

## THE SIN OF PRIDE IN THE CHURCH—PRAYERLESSNESS (Part 2)

### INTRODUCTION:

God wants His people to be holy, doesn't He? We see the **command** in I Peter 1:15-16 "But as He which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation; <sup>16</sup> Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy."

What does it **mean** to be holy? Separated from sin—and separated unto God. We're still talking about the **first half** of the definition—being **separated from sin**. But as J.C. Ryle wrote, sin is a "vast and solemn subject", so we've narrowed down our study of sin to **sins in the church**. But since sin—even in the church—is such a **broad subject**, we are focusing on **the sin of pride** in the church.

--**Can there be** pride in the church? There certainly can be because **Jesus warned us about it** when He said not to do things **to be seen of men!**

--We also see it in the **manner** in which we **react to correction**. If we get angry and "blow up" ... or become defensive...or blame someone else, it is pretty safe to say we are **displaying pride**—not **humility**.

--And last week we noted that pride is one of the reasons we **don't pray!** Too many times we have the attitude of the Laodiceans as seen in Jesus' letter to them found in **Revelation 3:17** "Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and **have need of nothing**; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked:"

Last week we looked at the fact that we often fail to see our need for **wisdom**. Instead of coming to God for **His** wisdom—which is **infinite and perfect**—we are instead "wise in our own eyes" and foolishly trust **our wisdom** over His.

Another area of need we looked at last week was in the area of **fighting temptation**. Too many times we are like Peter and **over-estimate our ability** to handle temptation. We wrongly believe we can stand in **our own spiritual strength**, so we choose to **sleep instead of pray**—and end up **falling instead of standing!**

This morning, we are going to look at a **third** area of needs that we fail to pray for, and it is this—asking God for **physical** needs. Does God want us to pray for our **physical** needs to be met? Yes, He does!

--Do we sometimes **fail to pray** for physical needs? Yes, we do!

**Why** don't we pray for **physical** needs? Because **we are proud**—and think we can take care of ourselves without God's help! That is what we will be focusing on this morning. Similar to last week, we are going to look at a **bad** example, a **good** example, & **exhortations** from God's Word to depend on Him for our needs.

### 1. Example of those who didn't trust God to meet their physical needs

I don't think I'm being overly dramatic to suggest that the nation of Israel gave Moses a lot of grief! They complained about what they **had to eat**—and what they **didn't have to eat**. They complained about what they had to **drink**, they complained about the **journey being hard**, and they complained there were **giants** in the land.

How many people came out of Egypt? Exodus 12:37 says there were **600,000 men**—not counting women or children. In the census taken in Numbers 1—13 months after they came out of Egypt—there were 603,000 males from age 20 and up. If that was **one-fourth** of the total population, there would have easily been **2 million people!** That is a lot of mouths to feed!

**How did Moses** feed them all? He didn't—but God did! **What did God feed** them? Manna! We see that in Exodus 16; let's turn there. Please follow along as I read verses 11-15. Since they didn't know **what it was**, they didn't know **what** to call it, so they called it "**what is it.**" Ryrie suggests it is as if they were saying, "the what's its name."

Jump ahead to vs 31 where we see another description of it. I've kind of thought of it as something like a vanilla waver, but it seems like it was probably smaller—and rounder—than that.

At any rate, starting in vs 16 we have **God's instructions** for gathering the manna.

--In **vs 16**, we see that every man was allotted an omer's worth of manna each day. If you had 4 people that lived in your tent, the most you could gather for the 4 of you was 4 omer's. How much was an omer? Glad you asked! The answer is in vs 36—"Now an omer is the tenth part of an ephah." Doesn't help much, does it? We don't know exactly how much an omer was, but it was probably around 2 quarts.

--In vs 17-18 and vs 21, we see that God's people would go out and gather the manna before it got too hot. Clarke suggested that it went something like this. People would go out and gather as much as they could before the sun got too hot. Due to age or health, some people might not be able to gather their full allotment. Those who were able to gather extra would give to those who had not gathered enough so that there was an equality. Paul refers to this equality in the **context of giving** in II Corinthians 8:15.

Now vs 19. "And Moses said, Let no man leave of it till the morning."

--**Why** would you want to keep some for the next day? You would keep some for the next day if you believed God would **fail to provide** you manna for the next day!

--In vs 20, someone did that very thing! We aren't told **why** they kept it over night—only that they did!

**What happened** to the manna that was kept overnight? **It bred worms and stank!**

**When did** that happen? It says they "left of it until the morning..."

So I'm thinking you "mid-night snackers" would be okay 😊! Not only that, but God would know the reason **why** someone was trying to keep the manna until the morning!

Two more thoughts before looking at some applications. Not only did God provide miraculously **each** day—He miraculously **provided extra on the sixth day**, so they did not **have to gather** any on the seventh day. We see that in verses 22-24. The extra gathered in this case **could be** kept until the next morning—and would not spoil or "breed" worms.

