Spiritual Pride

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Preacher: Chris Trousdale

[0:00] Mark writes, they went on from there and passed through Galilee.! And he did not want anyone to know, for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them,! The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him.

And when he is killed, after three days, he will rise. But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask. And they came to Capernaum, and when he was in the house, he asked them, What were you discussing on the way?
But they kept silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. And he sat down and called the twelve and said to them, If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.
And he took a child and put him in the midst of them. And taking him in his arms, he said to them, Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives not me, but him who sent me.
John said to him, Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him because he was not following us.
[1:06] But Jesus said, Do not stop him. For no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. For the one who is not against us is for us.

For truly I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward to spread. Father, we ask you to take your word, to open our eyes to see the truth.
We ask you to convict our hearts when we fall short of the standards laid out in the word. But to not allow us to despair when we fall short of those standards, but to take heart that Christ has borne the penalty for all of our sins.
And that we can come with boldness before you and ask for help. And so we ask you to help us now as we meditate on the word.
In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. You guys take a seat. For the last few chapters, if you haven't been with us as we've been walking through the Gospel of Mark, what you need to know is that for the last few chapters, Jesus has been taking his disciples on a sort of teaching tour outside, primarily outside of Israel.
[2:28] So they began by leaving Galilee and leaving Israel and going north into the regions of Tyre and Sidon. And as they spent time there, Jesus taught his disciples and kept them away from the crowds as much as he was able to so that he could spend time alone with them.

We're told that they came all the way back down to the opposite side of the Sea of Galilee from Israel. And he spent some time there and he briefly stopped over in Israel before they went up north into Caesarea Philippi, which is where we've been for the last two weeks in this Gospel with the disciples, in the northern region above Israel in Caesarea Philippi.
That's where the Mount of Transfiguration occurred, where the glory of God came down and Moses and Elijah stood there with Jesus. And Peter and James and John were able to witness that. That's where last week we saw the healing of this boy who was possessed by a demon, the casting out of that demon by Jesus, and the display of the power of Christ.
And throughout that little teaching tour that Jesus has been taking his disciples on, one of the things that he has been hammering home with them is this issue about spiritual pride and the necessity of humility in their lives in order for them to be faithful disciples of him.
In fact, Jesus has displayed this kind of humility as he has now in this passage this morning, for the second time he predicts his own death. And yet both times we see the disciples are unable to understand, they don't quite get what Jesus is saying.

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[4:02] In fact, this little trip has been kind of a series of highs and lows like that, where you have Peter initially confessing, you are the Christ, the Son of God, to Jesus, and Jesus commends him for it, and then at the next minute Jesus is telling Peter, get behind me, Satan, because Peter doesn't yet possess the kind of humility that's required by the disciple of Jesus.

He wants to fight. He wants to show himself strong and brave, and that's not what Jesus requires.
Or the Mount of Transfiguration occurs, and it's the high point here for these three disciples, it's the high point of their lives, not only of their time with Jesus, but of their lives.
And yet, as they come down to the bottom of the mountain, right after the Transfiguration, they find the rest of the disciples in a sad state, unable to cast out a demon, unable to do mighty works in the name of Jesus.
Failures. So it's just kind of up and down from the disciples while they're on this teaching tour. They have these highs, and then they have these lows, and I think one of the reasons that they're experiencing these lows is because they're not fully following Jesus.
They don't yet understand, they don't yet see what it means to lay down their lives as Jesus will lay his own life down. They are filled with the kind of spiritual pride that pervaded the culture of their day.
[5:27] And even today, it creeps into our own hearts at times. So take a look. I want you to look at the first couple of verses here. Look at what Jesus says. It says that they went on from there, that is, they went on from the northern region of Caesarea Philippi, and they passed through Galilee.

