

Behold Our God
Stealing God's Glory

July 3rd, 2011

Text - Isaiah 13-23

Scripture Reading - Luke 18:9-14

If you were to trace every sin ever committed back to its root, a strong argument could be made that what you'll find in every case is pride.

- When we sin, we go against God and His commands. We go our way instead of His way.
- Whether we're conscious of it or not, what often underlies our rebellion is pride. We believe that we know better than God what's best for us and so we go our way instead of His.
 - o Stealing a cookie
 - o Gossiping about someone
 - o Not sharing our faith with our friends

God hates pride and will not allow it to go unchecked or unpunished.

- **Proverbs 8:13 (ESV)**
¹³ ...Pride and arrogance and the way of evil and perverted speech I hate.
- **Luke 18:14 (ESV)**
¹⁴ ...For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted."

Pride is our problem.

- Pride was Judah's problem during Uzziah's reign.
 - o Assumed that God would continue to bless them, regardless of whether or not they followed His commands, simply because they were His chosen people and were more faithful than their sinful brother Israel.
- Pride was Judah's problem during Ahaz's reign.
 - o Completely abandoned God and His ways for the ways of the idolatrous nations around them.
- Pride was the problem of Judah's enemies.
 - o Which we'll see today.
- And pride is our problem today.

Today we'll take a closer look at the problem of pride in Isaiah and in ourselves and talk about what we can do to solve it.

In chapters 13-23 Isaiah pronounces a series of oracles, most of which are oracles of judgment, against Judah's enemies both present and future. At the root of God's judgment on these nations is their pride.

- **Isaiah 16:6-7 (ESV) - Moab**

⁶We have heard of the pride of Moab— how proud he is!— of his arrogance, his pride, and his insolence; in his idle boasting he is not right. ⁷Therefore let Moab wail for Moab, let everyone wail. (They will) Mourn, (and be) utterly stricken,...

- **Isaiah 23:1-9 (ESV) - Tyre**

¹The oracle concerning Tyre. Wail, O ships of Tarshish, for Tyre is laid waste, without house or harbor!...⁸Who has purposed this against Tyre, the bestower of crowns, whose merchants were princes, whose traders were the honored of the earth? ⁹The Lord of hosts has purposed it, to defile the pompous pride of all glory, to dishonor all the honored of the earth.

- **Isaiah 13:11 (ESV) - Babylon and the world**

¹¹I will punish the world for its evil, and the wicked for their iniquity; I will put an end to the pomp of the arrogant, and lay low the pompous pride of the ruthless.

The reason God hates pride and will not allow it to go unchecked or unpunished is that it is stealing His glory.

If God were a bank full of riches the thing He would keep in His safest, strongest, most impenetrable vault, would be His glory.

- **Isaiah 48:9-11 (ESV) - To Israel (His rebellious chosen people)**

⁹"For my name's sake I defer my anger, for the sake of my praise I restrain it for you, that I may not cut you off. ¹⁰Behold, I have refined you, but not as silver; I have tried you in the furnace of affliction. ¹¹For my own sake, for my own sake, I do it, for how should my name be profaned? My glory I will not give to another.

God is jealous for His glory and that's why He especially loathes the glory stealing sins of idolatry and pride.

- Idolatry steals glory from God by giving credit to false gods for something God has done.
 - o Uzziah – Credited both God and gods
 - o Ahaz – Credited only gods
 - o Idols today – in both senses
- Pride steals glory from God by taking *personal credit* for something God has done.

We're typically not proud of our weaknesses and failures.

- Unless they're a fool trying to get attention, you don't usually hear a student boasting about the F they got in science or the hour they spent in detention.
- It is a rare and sick parent who is proud of yelling at their kids or failing to provide for their needs.
- And it is a very rare politician who highlights the promises they didn't keep or the legislation they were unable to pass.

What we typically *are* proud of are our strengths and our successes.

