

DEEP SIX STUDY

February 28th, 2021

Jesus in the Letters – “Corinthians: A Study in Pride”

MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS (You can view the full message on Facebook or at live.capecodchurch.com/live)

Opening: Our Jesus in the Letters series hits the halfway point this week with a look at Paul’s two letters to the church he planted in Corinth. The Corinthian church was Paul’s pride and joy – and the one church he had the most worries from; it was a mess. The source of the mess, in a word, was their *pride*.

1. What We Take Pride In Reveals Where We Think Greatness Comes From (1 Corinthians 4:6b)

- Over and over as he addresses the various issues arising in the Corinthian church, Paul comes back to their problem of pride. Of the 37 times the Greek word for pride (“puffed up”) is used in the New Testament, 26 of those are in Paul’s letters to the Corinthian church.
- Paul sees the dysfunctional pride of the Corinthians as a manifestation of a deeper flaw in what they believe to be true – that they weren’t “paying attention” when he taught them about Jesus.
- Pride isn’t, of itself, a bad thing – but it always points to what we really believe to be true about ourselves. It also reveals what matters to us, so how we react when our pride is threatened clearly tells us what it is about ourselves that we really put the greatest amount of value and faith in.

2. Pride Becomes Ugly When It’s Misplaced (1 Corinthians 4:7)

- Paul tells the Corinthians that misplaced, ugly, “puffed up” pride – in their achievement, in their allegiances, in their wisdom, even in their freedom – is, in effect, killing them.
- Misplaced pride is ugly because it forgets where our wisdom, talents, wealth, etc. come from. The worst sin of misplaced pride is to forget our relationship to God: that “He’s God, and I’m not.”
- If we invest everything we value about ourselves in self-pride, a catastrophic emptiness results when the thing(s) that gave us pride are taken away. Loss of misplaced pride leads to desperation.

3. God Offers Us Greatness in Jesus (1 Corinthians 1:30-31)

- Paul gives us (proudful humans) the Good News: at the end of our misplaced, ugly pride, God wants to give us purity, holiness, and freedom in Christ. And that’s something to boast about!
- When we finally realize that everything we are and have comes from God, and that our true worth is only found in a relationship with God through the grace offered by Jesus, it frees us from having to live up to our own (and others’) expectations. It frees us from our pride!
- When we shift from chasing pride in ourselves to taking pride *only* in our relationship and standing with God, three good things happen:
 - a. It frees us from always needing to perform to feed our pride.
 - b. It changes our measurement of greatness – making Jesus the only standard.
 - c. It changes how we see and judge others – those who carry the image of God.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

These passages may provide additional insights related to the subject of this week's message. Verses from NLT unless otherwise noted.

Proverbs 11:2; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Luke 18:9-14; 1 Corinthians 13:4-5; 2 Corinthians 10:17-18

Videos of the Week: [1 Corinthians](#) and [2 Corinthians](#) by the Bible Project

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. We're all proud of something – our kids, our careers, our country, etc. In general, do you think pride is a good thing or a bad thing?
2. When and how does pride become “dysfunctional”?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 4:7 again. Paul points out in one verse the two errors of pride: judging others as “less than,” and judging ourselves as “greater than.” How does recognizing our proper place in relationship to God fix both those errors??
4. Which would you say is the greater sin in the eyes of God: thinking too much of myself, or thinking too little of others? Explain your answer.
5. Read 1 Corinthians 1:30-31 again. How do we overcome the temptation to boast about *ourselves* (our faith, our “rightness,” our standing with God, etc.) when we “boast only about the LORD”?
6. We all struggle with misplaced pride. What are some practical ways we can work to “shift from chasing pride in ourselves to taking pride only in our relationship with God”?