

Welcome, everybody, to God's Sabbath.

The title of today's sermon is *Signs of Pride – Part 1*.

The dictionary definition of 'pride' is 'a feeling of deep pleasure or satisfaction derived from one's *own* achievements, excessive self-esteem, arrogant or disdainful conduct or treatment, haughtiness, an excessively high opinion of one's self, conceit.'

Today we are going to begin to explore the topic of pride, and it would take a lot of sermons, but we will hopefully cover what we need to in two parts.

The more God has taught me personally about myself the more I have come to see the depth of my own pride. This is one of the greatest blessings anyone could receive from God, the ability to see pride *in* oneself. The purpose of this sermon is to explore the topic of pride for the purpose of spiritual growth, recognizing, and fighting pride.

The best place to start would be to look at a couple of direct scriptures from the book of Proverbs. If you'd like to turn to Proverbs 8. Now, we have covered this in a previous sermon. **Proverbs 8:13 – The fear of the LORD is to hate evil**, and we understand that is to hate all sin within ourselves. Proverb goes on and describes some sins... **pride and arrogance**, and those words mean 'swelling, exaltation,' and that is in the mind really. So it is a swelling or an exaltation in one's thinking **...and the evil way, and the perverse mouth I hate**, and that's God saying that *He* hates these things within a person's thinking.

Now, we understand that pride starts in the mind, in our thinking, and we are to learn to hate sin. We are to learn to hate evil. We are to learn to hate our pride and arrogance, which we all have to different degrees. And we all see this pride to different degrees as well. The first sin mentioned in Proverbs 8 is the sin of pride, which is manifested by a person's arrogance, the swelling in their thinking. Arrogance is revealed by someone when they voice their opinions in a boasting or dominant way. Boasting is taking credit to self. Now, we all have boasted in our life; that's what our life - about how we have built up our image in our life - has come from, boasting. And boasting is the giving credit to self and expressing that to others so that others would see us in a different light, to elevate us in *their* thinking.

Name dropping is an attempt to lift the self up in the eyes of others. This action is motivated by pride also. Our nature is a base human nature. It also drops names, which it associates itself with someone or something that it thinks is greater than itself. So someone drops a name and says, "Oh, well, I know 'such and such,'" maybe a movie star or someone important, or a politician. The reason that is happening is because the self is elevating itself in the eyes of others. "Well, you see, *I* know this person. *I* have a contact with this person. *I* have spoken to this person." And the carnal mind is actually building itself up in the eyes of others by this name dropping. Boasting about one's own achievements with the intent of lifting the self up in the eyes of others is pride also, which is sin.

Another aspect of pride, which we will look at in more detail, is a lack of a prayer life of God's people before God is caused by pride. Leaving God out of our thinking, out of our life, is self-reliance which is done because of pride, because self-reliance is pride. Let's look at James 4. Turn to **James 4:13 – Come**

now, you who say, Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit. From that we can see, we can remember things. Remember Lucifer's attitude towards God? His attitude was, "I will..." which was something that he was going to do. "I have decided to..." is another way to look at it. "This is what I have decided to do..." and it's leaving God out of the picture. Here God is being left out of their decision making. God is no longer *first* in their life. He is no longer their *first* priority.

Verse 14 – whereas you do not know what will happen tomorrow. For what is your life? And what's being said there is, well, you don't know what's going to happen to your life. You don't have control of your life. You might think you do, but the reality is you don't. And here this person or these people are leaving God out of the picture in their life. Now, that's what happens when we don't have a prayer life. We tend to leave God out of the picture in our life, which of course we all understand it should be 'God willing' is what we should be saying. Continuing in **verse 14 ...is it even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away.** In other words, it's temporary. Our life and strength, everything that we have, is actually in God's hands. It is in God's control, and our life *is* temporary. We don't know what tomorrow brings. We don't know what this afternoon brings. We don't know anything about our future and we don't know when our life will stop, because it *is* like a vapour. Life and death are in God's hands.

Verse 15 – Instead you ought to say, If the Lord wills, God willing, we shall live and do this or that. Put God into our lives. Bring God and have God involved in our lives.

Verse 16 – But now you boast in your 'arrogance,' and that is 'empty bragging' because they're bragging about something or boasting about something or saying something that they're going to do with this self-confidence that they can achieve it when they really have left God out of the picture. **All such boasting is evil.** It is sin. To leave God out of our lives is sin; therefore, a lack of prayer or a lack of communication with God is actually sin because when we do that it's a sign of self-reliance, and self-reliance is pride...pride. And pride is sin.

Verse 17 – Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin. Another way of looking at this is anyone who knows to do good by *not* pulling down others, by *not* condemning others, by *not* boasting, by *not* taking any spiritual credit to the self for good works, but does these things – boasts, exaggerates, pulls down others, takes credit to self – it is sin. Why is it sin? Because they are all motivated by pride and are *signs* of pride. So when we pull down others it's a sign of pride. We should see that in ourselves. The moment we open our mouth and start pulling down others we should know within ourselves that is a sign of pride *within* ourselves. When we boast, exaggerate, we should know that this is a sign of pride within ourselves. If we take *any credit – spiritual credit – to the self for any good works*, we should know that that is a sign of pride within ourselves.

So these are obvious signs of pride that we should see within ourselves. If we have the eyes to see on a spiritual level, we will see these signs in our thoughts, in our words, *and* in our actions.

Proverbs 11:2 – When pride comes, that's this insolent, presumptuous, or arrogant thinking, **then comes shame,** and it's talking about on a spiritual level. There a spiritual shame associated to it, which is confusion, dishonour, or shame. **But with the humble is wisdom.** With the meek, someone that is lowly in their thinking, *is* wisdom – has the potential of the mind of God. They have the potential to *live* the mind of God because they are living wisdom by this humility. The opposite to pride *is* humility.

Proverbs 16:18 – **Pride**, or this arrogance, **goes before 'destruction,'** and that word there is 'crash' or 'ruin.' **And a haughty spirit**, a high or lofty thinking, **before a fall.** Now, we've often used the term, 'Pride comes before a fall.' It's a common statement that is made, and even within mankind when people discuss, they see somebody that has a big fall, they say, "Pride comes before a fall." Now, they don't understand the spiritual aspect of this statement, but they do understand that someone that is proud-filled or self-confident, or what they are going to say, that over-confidence, they know that a fall is coming. They don't always know *how* it is coming, but it's coming.

So this very *pride* that exists within mankind in the natural state of mankind is about to have a fall. So what is coming on mankind is a fall, a great fall. Isaiah 13. Now, this is the best thing that can happen to mankind because pride is sin and sin needs to be pulled down. It needs to be destroyed, which God will do. At the end of time, He will do that. Mankind in his natural state needs to be humbled so that he can be taught. Now, one of the things we all understand and learn from being in God's Church is that if we have pride we're not teachable, because we already know everything. We have what we think is great knowledge, therefore, we're unteachable and we'll tend to disagree, whereas someone that is humble is teachable. Therefore, man cannot be taught God's ways now because his mind is pride-filled. He is motivated by pride, and what is coming is a fall so that he can be taught. He's going to be humbled so that God can teach him His ways.

Isaiah 13:6 – '**Wail,**' and that word is 'cry out in distress,' **for the day of the LORD is at hand. It will come as destruction from the Almighty.** Mankind is about to be humbled, and that is part of this end-time that we are facing...is mankind is about to be humbled in ways that it has no comprehension or understanding of to this point in time.

