

Sermons
of the
Concordia Lutheran Conference

***What Is Necessary Among Us
That We Might Go Forward
In The Work Of The Lord***

I Peter 5:5

- 1. We must avoid sinful pride and conceit**
- 2. We must strive after true Christian humility**

Eleventh Annual Meeting 1961

Sermon for the Convention of the
Concordia Lutheran Conference
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***What is Necessary Among Us
That We Might Go Forward
In The Work Of The Lord***

Sermon Delivered at the Sunday Service
by Rev P. R. Bloedel. Seattle, Washington

“Yea, all of you be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.”

—I Peter 5:5

Beloved friends in Christ:

This is the 11th anniversary of our Conference. Once again we are assembled for our annual convention. Looking back over the years, we recall with joy how God granted us His abundant grace to stand unwaveringly upon His pure Word and boldly to resist the spirit of compromise and toleration of error prevailing in our former synodical affiliation. We recall the first faltering steps of our newly formed congregations and of our Conference. How we rejoiced in the privilege of helping others to retain the services of full time pastors and in the establishment of a truly Lutheran Seminary, where young men can be prepared for the office of the ministry in order that our priceless Lutheran heritage might be preserved for us, and for our children and for their children after us. These things have gladdened our hearts! — But a somber note is heard as we consider the obvious lack of progress made by our Conference in carrying out the work which the Savior has given us to perform. Of course, it's easy to say: “Our progress is in the hands of the Lord”, which is certainly true in the sense that to the Lord alone belongs all praise and glory for whatever progress we have made as individuals, as congregations, and as a conference in the carrying out of His work! But we dare not use this as an EXCUSE for our LACK of progress. The Lord has given us His commission to declare before all nations the pure truths of His Word!! What have we done and what are we doing? — we

must constantly ask ourselves. Being sinful and totally corrupt by nature — having our Old Adam (our old sinful flesh) which is without true fear, love, and trust in God: without righteousness constantly inclined toward that which is evil and wicked; and which wants nothing to do with the things of the Lord — we are indeed perfectly equipped to hinder or to stalemate the Lord’s work. On the other hand, as regenerate children of God (as true believers in the Savior by the work of the Holy Spirit through His Word) we are more perfectly equipped by the grace and power of God to go forward in His work. These things we should seriously ponder as we approach the Lord’s Table this morning. In our text, the Apostle Peter aids us in examining ourselves both with regard to our inward disposition and our mutual conduct one toward another as we toil in the Savior’s Kingdom. We will meditate upon these words of the Holy Spirit as we consider the theme for our discourse:

WHAT IS NECESSARY AMONG US THAT WE
MIGHT GO FORWARD IN THE WORK OF THE LORD

1. We must avoid sinful pride and conceit
2. We must strive after true Christian humility

May God the Holy Ghost bless the consideration of His Word. . .

I.

“*God resisteth the proud*”. Who are the proud and what is pride? Pride is self-glorification. Those are proud who concern themselves with their own excellence or importance. The Holy Ghost describes those who are proud as being “*puffed up*” (bloated), as thinking more highly of themselves than they ought to think, as those Pharisees who thought much of themselves and despised others.

Pride has afflicted the human race since the Fall of Adam and Eve. We may assume as did Luther, that pride was the original sin of the devil for which he was cast out of heaven and because of which the devil and his angels are sentenced to everlasting fire. St. Paul writes

that pastors should not be “*lifted up with pride lest they fall into the condemnation of the devil,*” that they may not by their pride bring upon themselves the same condemnation which Satan brought upon himself by his arrogance. Satan endeavored successfully to instill pride into the hearts of our first parents by telling Eve: “*ye shall be as gods,*” and Eve consequently looked upon the tree of the knowledge of good and evil no longer with the respect and honor due it because of the commandment of God but she looked upon it as a tree to be desired “*to make one wise*”

Since the Fall all people by nature are slaves of pride. The world exalts pride and urges people to strive after praise and glory. Filled with pride, the children of the world desire to be as gods, to be the masters of their own lives, of their own destiny, of the universe. They do not want to be dependent upon God and subject to His Word. They want to build their own system of religion and to establish their own rules of conduct and behavior. In idolatrous admiration they worship their own bodies, their own wisdom, their own strength, their own power, their own beauty, their own achievements, their own inventions, their own pleasures, and amusements. And worst of all, in pride, man, by nature laughs at and despises the wonderful love of God in Christ Jesus our Savior!

