

# FIVE FORKS BRETHREN IN CHRIST CHURCH

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**SERMON:** *“Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought.”*

**SERIES:** *FATAL - Pride*

**SCRIPTURES:** *Genesis 1 & 2; Luke 18; John 13*

**SPEAKER:** *Shaun Kipe*

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*\*Credit to Scott Scruggs series from “Sanctuary”; Tony Campolo “Seven Deadly Sins”; CS Lewis “Mere Christianity”*

Well good morning, it so great to worship with you. Want to say welcome to all of you in this room and to so many gathered on-line, at home, tuning to the live stream.

Believe it or not, there is something in you, in me that can be fatal. Fatal to our lives and fatal to journey of faith.

We need a heart transformation to be the people God created us to be. Jesus said,

**Mark 7:21-22 - <sup>21</sup> For it is from within, out of a person’s heart, that evil thoughts come—sexual immorality, theft, murder, <sup>22</sup> adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. <sup>23</sup> All these evils come from inside and defile a person.”**

This morning we want to talk about pride.

## **I. What is Pride?**

**There is one vice of which no man in the world is free; which everyone in the world loathes when he sees it in someone else and of which hardly any people, except Christians, ever imagine that they are guilty themselves...There is no**

**fault which makes a man more unpopular, and no fault which we are more unconscious of in ourselves. And the more we have it ourselves, the more we dislike it in others.**

**According to Christian teachers, the essential vice, the utmost evil, is Pride. Unchastity, anger, greed, drunkenness, and all that, are mere fleabites in comparison. It was through pride that the Devil became the Devil: Pride leads to every other vice. It is the complete anti-God state of mind.**

Pride is sometimes referred to as the oldest or “the original sin”...

The theologian, Augustine, said pride was “the original sin” of Satan who was kicked out of heaven. Augustine pointed to Isaiah 14:14 as a description of Satan’s original sin: **I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High. (Isa. 14:14).**

Reinhold Niebuhr said that pride was man’s basic sin. It was his unwillingness to recognize his creatureliness. That is, it’s man’s basic sin to fail to recognize he is the creature and not the creator. Mankind wants to be in charge, captain of his own ship, master of his soul. Mankind expresses great hostility when he’s confronted by the demands and commands of God.

**The serpent said to the woman, "You surely will not die! For God knows that in the day you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." (Gen. 3:4–5)**

So if you have Bible turn with me to Genesis. Stories of creation and two important concepts related to pride.

### **A. You are made in the image of God.**

**26 Then God said, “Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals,<sup>[a]</sup> and over all the creatures that move along the ground.”**

**27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.**

So I just want to be clear on this, because there are far too many people walking around our world with a poor self-image. **Confidence is not the same thing as pride.**

Every human being bears an imprint, a reflection of God. Humans are uniquely important, valuable, and significant in all of creation.

Yes, your pet dog is important to you. Sometimes it feels like part of your family, but scripturally speaking, your pet will always be just a pet, an animal. You are human. Your dog is not. Your dog does not bear the image of God.

Receiving compliments for good work and feeling good about yourself.

Recognizing your own areas of giftedness and uniqueness and talent is not pride.

Congratulating your son or daughter on an accomplishment is good and right.

### **B. You are made from the dust of the earth.**

This is why the creation story in Genesis 2, adds another important element to the status of humans...you just need to know this about yourself.

**Genesis 2:7 - <sup>7</sup> Then the LORD God formed a man<sup>[a]</sup> from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.**

**You are made in the image of God, but you are made from the dust of the earth.**

Paul says it like in Romans 12...

**Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment...**

We must learn to hold both of these realities about ourselves in tension, if we are going to think rightly about ourselves.

### **C. Pride is thinking of ourselves as more highly than we ought**

Pride is when we take this good and true concept and go too far with it. While we are unique and the pinnacle of God's creation, we are NOT the creator.

Pride is when confidence moves to superiority. I recognize the image of God in myself but not in others. I put myself above others. My life is more important than your life. My rights are more important than your rights. I am more valuable than you.

