

Pride's Religion

by Carter Conlon

Pride's religion is a state of religiousness that lacks the fear of God and obedience, and can be escaped by bending one's knee to God and asking for guidance.

Duration: 52:53

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Matthew 7:21-23, Matthew 21:22, Matthew 21:28-30, John 1:27, Acts 9:6

Topics: "Pride"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of humility in the Christian faith. He shares that he is on a personal journey towards humility and desires to finish his life's course like the apostle Paul. The preacher urges the congregation to bend their knees, open their hearts, and die to their own self-righteousness. He prays for the Holy Spirit to convict and speak to every heart, emphasizing the need for a genuine worship of God in spirit and truth. The sermon concludes with a reminder of God's love and the call to be a source of living water to a thirsty world.

Transcript

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This will be the third time today that this same topic is going to be spoken on, really the topic of humility. The title of my message tonight is called Pride's Religion. It might be subtitled The Testimony of a Humble Heart.

And you'll see as we begin to progress in this. If you'll go to Matthew Chapter 21, please, with me. Now, Father, I thank you for the anointing of the Holy Spirit.

I thank you, Lord, that you have worked into me a dependence on your strength. God Almighty, I ask you for the grace to speak for you. I ask, Lord, that you put weight on your word tonight.

Lord, those that are familiar with escaping conviction, I pray, God, that conviction not pass them by. I ask, Lord, that in every heart, beginning with mine, that you speak to us. Lord, this is not an hour to be turning a deafened ear to the voice of God.

Lord, we need you. We need your strength. God, we need you to guide us through the coming days.

I pray tonight for every person in this house. I pray, Father, that not one person within the sound of my voice end up in hell when this life is over. Oh, God, I pray, even if it's just a momentary ability to hear, Lord, that you open the ears of the inner man.

I know I have your heart. I know you've given me your word. I ask you for physical strength and spiritual strength to be able to deliver it and the grace to speak it in the manner that you would speak it if you were in physical form in this church tonight.

Jesus, honor your name. Honor your name tonight. God, open prison doors and set captives free.

I thank you for this with all my heart. In Jesus' name. Pride's Religion, Matthew chapter 21, beginning at verse 18.

Now in the morning as he returned into the city, he hungered. And when he saw a fig tree in the way, he came to it and found nothing thereon but leaves only and said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforth forever. And presently the fig tree withered away.

When the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, How soon is the fig tree withered away? Jesus answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If you have faith and doubt not, you shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if you shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed and be thou cast into the sea, it shall be done. And all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive. Now we're beginning at the scripture and we're going to be moving back to it in the not too distant future.

Now pride is the one sin of which you and I should be the most afraid. And I'm serious about this. I'm not just making that statement because the issue is pride's religion.

So we have to build a case. No, it's the one sin and I'm going to prove it to you. You should be terrified of this sin, never getting a hold of your heart.

Proverbs 16, 18 says that pride goes before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall. If pride gets into the heart, it's indisputable because God's word gives a prescription of what follows pride. It goes before destruction.

Proverbs chapter 6 and verse 17 lists a proud look first among the seven things that God hates. If we're going to list things that absolutely actually God's word says are an abomination to God. He lists a proud look.

Number one of all these things that God hates. Pride is the fuel source of all rebellion against God. If you look in the Old Testament, I'll just read it to you for the sake of time.

In Ezekiel chapter 28 and verse 15. Now, it's believed by most all Bible scholars that this is a veiled reference to Satan himself. In Ezekiel chapter 28 and verses 15 to 17, he says, Thou was perfect in thy ways from the day that thou was created till iniquity was found in thee.

By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence and thou hast sinned. Therefore, I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty.

Thou has corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness. I will cast thee to the ground. I will lay thee before kings that they may behold thee.

Thou has defiled thy sanctuaries by the multitude of thine iniquities by the iniquity of thy traffic. Now, this is the Lord speaking through the Holy Spirit to Satan himself. He said, You were perfect in all your ways.