Like a terrible monster such pride lurks in every one of us. It is one of the most deadly tools of our old sinful flesh. Luther says that “pride is the head, life and very nature of all sin.” All sins have their root and origin in pride! It is then sinful pride which causes us to put other things first in our lives before God and His Word, to do what we know displeases the Lord and to avoid doing what we know is pleasing to Him, to rely upon ourselves rather than upon the Lord. Pride is the mother of false doctrine and hypocrisy. It causes us to dishonor God by misusing His name and by negligence in prayer. Pride causes us to despise the preaching and teaching of God’s Word, to be sluggish in our own private Bible study and in our family devotions, negligent in our attendance in the Divine Service and in Bible Class and ashamed to tell others about Jesus and the way of salvation. It causes us to give only of our leftovers to the Church and to hold back the use of our time and talents in the Savior’s Kingdom.

Pride causes children to disobey parents and teachers, employees to rise up against their employers, citizens to revolt against their government church members to overlook the needs of their Pastor, despise his work and cause him to labor them with grief and not with joy. Pride also causes parents and teachers to abuse the children, employers to overwork their employees and to give them insufficient wages, governments to enslave their citizens, pastors to be legalistic and to lord it over the flocks committed to their care. Pride causes a person to hurt or harm another, to harbor thoughts of hatred and malice and to neglect to help those who are in need. Pride causes dissension and quarreling in the home, unfaithfulness and strife between husband and wife, immorality and impurity in word and in deed. Pride engenders envy, jealousy, greed, robbery and theft. Pride causes a person to injure another person's reputation by slander and gossip. Thus pride shows its hideous face in many ways and brings about untold heartaches, misery, contention, and strife. God says in His Word: "*Only by pride cometh contention.*" It is no wonder that our God also declares: "*Everyone that is proud is an abomination unto the Lord.*"

"*God resisteth the proud,*" says our text. The Greek word for "*resisteth*" is a strong word: God sets Himself like an army in battle array against the proud. In His own time and according to His own purpose He removes from the proud their earthly possessions, their mind, their intellect, their strength, their beauty, their life. If such as are proud do not turn to the Lord in true repentance and faith through the power of the Holy Spirit — He will dash them in pieces like a potters vessel and bring them into the pit of Hell.

"*God resisteth the proud!*" It is, then, easy to see how sinful pride hinders the work of the Church. We Christians should take earnest heed to the warning words of our text and beat down the pride of our sinful flesh. It is pride which caused the once faithful Missouri Synod to forsake the old paths. It is pride which brought about the contention and strife in the Orthodox Lutheran Conference. And it is pride which, if it is given free reign in our hearts and in our conduct, will keep us from properly performing the work of the Lord in the Concordia Lutheran Conference. It is most necessary therefore

strenuously by the grace of God to avoid pride and conceit that we might go forward in the work of the Lord. To this end our text also earnestly admonishes us to strive after true Christian humility.

II.

The Gospel, God's wonderful plan of salvation, opposes pride and is perfectly fitted to make us humble children of God. The necessity of God's plan of salvation is the fact that we are guilty and helpless sinners. The Savior in God's plan of salvation is meek and lowly of heart, a servant of men, despised and rejected by the world — who, though being true God, humbled Himself and became obedient even unto His death on the cross. On this Savior we are entirely dependent for the forgiveness of all our sins and for our eternal salvation — not on anything good in us. And we embrace this Savior only through the effectual working of the Holy Ghost, through the Gospel, and not by our own power, strength or wisdom—for in ourselves, as we are born into this world, we have nothing in us but sin and death. God's plan of salvation by His grace alone through faith in Christ without any merit worthiness in us should certainly make us humble and should cause us to strive after Christian humility in our hearts and in our conduct.

