

Royal Kingdom

THE YEAR OF THE BIBLE

Sermon 4: How to Win Big and Lose Famously

1 Kings 3–11; Ecclesiastes 12

Dr. Matt Cassidy --- June 21, 2020

Well, good morning, Grace! And Happy Father's Day. I've got my Father's Day ugly tie on, brought to me by my family. I like this one particularly--you want to cut to the close-up there? It's a dad grilling. I think this one is especially handsome. Yeah. So, I'll be working on how to get them back. I'll tell you more about that later on.

Hey, I wanted to give you an update on a regathering plan. So, we're going to get back together in the auditorium. We'll take a shot at that on July 12th. There are a number of reasons, many reasons, why we can't get right on it right away. A couple of them that I want to mention to you is that we're making a pretty big switch from audio recording to video recording and there are a lot of wires being run and cables being laid out and rooms being converted. And it takes some time. Because even when we come back on July 12th, the largest portion of our audience, maybe eighty percent of our congregation, still will not be meeting here, because of the various rules. And so, we're making the audiovisual broadcast live, and as professional and nice as possible. We're working on that part.

The other thing that we're working on is that we're having to completely redo our volunteer ministry because people have been gone and we've had a change of season. So, we need a whole new set of volunteers that can come back on the 12th in hospitality. In our kids' ministry, certainly—that's in August. And then in the tech industry, in the tech part of this church we will need people to sign up for that as well. If you'll go online and you want to volunteer that way, we'd love for you to join us in this new capacity.

I wanted to let you know that next Sunday night from 7:00-8:00 o'clock, June 28th, we're going to have a night worship. If you feel comfortable coming and worshipping--because we'll be able to do that outside, weather permitting--we'd love you to join us. Bring your friends. We'll give you more details as the week progresses. Check our website. And we'll be sending out e-mails as well.

Finally, my last announcement is that I wanted to thank you for being such a generous church. We are in a place of financial health right now. And because of that, we're passing this down to as many ministries as we see are having a need, especially in this unique time that we're involved in. One, we've given another check to ADRN, Austin Disaster Relief Network, as they prepare for hurricane season. And also, as the COVID virus has affected all parts of Austin, east and west, this ministry touches people in so many different ways, emotionally and spiritually and financially. Central Texas Food Bank—we've given another check to them. We were able to move some of our benevolence money over to Mission Possible, an east Austin ministry that is multidimensional. And then I'm especially excited about a large gift we gave, twenty thousand dollars, to The God of Hope ministry. It's a prison ministry. And because of that gift, they were able to take on a new position, a women's director for The God of Hope prison ministry. So, Grace, thank you for doing that. We'll keep you posted on how we're able to share the generosity of our congregation as we go. Let me pray before we go into our learning time today.

Lord, we lift up grace and the Church, capital "C" Church, around the country and around the world; that we would see this as an opportunity to thrive, to bring Your name to the conversation, to bring Your righteousness and Your justice to places that are in desperate need of that. Lord, I'd ask that the Church would thrive; that Grace, where we've believed for fifty years that every believer is a minister, would look for and hear Your voice in places of ministry. It's thrilling to think that You have arranged good works in Jesus Christ for us to do before time began. You had this crazy virus in Your knowledge of things to come. And so, You have given us opportunities to do good works in the name of Jesus Christ. Lord, I'd ask that You would help us have a listening ear for that and the courage to implement what You have for us.

Lord, as we look at the passage today, I'd ask that You would open our hearts and souls to what Your word teaches us through the life of King Solomon; that we would be open and ready to hear Your voice in this man's life. We pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.

Well, today we're going to look at lessons to be learned from an exemplary life. As a matter of fact, this man is the poster boy for lessons learned. There's no person that you can learn more lessons from than King Solomon, maybe with the exception of Jesus. You don't learn bad lessons from Jesus, but you learn bad lessons from Solomon.

Part One: How to Win Big

Personally, the first time I read through this story forty years ago, it altered my entire life. And I'm still changed for it. I was profoundly influenced by him. Because I think if there was a book about Solomon written and it was an autobiography, for example, the title would be this: *How to Win Big and Lose Famously*, by King Solomon. *How to Win Big and Lose Famously*.