So they come back down to Israel, they're back in Galilee, but they're on the move. They're passing through. They're not going all the way through Galilee, but the point of saying they're passing through is to emphasize that they're not stopping a lot.
They're moving. They're on the move, and Jesus has a reason for that. He doesn't want all the people to know that he's back in Galilee. Because if you'll remember, in the early chapters of the Gospel of Mark, very early, Jesus gained popularity in Galilee, and crowds would swell around him, and people would bring the sick to them.
People would bring those who were possessed by demons. People were clamoring to Jesus for all sorts of things, and he had to go out on his own into the wilderness and just have time to pray. And Jesus is trying to avoid that.
He wants to extend this concentrated time of teaching with his disciples before he goes down to Judea, ultimately to Jerusalem, to the cross. He wants to extend this teaching time with them.
[6:35] So even though they're back in Galilee, they're on the move through Galilee, and he says there in verse 30 in the middle that they did not want anyone to know. For he was teaching his disciples.

He's still in this teaching mode. Listen to what he says to them. This is the second time he's going to say this. Saying to them, The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him.
And when he is killed, after three days he will rise. And then Mark tells us, But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him. So the disciples are blind to the truth here.
They don't understand. They're unable to understand what Jesus means when he says he's going to be delivered up into the hands of men. And he's going to be killed and rising.
And they can't understand that. There are two kinds of, I think, blindness that affect us and impact our ability to understand the truth and understand the gospel.
[7:36] And I don't think these two kinds of blindness occur separately. In fact, most of them occur at the same time. And we see these things happening here. One is a kind of spiritual blindness that the Bible speaks of.

For instance, the Apostle Paul says that the God of this world, that is Satan, has blinded the minds of unbelievers so that they might not see the light of the gospel.
In other words, Satan's great work in the world is to keep people from seeing, to keep people from understanding the gospel message. That's a kind of spiritual blindness that only God, in his supernatural divine power, can dispel and remove.
It cannot be removed in any other way. If God doesn't intervene in your heart and your life, you will live your whole life blinded, unable to see the beauty of the gospel, unable to believe the truth of this book.

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And that's part of what's happening to the disciples here. Because if you turn over to the gospel of Luke and you read the account of this story in Luke chapter 9, you don't have to turn there, but it says this in Luke chapter 9, verse 45, that they did not understand this saying and it was concealed from them so that they might not perceive it.
[8:49] It was hidden from them. God's not allowing them yet to understand the full meaning of Jesus' words. He's not, he has not yet given them the spiritual insight to understand what the cross is all about.

So a part of their blindness is a spiritual, supernatural blindness that on their own they'll never be able to overcome. And we are, to varying degrees, we are affected by that kind of blindness oftentimes.
But there's another kind of blindness I think that's going on here that goes hand in hand with spiritual blindness. And what I would call it is a kind of experiential blindness. Because the truth of the matter is all of us live within a certain culture and we have certain experiences in our lives.
And our own culture, our own experiences, the world that we live in, it begins to build up walls around us. And we are often unable to see on the other side of that wall.
So just by virtue of being who we are and where we are and having lived the lives that we live, there are some truths that we have a great difficulty seeing and sometimes that we simply cannot see.
[9:52] And that's true of all believers in all times and all places. So oftentimes we will look back on previous generations of Christians and we will judge them for their sins and it seems obvious to us that they were apparently blind towards.

The easiest example to think of is slavery. I think back to some of the great heroes of the faith. I think of one of my heroes, Jonathan Embers, lived in the 1700s, probably the greatest American theologian of all time, probably the greatest American philosopher of all time, brilliant, endowed by God with great wisdom and vision, and yet, he owned slaves.
What do we say to that? We could just say, well, he's a horrible person, he was a slave owner, he dismissed everything he said, everything he ever wrote, and we would be the worst for that.
So what we say is we look back and we say, that was a sin, it was wrong, but for whatever reason, in his time and in his culture, he was blind to that sin.
He was unable to see it. And I don't have any doubts that in 300 years from now, there will be people looking back on you and me who say that we are blind to something. I can't tell you what it is because I'm blind to it.
[11:05] But there's something that we're doing right now, we're in general participating in as the church in the 21st century that's wrong and we don't know it and we don't see it and generations later they'll see it and they'll look back on us and they'll judge us the same way that we look back on and judge other people.

