

Text— Luke 22:24-32

Fellow redeemed sinners, redeemed by the blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ,

We have now entered the Lenten season of the church year— a time for penitential reflection as we especially consider what it cost Jesus Christ our Savior to pay for our numerous sins. Oh, the cost was quite great, for we read in 1 Peter 1:18-21, “Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot: Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you, Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory; that your faith and hope might be in God.” Yes, it took the holy and infinitely precious blood of Jesus Christ, true God and true man, to pay for all of our sins in full.

My friends, the truth is that we naturally conceived human beings were born in sin, and we commit all manner of sins in thoughts, words and deeds daily, for Isaiah 64:6 states, “we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.” Accordingly, we have no reason to hold a high opinion of ourselves.

Hence, our Scripture selection can be of benefit to all of us as it in effect warns:

“BEWARE OF BEING PRIDEFUL”

With that as our theme, may we, in view of our text and with the help of the Holy Ghost, see—

- 1) What it means to be prideful
- 2) Why it is necessary to beware of being prideful

-1-

It was just a month ago when we pondered a

sermon text from the book of Genesis in which we learned to beware of sinful pride as we considered the history of mankind at the tower of Babel. We noted man’s sinful pride in his aspirations to reach into heaven and be his own god. Sadly, it all happened as man had again multiplied on the earth after God destroyed all but eight persons in the world-wide flood. Nevertheless, fellow Christians, since we human beings dwell in sinful flesh, we are all inclined to be prideful, which is why the apostle Paul warns in Romans 12:3, “I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.” Yes, we all need to remember that faith in Christ and every other good thing we possess or do are gracious gifts of God and are not things we produce in ourselves.

Verse 24, ----- (Luke 22:24)

My friends, the inclination to be prideful remains in every one of us while we dwell in sinful flesh in this world, for even Jesus’ disciples were prone to high self-esteem and conceit, as is evident from the fact *there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.*

Yeah, the disciples of Jesus disputed and quarreled about which of them should be thought of as the greatest. Think about the timing of the strife. The disciples had just celebrated the Lord’s Supper as Jesus instituted it that very evening; and yet, instead of pondering Jesus’ words concerning His then upcoming bitter sufferings and death, which He would endure after one of them betrayed Him, they were arguing about which of them should be accounted the greatest. Unfortunately, it was not the first time the disciples had a discussion about such things, since months earlier a similar situation occurred, for Luke 9:46-48 reports, “there arose a reasoning among them, which of them should be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a child, and set him by him, And said unto them, Whosoever shall receive this child in my name receiveth me: and whosoever shall

receive me receiveth him that sent me: for he that is least among you all, the same shall be great.” Thus, Jesus at that time directed His disciples to be humble, not haughty.

Therefore, let us take it to heart that to be prideful is to be haughty in self-esteem, being conceited and having a very high-opinion of one’s self, holding one’s self as being better than all other human beings and desiring to be accounted the greatest.

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As we continue to ponder our sermon text, let us consider why it is necessary to beware of being prideful.

Again, verse 24, ----- (Luke 22:24)

The disciples of Jesus Christ, men who had spent some three years in the physical visible presence of Jesus, having Him instructing them as He spoke God’s Word from His own lips, and beholding Jesus humbly serving others, still argued among themselves as to *which of them should be accounted the greatest*.

Now, since those men were being prideful, it is certain that we who are not privileged to have Jesus visibly present with us are also inclined to be prideful, “For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not.”— declares Ecclesiastes 7:20.

Fellow Christians, the temptation to sin by being prideful comes from our own corrupt flesh, the devil, and the wicked world in which we live.

We’ve already noted that we Christians – we who are accounted just in God’s sight by faith in Jesus Christ as our personal Savior and Lord – are still dwelling in sinful flesh which moves us to commit all manner of actual sins. Furthermore, the fact that the devil tempts people to sin in being prideful is already evident in the case with our first parents, Adam and Eve. It’s as Genesis 3:1-7

relates: “Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons.”

Did you catch Satan’s tricky temptation method? The devil – the old serpent – incited Eve and Adam to sin in being prideful when he said, “your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.” The devil in effect said: Adam and Eve, you can elevate yourselves by having high self-esteem, you can be the greatest, once you disobey God. But what really happened? Adam and Eve fell from their perfect state of holiness, and were stuck in sin. Thankfully, God graciously promised the Savior to Adam and Eve when within earshot He said to Satan, as recorded in Genesis 3:15, “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.”

Yes, the only begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ, would be and is the Seed of the woman, for He was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary; and, Jesus dealt a defeating blow to the devil by paying for the sins of the whole world with His own holy and precious blood. Indeed, Hebrews 2:14-15 states the case: “Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the

power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage." Thanks and praise be to Jesus! Let us beware of being prideful as we recall how the devil successfully tempted our first parents to sin.

The wicked world in which we live also tempts us to sin in being prideful as it near constantly promotes high self-esteem rather than humility. For example, the public school system shoves the principal of high self-esteem upon students quite regularly. Nevertheless, God's Word instructs us in Philippians 2:3, "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves." Let us therefore strive to heed God's Word rather than man's falsehoods, for it is obviously truly necessary that WE beware of being prideful.