Actually, if you go back earlier into that chapter, he says, You have been in Eden, in verse 13, in the garden of God, and every precious stone was your covering. In other words, God is saying there's nothing I would have withheld from you. You were adorned.

There was a beauty about you. And just as you and I tonight, when you come to Christ, there is an adornment that God puts upon us. He makes us into something other than what we are, being built as it is upon the foundation of Jesus Christ and the apostles.

And as we begin to believe God, we are changed into another image. And those who truly walk with God, this is the evidence. There is a change in you.

You are changing from image to image and glory to glory. And things that were not in your life are now, by the very presence of God, now beginning to be there. And this is what God does.

Could I possibly get a glass of water from somebody? I'd appreciate it very much. I'm taking medication because of my lungs and my mouth is dry. If you care to even know, I guess it doesn't look right.

It says in verse 14, you are the anointed cherub that covers. And you are on the holy mountain of God. And you walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.

And you were perfect in your ways until the day that was iniquity was found in you. Now, the iniquity is that you are corrupted by how you began to see yourself. Really, the sin of Satan was pride.

He got taken with his own beauty. He was taken with the giftings that, of course, God had given him in the first place. And was no longer content to walk humbly as it is in the place that God had placed him.

But decided in his heart that he would be exalted as God is. And he would, in effect, become his own God. And because of it, he caused not only his own fall, but the fall of many around him in heaven at that time.

And subsequently, of course, the fall of the human race when he tempted Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Thank you. In verse 18, he says, you defiled your sanctuaries by the multitude of your iniquities and by the iniquity of your traffic.

In other words, everywhere you dwell is defiled as you sow the same pride that caused your downfall. Everywhere you dwell. We heard it this afternoon so clearly.

I was shaken inside as I began to realize that surely, God, you are speaking to this church in this season. Talking about the son of Belial, if you didn't hear the message. The son of Satan himself.

This is what an evil man, a prideful man, became. In Job chapter 41. If you go back with me to Job, find the book of Psalms and go back about one page and you'll be in Job chapter 41.

And if we begin at verse 15, there's a reference to a sea creature called Leviathan. Which I believe, in my heart, is again a veiled reference to Satan himself. I think I know why.

In chapter 41 of Job, verse 1, we see in the beginning of this chapter an image of Christ as it is. And he asks a question. He says, can you draw out, this is God actually speaking to Job.

He says, can you draw out Leviathan with a hook or his tongue with a cord which you let down? Can you put a hook into his nose or bore his jaw through with a thorn? I want you to think of Christ as we read these verses of Scripture. Will he make many supplications to thee? Think of Jesus coming. Think of the petitions that he put out of his heart as it is in his mouth towards a prideful creation that was exalting itself as Satan had above the knowledge of God.

Will he speak soft words unto thee? Will he make a covenant with thee, verse 4? Will you take him for a servant forever? I think of Jesus at the last supper taking a towel and girding himself and washing the feet of his disciples. Will you play with him as with a bird? Think of when he was brought before the judgment seat and when the people around, beginning firstly with the religious and then eventually progressing into the soldiers themselves, slapping his face and pulling his hair and insulting him with all kinds of insults. He says, or will you bind him for your maidens? Shall the companions make a banquet of him? And shall they part him among the merchants? Think of the Scripture where they took his garments and they parted them among themselves.

Verse 7, I think, brings it home. He says, can you fill his skin with barbed irons? Think of the nails that went into his feet and into his hands. Or his head with fish spears? Think of the crown of thorns that Christ wore.

I do believe with all my heart that this is God saying, I want you to compare the heart of the one who came to redeem you with the heart of one who is full of pride and hates you. And now in verse 15 he's talking again about Leviathan. He says, his scales are his pride.

Shut up together as with a closed seal. One is so near to another that no air can come between them. In other words, he is so closed that you can't get to him anymore.

That's really what the devil is. He's so closed. He's so enclosed in his image of himself that he cannot be reached by any amount of truth.

He is a liar, Jesus said, and he's the father of lies. He's a murderer. He was a murderer, he said, right from the beginning.