We're just, our culture, our experiences, they blind us to things and I think that's also happening here in the gospel of Mark. In fact, if we didn't have the gospel of Luke and Luke didn't tell us about that spiritual blindness that the disciples were experiencing right now, I think that their failure to understand would still be understandable to us.
I think we would still be able to go, okay, I can see why they wouldn't understand what Jesus was saying here. Because when you consider the religious culture in which they lived, their greatest religious leaders, the people that were most honored for being holy and righteous, were some of the most self-righteous, were some of the most spiritually prideful people to have ever lived.
They were led by the Pharisees and the Sadducees. You're talking about men who when they prayed in public would find the places the most people around them and they would pray as loudly as they could so that a lot of people would hear them praying and then they'd go, oh, they're spiritual.
These are people who were so spiritually prideful that when they gave their offering at the temple they would make sure they dropped in the largest, loudest coins that they could into the coffers so it would ring more loudly than the person in line in front of them and hopefully than the person in line behind them.
[12:39] That's deep spiritual pride right there. I mean, that's bad stuff. In fact, if you hold your place in Mark and you turn back to the Gospel of Matthew, in Matthew chapter 23, Jesus issued some scathing warnings and condemnations at these religious leaders.

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Chapter 23, verse 1 of Matthew, Jesus said to the crowds and to his disciples, he said, the scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat, so do and observe what they tell you, but do not do the works that they do, for they preach but they do not practice.
He says, they tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on people's shoulders, but they themselves are not willing to move them with their finger. And then listen to verse 5. They do all their deeds to be seen by others.
All the spiritual stuff that they do, it's all a show, it's all to be seen by others. And then Jesus describes some of them. He says, they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. In other words, they even dress in such a way as to impress others and to make others think that they were super spiritual.
So they read these things called phylacteries across their foreheads and tie them on. That was a sign of your devotion to the scriptures and to God. But they would try to get them as broad and as wide, bigger than their neighbors, I guess.
[14:02] All right? The best phylactery that you could get. All right? I'm not showing up with a phylactery next week. All right? But they would do that. They would have their garments or hymns in a certain way to show that they, they were rabbis or scribes.

They were the spiritual ones that were to be honored and revered and they expected to be honored and revered. And we, we laugh at that but we do the same kinds of things.
It looks differently in different, from church to church it looks a little bit differently. So you might go in one church and the spiritually prideful, those who want to be recognized as, as those who really honor God.
In one church they will dress up in their, in their suits and ties and they spend a lot of money on their suits and ties. In another church the ladies will wear the fanciest, biggest hats they can get, right?
So nobody behind them can actually see the preacher while he's preaching or spend a lot of money on hats. Then you've got others that were kind of on the other end of the spectrum. They don't dress nicely, they dress down and they dress cool because they want to be seen as the cool spiritual person who's in touch with the world.
[15:07] And so I remember seeing this guy, I'm not going to say his name but I saw this preacher on TV one time but he was easily in his early, early 50s easily, okay? And he, but he was wearing clothes, he really needed to be about 30 years younger to wear those clothes.

I couldn't, in my 30s I couldn't wear what he wore and be age appropriate, alright? He had on like the skinny jeans and the cool tight sweater shirt and the jewelry and the rings and all that.
I'm sure he had plenty of tattoos and all those sorts of things and I don't care how you dress. I don't care what you wear. But the point is that often we wear things whether it's a suit or the cool clothes or whatever it may be, we wear things in order to be impressive to others so that when we show up at church they'll know that that's the guy or that's the girl.
See, they're the one that we need to go to. They're the one that we need to respect. It appears in all kinds of forms but it's there where not a whole lot different from these Pharisees in the days of Jesus.
We are as much as them imbued spiritual pride and the disciples this is a culture in which that kind of display is greatly valued.
[16:23] They don't know any other kind of spiritual leaders. Okay, they don't, they're not living in a world where there are multiple churches and multiple denominations and you can see God worship this way over here and this way over there and you kind of, you know, we kind of have like a Christian buffet today.

You can find whatever you kind of want if you go to enough churches, all right? You can pick, they can live in that. This was all they knew. This was their entire experience of spirituality and so they are experientially, culturally blind to the message that Jesus is delivering here.
They have proven so far in this gospel that they understand and believe that Jesus is the Messiah. They know that. He is the long awaited Messiah from the line that David prophesied in the Old Testament.
They believe that and they know that. So far so good. They've gone beyond that. They have, they have shown that they understand and believe that Jesus is not only the Messiah but he is a divine Messiah.