True Christian humility gives God and His Word first consideration. It serves the Lord with fear and rejoices with trembling. It casts all care, worries, trouble, heartaches upon the Lord and relies upon His gracious help in every need. It exercises itself in prayer, praise, and thanksgiving, and is not ashamed to speak of God and His Word, of the Savior and His salvation, of the Holy Spirit and His grace at any time, in any place, and under any circumstances.

To illustrate such humility before God, Jesus placed a humble, trusting little child in the midst of His disciples and declared: "*Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of heaven.*" Through the Prophet Isaiah, the Lord declares: "*To this man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My Word.*"

True Christian humility honors and respects God's representatives in the home, church, school, government, and place of employment. It is concerned with the bodily needs of others, and is merciful, kind, and forgiving. It loves and honors husband or wife and cultivates pure thoughts, desires, and actions. It rejoices when others are blessed with prosperity and is concerned about the welfare of the property and business of others. It practices the art of defending others and putting the best construction on their words and deeds.

Especially in the Church, — in our conduct with our fellow Christians — the Lord has much to say about humility. This humility showed itself among the early Christians by their unselfish love for one another which caused the heathen world to marvel, saying: "*Behold, how they love one another*" Jesus says: "*By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another.*" Such love, the Apostle Paul writes: "*is without dissimulation*" — without pretense or deceit. It is displayed by actions as well as by words. It is sincere and true and honest, It does not behave itself unseemly. It is not puffed up. It is not filled with suspicion.

The Savior illustrates the exercise of true Christian humility among His disciples by girding Himself with a towel and washing His disciples, feet. He, then, told His disciples: "*If I, then your Lord and Master, have washed your feet; ye also ought to wash one another's feet.*" St. Peter writes in our texts. "*Yea all of you be subject one to another*" St Paul urges the Christians to be "*kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honor preferring one another.*" Christian humility causes the Christian always to place himself on a lower level than his fellow believers: "*Submitting yourselves one to another in the fear of God.*"

At another place the Apostle Paul writes to the Christians, "*I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called, with all lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love.*" In true humbleness of mind and spirit, Christians are to help one another, hold one another up, bear one another's burdens, charitably overlook one an-

other's faults and shortcomings, and cordially forgive one another with cheerful and genuine willingness. We read in the Scriptures: *"Put on, therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, longsuffering; forbearing one another, and forgiving one another."*

We read in our text; *"And be clothed with humility."* Humility is to be put on like a garment. The Greek word which is translated *"be clothed,"* here in our text, is found nowhere else in the New Testament and it is truly a remarkable word. It refers particularly to an article of clothing worn by the slaves. And in connection with humility it indicates that we should not be ashamed or hesitate in the least about doing the most servile task for the Lord. It is a false humility which constantly lets the burden of the Lord's work fall on the shoulders of another. It is true Christian humility which causes a Christian gratefully to acknowledge the gifts and talents which the Lord has given him and to use such gifts and talents for whatever task they are needed in the work of the Church in humble submission to the Word of God.

It is, therefore, most necessary, dear Christians that, by God's grace, we earnestly strive after true Christian humility — that we might go forward in the work of the Lord — *"for God resisteth the proud but giveth grace to the humble."* And to these words we close with the exhortation of the Lord through the prophet 'Micah: *"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with thy God."* Amen.

Concordia Lutheran Conference Archives

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Pride and Humility

Like a terrible monster pride lurks in every one of us. It is one of the most deadly tools of our old sinful flesh. Luther says that “pride is the head, life and very nature of all sin.” All sins have their root and origin in pride! It is then sinful pride which causes us to put other things first in our lives before God and His Word, to do what we know displeases the Lord and to avoid doing what we know is pleasing to Him

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