**How long** did this go on? **Forty years!** We see that in vs 35.

Some of you might be thinking, 'Wait a minute, Pastor! You mean to tell me that God used manna from heaven to feed roughly **2 million people every day**—day after day—for **forty years!**'

To which I reply, 'Yes, He did!'

It not only **says that** in what we just read, but Jesus **confirmed its truthfulness** in the NT!

In **John 6:49**, Jesus says, "Your fathers did eat manna in the wilderness, and are dead."

Talking of Himself, Jesus says in **John 6:58** "This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as **your fathers did eat manna**, and are dead..."

So, what are some applications—some timeless truths—that we can count on **for us** in our situations?

- 1) God knows what we need day-by-day, and He has the ability to **provide** it day-by-day.
- 2) God has the ability—and willingness—to **take away what we** have to show us we need Him.
- 3) God has the ability to **stretch out** what He gives us to meet our needs.
- 4) God's desire is that we **look to Him** and depend on Him and obey Him.
- 5) And, sadly, although this was a miraculous day-by-day provision from God—for 40 years—the people came to the point where they **took God's provision for granted**. The same thing can happen to us!

We've seen an example of not trusting in God to meet needs, let's consider next...

## **2. An example of those who did trust God to meet their needs**

A number of examples we could look at; we will look at just one. Please turn now to I Kings 17 where we have an account of God's miraculous care for His prophet Elijah. There are actually 3 miracles in this chapter.

**First**—in verses 1-7—God used a raven to bring Elijah "bread and flesh in the morning, and bread and flesh in the evening." If you don't think it is a **miracle for a raven to share food**, you obviously don't know much about ravens!

**Second**—in verses 8-16—we have the widow of Zarephath feeding Elijah with a handful of flour—and a little oil—for “many days,” the Bible says.

**Third**—in verses 17-24—we have God using Elijah to bring the widow’s dead son back to life again! Obviously can’t go through the whole chapter, so we are just going to focus on **God using the widow** to feed Elijah.

--Vs 7. Brook dried up because there had been no rain

--Vs 8. God doesn’t leave Elijah to fend for himself—and He doesn’t leave him without direction.

“Get thee to Zarephath, which belongeth to Zidon”

--Zarephath was roughly 100 miles from the brook Cherith

--There are a couple of reasons that make the choice of this city rather interesting.

1) This was not a city of Israel; rather, it was a Gentile city.

2) Even more significant was the fact that it had ties with wicked queen Jezebel. I Kings 16:31—possibly on the same page in your Bible—indicates that the king of the Zidonians was **Jezebel’s father**—a devout worshipper of Baal!

Imagine being Elijah! God was miraculously feeding you using ravens, then the brook dries up. Instead of God directing you to a **rich family in Israel**, though, He sends you to a poor Gentile woman. If that’s not bad enough, the woman lives in a city whose king happens to be Queen Jezebel’s father!

To top it all off, she’s pretty much **out of food!** Follow along as I read verses 9-12 (read). She’s down to her last handful of meal—meaning flour—and her last little bit of oil. She is preparing one last meal for her and her son. This was literally—in her mind—her **last supper!** ‘We’re going to eat this last meal, then die!’

Did Elijah have to trust God? He certainly did!

--In vs 9, God told Elijah that He had commanded a widow woman to sustain him—take care of him

--Somehow, God made it known to Elijah that **this was** the woman

--So strong was Elijah’s faith, that even though she said this was the **last of her flour and oil**, he said—notice vs 14—“For thus saith the LORD God of Israel, The barrel of meal shall not waste, neither shall the cruse of oil fail, until the day that the LORD sendeth rain upon the earth.”

The woman obviously had to trust God, too! In vs 12, she says “As the LORD **thy God** liveth...” She maybe knew who God was and feared Him, but she was not claiming that God was **her** God!

--She had to believe that there would be enough for her and her son—**after she made Elijah** a cake first per his request in vs 13.

--She then had to **believe Elijah’s words** that the flour and oil wouldn’t run out until God sent rain on the earth.

--Did she trust God? Yes, she did! We see in verse 15 “And she went and did according to the saying of Elijah...” In other words, she obeyed what Elijah said. What was **the result?**

--End of vs 15 “...and she, and he, and her house did eat many days. <sup>16</sup>And the barrel of meal wasted not, neither did the cruse of oil fail, according to the word of the LORD, which He spake by Elijah.”

**How long** did God use her to feed Elijah? Can’t say for sure—but we do know there was no rain for 3-1/2 years! We also know from I Kings 18:1 that God spoke to Elijah in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year to go find King Ahab. We don’t know how long Elijah stayed by the brook Cherith, but it is possible that the widow woman may have fed Elijah for 2 or 3 years!