Author John Ortberg writes: Not long ago, there was a CEO of a Fortune 500 company who pulled into a service station to get gas. He went inside to pay, and when he came out he noticed his wife engaged in a deep discussion with the service station attendant. It turned out that she knew him. In fact back in high school before she met her eventual husband, she used to date this man.

The CEO got in the car, and the two drove in silence. He was feeling pretty good about himself when he finally spoke: "I bet I know what you were thinking. I bet you were thinking you're glad you married me, a Fortune 500 CEO, and not him, a service station attendant." "No, I was thinking if I'd married him, he'd be a Fortune 500 CEO and you'd be a service station attendant."

My job is more important than your job.

Our vacations are better than your vacations.

My kids are better than your kids.

My hair is better than your hair.

We give me, so we are more generous...and thus more spiritual.

And I'll just say this because I think this is really important. Pride shows up not only in our individual lives but in communities and even nations. *"We're better than you. We're more important than you. We deserve ??? more than you."*

Nazi Germany was founded on a belief of racial superiority which is ultimately grounded in pride. Our group of people is more deserving, more rightful. Our way of life is the right way. Our beliefs, our values more important than yours. Now, I know it's easy to look at Nazi Germany and pick on them. But hold on to your seats people...Tony Campolo says this...

**"I am convinced that the United States has its greatest enemy in itself. The pride of America, more than any other single factor, threatens our existence as a nation."**

Our way of life is better than your way of life.

Our language is better than your language.

Our

Truth is, if we're really being honest, we have idolized our world, our lives...we have become worshippers of ourselves. Our sense of security is often not in God, but in American wealth. Or American Values. Or American Military might. And then we simply try to find ways to fit Jesus into our American systems. This is how we justify our sense of superiority...our pride.

Do not think of yourself as more highly than you ought...for from dust you came and to dust you will return.

**D. Pride is when we see only our good and are unaware of our flaws.**

Jesus told a story in Luke 18...

**Luke 18:10-13 – <sup>9</sup> To some who were confident of their own righteousness and looked down on everyone else, Jesus told this parable: <sup>10</sup> “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup> The Pharisee stood by himself and prayed: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other people—robbers, evildoers, adulterers—or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week and give a tenth of all I get.’**

**<sup>13</sup> “But the tax collector stood at a distance. He would not even look up to heaven, but beat his breast and said, ‘God, have mercy on me, a sinner.’**

**<sup>14</sup> “I tell you that this man, rather than the other, went home justified before God. For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.”**

**“Most Christians define sin as the sum total of acts which they themselves do not commit.”**

Folks, if you are in the habit of recognizing sin in other people, but fail to see it in yourself there’s a good chance pride is creeping around in your heart. Similarly...

**E. Pride is when we see only our abilities and can’t acknowledge our limitations.**

In our pride we have a tendency to notice our gifts, our talents and successes and overlook our limits.

There's an old country song, by Kenny Rogers, called **The Greatest (PICTURE)**. Are you familiar with this song? It's about a little boy playing baseball in his back yard by himself.

He talks about tossing the ball up in the air and trying to hit the ball. And the first toss goes up, comes down and he swings and misses. Strike 1. So he does it again, tosses up the ball, it comes back down, he swings and misses again. Strike 2. He tosses the ball up a third time, you can feel the tension building in the song, ball comes back down...he swings for all he's worth...he misses a third time...and that's strike three. You feel bad for the kid. He's obviously doesn't have the ability to hit the ball.

But then the song ends with a little bit of a twist...The boy picks up the ball, throws his bat over his shoulder and heads for home...proudly, a smile on his face. As he thinks to himself, "I knew I was good, but even I didn't know I could pitch like that."

It's fascinating, it's intended as humor, all in good fun, but in a sense the song hinges on the boy's inability to acknowledge he can't hit the ball. He conveniently overlooks his limitations.

I just wonder, for how many of us...we are so quick to recognize our ability and overlook our limits.

That's Pride.

Turns out, this is the oldest sin in the book, it's lurking in your heart and mine. So...

