

## Upon this Rock Week 2

Good morning. You can go ahead and turn in your Bibles to 1 Peter 5:6-11. More often than not, for our sermons, we will preach through a book of the Bible or look at what the Bible has to say about a particular topic, but for this series we are digging into just 6 verses in the book of 1 Peter, the ones you just heard on the video.

The reason, as we discussed last week, is that we live in a time and place that is generally speaking, unwell. We have all sorts of glaring issues in our mental, spiritual, emotional, and relational health. We need a rock to stand on to have any sort of hope at being mature, joy-filled, Christians, and these verses in 1 Peter 5 function as beautiful, practical instruction for some of the ways we can build our lives on the rock that is Jesus.

One of our hopes for this series is that many of us would actually memorize these verses, that they would stick with us long after we finish our study, so although we just heard the passage I'd like to read it again.

### 1 Peter 5:6-11

**6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,** **7** casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you. **8** Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. **9** Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same kinds of suffering are being experienced by your brotherhood throughout the world. **10** And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, confirm, strengthen, and establish you. **11** To him be the dominion forever and ever. Amen.

Today we are covering the first statement: ***6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,***

This verse is an example of a dichotomy we see in Scripture that I would summarize as **Breakdown vs. Blessing**. There are examples through the Old Testament as God speaks with the people of Israel and He says, "down this road you will find life and flourishing and wholeness". Blessing. Now I don't know what kind of church traditions you may be familiar with, but when I say "blessing" I don't want anyone to misinterpret me. I don't mean blessings like mansions and benz's and that you always find a parking spot up front at every store you drive to. When I say blessing I mean you will be operating in God's intended design. Therefore you will have a much better chance of experiencing the delight and wholeness and peace of God as you walk in relationship with him.

And then God says "if you do not choose the path of blessing but instead go down the other path, the other road, that road will lead to brokenness, despair and pain." blessing vs Breakdown.

And of course when I phrase it that way it sounds very simple. Behind door number 1 is joy and happiness and giggles for the rest of your life and behind door number 2 is sorrow and weeping and gnashing of teeth. There's not a lot to think about really. Unfortunately it's not quite that simple.

Our scripture for today gives us an example of this dichotomy between blessing and breakdown, and it does so in the form of pride and humility. In order to see it fully let's back up to the verses that come just before our verses for this series.

Peter starts chapter 5 by talking to the elders of a local church, instructing on how they are to lead

the church family they are entrusted with.

Then he speaks to everyone and says this in vs 5: Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble."

So I'd like to do some defining to make sure we're talking about the same thing here. The other day during our family devotion we read something about pride being a sin and my daughter was shocked. She said "Wait, Daddy, how is pride a bad thing? You tell me you are proud of me all the time?!" and she was like, mad about it. "Wait!" Giving me all kinds of pre-teen attitude about it.

### **Humility -**

Humility is an accurate view of reality. God is up there and I am down here. God is big and I am small. God is eternal creator and I am created. God is infinite, I am finite. God is all knowing, I have limited knowledge.

Humility is complete dependence on God that brings right relationship with God, and is the emptying of ourselves so that God can fill us with His power and goodness. This is the root of every other virtue because it allows the Holy Spirit to fill us and be our love, hope, peace, patience, etc. Humility is not just a virtue, but the root of all virtues: it takes the right attitude before God and allows Him, as God, to do all. It allows God to work. It is not something that we bring to God, but a sense that comes over us when we see how big God is.

### **Pride-**

Pride is essentially humility's inverse. Now it's a little more confusing because we use the word pride in different ways, and Scripture does as well. The bible has examples of using pride in a positive way, such as taking pride in a job well done (Galatians 6:4) or the pride we express over the accomplishments of others (2 Cor 7:4) which of course is how I use it with my kids "im proud of you". Here the Greek word translated "the proud" is obviously not talking about those situations, but literally means "showing oneself above others" or considering oneself "pre-eminent."

Cj mahaney says pride is contending with God for supremacy. Without humility and with pride, we are stiff-arming God and pushing him out.

### **Psalm 10:4**

In his pride the wicked does not seek him; in all his thoughts there is no room for God.

Promotion of self and inflating me, that squeezes out God and others.

It says, I wanna be admired, enjoyed, noticed, thought highly of, honored, celebrated, appreciated, esteemed, praised. The problem is, that's God's place. To receive those things. Pride is hijacking them. God and pride are in competition because they want the same thing.