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That he is God in flesh. They, they understand that. They believe that. Those things are not a problem for them. What they can understand is how this divine Davidic Messiah will die.
[17:34] on a cross. That does not compete for them. Makes absolutely no sense. Because the truth is that that spiritual pride will often blind us to gospel truths.

And that's exactly what's happening here. There's so many times that we can't understand some of the demands of the word of God but we can't understand why the word doesn't address this issue in this particular way because we're expecting one thing and we get another and what's blinding us to the truth is our own sense of pride and what we expect and what we want.
It will blind you to gospel truths. But, but it will do much more than that. It does much more than that here in this particular passage because as you move on we see in verse 33 that they came to Capernaum.
So now they're back at home base. You remember Capernaum is sort of the home base for the ministry in Galilee. They come to Capernaum and they're in the house looks like in Peter's house and Jesus says to these disciples what were you discussing on the way?
So I don't know on their trip through Galilee as they're approaching Capernaum apparently the disciples are somehow able to have a discussion that Jesus is not a part of. He may be walking at a distance in front of them or walking at a distance behind them or he may be dealing with crowds as they're coming into town.
[19:05] I don't know what's happening here but for whatever reason Jesus is not a part of the conversation that they're having as they near Capernaum and as they come to the house he's not a part of it and so when they get to the house Jesus asks them what were you what were you talking about while we were on our way here?

And verse 34 says that they kept silent for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. They were wait Jesus just said he was going to die and now you guys your next thought is which one of us is number one among the disciples?
Who's the best? Who's the greatest? Who comes first? So they're looking for some kind of hierarchy. Well I guess you know John you can be number one and Peter would be number two James would be number three you know we're obviously we're going to put Judas way down there but everybody else kind of factors it they want where we rank among one another.
Who's the best? Who's the first? What's I mean what is this about? Well if you turn over just one chapter to chapter 10 of the gospel of Mark you can kind of gain a better understanding of what's happening here and what's going on in their minds.
because in chapter 10 in verse 35 we read this James and John the sons of Zebedee came up to him and said to him teacher we want you to do for us whatever we ask you it's always dangerous when he says that I agree but he says to them what do you want me to do for you?
[20:36] And they said to him grant us to sit one at your right hand and one at your left in your glory that's what it means to be first to sit at the right hand of Jesus or on the left hand of Jesus that means to be first and greatest among the disciples and so even a chapter later they haven't quite gotten it they don't quite understand they are still filled with spiritual pride and their concern is who when he establishes his kingdom when he comes in glory who's going to sit at his right hand who gets to be the number one to Jesus who gets to be his right hand man because again they don't understand this business about a crucified Messiah it doesn't make sense to them despite all that Jesus has said and all that he has taught him these men are still expecting Jesus to set up an earthly kingdom to kick out the Romans and any other people who would try to rule over Israel that he's going to set up a kingdom there in Jerusalem and he's going to rule over an earthly kingdom that's what they're still expecting they still think that and so their minds are on that day and Jesus finally maybe it's next week maybe it's in a month maybe it's in a year they don't know but they're looking at that day and they're saying on that day

Jesus our goal is to be at your right hand we want to be your number one and number two choose us Jesus in fact if you read the account of that in Luke it's not just James and John who go to Jesus but they send their mommy to Jesus that's really bad you have to send your mommy and ask and say can my boys be number one in your group alright that's exactly what they do because their goal their goal is to have power in the earthly kingdom Jesus' goal is to lay his life down for a people so that he might build a spiritual kingdom because this kind of spiritual blindness that they're fighting that they're dealing with here it will not only blind you to gospel truths but it will it will shift your focus away from gospel goals to selfish ambition every time if you don't allow if you don't allow the word of