You cannot get through to him. You cannot get beneath the scales of the defense as it is with the covering that he's placed around himself. Verse 18 says, by his sneezing, the light does shine in his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning.

In other words, he has an appearance of light about him. But remember, Jesus said, don't forget, he dwelt in the presence of God. You have not seen the glory of God.

Satan has seen the glory of God. He knows what God looks like. He was familiar with the presence of God.

And he has an understanding of some, as it is, it's a perverted, twisted understanding now. That's why Jesus said, if the light that is in you be darkness, how great is that darkness. If you've heard truth, but the truth has not transformed your heart.

If it's not brought you to a place of surrender to God, if the character of Christ is not being formed within you, then the light that you've ingested in your mind has turned you to a deeper darkness than anything this world can ever throw at you. If the light that is in you is darkness, how great is that darkness. Verse 34 says, he beholds all high things.

In other words, anything that will exalt him, anything that will, in a sense, better his position or his image of himself, he is a king over all the children of pride. Now, we describe pride as that which exalts itself above the knowledge of God. We see this creation called Satan coming down into the Garden of Eden.

The very first three words out of his mouth to Adam and Eve is, hath God said? Has God said? Did he really mean that? Is God's word absolute? The inference is, of course, do you really have to obey it? Is there a consequence for disobeying the word of God? He said, no, God knows in the day you partake of this fruit that your eyes will be opened and you'll be just like he is. You'll have a knowledge far above the knowledge that you possess right now. And Satan succeeded in tempting Adam and Eve to sin against God.

He infused into man that same seed of pride which led him astray and pride's religion was born. Now, pride's religion is best described as a state of religiousness which can hear but lacks the fear of God and feels no obligation to obey what God has clearly spoken. That's pride's religion.

Can hear? You can hear tonight, can't you? You hear my voice. I may speak truths that you may say, that's it, that's true, that's right. But there's no fear of God.

No sense that one day you will stand and give an account for every word that you've heard. And no obligation to obey what God has clearly spoken. I'm dumbfounded over the years that the number of people whom Christ has said, if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you.

And they see this, they hear it, but there's no fear of God. And the first little offense, they take it to heart, they hold a grievance, they will not let it go. And some take it sadly to the grave.

Only to one day stand before God and realize that God meant what he said. But only pride could cause you or I to disobey God and have no fear of God in our hearts. How did the devil ever get to the place of thinking that he could try to overthrow the throne of God? The blinding power of pride is incredible.

The religious crowd, in John 8, 39, they said to Jesus, Abraham is our father. But Jesus responded to them, he said, but if you were the children of Abraham, you would do the works of your father. Now, they didn't take it a step further.

What were the works of Abraham? Abraham heard God and obeyed him. He was not a perfect man. He was not an unflawed man, but he heard God.

And when he heard God, he obeyed God. Because he had a fear of God in his heart. And in spite of the fact that half of the world probably thought he was insane, he still walked with God.

And he believed that God was able to perform the impossible that he had spoken into his heart. Matthew 15, chapter 15 and verse 6, he said, you've made the commandment of God of no effect by your tradition. He said, God spoke to you, and I'm paraphrasing the word of God.

But God spoke to you and said you're to honor your father and your mother. Now, the context of that is that you are to provide for your father and mother, quite possibly in their old age. You're to look after them.

They're not ever to become destitute or impoverished. But he said, but you say it is a gift by anything where my mother or father might be profited by me. He said, thus, by your tradition, you've made the commandment of God of no effect.

You've taken the commandment of God and you've substituted it for a proudful religious tradition. And this was the heart of his own people. By the time Christ came in bodily form, his own people were so against him that, of course, they would end up yelling, crucify him.

In pride's religion, every man is allowed to develop an image of his own godliness, no matter how far his heart might be from the truth. He's allowed. A proud man can develop a sense of godliness about himself.

He can stand, for example, and say, well, I fast, I tithe all I possess, and I come to the house of God and pray. And oh, thank God, I'm not like this publican, standing and beating upon his breast and saying, oh, God, be merciful to me, a sinner. You see, he's allowed to create an image of his own godliness.