Verse 7 – **Therefore all hands will be limp**, and that is, every man's hand is limp. What's going to happen is that every man is going to go into a state of *shock*. They're going to be so distressed by what they see! **Every man's heart**, and that is inner thinking, their self-will, **will melt.** It will dissolve. *No one* will escape what is coming! Everyone will be paralyzed in panic, in fear, in *hysterical thinking*. They're going to be hysterical because they're going to be confused. They're going to be thinking, "What do I do?" First thing is when something dramatic happens we go into shock, and that shock is...how do you begin to think? What's happening? You just can't think clearly, and the first thing that when you start to reason within your thinking is, "How do I save myself? What do I now have to do? How do I save my family?" Because they're the natural mind, the way it thinks. It generally doesn't think out to the needs or the welfare of others, of the rest of mankind. It thinks about self, "How am I going to survive this? What do I do now that this has happened?" So every man's hands are going to be limp. Every man is going to face this great distress. Every man's heart, their inner thinking, is going to be dissolved. They're not going to know what to do. They're going to be paralyzed with fear because there is uncertainty: "What does this actually mean? How do I move forward? What *about* tomorrow? *Is* there a tomorrow?"

Verse 8 – **And they will be afraid. Pangs/pain and sorrow will take hold of them. They will be in pain as a woman in childbirth. They will be 'amazed' towards one another**, and this word means they will be 'stunned.' They will be 'speechless.' **Their faces flames...** they'll be bright. And what that's referring to is everyone is *horrified*. Everyone's face shows *distress*! Life is now *a nightmare*. So there is going to be great mental distress and it's going to be revealed on the faces of men because all of mankind is going to go into this shock, this terror, "What does this mean?" And mankind in general will be speechless because they're not going to know what to do.

Now, we in God's Church know what these things mean and deep down in our inner heart, our inner thinking, there is going to be some level of concern for the rest of mankind, but we know that God is for us, and therefore, who can be against us, and we know the purpose of this humbling of mankind. We're going to have a boldness and confidence towards God, that God is with us and that God's plan is now coming to its end for this period of 6,000 years of mankind, and so there is going to be this inner joy. There is going to be a calmness within us and we won't be paralyzed with fear. We will not be in confusion, and we know what we have to do. We have to rely on God, trust in God, and stay close to God in obedience and love towards God and our fellow humans. So we know what to do, but mankind will not know what to do.

Verse 9 – Behold, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with both wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate; and He will destroy it's sinners from it. So the land will be laid desolate. There will be not much left by the end of it. And there is a reason for this, of course, and it is about the pride, the thinking of mankind, and God is going to destroy sinners from it. Now, all of mankind are sinners, and those that survive this period of time, this tribulation of time, this distress, is because God in His mercy will allow them to continue to live into the Millennium.

Verse 10 – For the stars of heaven and their constellations will not give their light; the sun will be darkened in it's going forth and the moon will not cause its light to shine. So there's going to be a lot of pollution in the air and there is going to be periods of darkness, and the sun, when it rises, you're not going to be able to see the sunrise as you normally would.

Verse 11 – I will punish the world for its evil, for its sin, and the wicked for their iniquity, for their sin, for their wickedness, and I will halt the arrogance of the proud and I will lay low... I will humble... the haughtiness, the pride of the terrible, of the mighty, those that *think* that they are important. God's saying that He's going to *stop* this arrogance, this pride. Mankind's mind is going to be confused and brought into a state of confusion, of *fear*, to be humbled, because then they can no longer be self-reliant. Because self-reliance is pride. When mankind leaves God out of the picture of all their decisions, it's similar to somebody in God's Church who does not have a prayer life. We leave God out of our decisions. We then become self-reliant and the best thing that God could do for us would be to stop our arrogance, the arrogance of the proud, and He needs to lay us low, humble us because of our pride, because we've lifted ourselves up. *We think we are mighty, that we're important when we're not.* So God is going to do that to mankind, but within the Church we can learn lessons from this. That is that we need to not have *self-reliance*. We need to be humble before God.

Verse 12 – I will make a mortal more rare than fine gold, a man more than a golden wedge of Ophir.

Verse 13 – Therefore I will shake the heavens and the earth will be moved out of her place in the wrath of the LORD of hosts and in the day of His fierce anger. So we can see from that that God is going to humble the proud, those that have lifted themselves up *in their thinking*.

Now, God's word defines pride differently than what the dictionary does because it is about the spiritual intent. Now, mankind does not understand their inner thinking because God hasn't granted it to them, but we, through the power of God's spirit, have been granted the ability to *see ourselves, to see our pride*.

Now, God's word defines pride as 'proud, haughtiness, arrogance, highness.' This is all about a way of thinking: 'Lofty, swelling, a raising up, insolence, presumptuousness.' All these words describe a spirit

which is *an attitude* within a person's thinking. Pride starts in the mind, in the inner thinking. Now, we're born and we're born with this pride *in us* to various degrees. Pride is an attitude within a person's thinking which is reflected through and by words and by actions. Without God's spirit we cannot come to fully see the evil and sin of pride, of being proud. By nature every human has pride. Now, pride in our thinking is a natural state or condition.

The best place to start this topic is when we are born. We are all born with a genetic variance from a family gene pool. We *are what we are* from birth, and then our environment, the environment we are in, affects aspects of our thinking. One of my first encounters with my own pride was when I was about eleven years old (that I can remember). I was actually a reasonably fast runner in the school that I was in and I always had won every race that I had ever entered into as a child, and I remember my mother used to make me a drink of milk and honey and she'd put the honey in the milk and stir it up and make me drink it before I went to school for that sports event, which is going back a long time now. So I used to always win a particular race, normally the 50 meter, 100 meter races. Then I was picked for the school as an interschool sports. We used to have interschool sports, so being a catholic school other catholic schools would compete against each other on a particular day.

Now, I can't remember actually losing a 100 meter race in my childhood ever because I *was* reasonably fast. And I remember this particular day when I was representing my school and I was lined up for this 100 meter race and there was about probably 8 or 10 other boys (I can't remember exactly), and I remember the gun going off and after about 20 meters into this race it became very obvious to me within my mind that I was well behind and that there was *no way* I was going to win the race! Well, at that point, my pride kicked in and I decided that I would pull a muscle in my leg. I stopped mid-race. I think it was probably around 40 meters that I stopped (and it was yards in those days, about 40 yards in the race, because we used to have yards and not meters), and I stopped mid-race and I remember pretending that I'd pulled a muscle in my leg. And that was because of my pride, that there was *no way* that I was going to be *beaten*!

I look back at that now and it's pretty horrifying that I did that, but the reality is that that's the natural carnal mind. That is pride within a human. So pride overcame me on that day and there was no way that I was going to be beaten. Now, at the time I didn't really fully know why and what had motivated my decision to stop running, but now with God's spirit I see why. It's because of my pride, the image that I had built up of myself in my thinking.

I remember also in my mid-teens I dressed a particular way because the clothes that I wore, the hairstyle that I had chosen, the car that I drove and the words that I used *all* reflected my pride in my teens and in my early twenties, because that is reality. Because pride comes out from the inner thinking and it's *revealed* by the way we dress, what we dress in, how we dress, the hairstyle we choose, for men in particular, the car that they drive. It reflects an image of what is going on in the inner thinking.

The human condition of pride has *not changed* within mankind. For 6,000 years mankind has been driven, motivated, by pride. For example, a way a man or a woman reveals his thoughts or her thoughts, what is going on in their thinking, is by what they say, clothes that they wear, and how they operate around others. Now, we all have this, and within the Church our goal is to discipline the self to manage the pride that was in us. Now, the only way that we can do that is to *see* our pride. Now, that takes God's spirit. If we have God's spirit there is the *potential* to see pride within ourselves. Now, the tendency of the human mind is to see pride in others, and pride in others can be reasonably obvious to us and we can say, "Boy, that person's a big-head!" or "That person's filled with pride! Look at the way

they're walking! Look at the way they dress! Look at 'this,' look at 'that.'" We tend to look out. That is natural and that is *pride*. That is actually a demonstration of pride. When we look out to measure others we are actually reflecting *pride within ourselves* when God says we are to actually look at ourselves and examine ourselves.