**Cs Lewis** - "The problem is, when you come up against God, you come up against a being in which you are entirely inferior in every regard. Your pride demands that you have nothing to do with him. As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people: and of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you."

Pride is acting like you don't share a universe with God. Even if you are the best thing out...you live in a universe with a God who is infinitely greater than you.

### **Job 25:2-6**

2"“Dominion and awe belong to God; he establishes order in the heights of heaven. Can his forces be numbered? On whom does his light not rise? How then can a mortal be righteous before God? How

can one born of woman be pure? If even the moon is not bright and the stars are not pure in his eyes, how much less a mortal, who is but a maggot— a human being, who is only a worm!”  
At our old house downtown, it was over 100 years old. So basically we were the guests and the cockroaches were the long-time homeowners.

Imagine, I come home from work to pick Courtney up for a date. She's all dressed up to go out... And beside her stands a cockroach, posing as though trying to outdo her in appearance. The distance between us and cockroaches is less than the distance between us and God. We're both created things, God is not.

**John Calvin** said “the greatest stench in the nostrils of God, is our pride. That we, the clay, would vain to instruct the Potter, are prone to go our own way, or replace the Potter with gods of our own choosing.”

And here Peter tells us if you go in the direction of pride, God himself opposes you. If you want to place yourself in the ring from God, this is all you have to do. But God gives grace to the humble. This is true, specifically with our salvation. Pride causes us to rebel against God, push God away, push God out. Repentance is turning from that prideful rebellion, humbling ourselves, and trusting in Christ for salvation. And in that humility we receive God's grace.

It's also true generally... that humility takes us down the path of blessing and pride takes us down the path of breakdown. Even if you are able to find success in some ways, pride will produce destruction spiritually, relationally, mentally. Because that's not the way God designed humans to work. It's like a car running off of Pepsi. It just doesn't work.

The irony of pride is that in the process of trying to elevate ourselves, we end up destroying ourselves. In trying to become God we make ourselves less human. Less whole. Going back to last week, we talked about the general state of unwellness in our culture, the myriad of ways we're just not doing well as a society. So many of those things can be traced back to this. Just like Adam and Eve, we step out of the design God has for us, step into roles never meant for us, go in the direction of pride, and all it leads to is breakdown and really depressing stats.

God wants to lead us up to the rock that is higher than us, but the way up there is through humility. Through humbling yourself before the mighty hand of God. That's the way he exalts you to what you were supposed to be. A son or daughter of the most high God. A joy-filled image bearer covered in grace and blessing no matter what difficulties your life may bring.

### **Transition**

So that's the framework for today. Pride leads to breakdown of all kinds, and humility leads to spiritual blessing of all kinds. In order to build our lives on the rock of Jesus we are going to need to first and foremost evaluate our lives and humble ourselves before him, forsaking any area of pride, and through that process God will exalt us, raise us up to the high secure place we are meant to stand with him.

For the rest of our time today, I want to quickly highlight some possible sources of pride that might need to be dealt with in our lives. It can be difficult to diagnose because pride tends to be very easy to see in other people but incredibly difficult to see in ourselves.

**C.S. Lewis** says “pride is a vice that no man is free of, that we all despise when we see it in other people, and that no one thinks they themselves are guilty. No fault makes a man more unpopular and there is no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves.”

It's tricky because pride can lead one person to break all the rules and say "im superior to you, I don't need any rules", and another person to obey all the rules and say "im superior to you, look how I obey all the rules"

So I picked 5 different ways that pride can show up in our lives that are overtly and obviously leading to breakdown.

### **1) The pride of having to be right**

Here's a question I would ask you. When is the last time, in an important relationship in your life, you have said the words "I'm sorry, I was wrong"? Now, what is the distance between the last time you said that and the last time you were wrong?

Maybe even though you are a Christian it's been a while since you've expressed that sentiment to God, and now there's stuff there that's unresolved and hindering you spiritually. Maybe it's been even longer since you've admitted fault in your marriage, and the other person is bearing up under the weight of your inability to admit fault, trying not to grow resentful, unsuccessfully. Maybe there is unnecessary distance between a friend or coworker or even a child because you just won't own your mistakes. Bare minimum it makes you very difficult to be around.

In our membership covenant as a church, we have a line that says I expect to receive correction from others in my church family when they see sin or issues in my life, and can I just say that some of you don't make that an easy thing for others to do for you. Because you don't welcome correction, you make it difficult for them. You always have a deflection, a response, an excuse, and now people are just timid and uneasy around you.

