

“The Impact of Pride”

March 3, 2024

Matthew 27:1-10

I. Introduction

Looking at the story of the Sanhedrin and Judas, one cannot miss the impact of pride. Someone has written that *“pride is the only disease known to man that makes everyone sick except the one who has it.”* In a more serious vein, according to one dictionary *“pride is unwarranted self-esteem; an unreasonable conceit of one's own superiority in talents, beauty, wealth, accomplishments, rank or elevation in office; it manifests itself in lofty airs, distance, reserve, and often in contempt of others.”*

Romans 12:3 says that pride is thinking *“of yourself more highly than you ought.”* The Bible has a lot to say about pride. Turn to Proverbs 11:2; 13:10; 16:18; 29:23. Pride in oneself can easily lead to sin.

1 John 2:16 says, *“For everything in the world-- the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life-- comes not from the Father but from the world.”* Pride is the root of many sins.

It was because of their pride in themselves that the high priests Annas and Caiaphas and the majority of the Jewish leaders wanted to arrest Jesus and kill Him. Jesus was making them look bad; He was pointing out to everyone that listened why they did what they did—their pride. It was because of his pride—his *“self-esteem”* that Peter, when he was questioned by the various people in the courtyard, denied that he knew *“the Man.”* Peter was afraid of those gathered there and what they would do or say about him. His pride—the way he thought about himself—would be wounded. Judas betrayed Jesus because, in his pride, he knew better than anyone else what Jesus should be doing. Judas thought that Jesus should be acting like the kingly Messiah all the Jews were expecting and not like a Lamb going to the slaughter.

After falling to the temptations of his pride and denying vehemently any knowledge of Jesus, Peter, following words of wisdom like those from Proverbs, humbled himself and was forgiven. God was able to use him to lead the Apostles in sharing the Gospel around the world. In today's Scripture we

see the results of the pride of the chief priests and the elders and the pride of Judas Iscariot. First, in [Matthew 27:1-2](#), we see **The Pride of the Chief Priests and Elders.**

II. The Pride of the Chief Priests and Elders

As we saw last week, contrary to rabbinical law, the first two phases of Jesus' religious trial were carried out during the night and away from the Temple. First, He was taken before Annas who, not for lack of trying, couldn't come up with a way to declare Jesus worthy of death. So, when that failed, Jesus was brought before the acting high priest of the day, Caiaphas, and the hastily assembled Sanhedrin. Even with people lying, the worst that they could come up with was that Jesus said, **"I am able to destroy the temple of God and rebuild it in three days."**

Following the illegal court sessions, Matthew wrote that **"early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people came to the decision to put Jesus to death."** Although they had already reached a verdict about His guilt and punishment, the Sanhedrin still had two hurdles. First, they had to devise a way to make their decision look legal under rabbinical law. That's why [Mark 15:1](#) says that not only were the chief priests and elders there but **"the chief priests, with the elders, the teachers of the law and the whole Sanhedrin reached a decision."** Everyone's input was needed to come up with a workable plan. Second, since all trials involving the death penalty had to be conducted in the daytime and in the Temple court, they had to wait until the morning of Passover Friday to reconvene the Sanhedrin in its legitimate council chamber. [Turn to Luke 22:66-71.](#) Actually, they just reaffirmed the charges against Jesus and the verdict of putting Him to death that they had reached earlier in Caiaphas' house.

Hiding behind a smokescreen of righteous actions, the Jewish leaders dropped all pretense of legality. Now that Jesus was finally in their hands, they were determined to kill Him as quickly as possible. But, because they were not allowed to administer the death penalty themselves ([John 18:31](#)), the leaders had to convince the Roman governor, Pilate, to give the required permission for Jesus' execution as soon as possible. Therefore, **"They bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate, the**

governor.” Their pride and the pride of Pilate would lead to Jesus’ crucifixion. Then there’s **The Pride of Judas**.

III. The Pride of Judas

There’s no record of where Judas was during the kangaroo court that the Jewish leaders held that night, but most likely he had accompanied the mob back from the Mount of Olives to Annas’ and then Caiaphas’ houses. He may have been waiting in the courtyard where Peter was, or he may have been in the room where Jesus was grilled. Because of his being a traitor, Judas’ testimony could not be used. Now he was a rejected outcast—to the chief priests and elders, to the disciples, and to the Jewish society.

It wasn’t until Judas watched Jesus being led away to Pilate that the full enormity of his treachery finally began to dawn on him and “He was seized with remorse.” The Jewish leaders really were going to have Jesus put to death. The one last obstacle was the permission of Pilate and Judas had no reason to think that that would be denied. Judas’ pride in himself and his motives had brought him to this point and now he felt remorse as he began to think of what he had done.

Judas with the other 11 disciples had spent 3 years in an intimate, personal relationship with the Son of God. Judas had seen and experienced God’s love, compassion, power, kindness, forgiveness, and grace. He had seen evidence of Jesus’ divinity and had heard many times the way of salvation. Yet in those 3 years, Judas didn’t take one step of faith. And during those years, he had managed to conceal his rebellion from everyone but Jesus. His hypocrisy was so complete and so deceptive that even when Jesus predicted that one of the disciples would betray Him, Judas was not suspected. Judas’ prideful self-esteem had so hardened his heart to the things of God that he was a willing instrument of Satan so that Judas could get Judas’ will done.