The first part of the book is about how to win big. The first day I read the introduction to the man Solomon—I think it's in 1 Kings chapter 3—I was jolted. I was startled by his self-awareness and his humility. When I read that original story and as it progressed, I found myself thinking, *This is him. This is the guy I'm going to look up to. This is the person I'm going to try to be like in the Bible*. Because I felt like when I saw the health of his soul, I thought, *I want that kind of deeply profound health*. And what I thought I would do is look at the first part of his life and find three deeply profound attributes of health.

1. Solomon Knows How to Wish

The first one is the deepest. It goes like this—make a wish. Think about this—really. Stop and pause. Make a wish—whatever you want—really. And whatever that wish is, it's going to tell a lot about the condition of your soul: what your values are, what your fears are. Because a wish is a dream for your soul.

And when Solomon—and let me just introduce him—Solomon is the son of the great King David. And in the context of this story, he has just inherited the throne. And he's new at this. He's the new king of Israel. And then he has a visitation, a vision, from YHWH himself. And this introduces the first attribute of a healthy soul.

1 Kings 3:5

At Gibeon YHWH appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, "Ask for whatever you want me to give you."

Solomon knows how to wish. Let me read it for you. "At Gibeon, YHWH appeared to Solomon during the night in a dream, and God said, 'Ask for whatever you want me to give

you.” There it is. Boom. YHWH God, the God of the universe, shows up in Solomon’s life and He gets out His checkbook, He has His pen in hand, and He says, *What do you want Solomon?—anything—it’s yours. Just tell me what to write here.*

1 Kings 3:7-9

“Now, YHWH my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a little child and do not know how to carry out my duties. ⁸ Your servant is here among the people You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. ⁹ So give Your servant a discerning heart to govern Your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of Yours?”

This is a very unusual story. It’s unique to Solomon. God does not do this in any other part of the Bible. And this is what Solomon asks for, verses 7 through 9: “ ‘Now, YHWH my God, You have made Your servant king in place of my father David. But I am only a child . . . ’ ” He’s twenty to twenty-five years old. “ ‘ . . . and do not know how to carry out my duties. Your servant is here among the people that You have chosen, a great people, too numerous to count or number. So . . . ’ ”—here it is— “ ‘give Your servant a discerning heart to govern Your people and to distinguish between right and wrong. For who is able to govern this great people of Yours?’ ”

Look at this prayer. I mean, first of all, he understands the sovereignty of YHWH God. He said, “You have placed me in David’s place. You have put me in charge.”

Second, he has this amazing self-evaluation. It’s accurate and it’s humble. He says, “I am just a child and I am unable to do what this job requires of me.”

And then third, what I love is the personal pronouns in this. “These are your people, these are your great people. How am I to govern them?” He doesn’t say “my people”, he doesn’t say “this is my kingdom”, “this is my company”, “this is my house.” He understands that God has delegated His authority and it’s just on loan. It’s just been given to Solomon as a gift and Solomon is going to give back to God in how he expresses that authority. It’s amazing. Anything you want. Really? Anything?

And this is what Solomon asks for. He says, *I just want to serve You and Your people with righteousness and justice.* I heard that answer and I thought, *I want to be able to have a wish like that. I want to hope like he hopes.*

How do you think God responds to this? You tell me. I mean, what if you went to your child and he or she is fifteen years old and you go to them and you say, “I want to give you for your sixteenth birthday anything you want. You name it, honey, and I’ll make this happen.”

And then she says this: “You know, if my freshman year has taught me anything, it’s that I’m not ready. I don’t have the wisdom to make value decisions. I don’t know what I’m supposed to accept in my life that will never change or if I have the courage to change the things that I can change. Here’s what I really want; if you could do this, here’s what I really want. I just want to go wherever God says to go. I just want to do whatever God says to do. I just want Him to be pleased with my life, whatever it costs me. I mean, if you can do that, I would love that.”

If your daughter said that, you would say, “I thought you were going to say ‘a car.’ So, I’m going to give you a car and I’m going to give you all that wisdom and courage you asked for.” That’s what God says.

1 Kings 3:10-15a

The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. ¹¹ So God said to him, “Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, ¹² I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.

¹³ Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both riches and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kinds. ¹⁴ And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.”

¹⁵ Then Solomon awoke—and he realized it had been a dream.

Look what He says. “The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, ‘Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment and administering justice, I will do what you

have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be.

“Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for—both riches and honor—so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in my ways and obey the statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life.’