It may have no bearing whatsoever in truth, but in his own mind, he feels that he's extremely godly. Jesus said of these people in Matthew chapter 23 and verse 27, you are like whited graves or sepulchers, which indeed appear outwardly beautiful, but within are full of dead men's bones and of all uncleanness. Now, how do I know that I have embraced pride's religion? How do I know? There's a sure sign that you are a member of the church of pride.

Now, I'm praying with all my heart. I did today that when this message is over, that some of you will be submitting your resignation to the church of pride. You have embraced pride's religion when you are highly offended, when even God challenges your image of yourself.

You're offended if somebody says that you're not as loving as you should be. You're not as loyal as you think you are. You're not as dedicated as you'd like to believe.

And God comes to challenge it. And you are immediately offended. John 11, 53, in John chapter 11, Jesus had just raised Lazarus from the dead.

And because of this, the resurrected Lazarus, many people were beginning to believe on him. And they took counsel, the Pharisees and the religious leaders, and they said, what are we going to do? All these people are going to follow this man and we're going to lose our position in our nation. And I'm thinking ironically how the high priest Caiaphas, he said, oh, you understand nothing at all.

Amazing. He was the one who didn't understand anything himself. He said it's more expedient that one man die for the nation than the whole nation perish.

And the scripture says he didn't even speak this of himself. But being the high priest, God had prophesied through him that Christ was going to die for the saving of not only the nation, but of all people. But he himself was completely ignorant of what was coming out of his mouth.

He was blinded by the pride of his heart. And in the pride of his heart, he joined those in John 11, 53, that met and took counsel to put him to death. They hated this manifested glory of God.

And you see, the only way that pride can maintain its sense of righteousness is by destroying anything and anyone that truly represents God. Think of Acts chapter 9 and verse 1. It says, And Saul, breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord. Here's a man who's got an image of himself.

He sees himself as righteous. He sees himself as zealous for God. And yet, some people are arising in the simplicity of faith in a finished work on Calvary.

And he is so incensed at the declaration that these people have, that they are cleansed, and that there's a new life being lived out in them and through them. That all that comes from him is threatenings and slaughter. The very heart of Satan is being manifested through him.

The very thing that found its root in Satan at the throne of God, and then eventually came down into Eden and was sown into fallen humanity. We find this in Saul. If you are offended when a godly man or woman reproves you, you're in trouble.

The question we ask ourselves is, how do I escape pride's religion? Number one, bend your knee to God. The Bible tells us that there's a day coming that every knee is going to bow. I would rather bend my knee now.

You see, on that day, it's going to be too late for many. There are many. There's going to be a parade of religious people bending their knee at the throne.

Oh, Jesus, you are Savior, you are Lord. But it's going to be too late. He's going to say, depart from me, I never knew you.

I never knew you. The righteousness that you professed was not mine. The heart that you manifested had nothing to do with truth.

I'd rather bend my knee now to God. In Acts 9, verse 6, it says about Saul, he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what will you have me to do? And the Lord said to him, arise and go into the city, and it will be told you what you must do. And I believe that God's giving the same word tonight to many.

You say, oh, God, what must I do? That's the beginning of humility. Lord, what must I do? And the Lord says to you tonight, arise, go into the city. I'll tell you what to do.

I'll tell you who to call. I'll tell you what letter to write. I'll tell you how to walk humbly among men.

I will give you a new heart. I'll give you a new mind. I'll give you a new spirit.

You will walk, and I will walk with you. And I will be your life, and I will be your chiefest delight and joy. You will no longer have a reputation to uphold among men.

Think of Jacob for a moment, a man who wanted the blessing of God and lied to obtain it. Years and years and years of being taught a lesson by the hand of God, only now going back and facing his fears one more time, and wrestling with God before going into that place where he had to face his own past. And in that place of wrestling with God, he said, oh, God, bless me.