Are you ready for a quote you're gonna hate?

**Puritan Jeremiah Burroughs** says...

"You know how, when you strike something soft it makes no noise, but if you strike a hard thing it makes a noise; so with the hearts of men who are full of themselves, and hardened with self-love, if they receive a stroke they make a noise, but a self-denying Christian yields to God's hand, and makes no noise."

One of the heartbreaking ways this plays out is that when you always have to be right you by nature elevate yourself, raise yourself in authority above others, and what this most effectively accomplishes is simply distance between you and others. You get what you set out for but then one day realize you don't want that at all.

God does not want breakdown and relational distance for you. He wants relational wholeness with him and others. He wants your relationships to flourish and mature and bring joy to you. Humility is the path to that blessing.

Depending on your level of courage, here is a question to ask a close friend or spouse. "Do you ever withhold negative feedback from me for fear of how I will react? And are you afraid of how I will react to your answer to this question?"

### **2) The pride of impression management.**

Where I'm always trying to manage the way people perceive me. I'm always thinking 'how do I look, how do I sound, what are people thinking of me? I tend to replay in my mind how I did, what I said, how I am coming across to others, etc. I am very concerned about what people think of me.

I might say "I often feel insecure.' Or I might not want to try new things or step out into uncomfortable situations because I'm afraid I'll fail or look foolish. I am easily embarrassed."

There are a thousand different ways this could look. This could revolve around the clothes you wear, the vehicle you drive, the furniture you own, the company you work for, the amount of money you earn, the food you eat, what you look like, where you went to school. I have no idea what this may look like for you, because I don't live your life.

The other day I heard about a dad telling his high school aged children, "High school is a game that you should not care to win." And I was like, oh that's so true. Being 20 years from high school, I can look back now and see that any peer pressures and the people I wanted to impress...it turned out to not be important to my life at all...but all that was very hard to see in high school. And it makes me think that many of us have our own version of "high school" now where we really care to impress others in some way and can't see that it's a game we shouldn't care to win.

We all tend to have our own circles that we do this with. It's not universal. You might come with me to a function that is important to me, with people I want to impress and all you're thinking is "who cares what these dweebs think?" But then you have your own circle.

It's important to realize the reason why we do this. When thinking through the lens of this passage, it makes sense: these are ways we seek to be exalted, lifted up, thought highly of by others. It's an offshoot of idolatry: looking for the exaltation we can only find in God in lesser ways.

It's a straight line from the pride of impression management to breakdown and a miserable existence. Because you are always hustling and posturing and pretending and trying to play a role and constantly over evaluating what other people think of you.

You know the truth right? We all tend to assume other people are thinking about us way more than they actually are.

There is actually a psychological term for it now. The spotlight effect bias. The psychological phenomenon by which people tend to believe they are being noticed more than they really are. You think there is a spotlight on you and everyone is watching. They aren't.

The truth is, other people don't sit around and think about you. Other people don't think about you that much at all! As my good friend says, "The only people thinking about you are God and your mom." That's it.

The call to "humble yourself before God" is a wonderful antidote to prostrating yourself in front of other people, hoping you can gain something by their approving nods. The gospel frees us to have our view of God and his importance be so huge that all of these other things just start to feel small, insignificant. If the approval of others is gained, then fine, but it's not needed whatsoever, and it's seen for the small thing it is. That's the path of blessing.

### **3) The pride of self-pity**

This one may not feel intuitive but hear me out. By self-pity I don't mean appropriate and honest reckoning of difficulty or suffering in your life and processing that grief. That's part of being a healthy human. But self-pity can cause us to be consumed with the particular difficulties of our lives.

Where you take on a victim mentality, consumed by how you perceive you've been treated by God or others. You tend to feel mistreated and aggrieved. You seldom recognize or sympathize with what's going on with others around you because you feel you have it worse than they do.

Maybe this comes out in the phrase "must be nice." Must be nice... to have a job like that. A house

like that. A body like that. A spouse like that. A family like that. Kids like that. Got a bunch of hooligans at my house and there are your kids sitting all quiet with manners.

Self-pity, at its core, is a protest against the particular life and circumstances and gifts God has given you. And drawn to its logical conclusion, ultimately it's often a protest against God himself. The one who gave you or didn't give you that reality that causes you to pity yourself.