Verses 25-27, ----- (Luke 22:25-27)

Behold the patience of Jesus as He lovingly instructed His disciples, for He *said unto them The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.*

The Gentiles, the unbelieving worldly-minded folks of the day, had kings which ruled the common folks with power and authority over them; and, such rulers had great titles of respect and honor, such as being called benefactors. Such worldly rulers relished being addressed by titles as they held themselves to be better and higher than other people. That is how the kingdoms of the world operate to this very day.

However, things are to be different in the Kingdom of God on earth, the holy Christian Church. Jesus commands that His disciples have an attitude opposite of worldly-minded folks, that they be

humble rather than haughty, that they be NOT prideful and self-serving but rather willingly serve others as Christ Himself did even though He is actually King of kings and Lord of lords!

Think about Jesus' amazing attitude of service to others. Why, in the very night in which Jesus instituted His Holy Supper, John 3:13-17 relates, "Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God; He riseth from supper, and laid aside his garments; and took a towel, and girded himself. After that he poureth water into a bason, and began to wash the disciples' feet, and to wipe them with the towel wherewith he was girded. Then cometh he to Simon Peter: and Peter saith unto him, Lord, dost thou wash my feet? Jesus answered and said unto him, What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter. Peter saith unto him, Thou shalt never wash my feet. Jesus answered him, If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me. Simon Peter saith unto him, Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head. Jesus saith to him, He that is washed needeth not save to wash his feet, but is clean every whit: and ye are clean, but not all. For he knew who should betray him; therefore said he, Ye are not all clean. So after he had washed their feet, and had taken his garments, and was set down again, he said unto them, Know ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you. Verily, verily, I say unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord; neither he that is sent greater than he that sent him. If ye know these things, happy are ye if ye do them." Just think of it: Jesus Christ, who is true God and true Man, humbly washed His disciples' feet. Thus, we should certainly beware of being prideful because being prideful is the opposite of how our Lord Jesus would have us conduct ourselves.

Take it to heart that true greatness means being humble and doing service to others as did our Lord

and Savior, Jesus Christ. Hence, Philippians 2:5-8 declares, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Oh, Jesus humbled Himself, for no sinful man could humble Him. Jesus willingly humbled Himself to-the-max in order to save us sinners. Jesus is truly amazing and wonderful.

Realize the fact Jesus in effect told His disciples NOT to be prideful and NOT to seek worldly-like self-serving greatness makes it quite clear that His Church on earth is NOT to have state ruling over it or a Pope ruling over it, since such things are sinful prideful behavior. It's as we read in Ephesians 5:23, "Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body." How dare any sinful human being claim headship over the Church when Jesus Christ alone is Savior and Lord! Beware of being prideful.

Verses 28-30, ----- (Luke 22:28-30)

Jesus had warned His disciples against worldly greatness and being prideful, but then He told His apostles of what lay ahead for them in yonder life when He said: *Ye are they which have continued with me in my temptations. And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*

Thus, Jesus would graciously give His faithful apostles true greatness in heaven. Indeed, it would be by the Lord's grace and NOT by some sinful jockeying for position during their life on earth that they would attain greatness in yonder life. God dispenses true greatness where and when He pleases, "For of him, and through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen." — reports Romans 11:36. Sinful, worldly, self-serving

pride will NOT gain anyone true greatness. So, let us beware of being prideful.

Fellow Christians, if we remain humble trusting servants of God's only begotten Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we have a wonderful future to look forward to since John 3:36 clearly states, "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him." And, Jesus promises in Revelation 3:21, "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Oh, we cannot begin to fully fathom the wonderful future which awaits us Christians if we remain in the true faith of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Let us be on guard against the temptations of the devil, the world, and our sinful flesh; let us beware of being prideful.

Verses 31 & 32, ----- (Luke 22:31-32)

The closing verses of our text serve as a powerful warning to all of us against being prideful, for consider the fact: *the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: But I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.*

Think about Simon Peter. Peter was full of boldness and self-confidence when he said to Jesus, as Luke 22:33 reports, "Lord, I am ready to go with thee, both into prison, and to death." Yeah, Peter was prideful, for Matthew 26:33 informs us, "Peter answered and said unto him, Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended." Nevertheless, despite the warnings given to Simon by the Lord Jesus, Simon did deny Jesus; Simon fell from faith; but thankfully, Simon was again converted and was graciously given faith once again. Let us learn from Simon Peter's example about the danger of being prideful. Pride often goes before a fall. Let us heed Jesus' warnings to us by taking the words of our sermon text to heart. Yes, let each and every one

of us beware of being prideful.

Let us daily and sincerely repent of our sins; and, let us cling to Christ Jesus in heart-deep faith as our personal Savior and Lord, knowing that He alone can give us the strength we need to fight against temptations to sin, including the sin of being prideful. Amen.

m.e.l.