We, brethren, can come to understand ourselves first, to examine ourselves. What we say about others is a reflection of our pride. The way that we dress, whether we're thinking of others in our dress is a reflection of our thinking, which is a reflection of our pride.

When God called me, He started a relationship with me, and that calling started at around age 29, 30, and when I was baptized and had received God's spirit I was then invited into 'Spokesman's Club.' So I think I was about 30 when I first went into club. Now, I had no idea what club was all about! I do now. I understand what club was really all about, but at the time I had no idea and I would say that I was quite self-confident and reasonably arrogant compared to most people. I think I was probably a little over-confident in what I thought my abilities were. Now, no one had really told me about what club was really about but it worked in the way that men would come together on a particular evening and we had a minister that would oversee the club and you had certain speeches and you had a manual, and that manual took you through a series of speeches, and it would start with one, a small one which was sometimes three minutes, sometimes six minutes, and it was just about yourself for a start. And then you went into a series of different speeches with the ability of structuring a speech through having an introduction, having a purpose, and then having a body, and then a conclusion, and it was about formulating words and talking about a topic, a particular topic. You were assigned a particular topic and others were what were called 'Impromptu's' where you had to stand up instantly without notice, basically, and come up and give a six or ten minute speech.

Now, in that period when a person gave a speech the other men in the club had a small form and they would do what was called a 'Speech Evaluation.' It was an evaluation. And some were called to stand up and give a *verbal* evaluation of the person that spoke.

Now, as time progressed, I remember one particular night that impacted me and started to change my life. It changed the way that I thought, and after a particular speech in club (and I *cannot* remember which one it was by any means; I've tried to think about it, but I can't remember it), I do remember the evaluation that was given by somebody that stood up and gave me the evaluation in a verbal way. And you had the opportunity after club where you could get the evaluations and you could read them with the intent of learning to develop to be a better speaker with your pronunciations or your formatting or whatever it may be. Well one particular gentleman stood up in club and said to me that he thought the speech was quite good structurally, things were generally good, but it was motivated and driven by pride. Well, that set me back big time! That really *upset* me! Afterwards, when I was driving home my mind was *racing*! I just could not concentrate because the words had *cut into me* so deeply that someone would dare stand up and tell me that I had pride! I was only new in the Church and I didn't fully understand what that person was actually saying, but I know driving home and for many weeks later I thought, "How *dare* could somebody stand up in front of all those other men, and in front of the minister as well, and say that I had pride!"

Now, I battled this! I battled this for a long period of time! I battled this towards the person who had said it, and over time I did eventually come to understand more of it. I came to see what He was talking about, and God through His mercy revealed to me what he was really saying. It was about pride! Any

attack on our pride hurts, and that's something that I learned. *Anybody*, no matter who it is, who attacks *our pride*, it hurts us.

Now, pride is the image that we have built up about ourselves. Now, we go about life building up our image – that's our purpose. We try to build these images the way we want people to see us or think about us for our whole life. Now, that can be done through the way we dress, or the way we conduct ourselves, who we associate with, what jobs we have, what job titles we take, how we have titles written on our business cards; all these things build an image of what we are, of the *way* we want others to see us, and that image is what mankind would call 'credibility.' Well, it's actually pride. It's pride in the inner thinking. It's what we think we are.

Now, the Bible talks about 'knowledge puffs up,' and it does, because we tend to take this knowledge, what we acquired. So education can be a very dangerous thing to a carnal mind because it lifts the self up to be better than others because it's been granted this education, and therefore, it is wiser and brainier than others. Pride lifts up! And that's natural for the natural carnal mind. But God through His spirit reveals that pride is a sin and that knowledge *does* puff up the natural carnal mind. Now it's about what image we portray to others and how we now manage it. When our image is hurt, is attacked, or confronted, it cuts deep, and the natural carnal mind goes into defending this image it spent all this time and energy in building up. So when we're confronted by words or actions of others that affect us emotionally, or we're affected by them, pride is alive and well in our thinking. It's a matter of whether we see it.

1 Peter 2:17 – Peter writing here, **Honour all people**, and that word 'honour' is 'value.' Value all people! **Love**, which is agape, **the brotherhood...** love the brethren with God's spirit. Sacrifice ourselves for the benefit of the brethren... **Fear God**, and to fear God is to obey God. To fear God is to hate sin, and if we hate sin we will obey God; we will keep the 10 Commandments. **Honour the King**, esteem Jesus Christ, 'Respect Government,' is another way to put it when it says, 'Honour the King.' We are to respect all authority. The point here is that we will *not* do these things on a spiritual level if we have pride. So if we have pride we will not *honour* all people, we will not *value* all people. We'll value ourselves as greater - we're *higher* than others. 'Love the brethren.' Well, if we have pride we can't love the brethren because pride is loving the self, putting the self before others. 'Fear God' and obey the Commandments. Well, we may not in this particular part, but in Part 2 we'll look at how pride and the 10 Commandments are connected. *If we have pride* we do not keep the Commandments. It's absolutely impossible. 'Honour the King,' honour Jesus Christ, esteem Jesus Christ as our High Priest, our Lord of Lords and King of kings as far as being appointed by God. We should honour Him! Well, if we have pride, we won't. We can't because we're living sin. Pride is sin, and if we're living in pride, we're living in sin, and that's not honouring Jesus Christ as King. The point here is that if we do these things on a spiritual level, if we do all those things just mentioned, it takes humility to live these things that are just listed.

Verse 18 – Servants, and we are all servants, **be submissive to your masters with all fear**, so we're to subject ourselves, subject one's self and obey others – follow instructions with all fear. And it should be a Godly fear that we have. We work for Jesus Christ; therefore, we should *fear* to represent Him in a wrong way, to misrepresent Jesus Christ by our words or actions that we do **...not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh**, someone that may be treating us unfairly. Now, it takes character not to pull down someone that is against us or affecting our pride. It is a difficult thing. And I remember when my pride was attacked I found it near impossible to overcome that matter, and I know it was through God's spirit and God's mercy that I did overcome that matter and I came to see what was really being said and that *it was* the best thing that could ever happen to me. Somebody (God was using that person,

I believe) to reveal to me the sin of pride, and I still have that same sin of pride today. We all do because it's a natural human condition.

Now, it does take a lot of Godly character to be able to *not* speak against somebody that has spoken or affected our pride. It really does take... it takes time to understand that principle.

Verse 19 – For this is commendable, which is grace, **if because of conscience towards God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully**. So when we suffer, when it's not even deserved, if somebody speaks against us in a bad way when it wasn't deserved and we take it, it's the right thing to do not to retaliate, not to fight back. What counts with God is that if we put up with it for God's sake, and if we're mistreated badly for no good reason we endure it. If we have pride, we will *not* take this from anybody. We will have an attitude towards them. We will actually have ill will towards them, and the reason we're having ill will towards them is because of our pride.

Verse 20 – For what credit is it when you are beaten for your faults you take it patiently? That's what *should* happen because we've earned it. So we should, if we've done something wrong and we are corrected for it, we should take it patiently. That's what *should* be happening because we deserve it! **But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, the beating, this is commendable before God.** Because we won't have reacted or retaliated or seek revenge because of our pride. We will be demonstrating humility. There is no virtue in accepting punishment that you well deserve, but if you're treated badly for your good behavior and continue to do good in spite of the bad treatment that is what counts with God.

Now, an example of that could be with regards to the Sabbath. *We* keep the Sabbath no matter what is dealt out to us and we don't retaliate back to those that treat us badly because of it. We accept that when we strive to keep the Sabbath and we tell people we *are* going to keep the Sabbath and we're not going to work, people can turn against us. They can give us the beating through words or even sack us or we have to go on unemployment. Well, we don't retaliate back at the business or to the owner or to the person who fired us. We just take it and we take it for the glory of God. And that's what God counts it to us as commendable. That's what we should be doing, because there is no pride involved, there is humility involved there.