It's a protest that is lonely, sad, and isolating. Whereas healthy processing of grief leads to resolution and acceptance and some measure of peace, self-pity causes you to get stuck. Because being consumed with yourself, even in this form, leads to breakdown and despair and moping, never to joy and freedom and peace.

This can also show up as what people sometimes call low self-esteem, which sounds humble on first glance but is actually that you inflate yourself so much that God's voice has no room. When he says, "You are valuable because you are made in my image and the death of my son for you has given you identity and value." You don't hear him or you don't believe him because you are so consumed with yourself and what you don't like about you.

God wants to raise you up. He wants health and wholeness and joy for you, so he calls you out of self-pity. Humbling yourself before God can look like accepting the life he's given you in this radically imperfect world as a gift. Accepting your life, your body, your marriage, your job, with all their warts, as a profound blessing, none of which are deserved or demanded. And the great irony is that the act of humble submission and gratitude is what leads you up out of the pit—it is what leads you to enjoy the only life you have.

#### **4) The pride of self-sufficiency**

Last week we reference Psalm 61 where David says "**Lead me to the rock that is higher than I**, for you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the enemy.

Inherent in building a life on Christ as our rock and being healthy spiritually is the idea that there is a rock higher than us. That we need a refuge and a tower to protect us from the enemy. That we need God's help and won't reach our desired state without it.

We also talked about the quote "Modern man believes in no such rock" as the spirit of our age. We live and move in a place that defaults to a belief that this rock doesn't even exist, so why would we need help getting there?

Pride, in whatever form it takes, will work itself out in self-sufficiency, where you approach your life, practically speaking, as if you don't need God's help.

The other day, my youngest did something and it made me laugh. He brought me something that he needed help with, and then literally 2 seconds after he handed it to me he said "Nevermind I got it, I got it." And he tried to yank the thing back out of my hand, even though he totally couldn't do it, and that reminds me a bit of what we do with God.

"God I need your help with this..." we might pray, and then our actions say "Nevermind, I got it, I got it." And while my intention for my son is to train him in such a way that one day he won't need my help with certain things, with God we never graduate past needing him.

Maturing in the Christian life is a process where we realize we need God more, not less. We realize that the cross must be bigger than we previously thought, because we are more sinful than we used to realize. We need the righteousness of Christ to cover sin that we didn't even see back when we trusted in Christ. We need his help in ways we didn't realize.

The reality is every single breath you and I take is dependent upon God sustaining our heartbeats, our bodies functioning. This is gonna sound corny but you wouldn't be wrong to wake up every morning and say "no way! God did it again! He woke me up. I had no ability to ensure I would wake up, but he did again! We have agency and delegated authority as humans, but we don't have the strength, wisdom, and ability to manage our lives on our own.

We are not self sufficient. But When you don't ask God for the help you need from him, you don't get the supernatural help of God in your life that would enliven and strengthen you in the ways you need it. You don't get him exalting you to the place of a Spirit-helped, Spirit-empowered human.

We also need help from others, and self-sufficiency keeps us from getting that help, and self-sufficiency keeps us from getting the help we need from community as well. So you don't end up getting the help God has empowered others to give you.

Self-sufficiency leads to breakdown, but humility leads to prayer and dependence on God in increasing amounts, which leads to our joy and peace because we are attuned and connected to the most loving, joyous, and powerful being in the universe. His power, joy and peace become ours in a way as they work through us.

I don't know what the particular outworkings of pride in your life might be. I don't even know what all of them are in me, I'm still learning. But my hope is that you and I would come to a place where we see that God contends with our pride not because he is against us, but because he is for us so very much. He has lofty intentions for you and I, and he's opposed to anything that stands in the way.

Ok so as we have some time to respond...

My hope for us is that we would ask God to expose any areas of pride in our lives. That we would have a renewed sense of urgency about this, see what breakdown it is causing in our spiritual health, our mental health, our emotional health, our relational health. And that we would ask him to forgive us, root it out of our hearts, and confess it to others this week.

My hope is that we all would do exactly what our verse for the day says:

***6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,***

As counterintuitive as it may seem, the path to joy is not through finding yourself but losing yourself. Not through exalting yourself, but through humbling yourself. This is where you will find the glory and exaltation your soul was designed for.

Identify any of this cancer lurking in you and rid yourself of it, confess it—place it under the mighty hand of God as soon as you can. Because assumedly, the quicker you lay it down the quicker you may find yourself raised up to where you wanted to be all along.

**Pray. Communion.**