And the Lord says, what is your name? You see, he'd been given a name at birth, and the name was Deceiver. What is your name? You see, the last time he sought the blessing of God, he lied and declared himself to be a man other than the man that he truly was. And God says, no, if you want my blessing, you're going to bend your knee and you're going to agree with me.

It's not as hard as it sounds, you know. It really isn't. You see, the scripture clearly tells us there is nothing good within us.

And if we could just agree with that, then it becomes easy to bend your knee to God. Think of John the Baptist, his testimony in John 127, speaking of Jesus, he said, Here it is, who coming after me is preferred before me, whose shoes latch it, I'm not worthy to unloose. Now, that's a very humble statement, but there's a lot more to this statement than meets the eye.

Now, remember, when a man encountered God, the thing that God would tell him, if he intended on using it, you'll see it in scripture, for example, Moses and Joshua. When he intended in using a person in any kind of a great way that would honor his name, he would tell him, take off your shoes. Take the shoes off your feet.

In other words, you're not the one who's going to determine the direction of your life from here on. You're not going to determine the path. You don't have to figure it all out.

All I require of you is an obedient heart. All I require is that you hear me, and when you hear, you set out to do what I call you to do, and I will supernaturally give you the strength to accomplish it. Now, John said of Jesus, I'm not worthy to unlace his shoes.

In other words, I'm not in the position of God. I'm not worthy to instruct him as to how things should proceed from this point. John says, I know he's the son of God.

Now, John had no knowledge of how that plan is going to unfold, but he did know one thing. He must increase, and I must decrease. There must be more of him and a whole lot less of me.

If I'm going to become anything, I'm not worthy to take his shoes off his feet and try to direct him. He is the one who's to tell me to take my shoes off my feet, and it is him who has the right to direct my life. Secondly, to escape this religion of pride, determine to obey the truth no matter what the cost.

The Lord called a man called Ananias, and he went in and laid hands on Paul. And God said to Ananias in the book of Acts, I will show him the great things that he must suffer for my name's sake. Determine to obey the truth.

Folks, it's not always easy. I've shared with you some things the Lord's had me do over the years. Restitution for wrongs that were made, done in the past, even before I came to Christ.

Things that were done, letters that had to be written, phone calls that had to be made. Determine to obey him no matter what the cost. And thirdly, die to reputation.

Die to it. You see, the root of loving reputation is pride. And the fruit is contention.

A proud man must always defend himself. A proud man must always defend his faulty self-image. He has created this image of himself in his mind.

Therefore, he has to defend it. Because God won't defend it. And the evidence of pride is that he can't be spoken to.

Now, I'm talking to a lot of husbands here tonight. Oh, you come to this church. Oh, God.

You'll even run to the altar. Oh, Lord, speak to my heart. And then you go home and your wife tries to tell you something about yourself.

And the very first thing out of your mouth is a defense and a contention. Because somebody, God forbid, is touching your fragile self-image. I hope I'm not being too hard.

I've lived this, folks. I know what I'm talking about. Lest you think I'm not included in the you here tonight.

I am. I am. I've been there.

I've done that. I know what this is all about. Defending a faulty self-image.

Die to reputation. I think it's one of the greatest victories a person can ever achieve in Christ. Is to be of no reputation.

And to take on the form of a servant. No longer wanting to lord it over anybody, but to serve all. And to be obedient unto death.

No matter where that obedience leads. Is the greatest victory of all. I could end up, before I died, preaching to hundreds of thousands.

But that doesn't mean I'm a great man of God. That's not the test. I was fortunate, perhaps, to speak his name to multitudes.

But that does not make me a great man of God. What makes me a great man of God is that God knows in my heart I'm not preaching for reputation. God knows in my heart that there's no sense of having to further self-objectives in preaching the gospel.

But I have determined in my heart to be a servant to all men. Now, this is not something that can be done in the natural. It's got to be done by the Holy Spirit.

It's a supernatural work. All we can do is ask for it. Remember, as a young Christian, I would always want to defend myself.

And some of you are there today. Always, always, oh, yeah? Well, you think I'm like this? Well, you're like that. And contention.