“And then Solomon awoke—and he realized he was in a dream.”

That’s a great wish. That’s a sign of a healthy heart. That’s someone to look up to.

2. Solomon’s Generous Worship

1 Kings 3:15b

He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord’s covenant and sacrificed burnt offerings and fellowship offerings. Then he gave a feast for all his court.

The second attribute of a healthy heart is that he is generous in his worship. Right after that the sentence continues: “He returned to Jerusalem, stood before the ark of the Lord’s covenant and sacrificed burnt offerings there and fellowship offerings. Then he gave a feast for all his court.” And this is just one of many examples that are part of his life where he is extravagant and generous in his worship. Solomon is famous for this. He knows how to worship in his generosity, with generosity.

As the story continues in chapters 5 through 10, what happens is that God does bless him with wisdom and peace and prosperity. And in the storyline of God’s redemption of mankind, this is the high point in Israeli history as far as it goes back from the Abrahamic promises that were made—the land, now they have a capital city, the palace has been completely rebuilt, and now Solomon builds this glorious temple.

3. Solomon Knows How to Pray

And that brings us to our third attribute, a healthy heart, a healthy soul. And that is Solomon—he knows how to pray. Now almost all of chapter 8 of 1 Kings—you should read this, because almost all of this is a prayer. And there is so much to be said here. But what I love about

this particular prayer that I want to draw attention to is he has such a heart for God. I mean, he just knows God. And so, he's praying these things because he knows that this is what's on God's heart. And one of the things that is on God's heart is the nations. God wants all the nations to know Him. That's been the plan all along.

1 Kings 8:41-43

As for the foreigner who does not belong to Your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of Your name—⁴²for they will hear of Your great name and Your mighty hand and Your outstretched arm—when they come and pray toward this temple, ⁴³then hear from heaven, Your dwelling place ... that all the peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears Your name.

And so, watch how he prays for this in verses 41 through 43, those verses: “ ‘And as for the foreigner who does not belong to Your people Israel but has come from a distant land because of Your name—for they will hear of Your great name and they're going to hear about Your mighty hand and Your outreached arm—when they come and pray toward this temple that we're dedicating today, then they will hear from heaven, Your dwelling place ... that all the peoples of the earth may know Your name and fear You, as do Your own people Israel, and may know that this house I have built bears Your name.’ ”

Solomon wants everyone to know about the name and the power and the promises and the love of YHWH God. And he builds that temple and he says, *I want this temple to be like a lighthouse for the entire world, for all the people.* Boom. There's a healthy soul. He knows how to wish, he knows how to worship, and he knows how to pray. And that's why I really looked up to him.

1 Kings 10:23-24

So King Solomon became greater than all the kings of the earth in riches and wisdom.²⁴ And all the earth was seeking the presence of Solomon, to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart.

Here's a summary of his life in chapter 10. It ends like this—this part of his life. It says, “So King Solomon became greater than all the kings of the earth in riches and in wisdom. And all the earth was seeking the presence of Solomon to hear his wisdom which God had put in his heart.”

There you go. And that's why my life was changed when I read about Solomon.

Part Two: How to Lose Famously

And then I kept reading. I kept reading and I was shocked and I became fearful, because the second part of his life is not only how to win big, but it's also how to lose famously. And what I was shocked about is how far he fell. And why I became fearful in reading about the other part of his life is that I thought, *If this can happen to Solomon, this can happen to anyone.*

And in my walk with God over the years, I have looked up to many men and many women that have fallen in ways that Solomon fell. And honestly, I don't look up much anymore.

And what's interesting about the fall of Solomon here is—and the people in my life that I've looked up to—they crashed on different lanes, but it was the same superhighway. And the highway is “Pride goes before a fall.” They might have expressed it in different ways, but it was always pride, just like it was in Solomon's life.

All Solomon had to do is just remember the words of Moses in Deuteronomy. Remember the theme of Deuteronomy was “YHWH is your loving father and you should be inspired by that love and just obey him. Obey his commandments.”

And what does that mean to King Solomon? Sure, the Ten Commandments and the other commandments that are in Deuteronomy, you bet. But in Deuteronomy, God writes just three laws for the kings that will come up eventually—three rules. They're pretty simple. All you have to do is follow the directions.