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Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit to come in and fight against and root out the pride that is deeply rooted in your heart if you don't allow the spirit and the word to do that then your goals will be all out of whack same as the disciples spiritual pride is dead it blinds you to the truth of God's word and it substitutes selfish ambition for gospel goals you move on in the passage though it says that
Jesus kind of gives us an answer to this it says in verse 35 that he sat down the twelve and he said to them if anyone would be first he must be last of all and servant of all and he took a child and put him in the midst of them and taking him in his arms he said to them whoever receives one such child in my name receives me and whoever receives me receives not me but him who sent me so Jesus wants to turn he wants to he wants to turn the disciples expectations upside down so he chooses a child it is telling that there's even a child present because most of the rabbis of Jesus day would not have children in their vicinity as they're teaching they're too they're too revered for that they're too good for that children are not looked at in this culture as they're not doted on and treated with special care children are to be set aside until they're useful to do something in this culture but here Jesus apparently has children in the midst of them while he's teaching and not only that he draws the child close to him and he says to his disciples unless you're like unless you receive a child unless you can unless you can be a servant to a child then you can't you can't serve in my kingdom it just it just won't work he says whoever receives one such child in my name receives me their pride has caused them to view ministry as a means to gaining something for themselves so to be one of the disciples is to sit at Jesus' right hand as he reigns over Israel and Jesus says that to be one of his disciples is to lay your life down as he does and to serve even the least of people around you that's what
Christian ministry is Christian ministry is not building a name for yourself Christian ministry is not growing a crowd for yourself Christian ministry is serving the least of those around you and Jesus says if you serve them you've served me and not only me but you have served my father but for the person who is eaten up with spiritual pride their service and their ministry will be greatly hindered spiritual pride it blinds us to gospel truths it points us away from gospel goals and it hinders true real life gospel ministry and we've seen this happen haven't we haven't you haven't you been involved in a ministry or church or been somewhere where initially the goals were simple and they were good goals to bring honor and glory to Jesus to make disciples to serve people around you but before long things built up and things got larger and things got more complicated and so eventually you stopped focusing on serving those around you and you began to focus on preserving your own ministry ministry and your own status as a leader in that organization how many times have we seen those sorts of things happen and ministry doesn't happen when we're focused on ourselves when we're trying to build ourselves up and build up our own little group then ministry doesn't happen because ministry is not building yourself up ministry is serving others so that you might build them up and spiritual pride will destroy real gospel ministry every time it may be a slow death that ministry dies but it will die a death if you don't root out spiritual pride but there's one more thing that I think that we see here in this passage of Mark 9 the spiritual pride will do to us and that is that it will destroy genuine gospel fellowship see that in verses 38 through 41 where I think after
Jesus has sort of scolded the disciples with this example of the child and told them they need to be serving and not worrying about these other things I think that at least briefly for a time it obviously doesn't last because they get to chapter 10 and they're still asking to be first and best but I think maybe for just a brief moment it leaves here to fears that John's conscience was maybe stirred up a little bit and began to sense and feel something because John says to him teacher we we saw someone casting out demons in your name and we tried to stop him because he was not following us it's almost as if John senses that their approach has been wrong and he wants to pass this by Jesus to see did we do the right thing was that the right thing to do or was that the wrong thing because I think they're confused at this point and their conscience are beginning to be touched a little bit by what Jesus says they're obviously not all the way there but there's something going on there so
[28:19] John brings up this example there's a man casting out demons in your name Jesus and we told him to stop because he wasn't in our group he wasn't with us he wasn't traveling with us and then Jesus says do not stop him for no one who does a mighty work in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me for the one who is not against us is for us what does Jesus mean by that does he mean for instance that anybody who does anything with the name of Jesus attached to it that they're to be given a pass and we're not to criticize I don't think that's what he means at all I

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don't think that's what he means because Jesus himself will acknowledge that there are those who do things technically in his name in other words they do things and claim that they're doing them on behalf of Christ and Jesus says to some of those he says that on Judgment Day that he will say to some of those depart from me I never knew you so there is a there is a kind of illegitimate ministry that Jesus recognizes and in fact as you read through the letters that are written after the gospels we are over and over warned to watch out for false teachers