Verse 21 – For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that you should follow His steps. Who committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth. So there is no pride. There is no lying. There is no exaggerating. And if you look at it, lying and exaggerating are part of pride. It's connected to pride.

Verse 23 – Who, when He was 'reviled,' and that word there is 'heaped abuse upon.' So **when He was abused and mistreated He did not revile in return.** So there is no desire to 'get even.' Now, the desire to 'get even' is pride. It's *pride* that drives those thoughts. Well, here it's saying that Christ, when He was reviled, when He had all this abuse, He did not revile in return. He didn't go back and try to retaliate. He didn't try to 'get even' with them. When **He suffered He did not threaten but committed Himself to Him/God the Father who judges righteously.** If we have pride, we will defend the self. When we are corrected, if we've got pride, we will defend ourselves.

Now, that is a good sign of pride, that if we are spoken to in a particular way or if we are accused of something and we set out aggressively to defend the self, to retaliate, to 'get even,' that is a sign of pride within us. The level of pride we maintain is revealed by the degree we defend ourselves.

Justification is a sign of pride. Now, when we go into justification mode we are revealing our pride. I remember that not long ago when I was corrected in a particular matter – I've had more than one, surprise, surprise, but I had a few – and when I was corrected in those matters I have learned that it's best to take the correction even though it's hurting – even though it's hurting – whether it's justified or not is not the point. Even though it's hurting, *that* hurt I have come to realize is my pride reacting and that I need to take it. And I haven't always succeeded in managing the correction, not in a Godly way by any means in my thinking, but over time I've managed to work myself through those things because with God's spirit you can. But the worst thing that can happen is to justify. And there has been a couple of examples where once the correction has been delivered I've moved straight into this justification mode, and I realize afterwards that I sinned and that I shouldn't have done it. Understanding that and seeing that is a wonderful blessing from God. To be able to see one's own *pride*, which we all have, is a great blessing from God.

Now, today we're looking at signs of pride. We're looking at ourselves. So the moment we go into defending the self, it is a sign of pride. And the way we defend ourselves is to *justify the action* of why we did what we did – any aspect of justification, which we can justify in our own thinking (if you understand what I mean), because we can justify something and then maybe realize that maybe we shouldn't have done it, but then we go and re-justify it in our thinking, saying, "No, I was right in saying that to that person." *Any* justification *is* a sign of pride.

So we can look at it, our life, and the moment we move into justification mode and start to make an excuse or justify why we did what we did, that is a sign of pride within ourselves that we can correct. We can stop and admit to God that we have pride, because we do.

It is only with humility, the thinking of God, that we will not defend the self, because we *cannot* defend the self. If we understand ourselves, brethren, if we *understand* the true self, the selfishness that is in us, *how* can we defend it? *Why* would we strive to defend it? *Why* do we strive to defend *the self*? Well...pride! Because of the image that we have built up that we are still trying to protect, this inner thinking that we have, and the image we're projecting to others, and we do not like it when someone else intrudes into our image or affects our image or distorts our image, the image we have of ourselves that we have projected to others. And the moment somebody affects it, we go into defence. We go into justification, and that's the depth of the inner thinking of a human driven by pride. That's what we do!

Now, defending the self is actually hard work for any human because our life has been built around defending the self. We've taken all this time to build up this image and now to maintain this image, well, it's hard work. Well, once we're called into God's Church we are no longer to defend, to justify the image. We are to admit, to accept the fact that the image we have is evil. It's driven and motivated by *pride*! So when we are reviled, we are *not* to revile back. Well, that's actually impossible without God's spirit, and it requires God's spirit to penetrate our inner thinking, to come to understand ourselves, to understand the topic of pride so that we then realize that we *do not need* to justify or defend the self. We should take the correction and we should accept it because we know what is really going on. It's our pride being reduced. And the future is, brethren, we have to be humble. We have to learn to live humility, and the only way we can live *true humility* is to have God's spirit living and dwelling in us, God's spirit *correcting* our natural carnal mind and it's pride, the way we see ourselves.

There are many times in my life that pride has been exposed in me through sermons, when I've heard sermons and I've felt this pain because I realize, "Yes, that's me!" And also directly from other people.

People have said certain things to me where I have had to adjust my thinking. Now, I thank God to this point in time that He has been with me and He has helped me deal with the spiritual impact of the matter of pride, because the times I have been corrected and my pride has been affected, it is hard work. It is not easy, brethren, because we are *all* of the same nature. We all have the natural carnal mind, and it depends on the degree we see ourselves, that God has revealed ourselves to ourselves, that we understand our level of pride.

Everyone that is called into a relationship with God must deal directly with his/her own pride. If someone will not deal with their pride, they face death on a spiritual level and it *will* lead to everlasting death. That's what it will lead to. So if we're not willing to deal with our own pride, admit our pride and deal with it, God can't work with us because pride has to be destroyed. That's what God is saying. God is going to destroy pride on a physical level, but on a spiritual level it also will be destroyed. So if we won't deal with ourselves and admit our pride and work on our pride, our selfishness, our justifications, our excuses, if we're not willing to deal with it, it *will* lead to everlasting death.

Since being called by God the Father into a relationship with Him and with His people, the one main sin that God has revealed to me on a personal level is the sin of pride, and I realize that from the time of my calling I've started to deal with small aspects of my pride and progressively I have come to see pride in a deeper way and I've come to see that I *still have pride*, and I've come to recognize the fact that I am still going to have pride until the day that I die, and it's an ongoing battle.

And in a marriage relationship it's one of the best environments where pride can be corrected because you have to work with another person, and that person will say things and they know – they know you better than you know yourself, is another way to put that – they know you and often if they correct you and say, "Well, this is what you've done and 'dah-dah-dah,'" the first thing is you want to defend the self. You want to justify it, which is a sign of pride. So if we can just see any justification is just an outward sign of pride, and if we are aware of it, the moment we open our mouth and catch ourselves saying these things we know pride is at work. Now, it's not easy, necessarily, to stop it, but to recognize it is the beginning.

I've come to accept the fact that I am selfish by nature and I have pride in my thinking. I *don't want to be this way*, but that is the way that I am. Now, with God's spirit I know that this can be overcome in me and I know that at some point when God offers me the opportunity to enter Elohim, into spiritual life, pride will be conquered. And that's what I look forward to. I look forward to the day when pride does not exist in me, in my thinking.

We are all born with the same problem, this spiritual weakness, the sin of selfishness and pride. From an early age the carnal mind starts to build its image of how it desires to have others think of it. We form an image of what we desire others to think of us, the way we desire to be seen. The natural mind then creates a self-protection around it; it establishes what it desires others to see of itself. Now, the natural mind doesn't let anyone into its deep inner thoughts. It just simply doesn't, but God sees them. God knows all the inner thoughts, but the natural mind won't let others in to see it. So the mind does not want others to know, to see the worst side of its thinking. The natural mind projects a physical image to others, but deep down often we just don't see inner workings of the natural carnal mind.

1 John 2:16...and here we see the natural carnal mind, what it's really built of. **1 John 2:16 – For all that is in the world**, what makes up the thinking of the natural human mind, **the lust of the flesh**, the desires of the flesh, this selfishness, to please the self, **the lust of the eyes**, and **the pride of life**, and 'the pride

of life' is the image of being right, being better than others is the image that we project, **is not of the Father but is of the world.** The human mind, human thinking, desires to portray an image of being right and better than others in the eyes of others. In human thinking life is about the image we portray to others. That's what it's about. It's about the image of self, the portrayal of the way we are, and that image is we're better than others! Humans will go to extreme lengths to build and then maintain an image or an image of self importance. Mankind desires to be seen as valuable, of high worth, better than, or have a 'look at me' attitude. It's this *self*-projection that is important to the human mind. Humans strive to portray an image to others that they are important and successful compared to others around them.