Deuteronomy 17:16-17

The king, moreover, must not acquire great numbers of horses for himself or make the people return to Egypt to get more of them, for YHWH has told you, “You are not to go back that way again.”¹⁷ He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray. He must not accumulate large amounts of silver or gold.

Here it is in Deuteronomy 17, verses 16 and 17: “The king, moreover, must not acquire a great number of horses for himself or make people return to Egypt to get them, for YHWH has told you, ‘You are not to go back that way again.’” Two: “He must not take many wives, or his heart will be led astray.” Three: “He must not accumulate large amounts of silver or gold.” That’s it.

And when you turn the pages of Solomon’s life and you get to part two where he loses famously, it’s like he’s going through the list. “Do not acquire many horses, especially from Egypt.” And so, Solomon does. And do you know why? Because he thinks he can. He acquires twelve hundred chariots and fourteen thousand horses from Egypt.

Then he goes down the list: “Do not take many wives, because they will lead your heart away.” That passion is going to ruin and destroy you. Solomon did. Do you know why? Because he thought he could. Seven hundred wives, three hundred concubines.

It says in Deuteronomy that you should not amass great amounts of silver and gold. And Solomon did. And do you know why? He thought he could. It says that silver was like common rocks in Jerusalem.

The point is this: the three laws were written in Deuteronomy because God knew that the kings would take authority and have that kind of power. And they were written so that the king would trust God for their protection and their power, that they would keep their hearts tender towards God only, and that they would know that God was their provider of wealth. The three rules that kings were to follow were to keep them humble before God. That was Solomon’s strength. And now he lost it. Solomon is above all those laws of humility. Solomon is the Überman. He doesn’t submit to the herd ethics. He’s risen above them.

PRIDE

But he doesn't. He can't. That's not the way the rules of God work. Pride comes before a fall. Pride is a special sin. It bends you.

Pride is not one sin among many, but really the root under all of them.

--- St. Augustine

Look what Augustine says about it. He says, "Pride is not one sin among many, but really the root under all of the sin—all of them." Pride is like a disgusting petri dish that is able to grow all kinds of sin out of it. There are a thousand expressions to pride. We see a proud politician and they literally write laws that they say don't apply to them. They write it into the laws. We get furious and vote them out of office and we vote for the guy who says, "I would never do that." And then he takes office and then he writes a law that says he doesn't have to apply that law. Is he just a liar? Yeah, but why? Why would he do that? Because of pride. Once he got that power, he didn't have to submit to the truth that he told earlier.

You'll see some kind of pastor that will teach for decades about purity and honesty before the holiness of God. He'll make a denominational law that says that you will never be alone with a member of the opposite sex. But it doesn't apply to him. And yeah, sure. He commits adultery. But the root of the sin is pride. He didn't think he had to submit to that rule, that law, that safeguard for him.

Pride is an endless circulation of ego. It is this constant "What about me?" And don't just be thinking of the heads-up pride that is out there and boastful and saying, *Yeah, look at me. I hope everybody appreciates all the stuff I'm doing.* There's also the pride that is the head-down pride that is just moping around, *Woe is me, I wish I were better than this or that* or whatever it might be. It's still just thinking about yourself all the time. That's the focus. It's this turning in on ourselves. And it destroys us. It will kill you. Pride will kill you.

And here's the worst part of pride. Here's the worst part. It's secret. It's invisible. You don't even see that it's happening in your life. The prouder you are, the more you think you're not proud. It's the carbon monoxide of sin. You go to bed and you don't wake up. You don't smell anything. By its very definition it destroys you from the inside out.

It would be great if there was a detector; some kind of detection device or something where you could see pride in your life, like a smoke alarm that's just for carbon monoxide, right? You know what—like a dashboard light. You guys know that on your car dashboard there are various light that are warning lights.



There's the check engine light. The check engine light means everything or nothing. It's either going to cost you thirty dollars or it's going to cost you three thousand dollars. True story—the check engine light is why the 3M engineers came up with the post-it note, so that you can just put it over that check engine light and just carry on.



Here's another dashboard light—it's low gas. It's the gasoline indicator, and that means, quick, get the car home, so dad will have to fill up the car when he's on the way to work tomorrow. That's what that means.



This one—this is the oil light. This is either low oil pressure or low oil levels, and that means that your car is having a heart attack—right now. Pull over. Stop. Don't turn it on until somebody tows you out of there.

That's what dashboard lights are for. They're to warn you about what's going on inside of your car.