- Whether outwardly or inwardly our chests tend to swell when we think about: our beauty, our speed, our intellect, our popularity, our technological savvy, our wisdom, our discernment, or our dedication to God.
- They also tend to swell when we think about: the A we got on our English paper, the winning goal we scored in our soccer game, the three books we read from cover to cover last month, the house we are able to keep perfectly clean despite having three kids and busy life, the promotion we landed, the 10 pounds we lost, the conflict we were able to solve, the hour we spent praying, or the person we led to the Lord.

Now it's not that God doesn't want us to feel good about ourselves or our accomplishments. I most definitely think that He does. *It's simply that He wants us to give credit where credit is due.*

- **James 1:17 (NIV)**
¹⁷ Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows.
- **John 3:27 (ESV)**
²⁷ John answered, "A person cannot receive even one thing unless it is given him from heaven.

- **1 Corinthians 4:7 (ESV)**

⁷ ...What do you have that you did not receive? If then you received it, why do you boast as if you did not receive it?

- **Romans 12:3 (NIV)**

³ ...Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

When we look at our strengths and our successes as OUR strengths and OUR successes rather than gifts that have been given to us by God, we become prideful and we steal God's glory. We see two great examples of this glory stealing in Assyria and in King Herod. Assyria took personal credit for their military success and Herod took personal credit for his oratory strength. As we'll see, both of them should have given credit to God.

- **Isaiah 10:5-16 (ESV) - Assyria's success**

⁵ Ah, Assyria, the rod of my anger; the staff in their hands is my fury! ⁶ Against a godless nation I send him, and against the people of my wrath I command him, to take spoil and seize plunder, and to tread them down like the mire of the streets...¹² When the Lord has finished all his work on Mount Zion and on Jerusalem, he will punish the speech of the arrogant heart of the king of Assyria and the boastful look in his eyes. ¹³ For he says: "By the strength of my hand I have done it, and by my wisdom, for I have understanding; I remove the boundaries of peoples, and plunder their treasures; like a bull I bring down those who sit on thrones. ¹⁴ My hand has found like a nest the wealth of the peoples; and as one gathers eggs that have been forsaken, so I have gathered all the earth; and there was none that moved a wing or opened the mouth or chirped." ¹⁵ Shall the axe boast over him who hews with it, or the saw magnify itself against him who wields it? As if a rod should wield him who lifts it, or as if a staff should lift him who is not wood! ¹⁶ Therefore the Lord God of hosts will send wasting sickness among his stout warriors, and under his glory a burning will be kindled, like the burning of fire.

- **Acts 12:20-23 (ESV) - Herod's strength**

²⁰ Now Herod was angry with the people of Tyre and Sidon, and they came to him with one accord, and having persuaded Blastus, the king's chamberlain, they asked for peace,

because their country depended on the king's country for food. ²¹ On an appointed day Herod put on his royal robes, took his seat upon the throne, and delivered an oration to them. ²² And the people were shouting, "The voice of a god, and not of a man!" ²³ Immediately an angel of the Lord struck him down, because he did not give God the glory, and he was eaten by worms and breathed his last.

What can we do to keep our pride in check and to avoid stealing God's glory?

- Embrace the truth that every good gift comes from above and give credit where credit is due.
- Ask God to reveal the pockets of pride we have in our lives and repent of them.
- Spend lots of time looking at Jesus, the ultimate example of God-glorifying humility.
 - o Jesus was about one thing, His Father's glory.
 - o Jesus was the most humble man who ever lived and we are called to follow in His footsteps.

- **Mark 10:42-45 (ESV)**

⁴² And Jesus called them to him and said to them, "You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. ⁴³ But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, ⁴⁴ and whoever would be first among you must be slave of all. ⁴⁵ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."

- **Philippians 2:5-8 (ESV)**

⁵ Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, ⁸ he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Communion - Tie in baptism

Prayer Team =