Matthew 5:20...Now, brethren, there is a *giant step forward* in a spiritual way for *any* of us that are prepared to admit that we have pride, because the recognition of a sin is the *beginning* of overcoming it. Because if we can't see a sin, how can we overcome it? It's not *possible*! We have to recognize it within ourselves first, *then* we can take steps to overcome it by the power of God's spirit, and it's God's spirit that reveals sin to us and it's by God's spirit that we can come to see pride within ourselves.

Matthew 5:20 – For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds *the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees*, and that is the self-righteousness, which is motivated by pride that they had, **you will by no means enter the Kingdom of Heaven.** So God is not going to allow *pride* to enter Elohim. *Pride* is not of God's being or of His thinking. Human life is about our motive or intent of why we do the things we do. And that is something that we can continue to explore in our life. *Why* do we do the things we do? *Why* do we say the things we say? And that is important! *Why* do we think the way we think? And the more that we examine that and come to see that pride motivates a lot of our thinking, we'll be able to overcome aspects of pride within our life.

Life of the carnal mind is about building an image and maintaining and protecting that image and the image it has built over all the years no matter how long a life has been lived. At some point in time we have all witnessed or interacted with someone who thinks they are pretty good or important or better than us. That's in their inner thinking! Well, that's most of mankind! And we think they are just a walking vanity, and we'll look out and say, "Well, he's just a big-head!" or "She's just walking vanity!" So we have those thoughts looking out! Well, the point is we need to be looking *in*!

Matthew 6:1 – Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them. So here is the motive of what they were doing. They were building and maintaining this image, "Look at me. I am righteous! Actually in fact, I am *better* than you only you just don't know it! But here is the demonstration for you that I am!" So here are the Pharisees and they were acting in a particular way and Christ is saying, "Well, don't do your charitable deeds. Don't do good works in front of others for the reason of being seen by others!" In other words, "Look at me! Can't you see how good I am? I am righteous!" **Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven. Therefore, when you do a charitable deed**, which is what we *should* do with God's spirit leading, guiding and motivating it, **do not sound the trumpet before you as the hypocrite.** Now that word 'hypocrite' is 'actor or pretender,' because they're pretending to do something. So now they're going to do a charitable deed and they sound the trumpet, 'Duh-da-dah-da-duh!' **LOOK!** Draw attention to self! "I am being charitable! Look how good I am!" And He's saying here, "*Don't* do it that way!" So don't be like a hypocrite, the actor or the pretender, because he's only acting out this role... **do in the synagogues and in the streets, that you may have the glory from men.** So here it is, this is that vanity, the requiring of praises of men. And that's what pride is. Pride is trying to acquire praises of men to lift the self up. Now, they were doing it to *have*

the praises of men. That's why they did it. That was their motivation, their intent. **Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.**

Verse 3 – But when you do your charitable deeds, your acts of kindness, **do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing;** in other words, don't make it obvious, do it in quiet, do it in secret, **that your charitable deed may be in secret,** so it'll only be known between **your God who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.** So when we are to do good works they are to be done confidentially, in quiet, secretly, and the only one that would know it would be God and your inner self.

Now, the moment that we were to say to somebody and boast about that charitable deed the reward is lost because we've now lifted ourselves up in pride and taken a "Look at me! Can't you see how good a work I have done! This gives me credibility!" The moment we boast about it – five, ten, twenty years later – we've lost the reward that God has stored for us because the charitable deed is no longer in secret. We are now boasting, trying to lift the self up in the eyes of others by talking about it to others. And that, of course, it would go back to the motive of *why* that discussion would take place, *why* would we be raising this charitable act.

Verse 5 – And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrite, not like the actor. **For they love to pray standing in the synagogue and on the corners of the streets...** What is their motive? **...that they may be seen by men.** So that's why they're doing it. **Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut the door, pray to your Father who is in secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly.** So it's not driven by pride. It's driven by humility. We would go into a quiet place and our thoughts and our words and our actions are between us and God, and we would pray to God and we wouldn't have the glory or seeking the glory of men saying that, "Oh, I pray five times a day!" or "I pray 'this'..." No, this is about doing it between God and an individual.

Verse 7 – And when you pray, do not use vain repetition as the heathen do. What is the motive behind this vain repetition? **For they think that they will be heard for their many words.** So their motive, this vain repetition of going over the same meaningless words over and over again is because they believe in their thinking that God will *hear* and see their so-called 'sacrifice' and that they will be given credit from God for it...which is not true. It's *vain* repetition.

I remember growing up as a catholic, and my mother being a catholic used to say the rosary, and therefore, I learned the rosary and every night before bed we had to kneel down on the side of the bed, myself and one of my other brothers (because one of my brothers had left home, my other brother was there), and we used to kneel there and do the rosary. We used to start at the top of the beads and go all the way around the beads to the end, and it was the most difficult time in my life because I hated kneeling there doing those rosary beads. I didn't even realize what was going on, really, but my mother believed that going through the rosary and praying to Mary, that Mary was going to protect her. She was never called, she didn't understand, and nor did I at that point of time as a young boy having to go through the rosary, turned around and around and around, and it was laborious going over the same thing. Well, one of the ways that the natural carnal mind dealt with that was to work at it at great speed, because I worked out quite early that you can do it quite slowly and it used to take so long and my knees used to hurt, so what I learned was that I could rattle off the 'Hail Mary's' so fast that speed reading was nothing compared to speed talking that I was good at. And I learned that and so much so that my mother at one time pulled me up and said, "You've got to slow down." I was going so fast to get through them, because we used to take it in turns for each bead. Someone would do the prayer...and anyway, a

lot of that's just all vanity of course. But they are the things that we went through. But this is just an example of this *vain repetition* – through the many words – which is going through, like a rosary bead. It's just vanity. It's empty. It's worthless. God doesn't hear it. Mary is dead. It's all just a big, vanity, manmade thinking. It's insane, really, but without God's spirit people can't come to see the truth. And fortunately, we have God's spirit so we can see that the rosary and praying to Mary is just a *vain*. It's insanity, man held in his bondage of his thinking and that's the way it will be until God calls a person out from that thinking to release him from that bondage, him or her from that bondage. Then they can come into a relationship with God and begin to see the truth, begin to see spiritually, that vain repetition is just a vanity. God doesn't hear because of the many repetitions of words. It's just a vanity. God requires a sincere, genuine heart driven by a desire to have a relationship with God, to be open and honest about the way we feel. God already knows, but that's what God desires from us, to be open and honest and sincere.

Verse 8 – Therefore, do not be like them, For your Father knows the things that you have need of before you ask Him. So we must be careful not to be like the hypocrite, the actor, or the pretender. Now, we can do this on Sabbath services. We can act out a role for others to see *then* when we leave fellowship with God's people we turn into the *real person we are*. We live a lie. So what is going on in our lives for the other six days, brethren? That's a good question. What is going on in our life for the other six days? Are we actually *fighting* the fight? Are we *striving* to obey God? Are we *looking* for signs of pride in our life? And are we turning to God in prayer, in humility, and calling out to God and crying out to God and saying, "I can't do this of and by myself! I require God's spirit to do the works in me. Help me, God, to do this! Help me to survive all of this battle that I am in!"