“An Essay on Pride” by Jonathan Edwards

The reason that I bring that up is because Jonathan Edwards, the famous American scholar and pastor, wrote an essay called “An Essay on Pride.” And he gives five little dashboard lights and says, *Look, if any of these are on, it means you've got a pride issue.* I'm going to go over five of those for the sake of time, and I thought they were very insightful.

1. Fault-Finding

The first one is fault-finding. Pride has the ability to lessen the evils in your life. You look at your own frailties and you think, They're not that bad. And then pride gives you the ability to look at other people and see their frailties exaggerated. You see their faults magnified.

The eminently humble Christian has so much to do at home and sees so much evil in his own that he is not apt to be very busy with other hearts.

--- Jonathan Edwards

Edwards puts it this way: “The eminently humble Christian is supposed to have so much to do at home and see so much evil in his own life that he is not apt to be busy with other people’s hearts.” Yeah, but if you’re proud, you turn that whole thing around.

2. Reputation Over Reality

The second dashboard light that he talks about is when your reputation is above reality. For the people that know you, if your reputation is up here, but you know in real life that your character is down here, do you know what that gap, the difference there, is? It’s a lie. And how did that lie get perpetuated? How did that get projected? Because you’re proud. You’re proud, and so you project an image that makes your reputation look here, when you know your reality is down here. And so, what happens is—it’s kind of interesting—that you fight sins that you’re involved in that would harm your reputation. We don’t want to bring that down. But sins that you can get away with that no one would know about—you know what? You’re really at peace with those, you give yourself grace in those areas, because, you know, I mean, everyone’s human. That’s an expression of pride.

3. Defensiveness

Defensiveness is an expression of pride, because you’re usually self-justifying whenever you’re getting threatened, whenever your ego is getting threatened. And that keeps you from ever growing, as a human being, as a soul, but certainly as a Christian, this self-justification and being

defensive. Like in a relationship when things get rough and you're going back and forth, you can either be humble and learn from that and have maybe a deepening relationship because of your growth. Or pride steps in and says, *You know what? Justify this, shut it down, and move on and find another friend.* It happens at work a lot. You have a conflict at work, you can be humble, you can learn from that, grow, develop; or pride steps in, justifies, and then says, *Yeah, let's just move on and we'll find somewhere else to work. It was his fault, it was their fault, it was circumstances' fault, but it was not my fault.* This defensiveness is one of the lights that go on in the soul's dashboard.

4. Desperation for Attention

Desperate for attention—there's a great one. That one's a big light-up. It is hungry to be noticed in some way. Some of you aren't old enough, but in high school Cheap Trick had a song. It might have been their only hit. Here are the lyrics:

**I want you to want me
I need you to need me
I'd love you to love me**

It's all about me. I want you to want me, I need you to need me, I want you to love me. And I thought it was really a cheap trick for Cheap Trick to have me singing that song all these years about how proud I am—just saying.

5. Neglecting Others

Last, there's neglecting others. Every form of prejudice has its root in pride. Prejudice means "to pre-judge." And when you pre-judge someone, it's based on your pride saying, *I should be with that person, or I don't need to be with that person,* based on their wealth level or their race or their intelligence or their level of attractiveness, whatever that might be.

Those were five of the seven dashboard lights that Jonathan Edwards brought up, showing that there's something wrong under the hood of your soul.

I used to work in an auto parts store. It's funny, what lay people call "dashboard lights" or "warning lights", in the industry, among the mechanics and the guys working at the auto parts store, they're called "idiot lights." They're called "idiot lights" because you're supposed to know

the health of your car by the way it sounds, the way it smells. You should be able to feel it in the gas pedal or the brake pedal. But, you know what? If you need a light to go on, good for you. So, they call it an “idiot light.”

I think in the Bible we’re to call these warning signs something. If Solomon were to come in here, he’d say, *Yeah, these are idiot lights*. Because pride always leads to ruin. You can crash in any lane you want. There’s a lot to choose from. It’s all the same superhighway. And the superhighway is pride.

Woe is me! I have this terrible marriage and I keep giving and giving to other people. And so, I deserve to break some of the rules, because I’m different.

Or you know, it could be like, *Look at all the ministry I’m involved in. Look at all the lives that have been changed. And there’s nothing quite like what I’m doing or as much as what I’m doing and because of all that, the rules—not all of them apply to me. Right?*

Different lanes, same highway.

