passengers to each grab a parachute and jump off because the plane was going to crash.

[3 : 33] So the pilot grabbed a parachute and jumped. Problem was, there were only four parachutes left. The politician grabbed a parachute and said, I am an important man.

I work to make important laws so the people need me. And he jumped off the plane. The doctor grabbed the second parachute and said, I have an important job. I save people's lives so people need me.

And she jumped off the plane. The scientist grabbed the third parachute and said, I'm among the world's most intelligent men. The people need intelligent men like me.

And he jumped off the plane. The pastor then turned to the little boy and said, I'm old. I've lived a full life. But you're young. And you still have your entire life ahead of you.

You take the last parachute. The boy looked at the pastor, smiled, and said, no, no, don't worry. The world's most intelligent man just took my backpack.

[4 : 34] So I wanted to begin this morning with a bit of a lighter approach because we're going to consider the sin of pride.

And you can probably see pride in that story. So while the story hopefully made you laugh, it sounded like it did, there's a deep truth on display there too, right?

The human tendency towards personal arrogance and pride. The issue of pride is a huge one for human beings. It can be seen as really the foundation or the underlying root behind many of the other behaviors that we consider to be sin.

Behind actions and attitudes that we would consider to be sinful, would consider to be in rebellion to God. So realistically, I could preach an entire sermon on our entire series rather on this topic alone, the sin of pride.

Because as I said, it's at the root of so many others. So we're going to have to limit our scope a little bit this morning. And I'm going to focus on three things. Why is pride the root of so many other sins?

[5 : 49] How can it be sinful to be proud of something that has significance or meaning for us? And how can we let go of our pride?

So first, why is pride the root of so many other sins? Well, the sin of pride really is foundational to the issue of sin in so many ways.

What caused Satan to rebel against God? Pride. What caused Adam and Eve to disobey God in the face of everything he had given them?

He gave them essentially one restriction. But that wasn't good enough because of pride. The Bible talks about pride a lot.

And it refers to it many different times and by many different names. So here are some.

Self-exaltation. Haughtiness. Being puffed up.

[6 : 52] Lofty. Conceited. Arrogant. Boastful. All different ways to say pride. And that covers a lot of ground really, doesn't it?

We learned how Jesus addressed the issue of pride many times in our sermon series on the parables. Jesus called it out over and over again. The pride and arrogance of that self-righteous Pharisee.

Do you remember that? He and the tax collector were in the temple praying and the Pharisee, rather than focusing on God, said, well, at least I'm not like this guy over here.

So how does God feel about pride? Well, Proverbs 6, 16, and 17 tells us that haughtiness, as we learned, is pride, is at the very top of the list of things that God detests.

And your translation may use that word, detests. It's pretty strong. Proverbs 16, verse 5. I'm just going to go through a bunch of verses so you can flip like mad and try and keep up or just take note.

[8 : 01] Proverbs 16, 5 says, the Lord detests all the proud of heart, it says. And it continues, be sure of this. They will not go unpunished.

Proverbs 16, 18, and 19 says, now you've probably heard this with a different kind of word and I'll highlight it for you.

Pride goes before destruction, my translation says. But you've heard the phrase, pride comes before the fall. A haughty spirit before a fall, it says there.

Better to be lowly in spirit and among the oppressed than to share plunder with the proud. Psalm 10, verse 4 says, in his pride, the wicked does not seek him.

In all his thoughts, there is no room for God. Ouch. Pride extinguishes or pushes out that relationship potential with God.

[9 : 08] Psalm 73, verse 6 says of people who don't seek after God, therefore pride is their necklace. That's a powerful image.

They clothe themselves with violence. So wearing pride as an adornment that leads to clothing your entire body in violence.

And so we've spoken before about how our perspective towards God should be. Right? A sense of fear. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, Scripture tells us.

And that's not fear of God's anger towards us, as I've said in the past. It's a fear of his awesome power. But yet we're also told by Scripture that we are his beloved children.

And he calls us to be close to him. So that's the balance of our relationship with God. The almighty creator of the universe who could take our lives like that, but who calls us his children.