John tells us very explicitly that anyone who proclaims a Christ not in the flesh is an anti-Christ the disciples are hard on those who preach a false gospel or a false Christ and so I don't think that Jesus is saying here that anybody who throws my name out there in the course of doing something that they label ministry is to be given a pass I don't think that's what Jesus is saying I think that Jesus is saying something similar to what the apostle Paul says in Philippians chapter 2 if you remember when Paul wrote the book of Philippians he was in prison and while he was in prison in Rome there were some other other believers who did not really care for Paul very much they didn't like his ministry they didn't like his approach to ministry and so they began in the city of Rome to proclaim the gospel with even more loudly and even more boldly thinking that if we're out here preaching the gospel and Paul is in jail for preaching the gospel we're going to agitate things and we'll make it more difficult for Paul while he's in prison that's twisted that's weird alright and we would immediately react against those people who want to get rid of them and Paul's response is that oh what then only that in every way
Christ is proclaimed he didn't care it didn't matter to make more difficult it didn't matter to him what their motives were the point for Paul is the gospel is being proclaimed so let them proclaim the gospel I think that's what's happening here in Mark chapter 9 that there's not a false gospel being preached by this individual he's not declaring a false Christ he's not like Simon the magician in the book of Acts who wanted to buy the power of the Holy Spirit to do things powerfully in the name of Jesus he's not like that at all he's someone who is apparently a genuine believer in Christ and in the name of Christ he is casting out demons and Jesus says don't stop them because the issue here was that the disciples were not so much upset that this individual was proclaiming Christ and doing things in the name of
Christ they were upset because this individual was not part of their group that was the issue and I think so many times we fall into this we fall into this trap there are there there's legitimate criticism of false gospels that we need to lay out there and we need to do that with boldness but so often we end up criticizing people because their methods are different from ours because they look different than we look because they do ministry in a different way from the way that we do ministry because they do church in a way that's different from the way that we do church because their expectations are a little bit different and what we need to do rather than look at all the externals and the ways in which they do things we need to take a step back and examine and look at are they preaching the gospel are they preaching the word of God are they serving Christ or themselves are they doing gospel ministry and if they're doing gospel ministry regardless of whether we agree with the way that they do it or we like the way that they do it regardless it's gospel ministry and let us have the attitude of
Jesus or the attitude of the apostle Paul and say only that in every way Christ is proclaimed it doesn't matter their motives it doesn't matter their means so long as Christ is proclaimed but if we're like the disciples and we're filled with spiritual pride and we'll look at those who are different from us and we'll think they cannot possibly be doing it as well as us and with as pure motives as we have and ultimately what will happen is that gospel unity will be fractured by our own spiritual pride this is this is dangerous stuff we tend to think of pride as just a minor issue because it's internal and not external it's just it's a it's an issue of the heart that we don't we tend to just not address it and we even oftentimes speak of pride and positive mind and get all mixed stuff but but this is a this is a serious spiritual issue that we need to confront because it will blind us to gospel truth and we won't be able to see with clear eyes what is revealed to us in the word of God it will turn it will shift our goals from good pure gospel ministry to to to to self it will it will it will prevent us from doing real ministry it will prevent us from serving people and it will fracture our unity it'll fracture our unity with other believers and other churches it'll fracture our unity here in our church it'll it'll just eat it away it's a serious issue so we have to ask how how do we combat spiritual pride it is it's just natural to us well so we don't have to decide to become prideful it just wells up within us naturally sinners that we are so we we need to have some kind of clear simple game plan for how we attack it and how we

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deal with it and I think if you look at the beginning of this passage and the end of this passage we're giving a very simple sort of two stage approach to fighting against pride in your heart so part number one I think is really simple and that is to to to dwell on and to meditate upon the self sacrificing example of
[35:15] Jesus there are those I remember reading theologians who who would say that the cross of Christ is not about him bearing the sins of people it's not about him dying in our place the cross is really just about Jesus giving us an example of how we should sacrifice on behalf of others and to that I would say that no it doesn't fit it doesn't work it doesn't it doesn't jive with what the Bible has to say it also promises that Christ became sin so that in him we might become the righteousness of God he says that God set Jesus forward as a propitiation that is a sacrifice that removes and absorbs the wrath of God on our behalf so we don't want to approach the cross and approach the the life that Christ lived and all that he did we don't want to approach that and say it's merely an example we want to see the cross the cross first and foremost as a dying in our place as a taking of our sin and our shame and our punishment upon