Fear This About Pride: How Far You Can Fall

Here’s the thing to fear about pride and the nature of man. Here’s the thing you need to fear about pride and the nature of men as shown in the life of Solomon. It’s how far you can fall.

If you were to just read the introduction to the life of Solomon and then the conclusion of the life of Solomon, the gap between those things is unfathomable. It’s unimaginable. You could not make this up. The introduction of Solomon is that he gets a visitation from God that says, “How can I help you?” And it ends—Solomon’s life ends with him sitting, holding the hands of one of his wives in a temple of cultic worship. And it’s an expensive cult to be a part of. As a matter of fact, the tuition for this is to sacrifice your only child. Your children, your babies, are sacrificed to this detestable God of the Amalekites, Moloch. And Solomon is there participating in this. And outside the temple there is a giant plaque carved in stone that says, “We are grateful to King Solomon for providing the wealth to build this temple.” How does that happen? Fear how fall you can fall if you don’t get off this highway called pride.

Application

I've met with men and women and they've said things like, "Oh, this is bottom. I cannot believe that I would be living out of my car." And I usually say, "I still hear plenty of pride here. You can't see bottom from where you are. First of all, you still have a car. Second of all, you still have your teeth. And in six months when you're near bottom, all your teeth will be rotted out of your head. You've got a long way to go to bottom. So, I suggest that you turn around now. But I can still hear the pride, because you say 'I can't believe I could be here living out of my car.' There it is again."

I fear this storyline. Because he was someone I looked up to. And like so many people I looked up to, I thought, *If it could happen to them, it could happen to me.* And Solomon's lesson to us would be this: humility is the way of wisdom, is the way of godliness. It is the way of obedience.

And I don't have to make this up, because he did write a book about himself and his life and it's called Ecclesiastes. And the last chapter begins with this sentence: "Remember your creator in the days of your youth." And the last two sentences say this: "Now when all has been said and all has been heard, this is the conclusion of life: fear God and obey all of His commandments, because that is the whole duty of man." And here's why. Because "God will bring every deed into judgment, even though it's invisible, whether it's good or evil."

Solomon would love to rewrite his life and just have that first part: How to win big. And if he were here today he would tell you that you've got to fear that highway, because pride always runs to ruin. It always leads to failure. It always self-destructs. So be humble. Be humble like Christ. That's the lesson of Solomon's life.

Would you join me in a word of prayer? And I'm going to pray the prayer that Paul prayed about humility—for Grace, for me, and for you.

If there's any encouragement from being united in Christ, if there's anything that's comfortable, that's found in His love, if there's any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion in your life and the life of Jesus Christ, then let my joy be complete so that all the church would be like-minded, in the same love, in the same spirit, and having one mind. And let the members of the church do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. But

rather, in humility value others above themselves. Be humble, not looking out for our own interests but of each other—looking out for each other’s interests.

And in our relationships with one another, Lord, I’d ask that we have the same mind as Jesus Christ had; Jesus Christ, being in the nature of God, God himself, did not consider equality with God as something to be used to His own advantage; but rather, he humbled himself. YHWH, the God of humility, made himself nothing, taking on the very nature of a servant, becoming like a man, the very nature of man. And being in the appearance of man, He humbled himself even more, becoming obedient to death—not just any death, but death on a cross! And because of that humility, YHWH God the Father exalted Him to the highest place and gave Him a name that’s above every name, that at the name of Jesus Christ every knee would bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth. Demons bow to this man’s name. And every tongue would confess and acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord. And Jesus Christ points to the Father and says, “To You be the glory. To You be the honor.”

Lord, that we could be like that. Lord, I’d ask that You would touch our spirits deeply today; that You would expose this invisible sin that sneaks around in our lives and convinces us that we’re not proud. I’d ask that Your Spirit would call that out; that we would find ways to seek out reconciliation, to apologize, to take responsibility, to serve others. I’d ask that You would surface prejudice in our lives so that Your Spirit would sear that, kill that, extinguish this petri dish of evil as it expresses itself in many different sins. Lord, give us an awareness as to how our sins lead back to this root of pride. Humble us; make us like Jesus in all of life. Make us humble. We pray this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

Thanks for joining us here at Grace on Father’s Day. We’ll see you again next week.