[10:14] So with this in mind, Proverbs 8, verse 13 says, to fear the Lord is to hate evil. It says, speaking for God, I hate pride and arrogance, evil behavior, and perverse speech.

God's pretty clear, right? So if we fear the Lord, if we love him and seek to follow him, we are called, do you recognize this throughout Scripture, we are called to hate the things that God hates. So we don't need to dig too deeply into any sin in our lives to recognize that its ultimate root is usually pride.

And you'll also see next week, it's also selfishness sometimes. But it's human nature to stubbornly and willfully seek to make ourselves happy, right?

We seek to substitute for God what we choose. We seek pleasure, we seek approval, we seek wealth, or power, or status, as instant gratification ways to replace what only a relationship with God will truly fulfill.

[11:33] So when we go down that path, I believe we often try to take control, right? We recognize that when we talked about worry. We stop viewing the things that we have as good gifts that are freely given to us by a good God.

We begin to see what we have as things we can take for ourselves, regardless of the cost, and we allow those same things to take the place of God in our lives.

That's what pride does. So pride can be a direct and dominant sin. Sometimes it's really, really clear when pride is at work in your life.

But it can also be quite subtle as well. Can you recognize times when you've resisted submitting to God or seeking His guidance because you think you can handle it?

You think you've got it just fine? No, I'm good. No, Lord, I'll give you a call if I need you. I got it covered pretty sure. That's pride.

[12:44] Have you snubbed advice or counsel from someone else because you know best what's good for you? That's pride. What about refusing to accept help or dependence on someone else because you think that's a sign of weakness?

Friends, friends, that's also your pride talking. I also want us to call out something else. When someone has offered you help or assistance or support and you've turned it down out of pride, can you recognize you may have actually robbed that person?

If someone reaches out to you, makes themselves vulnerable, and you may have allowed your pride or your stubbornness to suffocate that opportunity for connection, that's a missed opportunity.

And pride was at the root. And I want us to consider something else. Are you good at receiving compliments? Friends, even when I say receiving compliments, I kind of cringe.

So you may have a sense that it is sinful or prideful to accept words of encouragement or a compliment from someone else. Do you feel that way?

[14:08] Perhaps you do. And perhaps you reject those things. But can you think about, do you reject them out of a false sense of humility, perhaps?

Friends, accept a compliment. It's okay. Accept a kind gesture or a gift, a kind or encouraging word from someone else.

Because you may just be giving them as much of a gift as you're receiving. And I want us to think about that. And also, who are we to say or presume that God doesn't use the words or actions or behavior of another human being to convey a message that ultimately comes to us through them from Him.

Think about that. There go the lights. And they're back on again. So, just an interesting side note. Last Sunday, you may have, if you're here, you may have noticed that those back two lights went out as soon as I started talking about Satan.

Pastor Ahmad and I talked later in the week and he said, I told him that, and he said, interesting, I preached about Satan the past two Sundays and we've had problems. Interesting.

[15:30] So we prayed for each other. Not surprising. But interesting, for sure. So second point this morning. How can it be sinful? This is a hard one. How can it be sinful to be proud of things that have significance or meaning for us?

Is that a tough one when you hear that? Because it's human nature, I believe, to want to be acknowledged. We seek to be greater. We seek to stand out and be recognized.

We may seek to dominate someone else in a conversation or an argument. You hear the last word. I want to get the last word in. We are prideful creatures in so many ways.

And I even struggled with it as I prepared for this sermon because I intentionally examined my heart and my motives. And it honestly felt strange for me to consider that it may actually be sin for me to be prideful about some of the things that matter to me the most.

I am proud to be a husband to Michelle. I'm proud to be a father to Connor and Emily, proud of some of the accomplishments and experiences I've had in my life, proud of the legacy my parents have given me, proud to be your pastor here at Braemar, proud of the legacy of this church, proud of God at work in this place.

[16:58] And the list goes on. And I would hope that for anyone who knows me, certainly who knows me well, that they would not consider me to be a prideful or arrogant person.

I hope not. So how could this pride that I feel be sinful in any way? Well, friends, as I've considered this, I've had a real sense that it's all about the heart.

And it's all about perspective. The sense of pride that I feel about so many things, and I hope you can relate to this, is really not about me at all.