Again, you may be tempted to ask—or at least think—‘Pastor, did God **really** make a handful of flour and a little bit of oil last for 3 years?’ To which I again would reply, ‘Yes, I do!’

And just like **Jesus confirmed the truthfulness** of God feeding the children of Israel manna in the desert, **Jesus confirmed that fact that the widow fed Elijah!**

**Luke 4:25-26** “But I tell you of a truth, many widows were in Israel in the days of Elias, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, when great famine was throughout all the land; <sup>26</sup>But unto none of them was Elias sent, save unto Sarepta, a city of Sidon, unto a woman that was a widow.”

Jesus **makes no corrections—or disclaimers—to this account.** Instead, He matter-of-factly states that in the days of Elijah there was a famine in the land and God sent Elijah to a widow in Zarephath to be cared for!

Lastly, let's consider... **3. Encouragements from God's Word to ask Him to meet our needs**

Is **trusting God to meet physical needs** something just for people in the Bible—or does it apply to us today? Thankfully, it **still applies to us!** In fact, Jesus taught quite a bit about God's desire that we come to Him as **needy children**—and He our **generous, loving, heavenly Father!**

In the time we have left, I want to do two things. **First**, I'm going to point out some of **what Jesus taught** regarding our heavenly Father's desire that we come to Him to have our needs met. **Second**, we'll look at how God used men besides Jesus to **remind us that God wants us to come to Him** to have our needs met. We won't be able to spend much time on them, but you will at least have the references to go back to later.

#### A. What Jesus said about God's desire to meet our needs

##### **i. God daily cares for "lesser" things so He will care for you**

We see that in Mt 6:25-30. I'm just going to read through these verses and make a few comments. What are the "lesser" things God cares for?

"Fowls of the air" for one. Jesus says as much in the end of vs 26. "...yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. **Are ye not much better than they?**" The answer, of course, is yes!

"Lilies" and "grass of the field" are also something God cares for. Lilies are beautiful—and so are dandelions **if you are a bee!** But grass, for the most part, is not something we get overly excited about. It's here today and burned—or cut up with the lawn mower—tomorrow!

And yet, since God "so clothes the grass of the field," Jesus rightly asks, "shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

##### **ii. God promises to supply your needs as you seek Him first**

We see that in Mt 6:33—probably one of my favorite and most-claimed promises. Please note that it **does not say**, 'Live however you want, and God will bail you out!' God promises to do something—add unto us the **things that we need**—but there are **strings attached**. In other words, it is a **conditional** promise. What are the conditions? What do we need to do? We need to seek first God and His kingdom!

##### **iii. God is more desirous to provide needs and wants than we are to our children**

Look at Mt 7:9-11. **Most** fathers do not purposely give their children **something that is harmful**—and unhelpful—if they come to them with a need. Jesus here says that if **imperfect and sometimes selfish** fathers meet the needs of their children, how much more will God meet **our needs!**

#### B. What God through Paul said about God's desire to meet our needs

Please note that what **Paul wrote** is what God inspired him to write! In other words, God used Paul to convey to us **God's desire** to meet our needs. There are obviously more; we are just going to look at 3.

##### **i. God already provided the greatest gift, anything else you need is far less!**

**Rom 8:32** "He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" God gave Himself **to us** and **for us** to meet our greatest need. Anything else we need pales in comparison to what He has already given!

##### **ii. God's "riches in glory" exceed what you need**

**Phil 4:19** "But my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." I don't think I'm going out on a limb to state that **God's riches** are greater than our needs. He has an endless supply of resources and will not run out!

It is important to point out, however, the context of this verse. God is using Paul to remind the Philippian church that since **they had sent monies to provide for Paul's needs**—at least twice—while he was in Thessalonica, that God would provide **for their needs**. In other words, this promise is similar to Mt 6:33.

##### **iii. God wants us to pray—not be anxious!**

**Phil 4:6-7** "Be careful [anxious] for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving **let your requests be made known unto God.**<sup>7</sup> And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

As we close this morning, consider this: God provided daily manna for two million people in the wilderness... and daily food for Elijah...and daily cares for the fowls of the air. Jesus even taught us to pray “Give us this day our daily bread.” Are you asking God to meet your physical needs—or are you too proud?

So, what would God have us do in light of His Word this morning?

1. First, I believe God wants us to ask ourselves this question: “Why don’t I bring more of my requests to God?” Am I proud? If so, humble yourself—and ask God to root pride out of your life.  
Do I doubt God’s ability...or love...or willingness to meet my needs? If so, go over these verses—and others like it—to encourage your faith. Our faith needs to be grounded on God’s Word!
2. Second, of all the needs you have—regardless of how big or how many—I can without hesitation say this:  
Your greatest need is to be forgiven of your sins so you can spend eternity with God in heaven.  
Having ***every need met on earth*** won’t matter one bit if you spend eternity separated from God in hell!