

ME, MY #SELFIE AND I

Crowded Out

Shane Philip

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Discussion Notes

The Crossing Church

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OPENING

Today we begin a three week series about pride. Pride is an issue that we can see in other people, but rarely can we see it in ourselves. When it comes to control, influence, and approval, our lives can easily become self-centered and empty. We'll learn in our new series, using the book of Daniel as a backdrop, how centering our lives around God puts Him in control and allows Him to use our influence for good. God's word has incredible wisdom on how to lead with humility.

SCRIPTURE¹

Psalms 10:4 "In his pride the wicked man does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God."

Daniel 4:4-8a "I, Nebuchadnezzar, was at home in my palace, contented and prosperous. I had a dream that made me afraid. As I was lying in my bed, the images and visions that passed through my mind terrified me. So I commanded that all the wise men of Babylon be brought before me to interpret the dream for me. When the magicians, enchanters, astrologers and diviners came, I told them the dream, but they could not interpret it for me. Finally, Daniel came into my presence and I told him the dream."

Daniel 4:17 "The decision is announced by messengers, the holy ones declare the verdict, so that the living may know that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes and sets over them the lowliest of men."

Daniel 4:24-26 "This is the interpretation, O king, and this is the decree the Most High has issued against my lord the king: You will be driven away from people and will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle and be drenched with the dew of heaven. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes. The command to leave the stump of the tree with its roots means that your kingdom will be restored to you when you acknowledge that Heaven rules. "

Daniel 4:29-30 "Twelve months later, as the king was walking on the roof of the holy palace of Babylon, he said, 'Is not this the great Babylon I have built as the royal residence, by my mighty power and for the glory of my majesty?' "

Daniel 4:31-34 "The words were still on his lips when a voice came from heaven. 'This is what is decreed for you, King Nebuchadnezzar: Your royal authority has been taken from you. You will be driven away from people and you will live with the wild animals; you will eat grass like cattle. Seven times will pass by for you until you acknowledge that the Most High is sovereign over the kingdoms of men and gives them to anyone he wishes.' Immediately what had been said about Nebuchadnezzar was fulfilled. He was driven away from people and ate grass like cattle. His body was drenched with the dew of heaven until his hair grew like feathers of an eagle and his nails like the claws of a bird. 'At the end of that time, I, Nebuchadnezzar, raised my eyes toward heaven, and my sanity was restored. Then I praised the Most High; I honored and glorified him who lives forever.' "

Daniel 4:37 "Now, I, Nebuchadnezzar, praise and exalt and glorify the king of heaven, because everything he does is right and all his ways are just. And those who walk in pride he is able to humble."

Philippians 2:3-8 "Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, by taking the very

¹ All scripture listed is NIV unless otherwise indicated

nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!"

OBSERVATION

Our present culture is bombarded by people wanting to take selfies because they are in a popularity contest with everyone else to get the most "likes". Their self-centeredness and pride is crowding out other people and God, too. Our story today is about Daniel who is living in exile in Babylon under the power of King Nebuchadnezzar. The king is a prideful man who begins to have dreams he doesn't understand. God gives Daniel interpretations of those dreams which are very disturbing to the king because they predict his loss of the kingdom and seven years of living like an animal and eating grass before the he acknowledges God's authority over his life. He didn't understand that pride is a prison that shuts us in and shuts God and others out.

Question: Why would you continue to let your pride kill everything that is valuable to you?

APPLICATION

Because pride diminishes us, we need to learn how to recognize it in ourselves and then how to kill it. We need to admit, acknowledge, and apologize because pride crowds out other people and has the potential of crowding God out as well. Pride convinces us that we are the center of our universe.

Question: Specifically, how much longer do you plan to let pride crowd God and others out?

Some symptoms that should alert us to the presence of pride in our lives are:

- We don't celebrate other people's successes;
- We don't initiate apologies when we know we are wrong;
- We continue to argue our point after we realize that we don't have a good one;
- We don't admit weakness, or loss, or when we need help or are wrong;
- We cheat before we allow ourselves to lose;
- We lie about and exaggerate our pasts;
- We buy things to impress others;

PRIDE - yikes! It hurts our hearts and drops us to our knees when we recognize it in ourselves. It is the ugly thing inside of us which we can see in others, but not in ourselves.

Question: How does pride manifest itself in you?

We often rationalize pride in our lives and call it something else, such as, confidence, or intellect, or fashion, or a commitment to excellence.

Question: What is pride masquerading like in your life?

Question: Why would you continue to embrace and follow something that has the potential to kill you?

As we become aware of the manifestations of pride in us, we need to go to our knees in prayer and ask forgiveness and direction from God.

Question: Why would you not embrace God's radical approach to humility? Do it by recognizing pride, rooting it out, and submitting to Jesus.

Question: When will you be willing to ask someone you love about the pride in your life and how it feels to be on the other side of you?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, help us to recognize the pride in our lives. We don't want to continue to hurt other people by the dishonesty pride causes in our relationships and we want to be obedient to You in all things. You are the Most High God, the King of Kings and Your kingdom endures from generation to generation. We want to come before you on our knees and ask forgiveness. Thank you that You hear and will extend to us Your mercy and grace. In Jesus' Name. Amen.