

(For Monday, May 1, 2017) **Are you alert to the certain outcome of pride?**

“The sentence is [made]...to the end that the living may know that the Most High rules the kingdom of men and gives it to whom he will and sets over it the lowliest of men.” (Dan.4:17, ESV)

I have always found there are at least two qualities to much Biblical prophecy. There is a time-specific element to many of the prophecies we read. So, prophecies in both the Old and New Testaments often speak of specific events which are to take place. But there is also a timeless quality to many Biblical prophecies. Holy Scripture often reminds us that sinful actions (often the fruit of human pride) inevitably lead to judgment. Nebuchadnezzar and his kingdom had grown so great and powerful that he had become dismissive concerning any mortal threat. But as Daniel prophecies, the King’s position of worldly grandeur would soon come to an end, and he would be mightily humbled.

The old saying goes, “Pride cometh before a fall.” But an even truer concept is that those who revel in vainglorious pride, what David calls “presumptuous sins” (See Ps.19:13), are surely destined to fall, and to fall hard!

(For Tuesday, May 2, 2017) **Where is your focus when you are in God’s house?**

“O Lord, I love the habitation of your house and the place where your glory dwells.” (Ps.26:8, ESV)

It’s interesting to read this verse written by David knowing that he would never build God’s house. That destiny would belong to a future King in David’s line.¹ Yet David had none-the-less come to love dwelling (inhabiting) the house of The Lord. Furthermore, he recognized this divine house as “the place where God’s glory dwells.” If we take Jesus’s promise of Matthew 18:20² seriously, it would appear that God’s glory should be on display every time we Christians gather.

However we spend our time on Sunday morning, regardless of how we do “church,” shouldn’t the key thing be not the beauty of the music, or the inspirational preaching, or the intricacy and authenticity of our Sacraments? Shouldn’t the key aim of church be that God is glorified?

¹In 2Sam.7:1-17 God’s promises to David would seem to indicate initially that the builder of his Temple would be his son, Solomon. But as we read the full extent of that passage, it is difficult NOT to see God’s promises here as Messianic in character.

²“For where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them.”

(For Wednesday, May 3, 2017) **Faced with so much truth, why is there so much doubt?**

“For there are three that testify: the Spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree.” (1Jn.5:7, ESV)

John is citing an Old Testament requirement that a charge be supported by two or three witnesses (See Deut17:6; 19:15) which Jesus carried into his earthly ministry.¹ (See Matt.18:16) These 3 witnesses to the true identity of Jesus are both historical and contemporary. They are the Spirit (arrived from heaven on Pentecost and still bearing fruit today in the community of faith), the water of Baptism (accompanied by God’s declaration of Jesus as his Son, and which draws the community of faith into unity), and the blood (which Jesus shed on the Cross, and which the martyrs have shed down through the centuries, thereby proving the Christian faith worthy of suffering, even unto death).

It is indeed puzzling to hear so many question the convictions held by Christians, when so much historical and current evidence exists to prove their validity.

¹See footnote 5:5-8, *ESV Study Bible*, p. 2436.

(For Thursday, May 4, 2017) **Is your faith in God strong enough to let go?**

“And this is the confidence that we have toward him, that if we ask anything according to his will he hears us.” (1Jn.5:14, ESV)

The Gospels are full of promises that God will honor the sincere and righteous requests of his children. (See Mt.7:1-11, 21:22; Lk.11:9-13; Jn.14:13-14; 15:7, 16, 16:23-24) But for John, the key to prayer is our assurance that The Father hears it. Anything else is secondary. God has proven over and over just how much he loves his children. And He knows our needs – both present and future – so much better than we ever could. So, the key focus of effective prayer becomes expressing our adoration for God, our remorse for those words and deeds which have caused pain for others and for ourselves, our earnest thanks for his blessings in our life, and our deeply held fears and anxieties from which we need to be free. The actual way we are blessed, and the means by which we are delivered are really up to him. And thank heaven for that! Because His view of what we truly need is so much higher and broader and deeper than anything we could possibly imagine.

So, do you have the faith to go to God in prayer with your fears and frustrations, and then let them go, assured that God in his infinite love for you has got your back?

(For Friday, May 5, 2017) **Are you called to be somebody’s go-between?**

“And when he saw their faith, he said, “Man, your sins are forgiven you.” (Lk.5:20.” ESV)

This verse has always astonished me. The reason Jesus heals the paralytic there in the region of Galilee is not because of that man’s faith. Instead, Jesus forgives his sins and then heals him because his friends went to the trouble of actually carrying his palette to the rooftop of the house, and lowering him down through a hole in the tiles. Jesus forgave and healed the lame man because of the faith **of his friends**. James says, “The prayers of the righteous availeth much.” (Jas.5:16) But here, this man’s friends are doing a lot more than praying. And Jesus sees the love they have for their friend and is so moved that he forgives the man whatever sins he’s committed, and restores the man’s ability to walk.

“Intercede” comes from the Latin for *cedere* (to go) and *inter* (between). Evidently, God takes the pleas of a faithful “go-between” very seriously indeed. So, when was the last time you acted as someone’s “go-between”?