Contention. Everywhere you go, nobody can speak to you. Then you finally find out that true greatness is in not defending an image of ourselves that we've created.

But true greatness is understanding that we have been covered in the righteousness of Almighty God in Christ Jesus. And nothing needs to be added to that. I am the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus.

In Mark 11, 14, it's a similar account to what we read in the beginning of this message. Jesus said to the fig tree, no man eat fruit of thee hereafter forever. And I believe in my heart that when Jesus looked at the fig tree, he's looking at Satan.

He's looking at Satan's infusion of pride into humankind. He's looking at all of the phony religion that resulted because of it. All of the prideful religion that was so alienated from the heart of God.

And he looked at that tree that really had dominion and dominance for that season until Christ's death on the cross. And he spoke to it and said, no man eat fruit of you forever. He knew that when he went to the cross and his blood was shed, that dominion was going to be taken over this power of evil that for so long reigned in the hearts of fallen humanity.

Now, in Matthew 21, where we began our scripture reading tonight, he said in verse 19, let no fruit grow on thee henceforth and forever. And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, how soon is the fig tree withered away? How soon? You see, we have. And then he goes on in verse 21.

He said, Verily I say unto you, if you have faith and doubt not, you shall not only do this which is done to the fig tree, but also if you shall say to this mountain, be thou removed and be cast into the sea, it shall be done. Now, here's what I believe that Christ is saying. We have not only the power to cast away unholy fruit as it is or the semblance of religiousness that really is not fruit, that does not satisfy any hungry stranger.

It does not bring life and nourishment into any situation. It has an appearance of God, but there is no life of God in it. He says, no, not only can you command this to die, but the whole mountain of sin, the whole mountain of flesh, the whole mountain of the very ground in which pride and all its manifestations find their life and provision.

I give you authority to tread upon serpents and scorpions and over all the power of the enemy. And nothing shall by any means hurt you. You have the power in Christ to command this whole mountain, this whole flower bed as it is of pride and flesh to be cast into the sea.

And then he said in verse 22, And all things whatsoever you shall ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive. You have the power in Christ to come to God with an honest heart, to agree with God and see these things cast away from your life. But we're not just to be clean and garnished and empty.

No, we're to go into this book and find the promises of God. There's real fruit. There's real life.

There is reality in Christ. And we're to find these promises and begin to ask God for them. Oh, God, I want a true loving heart.

Lord, I truly do want to die to all desire for reputation. I do not want to contend for something that offends your nature. We begin to ask.

And the life of Christ begins to be our life. We become planted in different ground. And God's life begins to be lived within us and through us.

And a glorious testimony is born in our lives to the glory and honor of Jesus Christ. In John chapter 4, I'm going to close with this tonight. Jesus stopped by a well where was a woman of Samaria.

Now, Samaria, Samaritan people were outside of this whole religious system that was built on pride. It was built on the exaltation of man. It was the very seed of Satan himself had gotten into the people.

And here's a woman who's outside of it. And the religious, of course, will have nothing to do with this type of a person. And Jesus comes to her.

And they begin a dialogue together. And he begins to offer her living water. He says to her, I'm willing to give you some water that you never have to come back to this place and draw again.

It will satisfy the deepest thirst that you have. And she said, sir, give me this water in verse 16 that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw. And then Jesus says to her, go call your husband and come back or come hither.

Now, at this point, she's got a choice to make because he's now beginning to expose something in her. Now, the religious man or woman may have just turned and said, I'll be right back. I'll go get my husband, knowing the whole thing is a lie.

The woman answered and said, I have no husband. That's half true. Jesus said to her, thou has well said, I have no husband.

You've had five husbands. And the man you have now is not your husband. The guy she's living with, in other words, in that you said truly.

Now, he begins to open up things to her because she's willing to deal in truth. She's not guarding some image of herself. God is able to speak into her life.

And she's receiving what he's saying. There's no defense presented there. She says the next verse is, I perceive you're a prophet.

She she's got an open heart. He can he can speak into her life about the things that she has done and is doing, which really are issues that have to be dealt with to come to God. And he tells her in verse 24, she begins to talk about worship.