Matthew 23:1 – Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: The scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. So they had the authority, the religious authority of that day. **Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do...** so they were to follow the teachings that were given by the Pharisees from the *Bible*. So this is about religious instructions from the Book of Moses, God's word. They were to observe what was obviously seen from the book, the Bible. They were to observe it, they were to do it, and as long as it was according to God's word that's what they were to do **...but do not do according to their works; for they say and do not.** So this is why they're hypocrites. They were saying one thing, "This is all the things you should do according to God's word," but they didn't do it themselves! They talked a good line but they don't live it! They didn't live it. They don't take it into their inner thinking and *live it* in their life. They don't behave that way. They behave a different way. So they say one thing and yet they do another.

Now this is, brethren, if we look at that, that command is also to us. We are to *do* what God requires of us, but we're not to just go and say the things, we're actually to do them. We're not to be hypocrites by having a double-standard, living two different ways, saying one thing and living another. And I know within child-rearing it's one of the greatest dangers within a family, and that is that the parents will say one thing and then they go and do another, and the child gets confused because they see the parents saying, "Don't do this..." "Don't do that..." and the next minute the child looks outside and there is the parents doing exactly the opposite to what they just said! Now, *how* do we expect the child to now live the right way of life? It's impossible because they've had the example, the physical example they've seen, and therefore, they follow the example. Words are cheap. Words are cheap! It's how we live, brethren.

Verse 4 – For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves do not move them with one of their fingers. So they make no effort. They tell you all the

things you must do and then they watch you stagger under the loads they place on you, but they won't support you in any way. So they're hypocrites! They're just laying all these things, "This is what you should do..." "This is how you should do it..." and then they go and live a different life.

Verse 5 – But all their works they do to be seen of men. So that's their motives. Everything they're acting out is to get the credit, the praises of men, because of pride. **They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders, which is the fringe, of their garments.** Now, phylacteries is a small piece of parchment in a scroll that was used in prayer that they might render the person more conscious and show themselves to be eager than the majority of other people, to remind them of God's law. So they had this phylactery, which is this small parchment, and it was a sign, really, an outward sign that they were (of course) more righteous. They were more *eager* than most people to be reminded of God's law, which is important. So this is done for a sign. So why did they do this? What was their motive? To be seen of men, seeking the praises of men, *to be seen as righteous, better* than others, more keen on a spiritual level. The reality is that it was just a vanity and it was a sign of pride. So the action now reveals a sign of pride.

And we, brethren, can look at *our* actions, to see whether *they* are signs of pride within ourselves. Another version of this says, "Their lives are perpetual fashion shows, embroidered prayer shawls one day and flowery prayers the next." They were speaking all these wonderful, flowery words and they're putting on this demonstration and he's saying it's just like a big fashion show because it's all about appearance. It wasn't from the inner man as far as sincerity. It was from the inner man in the sense of pride.

Verse 6 – They love the best places at the feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplace, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi.' 'Master, Master.' 'Teacher, Teacher.' They loved the praises of men. They were happy to take *credit* to themselves, which is pride. Another rendering of this from another version is, "They love to sit at the head table at church dinners, basking in the most prominent position, preening in the radiance of public flattery, receiving honorary degrees, and getting called, 'Doctor' or 'Reverend.'"

Verse 8 – But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'/'Master'/'Teacher'; for one is your Teacher, one is your Master on a spiritual level, the Christ/the Messiah, the Word of God made flesh, and you are all brethren, you are all students. Now, this scripture is saying on a spiritual level nobody should be called 'Master' or 'Teacher' because there is only one Teacher. That is Jesus Christ.

Now, Jesus Christ reveals something about having a religious title outside of what God has established. God has established titles for the purpose of revealing a spiritual role *as a servant*! It's not about taking *credit* to self. It actually defines the role as a servant of God. Titles are not for self-exaltation, not for taking credit to self.

Verse 9 – Do not call anyone on earth your 'father'; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. Now it's referring to the spiritual title. So why do Catholic's call their priests, 'father'? God *clearly* says here that we are *not* to do that. So why do they call priest's 'father'? Well, if you look at the reason why it's because they know that only God the Father can forgive sin, and that's outlined in scripture, so priests in confessionals are acting as 'fathers,' representing and are in the place of God the Father, and the reason is so that they can forgive sin. Because all Catholics know they're supposed to go to a confessional and go to a priest called 'father' in a confessional and the first words that are said are, "Father, forgive me my sins." Isn't that incredible? Now, that's the process of why the Catholic Church calls their ministers,

their priests, 'father,' because they have to have that title because *they* have the *power* to forgive sin! Isn't that disgusting? Isn't that terrible that someone would place themselves in a position of God the Father who is the *only one* who has the authority and the power to forgive sin?! And we know that the Catholic Church, the Roman church, the Universal church *is* totally deceived and it's not based on God's word. Because if they did, the first thing they would do is get rid of all their 'fathers,' all those people that call themselves 'father,' because it's actually sin. And the reason is pride within mankind, taking authority to itself, lifting themselves up to think that they are in a position to represent God and forgive sin. Now that is spiritual sickness.

Verse 10 – And do not be called 'teachers,' 'Rabbi,' spiritually, 'Masters,' for One is your Teacher, the Christ. One is your spiritual Teacher, Jesus Christ! Jesus Christ teaches us today as the Head of His Church by the power of God's spirit. What *pride* is revealed in the fact that *anyone* would place themselves in a position or in place of God on earth? A sign of pride is when someone takes a title for the purpose of drawing attention to self, self-exaltation, because the purpose of titles is to define a role of service. It outlines what the role of service is. And we find that in scripture that God has clearly set it out. They are roles of service to God, they are appointments by God, and nobody would take the role of 'Father.'

Verse 11 – But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. That's somebody who sacrifices themselves for others. The purpose for the ministry is one of service and *not recognition, not vanity, not pride*, and the moment that anybody in God's Church is ordained to a role and takes it as a role of vanity, of recognition of *self*, that raises themselves up in *their thinking* rather than lowering themselves to say they have a greater expectation of service placed on them, and if they raise themselves up, sin has taken place. Pride has entered.

Verse 12 – And whoever exalts himself, pride in thinking, will be humbled... they'll be brought down... and he who humbles himself to serve others will be exalted. Now that's the process; this is a *law* that God has established. God is the one that lifts up and pulls down, and God is saying here that anyone who lifts themselves up in their thinking, thinking they are better, thinking they've been appointed to a role because *they* are better in their thinking, God says they *will* be humbled, they *will* be brought down, and God can work in many ways to achieve that. But He also says that 'he who humbles himself,' anybody that is willing to lower themselves through the power of God's spirit to realize that they are here to serve others.... Marriage is a role of service. It's about *sacrificing the self*. Human life, whether married or unmarried, it's a role of service, *sacrificing the self* for others, for *everybody*, and God says if we take on that mindset of humility, if we lower ourselves, God says we *will* be exalted on a spiritual level. It's not a physical thing it's a *spiritual* matter!

Verse 13 – But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites/actors and pretenders! For you shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men... and how were they doing that? They were saying one thing and acting out another, but in this example they're not even teaching the truth **...for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.** So they were actually stopping others from entering the Kingdom of God, from following God, because they were *not teaching the truth*, the spiritual intent of the law! They work against God's plan by not teaching or living the truth. You have to do both. You have to teach the truth and live the truth, and therefore, by that they were throwing a stumbling block up to others so others couldn't have a right relationship with God. They set wrong examples for others to follow, and that's the point. It's the way we live, brethren. It's not what we say. It's the way we live, so that others see our example and follow.

Verse 14 – Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' homes, and for a pretense make long prayers. Therefore you will receive greater condemnation. Greater judgment! So here they are they're acting out a role and they were devouring widow's houses; in other words, they were getting the widows to assign the house over to them. They were gaining their wealth. And for a pretense they made long prayers. They stood there for hours and carried on making these prayers and it was all for a pretense, all for a *vanity*, all to take credit to self. Hypocrites, actors, that's what they really were! Because although we can see how obvious this is on a physical level about the Pharisees, but what about on a spiritual level, brethren? What are our motives? What are our motives? And that's what it's about. So it isn't about making these long prayers. It's about the sincerity of the heart. It's about what we say when we have that communication with God.