Christ himself he bears the penalty for us that is the gospel the gospel is the good news that though we are lost and sinners and deserve health and deserve the wrath of God Christ has taken our place and if we trust in him he becomes sin for us so that in him we become the righteousness of God that's the gospel and we don't want to reduce the cross to anything less than that but there is more happening at the cross than the atonement and one of the things that's happening in addition to atonement for sins is Christ is providing an example for us to God he is so one of the ways that we can combat spiritual pride in our own hearts is we can look at Christ and we can see that although he was worthy of all honor and glory he was worthy of every bit of adulation that the crowds might have thrown at him he avoided the crowds on his way to Calvary he was not aimed at an earthly crown he was aimed towards a bloody cross in fact it's not it's not even just the cross in which Jesus provides an example of humility and service to us in Philippians chapter 2 Paul tells us that we should imitate
Christ's humility and he describes the humility of Christ he says that he became obedient even to the point of death in other words the death of Jesus on the cross was the pinnacle of his obedience even to death on a cross but it's not the sum total of his obedience it's not the sum total of his service his entire earthly life was a life of sacrifice and service and ministry on behalf of others the apostle Paul says in that same passage that he he emptied himself he became a servant and took upon himself the form of a servant a slave for us the entire life of Jesus is sacrifice sacrifice sacrifice and service service service in everything that he did he was laying down himself on behalf of us and the cross is the pinnacle of his sacrifice not the sum total of the sacrifice so we look to that example and we say if the creator of the universe could humble himself to serve sinful people many of whom most of whom would ultimately reject him how can we how can we cling to our own pride how can we set ourselves up above anyone when the king lowered himself below us it's not it's not our first to say that here this morning in church and acknowledge that is true if you want to battle spiritual pride you need to meditate long and hard and daily upon the sacrifice of Jesus for his people it's a daily meditation that's the first thing that I think you need to do to combat spiritual pride the second thing though is found there in verse 41 at the very end of the passage Jesus says for truly I say to you whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you belong to Christ will by no means lose his reward now this is still in the context of dealing with that guy who's not a part of their group and he's doing things in Jesus name they don't know what to do with that still in the context of that and Jesus say about those people who are doing things in Christ's name they serve you if they even just do so little of service toward my people as to give them a cup of water they will not lose their reward center of the spiritual pride will will will replace gospel goals with selfish selfish ambition but one of the things that we've got to realize is that ultimately gospel goals they take us all the way beyond beyond our lives on this earth of laying down and sacrificing for others taking up our cross that gospel goals take us through all that and beyond all that to Romans chapter 8 where all creation awaits the unveiling of the sons of God there is a reward to be had at the end of it all there is a there is a reception a participating in the glory of
Jesus at the end of it all that is ours if we serve now see how that works you try to gain something now you try to obtain a name now you get nothing then you serve now you lay your life down now you get eternal glory with Jesus then you switch those can't go back forward service now glory then so so the way to battle spiritual pride is to begin by looking backwards to the life of Jesus and

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ultimately the cross of Christ and seeing in that an example of how we are to serve those around us even those who do do wrong to us and then there's a looking forward to the future and clinging to that future reward and not looking for it now you see in both of those things the thing you're not focused upon is now because now is where you find yourself and if you focus on now and you focus on yourself it only ends in pride it only ends in self-exaltation if you focus on Christ and you focus on future glory spiritual pride begins to shrink and wither and die within your heart it is it is a constant daily struggle the minute you stop gazing at the cross the minute you stop aiming for future glory with Christ pride begins to well up again in fact I would go so far as to say that spiritual pride or self-exaltation is the root sin in all of our hearts and it is it is the core issue for which Jesus laid down his life for us I say that because the Apostle Paul says in Romans chapter 3 verse 23 that all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God so for the
[43:31] Apostle Paul sin is defined as a failure to give God the glory that he deserves and nothing will rob God of his glory more quickly than you seeking to obtain your own glory here and now Jesus died because we are full of pride and he set an example of us so that we might be rid of pride now and so the question the question before us is not how well will we look back and look forward the question is not that the question is do you want to do that you see pride will remind you to your need for that you'll go out of here and you'll think that was a great sermon for so and so widened to the truth examine yourselves let's pray let's pray

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