It's about recognizing that I feel blessed to be who I am. I feel blessed to be where I am and in the circumstances that I find myself.

I am truly, deeply humbled by how God has worked and continues to work in my life. My sense of pride really doesn't stem from a personal sense of self-importance or arrogance, but from a sense of humility over how God has blessed my life.

[18:13] Now, don't think for a moment that I don't wrestle with sinful pride at times because, oh boy, again, for those of you who know me, who know my background, who know some of my past, for much of my life, I have spent it in the spotlight.

I have been a speaker and presenter. I have given hundreds, literally, of media interviews. I have acted in theater productions. I have had numerous opportunities to bask in the praise of other people, to begin to feel self-important and arrogant.

But it is because I know of this weakness that I face that I intentionally seek to recognize and turn away from sinful pride in my life.

If you have given me a compliment and you see me cringe and say thanks as I look at the ground and kick the dirt with my toe, it's because I'm careful of receiving prideful attention.

So I know many of your stories in our church and this is a community of skilled and gifted and experienced and successful people in so many ways.

[19:31] Does it make you cringe to hear me say that? Well, my friends, there's nothing wrong with recognizing and celebrating who we are and what we've been able to accomplish.

As long as, there's the caveat, we give the glory back to God because God is the source of who we are and what we have.

Thanks, Donna. Does that make sense? Third, how can we let go of our pride? That's a tough one. Pride is subtle and it's addictive. If you can recognize the time when you've been given attention, it feels good, doesn't it? It feels really good.

And we tend to crave acceptance. We tend to crave affirmation, even praise. Can you recognize that in yourself? It's only when we fully surrender our desires and our cravings to find that praise, to find that fulfillment from other people and other sources, that we can connect with the true source in God himself.

[20:57] Do you know the antidote to pride? It's humility. Humility. I think we can so easily relate that concept to the idea of meekness or even weakness.

Right? More extreme, perhaps, what word sounds like humility? How about humiliation? A sign of weakness, a sign of giving in, a sign of being less than we were meant to be.

We may tend to view humility as giving up or giving in rather than trusting God and letting go.

Our world tends to mistake or identify meekness with weakness. But nothing could be further from the truth. An attitude of meekness and humility means that we are teachable.

It means we are responsive in our relationship with God and with other people. It means that we are humble and gentle and respectful in our relationships with one another.

[22:21] As Christians, we need to recognize that we must continually battle our own pride and grow in humility. We can express our humility through interactions with others by opening our hearts, being more willing to see things from the other person's perspective and to learn from them.

A small but concrete example of humility is learning to apologize freely and sincerely.

It shouldn't surprise us that we find the ultimate example of humility, the ultimate model of humility in Jesus himself. Philippians 2 verses 5 to 9 reminds us your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus, who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness, and being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death, even death on a cross.

My friends, Jesus is the ultimate example of humility, showing his quality of character that was noticeable in his life while he was here on earth.

Jesus was not weak, he was not docile, he was not repressed, he was not unambitious, if that's the impression you have of Jesus, you missed lots of it.

[24 : 12] His humble nature, though, and his humility were astounding. Out of obedience to his father, Jesus humbled himself.

The scripture tells us all the way to the cross. Jesus understood that humility, not self-serving pride, is what creates greatness.

And that greatness, in that form, is expressed in wanting to serve more than seeking to be served.

We know that humbleness, especially as modeled through Jesus, leads to genuine goodness peace.

Through his ultimate humility and submission to God, Jesus paid that ultimate price for you and for me. The one who is worthy of all the praise and adoration of all creation set aside and humbled himself for our sake.

Friends, I hope that this morning you've been able to recognize just how destructive the sin of pride can be in so many areas of our lives.

[25 : 38] Pride, I don't care what you think about it. Pride, scripture tells us, is sin. Don't seek to minimize or discount it.

But friends, also by God's grace, our sin, can be forgiven. As we journey through a deeper exploration of some of these respectable sins in the coming weeks, I want us to continue each week as we have in previous weeks to say the words of 1 John 1 9 together.

Ready? If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Amen. Amen. Amen. For the For the with us, Amen. Amen. MosheVert