## **II. What do we do about pride?**

### **A. Acknowledge our limits.**

Now I know this may initially sound kind of discouraging so I just want to clarify what I mean. Because I think in the end this is a very freeing concept.

I'm not saying you shouldn't do your best. "Do everything as unto the Lord..." This is not an excuse for not giving your best efforts. I'm not trying to encourage you to be self-condemning or beat yourself up.

Here's what I mean, we live in a world that is often all or nothing. Almost like, if you can't be perfect, then don't bother. That's pride. Expectations of perfection, achievement and success above and beyond our abilities. And it'll just kill you.

It's crazy sometimes the things we remember from our childhood. But I remember one time failing a math test. I remember sitting in that chair in Mrs. Kunze's 5<sup>th</sup> grade class. Big red F, boldy and proudly standing out, right on the front of that test. I remember the shame and embarrassment I felt in that moment. I was supposed to be a good student. I turned my paper over right away, because I didn't want anyone else to see. I began to wonder if I was the only student who got an F. I began to wonder what my parents would think. My older brother was a great student. I began thinking, he probably never got an F. I'm probably in big trouble.

And I wouldn't have known it at the time, but behind that shame was a sense of pride in my little heart. *"Gotta be the best. Gotta be perfect or it's no good. Don't want anyone to see that I'm not the best."*

I remember getting home and taking that paper out of my book bag up in my bedroom and kind of staring at it for a while. *"How I'm gonna tell mom?"* I walked into the kitchen handed it to her and kind of stood back waiting for the condemnation.



I remember mom looking at that test and then looking down at me. Then she taught a very valuable lesson... *“Aww I’m sorry this test didn’t’ go well for you. That hurts doesn’t it? But Shaun, you’re not gonna ace every test, sometimes in life we fail and that’s ok too.”* And then she bent over and gave me a great big hug.

Mom reminded me. Perfection is a standard we humans can never live up to. But that heart of pride seems to think that’s the standard.

And the same is true when God goes looking into our lives. Yes, he wants me to do my best. But we were never intended to ace all of the tests life throws at us. And truth is, he loves us anyway.

So, it’s ok to acknowledge your limitations.

Mom’s/Dad’s out there...I’m just gonna let you know, you aren’t going to be perfect. Because parenting is not easy. We will get many things wrong along the way. It’s ok. It doesn’t make you a parenting failure.

Perfectly kept house, with everything in order and dishes done, and laundry folded...I’m just telling you perfect house-keeping is unreachable.

I hate to spoil this folks, but you’re probably not gonna reach the perfect physical appearance.

It is important to know you are not perfect and you were never intended to be perfect.

Again, this is not an excuse for not giving your best. But an acknowledgement that even your best will not be perfect and that’s ok. Your value as a human being does not come from your ability to be perfect, from all of your best talents or even your own righteousness...if you think it does, pride may be creeping around your heart.

It is ok to acknowledge weaknesses and limitations, it does not make us failures or invaluable. It helps us to deal with the pride that tries creeping in and it frees us to think rightly about ourselves.

### **B. Learn to paint toenails.**

In Philippians, Paul wrote...

**Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves,**

Several years ago, I came across a brilliant little story, that I share at most wedding ceremonies, because it's such a powerful image.

About a little 8 year old girl, Rebekah, who was once asked what love is. She thought about it for a moment and then replied, **“Well love is when my grandmother got arthritis and she could no longer bend over and paint her toenails so my grandfather paints them for her.”** (Ortberg)

Kind of always thought I could picture a little old lady who does all she can to still try and look beautiful for her aging husband. But she can no longer bend and paint her toenails. Now can you picture with me, a little old man, who himself has trouble getting down on the floor, and let's be honest painting toenails has never been part of his daily routine, but in humility, the old man lowers himself in front of the woman he loves so dearly and paints her toenails. It's just an incredible image, isn't it?

Kind of reminds of another story...very similar to painting toenails. This one is in your Bible...picture this scene with me...