And he says, no, God is a spirit. And they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truth. Oh, God says, I'm willing to give you my spirit, in other words.

But you have to be willing to walk in truth. This is how the mixture goes together. It's not just going to a Bible study and coming out and speaking in tongues.

No, no, no. I'll give you the power. But your part is to want the truth, to want to walk in the truth as I speak to your heart.

When I call right, right and wrong, wrong, you agree with me and you walk in the truth. And I'll give you the power to walk in that truth. And then she said, well, I know that Messiah is coming in verse 25.

And when he comes, which is called Christ, he will tell us all things. Now, this is profound when you see it. And it's the first time that Jesus clearly reveals himself.

He said to her, I that speak unto thee am he. In other words, I am the Christ. He said, I am the Messiah.

I'm the anointed one. I'm the one sent of God. The disciples, they're not getting even anywhere close to this at this time.

To the religious of Israel, he's simply speaking in whispers and parables. Because they've long, long, long ago closed their ears to truth. They can't hear anymore.

There's really no sense in a clear revelation because they can't hear. They're defending a false sense of righteousness. They've created an image in pride that hates the glory of God.

And then here's the testimony of humility. This is a humble woman. This woman's got nothing to hide.

And she left her water pot, went into the city and said to the man, now, Jesus stays at the well. It's amazing. He doesn't leave.

He knows all of this is transpiring. And she said, here's what she said. Come see a man which told me all things that ever I did.

Is not this the Christ? Isn't that amazing? And verse 39, it says, many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, he told me all that ever I did. Come see a man who told me all, in other words, the wrong things that I have done. Yet he offers me living water.

He waits at the well for me to bring you to him. He's not willing to leave me nor forsake me. Do you see it? Do you understand it? A prideful person can't lead anybody to Christ because a prideful person doesn't even know where he is.

A prideful person doesn't know who he is. But here's a woman, a simple woman, that lets God speak into her heart. And her testimony, I could just see going to work on Monday morning.

Hey, you gotta come. I found God. He told me everything that I've ever done.

He told me I was an adulterer. He told me I was living in fornication. But he loves me, and he offered me eternal life and living water.

Come see this man. Come and see this man. Folks, that's the testimony of an humble heart.

We don't need any religion in New York City. We need people with humility. The Scripture says many believed.

You'll never know what it is to be an evangelist until you know that you've been forgiven a great deal by a merciful God. You know every day you have to rely on His righteousness and His covering and His leading and His strength and His power. And you need your feet washed every second day by the grace of Almighty God.

Come and see this man. He told me everything I've ever done. He told me the things I'm doing.

And yet he offers me living water. Oh, hallelujah. See, that's the testimony of a humble heart.

That's the testimony I want with everything in me. All the days of my life. Testimony of a man or woman who knows that they need God's grace.

And they know that God's grace is there for them. I guess the question would be tonight. Are you leading men to God? Or are you contending with them while you're defending the image you've created of yourself? What's happening in the workplace? In your neighborhood? Are you fighting with all your neighbors and your co-workers? Or are you leading them to God? Can't have it two ways.

If you're fighting with them, you've created an image. And you're duty-bound to defend it now. But how about if I tell you you're proud tonight? And that's why you've been contending.

And maybe you'll go back to work on Monday morning and say, You know, folks, I realize God spoke to my heart and told me I'm a proud man. Well, they already know that, you see. You're just going to be stating what people already know.

But I want you to come and see Him because I felt such hope and encouragement. I felt such love. I feel so washed.

I feel so clean. I feel like something, a deep, deep need in me has been satisfied by something that only God can give to me. And secondly, are you in a contention with Christ? You see, whenever I get in an argument with God, thank God I never win.

But one of the evidences, if you're in a contention with Christ, is a restlessness, stirring. The mind can't shut off. And there's this constant visiting and revisiting of things and attempting somehow to convince God of your righteousness.

But you see, the Lord won't be convinced. And so you can end up in a position where you're actually contending with God. And that is a lose-lose situation.