Verse 15 – Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! You travel the land and sea to win one proselyte... now, 'proselyte' is 'someone to follow their way of life,' and when he is won you make him twice as much a son of gehenna as yourselves! Now, what they were doing was if they went overseas and they had somebody to follow them – which is what we say in the Church of God that we do not proselyte. We don't 'get a following' – well, the religions of the world try to 'get a following.' They make proselytes, somebody to follow. A proselyte would have to then be circumcised and then bound themselves to keep the whole of the Mosaic Law, to comply with all the requirements of Judaism. So that's if you became a proselyte of the scribes and Pharisees. They made the proselyte into a replica of themselves, examples of self-righteousness, examples of pride. They converted them to a way of thinking, *their* way of thinking that will be destroyed in the gehenna fire. They're going to face the second death! So if anybody becomes a proselyte of this way of life and does not repent, does not change, does not change *their thinking*, they are now sons, they are inheritors of the gehenna fire. They are heirs of a second death unless they repent and change.

Now, Christ is condemning the scribes and Pharisees because they were acting out this role and they were having people convert and they were changing the way they think. They would have been better off left the way they were because *now* they're getting closer to destruction! Whereas if they hadn't followed these scribes and Pharisees, they were actually better off because they wouldn't have to unlearn all the trash that the scribes and Pharisees were teaching them, the falsehood of the way that they live.

Verse 16 – Woe to you, blind guides, spiritually blind, who say, Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing... so this is, they're saying that an oath to God *can be broken*. You don't have to honour that one... but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obligated to perform it.' Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold?

Verse 18 – And, therefore swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obligated to perform it. Fools and blind! Which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?

Verse 20 – Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it, by God.

Verse 22 – And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it. In other words, you can't break it or change it. The point is, a promise is a promise no matter where the promise is made. And that's a point, brethren, that we need to take-on on a spiritual level. A promise, something that comes out from our lips, a promise is a promise no matter where the promise is made.

So if we make promises to children, we have to honour those promises, words that came out of our lips. So we need to *guard our lips*. That's what we need to do. So a promise is a promise no matter where the promise is made. Our commitment to God or to others are to be kept. Our word is our word. If we don't keep our word to God or to mankind we are accounted as *liars*. What is the reason somebody lies? What is the reason we would lie? Why would we exaggerate? Pride! The protection of one's image!

Now, often we may say things and make promises and then not keep them. Well, brethren, that's an issue for us, which means it boils down to our sincerity, our genuineness.

Matthew 5:33 – Again you have heard that it was said to those of old, You shall not swear falsely, but shall perform your oaths to the Lord. But I say to you, do not swear at all, in other words, don't do oaths or promises, neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; (verse 35)...nor by the earth, for it is His footstool; nor by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. Nor shall you swear by your head, because you cannot make one hair white or black. We cannot change what God has planned or the things that are not in our control. We can't go making promises. Like remember we read before where it turns around and says, "Well, tomorrow we're going to go and do this..."? Well, we need to say, "God willing!" So now the same thing comes to when we make a promise of some type. We need to be very, very careful because we do not know whether we're going to be able to fulfill that promise, and therefore, Christ advises here in **Verse 37 - But let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No.'** For whatever is more than these is from the evil one. Because what it's doing is when we go and make these promises we're actually lifting ourselves up in *pride* to believe that we can fulfill them.

We should never make any spiritual promises to God. Why? Because it is presumptuous to think that we are in *full control* of every event in our life because we may not be able to fulfill that promise. We may not have time to fulfill it or the capacity. We do not have any spiritual power to achieve anything apart from God's power, His will and purpose. It is a sign of pride to make a spiritual oath or promise to God. It's being presumptuous, presuming that we're going to have time or the ability to do it. And that's why Christ says, "Let your 'yes' be 'yes', and your 'no' be 'no.' Keep it all simple."

If anyone promises before God that "I will do this on a spiritual level..." they are taking credit to themselves that they have the spiritual power to achieve it and that's not true! It's *God* that does the works! It's *God in us* that does good works, spiritual works, and therefore, we should not be promising or taking an oath about a matter because we can't achieve anything spiritual, nothing without God's power.

James 5:12 – But above all, brethren, do not swear by neither heaven or by earth or with any other oath, any other promise. But let your "Yes" be "Yes," and your "No," "No." Why? **Lest you fall down into judgment, into hypocrisy, into condemnation.** Why? Because we cannot achieve anything spiritual without God's spirit! A hypocrite is someone who says one thing and does another. So let's not be hypocrites, brethren, and make promises that we cannot keep – and particularly on a spiritual level.

Matthew 23:23 – should have told you to hold back in Matthew 23. **Matthew 23:23 – Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! ...actors** to get the praises of men, actors who say one thing and do another! **For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cumin.** This is really talking about an extreme focus on the very little things, the physical things, little tiny things, that they were taking and counting out every seed. If you've got a hundred seed you've got to count out 10. But that's what they were doing. So they were focusing in on the physical things to *maximum detail*, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, in other words, we should have

tithed on the hundred seeds, **without leaving the others undone**. So it goes back to the spiritual intent. We should focus on justice for all, and justice is the way we think towards others. Mercy is a way we think towards others. We either think mercy and live mercy to others or we don't, which is the weightier matters of the law, and we shouldn't leave these undone. And to live faith is to live what we believe. **These you ought to have done without leaving the others undone**. God requires us to live love from within the inner thinking plus pay our tithes and give our offerings.

Verse 24 – Blind guides, you strain out a gnat, and that's a very small insect, and swallow a camel! And they're both unclean, of course, but they are concerned about the physical clean and unclean laws, but not about the spiritual intent of a matter. And that was the problem! So they're focusing on all the physical things of life, but the spiritual motivation of why we do what we do, *that* should be the focus.

Verse 25 – Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and the dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. So what it's saying there is they're worried about what's on the outside, the *appearance*, but what's inside, what cannot be seen in the mind, in our thinking, that's what we should be concerned about. Christ is saying, "But what was inside was 'the way of get,' self-indulgence, excess, gluttony." Things look good on the outside, the appearance of righteousness, what others see with their eyes (in other words, the image that is being projected), but the inner thinking is one full of pride and selfishness. Now, brethren, we have this same potential, because this is the makeup of mankind. This is the natural carnal mind. It likes to portray an image to others to gain praises of men, to be seen as better or of value or of worth, *but inside* it is full of pride and selfishness. That is the natural carnal mind of Romans 8; that is what *we are*! Now, our ability to see it is based on the power of God's spirit. And this is a wonderful to be able to see pride, to see the signs of pride, to see the signs of selfishness, and deal with them, to admit them before God because they are sin, sin from within.

Verse 26 – Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and the dish, clean the mind, battle the mind, fight sin in the mind, **that the outside may also be clean**. What it is saying there is if we are to discipline the self, the inner thinking, right thinking, *then* what will follow will be right actions. If we are to take on the mind of God, the way God thinks, what will follow is obedience to God's law and this is the way we will live life, and what will be seen is obedience to God. Yes, the world will see us differently because it's using the natural carnal mind to view us. We will look odd and strange and Sabbath keepers and all these other things that they think are weird, Holy Days. That's fine! We are worried about what *God* thinks of us. We are concerned about the weightier matters of the law. We want to live justice, live mercy, and live faith. That's what we want. So we're focused on the spiritual. We're focused on the *inner* thinking, and therefore, if we focus on that what will follow is right actions. What will follow is *no* hypocrisy, *no* pride, *no* acting, *no* insincerity. That's what follows from disciplining the mind by the power of God's spirit.