As he watched the official trial and sentencing of Jesus that Friday morning, just before Jesus was led away to Pilate, Judas realized that Jesus was condemned to die. Judas “was seized with remorse,” but his remorse did not lead to repentance for sin. He was just sorry at being caught in his own game—things weren’t going the way he had planned. Unlike Peter’s remorse which led to repentance and being

restored to Jesus and the other disciples, Judas' remorse led to guilt and despair—a feeling of “*Woe is me.*”

The outcome of his act of betrayal rested heavily on his conscience as he confessed to the chief priests, “**I have sinned for I have betrayed innocent blood.**” Had he truly repented of his sin, he would have turned to God or even to Jesus Christ, but instead he turned to the chief priests and elders who were just as guilty of Jesus' blood as he was. With hearts that were even more hardened than Judas' they replied, “**What is that to us? That's your responsibility.**” In their pride, they had no more concern for Judas than for Jesus and were as cold-heartedly indifferent to his remorse as they were to Jesus' innocence.

In desperation and frustration, Judas threw the money into the holy place of the Temple—a place where only priests could go. He didn't throw it there to be charitable. He threw it there out of spite, wanting them to feel guilty and forcing the chief priests to handle the blood money again themselves.

Following that he went away and hanged himself. Considering himself already cursed because of his treachery and having pain from having committed the greatest crime in human history, Judas may have thought that hanging was the only escape and fitting death for someone like himself. Perhaps he took his own life as an act of ultimate self-punishment. His pride had been dealt a terrible blow and this would end the pain of humiliation. Whatever the reason, Judas' pride led to his death.

Because of where Judas had thrown the money, the chief priests were forced to take back the 30 pieces of silver and then they had to devise a way to dispose of them. After their unjust and shameful treatment of Jesus, it seems quite hypocritical that they were suddenly concerned about sticking to religious custom at this point. By calling it “**blood money**” they condemned themselves. They were the ones who had given it to Judas to betray the innocent Son of God. So “**they decided to use the money to buy the potter's field as a burial place for foreigners.**” Apparently, the chief priests knew of an area that had previously provided materials for making clay pots that was for sale. So, they purchased it with the 30 silver coins and made it into a burial ground for travelers to Jerusalem who died while still there. It

came to be called the “**Field of Blood**” because it was purchased with blood money—Jesus’ blood as well as Judas’ blood.

As he has done through out his Gospel, Matthew pointed out that this purchase had been prophesied in **Zechariah 11:13**: “**So I took the thirty pieces of silver and threw them into the house of the Lord to the potter.**” Like every other incident in the life of Christ, God wasn’t caught by surprise. This was a precise fulfillment of a specific prophesy. Even in Judas’ death, God’s word was satisfied.

IV. Conclusion

Pride is a curious thing. It’s good to take pride in one’s work or in the work of others. In **2 Corinthians 7:4** Paul wrote, “**I have great confidence in you; I take great pride in you.**” **Turn to Galatians 6:1-5.** There is “good” pride but there is also a sinful pride—“*an unreasonable conceit of one's own superiority.*” Pride can so warp a person’s mind or heart that he can no longer see the reality of things. Just like the chief priests and Judas, a prideful person sees himself above everyone else around him. Such a person has no need for anyone else including God. As Paul wrote in Galatians, we need to test our own actions and thoughts. We must not let pride fester.

As football players from the Super Bowl were interviewed after the game, I was pleasantly surprised at how many of them gave glory to God. They had already considered the question, “*Where had their ability come from?*” No matter how much someone may want to be a professional football player, they need to start out with some God-given talent. When a person is a great singer or a choir sings well, where does that talent come from? - *from God* All that we have and all that we are come from God. We are just the happy recipients of gifts from Him. There is no reason for sinful pride—what we have is a gift. As the Doxology says, “*Praise God from Whom all blessings flow.*” As you go about your daily life, keep on guard for the puffing up of pride in what you do or say or think. Unlike Judas or the religious leaders, at the 1st hint of pride follow the directions that Peter gave in **1 Peter 5:6, 8**: “**Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour.**”

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Mark 14:17, 22-26

The devil doesn't just prowl "around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour," 2 Cor. 11:14 warns that "Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light." In John 8:44 Jesus called him "the father of lies." Satan is like a slippery snake who uses everything he can to get a person to sin. As we've seen these last couple of weeks in Peter's life, things start out small but pretty soon escalate to full-blown sin. From years of experience the devil knows how to use a person's weak points. John wrote about these weak areas in 1 John 2:16: "For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world."

One of the major purposes of the Lord's Table is to take time to remember what Jesus did for each one of us—Romans 5:8 says, "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us." However, over time pride may start to say that you aren't that bad—in fact, you are a pretty good person, especially compared to some other people. From there it is easy to progress to the thought that your "goodness" compelled Jesus to die for you. This is one of Satan's lies. From the perspective of a holy, sinless God, there wasn't anything good enough about any of us to compel Jesus to die in our place. And because of this absence of "goodness" there is no other way for a person to be saved except to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.

There is another purpose of the Lord's Table—to give us time to purposely examine ourselves and make sure that there isn't some sin, like pride, that is just starting to take root. Something that at first glance seems to be harmless but upon closer examination promises to yield sinful fruit. That's why in his record of the Last Supper in 1 Corinthians 11:28, Paul wrote, "Let a man examine himself."

This morning as the elements are being passed take time to remember what Jesus did for you. Thank Him for His love, His mercy, and His grace; thank Him for the gift of eternal life. Then take time to look closely at your life—at your heart, especially those secret places. Has Satan gotten a foothold which needs to be removed before it is too late? If so, ask for God's forgiveness and help in eradicating this sin.