

## Facing Pride: The Disciples at the Last Supper

In this study, we want to examine how Christians can face our temptation to pride. In our series, we are contemplating Jesus' journey in the wilderness, as He faced the temptations of Satan. The temptation of pride is the primeval snare of the evil one, who, in the Garden of Eden, first sought to appeal to Adam's and Eve's desire to be like God. Our text is set in the moment of the Last Supper, on the night when Jesus was betrayed, before He bore our sins on Calvary's cross.

### Luke 22:24-30

**24** A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. **25** And he said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. **26** But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves. **27** For who is the greater, one who reclines at table or one who serves? Is it not the one who reclines at table? But I am among you as the one who serves.

**28** "You are those who have stayed with me win my trials, **29** and I assign to you, as my Father assigned to me, a kingdom, **30** that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

### I. Disciples of Jesus are tempted to outrageous pride (vs. 24)

The temptation to pride is an outrageous one because we all are creatures, we are sinful creatures, and we are redeemed sinful creatures. Each of these realities ought to lead us to a deep humility, but rather, we are tempted to seek our greatness in and of ourselves.

The disciples' sin of pride is all the more outrageous because, first of all, who among them is truly great? Peter? Matthew, the tax collector? James and John? Who will later prove to be great? Thomas? Judas? Obviously there is none "great" among them. Secondly, the moment in which they are disputing among themselves about who is the greatest, Jesus Himself is facing His hour of greatest trial. Amazing how blind we can be to true greatness when we wrongly pursue our own greatness. C.S. Lewis once said, "As long as you are proud, you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and, of course, as long as you are looking down you cannot see something that is above you." This was indeed the disciples' problem. It is indeed outrageous when we are proud of our accomplishments, our possessions, our morality, or our religious convictions.

### II. Jesus alone leads His disciples out of temptation to pride (vs. 25-30)

We notice first of all in verse 25 that Jesus directs us to separate ourselves from "phony greatness." He describes the behavior of the Gentiles in verse 25: 1) they seek to lord over other people, and 2) they like to be seen as benefactors. There's a very interesting parable on this topic in Judges 9:7-15. Secondly, Jesus instructs His disciples to join ourselves to true greatness, which is seen in imitating Jesus Christ. We imitate Him in two ways:

First of all, we seek to serve rather than to be served (vs. 26b-27). This is exactly what Jesus did among us. Look at John 13:13-15 and Matthew 11:28-30. Jesus doesn't say that service is the way to greatness, but rather that service is greatness.

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Second, Jesus tells us to imitate Him in looking forward to our future greatness. This, in fact, is the motive for our service. We find Jesus thinking this way in John 13:3 and in Hebrews 12:1-2.

The key to imitating Christ is to be in Christ. Notice the first person singular pronouns in verses 27-30. Our humility is found completely in Christ. When we are in Him, we, too, will serve and will eagerly await our assigned place in His Kingdom, at His table, ruling over the cosmos at His right hand.

This is the way that we face the temptation to pride. When we fall into pride, we have failed to remember and/or believe the wonderful promises of our exaltation to come one day. As Peter says in his first epistle (1 Peter 5:5b-6), "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you..."

### Discussion Questions

1. Why is human pride so outrageous? Why is it so destructive?
2. What is it about us that makes us susceptible to pride?
3. Why should we be humble?
4. What is the unique Christian antidote for pride?
5. Look at Philippians 2:1-11. What sort of attitudes and behaviors emanate from the person who renounces pride?

### **Going Deeper**

1. When do you struggle the most with the temptation to pride? Why?
2. How can you discipline yourself to have the same mind as Christ Jesus in those moments?