**John 13:2-13 - <sup>2</sup> The evening meal was in progress...<sup>3</sup> Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; <sup>4</sup> so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing,**

**and wrapped a towel around his waist. <sup>5</sup> After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.**

Let me just have you pause for a moment and think about this... “The one who created you and me. The one who created life itself the world, the universe, the very dust from which we came...entered into a human body. God himself got down on his hands and knees, lowered himself in front of his followers to dig the dirt from between their toes...to paint some toenails”.

I can only imagine what was going through the minds of those young men that night. Masters don't wash feet. Rabbi's don't wash feet. Kings and Pharoahs and Caesars. Military commanders. Leaders. People of power and privilege. Don't get down on their hands and knees in humility...that would be ridiculous.

But our leader does. Turns out Jesus was different. Different kind of Rabbi. Different kind of King. Different kind of values. Jesus was the God who washed feet. The King who rode into town on a donkey. The Master who came to serve rather than be served. He was the one who made himself last so others could be first.

And then check this out...

**<sup>12</sup> When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them.**

**<sup>13</sup> “You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. <sup>14</sup> Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. <sup>15</sup> I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.**

Folks there's a lot of debate about what exactly it means to be a Christian...but Jesus makes it pretty simple here, He says, a Christian is someone who does what Jesus does. Someone who washes feet and paints toenails.

And I know you're probably thinking we won't be painting too many toenails this week or washing too many feet at the office...but I guess what I mean and what Jesus meant is that in the daily routine of life we seek to serve those around us and to put their needs ahead of our own.

It might mean listening to someone first instead of talking first. It might mean allowing someone else to get there way, instead of you getting yours. It might mean allowing someone else to get the last word in an argument.

Moms & Dads it's stepping up to change the dirty diaper so other one doesn't have to. Husbands and Wives it's in washing dishes, and folding laundry and mowing lawns. No joke a couple weeks ago I was having a really busy and stressful week. Long day at the office, all day I was thinking and I still have to get home and mow the lawn...only to pull in the driveway as Jenny was finishing up with the mowing. She was busy too, she didn't feel like doing it either. She's making meals, and teaching all day, and even taking masters class...but she knew that I was gonna be stressed about that lawn. She put me ahead of herself. I'm a lucky guy.

Kids in helping out around the house. Letting someone else have get the best seat in the car.

Students at school it's allowing others to receive credit and be the hero. It's letting someone else in line in front of you.

At the office, it's doing the task at work that no one else wants to do. I'll just take a moment and tell about the guys I work with...your staff here at Five Forks...Man these guys just true servants. No they aren't perfect, but in the daily routine around the office, it's almost like a competition among these guys to serve each other.

When we do that kind of stuff in life, it's washing feet and painting toenails. It's humility and that's when the transforming work of Jesus starts to take over in our lives.

**Communion:**

(Ask worship team to come forward, we're gonna close our service by reflecting on the Jesus and the example he set for us.)

On that same night that Jesus washed his disciple's feet we are told that Jesus also took some bread and broke it and gave it to his disciples. And he said this my body broken for you. And then he gave them a cup and said drink, this is my blood poured out for you. I choose to give up my life for you.

To this day the symbol of Christ's body and blood given for us, is a simple wafer and cup of juice. The Kings and leaders in our world may have selected different symbols to mark the most significant act of their lives. And from a place of pride, privilege and power we might look at this and say, that's not good enough. We deserve more. We deserve better. We deserve a feast fit for a king.

To this Jesus replies...this is the feast of the true King. So we're gonna share this feast remembering Jesus. In a moment, we'll pray a prayer together and then as the worship team begins to sing, I want to encourage you to savor the feast. The song we'll be singing is pretty reflective for the first couple of verses. So don't just wolf down your feast. Take a few moments, close your eyes, think about Jesus, the master and what he did, and how that should impact you this week.

Let's pray this prayer together.

*"Most merciful God, we confess that we have sinned against you in thought, word, and deed, by what we have done, and by what we have left undone. We have not loved you with our whole heart; we have not loved our neighbors as ourselves. We are truly sorry and we humbly repent, for the sake of your Son Jesus Christ, have mercy on us and forgive us; that we may delight in your will, and walk in your ways, to the glory of your Name. Amen"*