You can never win that one. The only thing I can suggest is what I'm learning, and I heard it so wonderfully in Pastor David this morning. And I heard it in the message this afternoon as well.

Bend your knee, open your heart, and die. That's as simple as I can make it. I'm on this journey.

I dare not say I'm humbled because then that means I'm proud and I'm starting all over again. But I'm on the journey. I want what I'm speaking to you tonight with all my heart.

I want to finish the course like Paul. I want to stand at the end and say, God, I've walked with you. I've honored your name.

Oh, Jesus, help us tonight. You've been speaking to this church all day. Help us, Lord God, to bend our knee to you.

Help us, Lord, to open our hearts to truth. Help us to die to all the images of righteousness that we've created of ourselves. Help us to yield to truth.

Oh, God, I pray with all my heart that there be a mass of resignations from the Church of Pride tonight. And we truly come and yield ourselves to you, Lord, and allow you to speak to our hearts. God, you'll never speak evil and only good.

You'll offer us living water. You will create in us a testimony that will bring glory to your name. God, I know this with everything in me.

You are so drawing us. You are so wooing this body. God, help us to respond.

Help us, Lord. I'd like to give an altar call tonight to everyone in this sanctuary who can say, Pastor, the Holy Spirit has put his finger on the pride of my heart. Now, it's different areas for different people.

It can be a contention in your marriage. It can be an issue in the workplace. It can be just an issue of religiousness in your own heart.

But the Holy Spirit has put his finger on it. And you say, God, I want to worship you, Jesus, in spirit and in truth. I want to be truly a man or woman of God.

If that's the cry of your heart tonight, I'm going to ask you to get out of your seat as we stand and make your way to this altar, please. And we're going to pray together. Would you do that right now? Up in the balcony, you can go to either exit.

Let's all stand together in the main sanctuary. Please just make your way. Hallelujah.

Hallelujah. God, thank you for your goodness, Lord. Thank you, Jesus.

Oh, God, all you ever wanted is to give us living water. Lord, all you ever wanted is to cleanse us. God, thank you.

You're going to be surprised tonight. You're going to be shocked, actually, at the release and the relief that comes when you no longer have an image to uphold. It's amazing how freeing it is when you can just agree with your adversary.

That's why the scripture of Jesus said, agree with your adversary when you're in the way. When the enemy comes against you, don't try. Or even when God becomes your adversary, agree.

Just agree with him. Lest you be cast into prison. Oh, hallelujah.

It's so freeing to not have to maintain an image of yourself. But to allow Christ Jesus to be Christ Jesus in you. To allow the promises of God to become your life.

To allow the journey that God has prescribed for your feet to be the places that you go to. To allow his hands to become yours and his eyes and his voice. Just allow Christ to live his life through you.

No reputation. Because you're not going to have one if you're a true Christian. You won't have a reputation.

Jesus said, they'll speak about you the same way they spoke about me. But you will have a joy. Hallelujah.

You'll have a joy that the world doesn't give and the world can't take it away from you. Hallelujah. Pray with me, please.

Lord Jesus, forgive me for the pride of my heart. Every time I've held to an image. A spiritual image.

Of even myself. Which is not grounded in truth. I repent of this.

I turn from it. And I want to be a person who worships you, Jesus. In spirit and in truth.

Your truth being lived within me. Embraced by my heart. And your Holy Spirit making these promises a reality in me.

I die to reputation. I bend my knee to the word of God and the will of God. I ask you, Holy Spirit, to plant within me a wholesome fear of God.

That I would know in my heart. It's not optional to twist the word of God. Or disobey the things that God has clearly spoken into my heart.

Lord, thank you for the knowledge that you love me. And your chiefest desire is to be a well of living water inside of me. And flowing through me.

To give drink to a thirsty world. Oh, Jesus, I love you. I love you, Lord.

God, thank you for your goodness. Thank you that all I am. And all I ever will be.

Is all in you. Hallelujah. Give him thanks.

Give him thanks. Thank you so much.

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