Verse 27 – Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outward. That's an image, an image that's portrayed. "Isn't it wonderful, that beautiful tomb? How *nice* it looks!" ...**but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness**. So what we're seeing on the outside, the image that's being portrayed, inside are polluted minds, minds riddled with sin, with self-indulgence, with selfishness motivated *by pride*; it all comes from the mind.

Verse 28 – Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, because of this act and this display, **but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness**. They give the impression that they are without sin, but it's all an act of insincerity. Their thinking is about themselves, pride, and selfishness. That is the

natural carnal mind. It is the natural condition which we are all born with, and during our teens we build up this image and then we strive to maintain it. When we are called into God's Church we are now brought into a condition to begin to fight that image, to pull that image down, to get rid of pride and to live humility.

Verse 29 – Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn them with monuments of righteousness. They've made them really large, giving them *great credit*, and they're all of course taking the credit for making these large monuments for the prophets. So they've taken the credit to themselves, **and say, If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.** "We wouldn't be like our forefathers. We wouldn't have stoned the prophets and killed them! That's not like us! We wouldn't have done that!"

They probably knew a lot of what they were doing. That it was *wrong* in the sense of elevating themselves, but deep down they didn't understand the natural carnal mind and the evil that is pride.

Verse 31 – Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are the sons of those who murdered the prophets. Because they, by saying that, it actually reflects exactly the same attitude – pride! Because the ones that killed the prophets did it in pride! And now they're boasting here saying they wouldn't be like that. Well, that's pride. That's exactly the same attitude.

Verse 32 – You fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' *guilt*. Christ is saying, "You're exactly like your fathers! Your actions reveal what you are really like and you are as guilty as them. You have exactly the same problem – pride. Actors! Hypocrites!"

Verse 33 – Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation/the judgment of gehenna? "You have earned the gehenna fire because of your deliberate willful actions!" It appears here that there were many of the scribes and Pharisees who knew full well exactly what they were doing, so it *was* willful and it *was* deliberate, and therefore, potentially may have committed the unpardonable sin, something that is willful and deliberate, *knowing* that they were rebelling against God and acting out this role, therefore, they had earned the gehenna fire.

Verse 34 – Therefore, indeed, I sent you prophets, wise men, and scribes: *some* of them you will kill and stake on a pole, and *some* of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city... (verse 35)... that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. In other words, this generation will be held accountable for the very death of Jesus Christ, because they are guilty. They have murdered the prophets. The prophets were sent from God to reveal God's mind and here we have Jesus Christ, which *is* the mind of God – because they have murdered the prophets and they're going to be held accountable for their actions.

Verse 37 – O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I... this is Jesus Christ *reflecting* the very mind of God, God's mind in Him... I wanted to gather your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under *her* wings, but you were not willing!

Verse 38 – See! Your house is left to you desolate, uninhabited, for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD! God could not dwell in them because of sin; therefore, they are uninhabitable. God could not dwell in them because of this sin. It's an unrepentant sin; therefore, they are uninhabitable.

When will they say, 'Bless is He who comes in the name of the LORD!?' Well the only opportunity they're going to have to say that is at the second resurrection back to a physical life when they're going to be able to understand and see on a spiritual level. Now, some of them aren't going to have that opportunity because they *have* committed an unpardonable sin.

We're just going to finish off in James 4 – signs of pride as outlined in James 4. **James 4:1 – Where do wars and fights, which are battles, come from among you?** And this is brethren in the Church! **Do they not come from your lusts that war in your members?** And the word there, 'desires for pleasure,' is actually not in the original scripture. So, **Do they not come from the lust, your lust which is in the inner thinking, that war in your members?** So it's in their thinking, this lust that they have, this *pride* that they have. And this is why we end up in arguments or fights within the Church, brethren, arguing.

And another way of asking this question is: Why do we argue and get into disagreements with others within the Church? Why is it? What is the motivation behind us wanting to get into disagreements with other brethren?

Why do we raise our voices to be heard over others when we get into conversations? What is the motive for raising our voice, the desire for us to be heard?

Why do we pull down others in our words? Why do we speak ill will of others in the Church, the brethren? Why? What is the motivation of why we would do that?

Why do we want things done *our way*? Why is it we desire to be *in control*? Why is it we have a controlling spirit or an attitude over others?

Why are we impatient with others? What is 'impatience' really?

Why are we opinionated or desire to express an opinion about a matter?

Why is that we don't show respect to authority in the world or authority within the Church? What drives us not showing respect for the office?

Why don't we listen to the advice of others? Why is it that we would not take advice or receive advice?

Well, brethren, the answer is these are all signs of pride. To the degree that we can understand it they are signs of pride, and it does vary in relation to degrees.

Verse 2 – You lust and do not have. You murder and covet and you cannot obtain. So that is, 'You lust and do not have.' You desire these things. You turn upon a thing; in other words, we turn our thinking towards a matter. We desire to have it. We turn our thinking towards it. We, [you], murder. We kill by words of hate and ill will 'and covet.' We desire more. We are actually envious of others, what others

have, therefore, we desire it. We're *not satisfied* with our lot in life or what God has allocated to us ...'and cannot obtain.' We can't have it.

You fight and war. We get into arguments and disagreements. We *battle* other people and we contend with other people on an emotional level. **Yet you do not have because you do not ask.** We don't ask God in a right attitude. We need God's spirit to understand aspects of this. We desire *more* from others. We desire *more* from God even, but we desire it for the wrong reason, the wrong reason, the wrong motives. So we can inquire things from God but we desire it for taking it to ourselves, giving credit to ourselves, which is *pride*.

Verse 3 – You ask and do not receive, because you ask amiss, that you may spend it on your own pleasures. So we're going to use whatever God gives us to glory the self, to magnify the self. So if God provides us a particular gift of His spirit, an ability, a fruit of the spirit, we have to be very careful that we then don't lift ourselves up thinking we are better than others because God has granted us an ability or a fruit of the spirit. We can't measure others. We should look at ourselves and take whatever God gives us as a sign of *His* great mercy and love towards us and we should receive His spiritual gifts with humility.

Verse 4 – Adulterers and adulteresses ...and that is having an unlawful relationship with the world's ways. That's what we are doing... **Do you not know that the friendship with the world is at enmity with God?** In other words, it's against God, fighting against God. To have a relationship with God is one way, but then to have a relationship with the world, you can't have a relationship with both. It's either a relationship with God in sincerity and truth, living love, living God's spirit, or we're not. We're living a different spirit by a different attitude, by a different spirit, which is demonic, which is from the world.

Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. We're fighting against God if we are going to align ourselves, our thinking and our attitudes, and take on the world's way of thinking and approaching things, the world's views. We are actually fighting against God.

Verse 5 – Do you not think that the Scripture says in vain, The spirit which dwells in us yearns jealously? The natural mind desires, longs for, pursues, and seeks the outward praise of men. It desires the praises of men. We desire to be lifted up in the eyes of others *by nature*. So this is what the spirit in man is. It yearns, it desires to have the praises and credit from others. And that's all about that image that we have. We try to protect it, lift it up.

Verse 6 – But He gives more grace. That's talking about God. **God gives more grace**, more favour. **Therefore He says: God resists the proud...** *Anybody* that has self-importance dwelling in their thinking, anyone who takes *credit to themselves* on a spiritual level for *anything* spiritual, God says He will resist it, He will go against it, He has to fight against that because God is going to destroy pride from within mankind... **But He/God gives grace/favour to the humble**, *anyone* who knows and understands their true spiritual worth.

Humility is anyone who understands and knows their *true spiritual condition*, and they have to understand the statement, "Of Myself I can do nothing." And that is true humility.

We will finish 'Signs of Pride – Part 1' there and we will continue with 'Signs of Pride – Part 2' in a following sermon.

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