

The title of this morning's sermon is, "*The Danger of Pride.*"

On Sunday mornings we're working our way through Luke's Gospel verse-by-verse and we find ourselves at **Luke 10:17**.

The previous 16 verses describe Jesus sending out the 70. If you remember the sermon from two weeks ago, I said it was the collision of two kingdoms:

- The kingdom of God crashing into the devil's kingdom.
- The 70 were invading enemy territory and taking it from the devil.

In the following verses the 70 return from their trip, and we get to see whether they were on the winning side...

Luke 10:17 The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, "Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!"

We don't know how long their mission lasted. Since Jesus is approaching the last year of His earthly life, it would've been less than a year, but it could've been a few weeks or months.

But what we do know is they were successful. This wasn't just a victory. It was more like a landslide.

They actually said **the demons [were] subject to [them]**.

This is a new, overwhelming reality for the 70.

And here's the question:

- The 70 were given supernatural power and authority...
- They experienced great victories over demons...

Can you guess the temptation they might face at this moment? It's the same temptation any of us would face given such great power, authority, and victories?

Pride...and this brings us to Lesson 1...

LESSON 1: SUCCESS CAN LEAD TO PRIDE.

We all want to succeed. Nobody wants to be a failure. But pride is the temptation associated with success.

Let me illustrate what I think is happening in the following verses by sharing a humbling experience that took place about 17 years ago...

After I got out of the military, I worked as a supervisor at a distribution center for Target. I don't talk about it very much b/c I didn't do it for very long...and I pretty much hated it. I started teaching elementary school as soon as I could.

As a supervisor, we worked 12-hour shifts, and halfway through each shift the department heads would get together to discuss the numbers showing how our departments were doing. Then we'd go back to our departments and we'd either encourage them regarding their performance...or tell them they needed to pick it up.

One of the first nights that I ran the floor by myself, my employees had super high numbers. Now to be clear, I had nothing to do w/ it – b/c you can't make your employees have a good night or put up great numbers – but I was still thrilled w/ their performance.

Then something happened that seemed like a wonderful coincidence...at least at first. I happened to run into the general manager of the distribution center. Considering he worked days and I worked nights, I almost never saw him. I was thrilled to tell him how well he did, thinking he would celebrate with me, congratulate me...maybe even ask for my autograph. Instead:

- He asked a bunch of questions I couldn't answer...showing I still had a lot to learn.
- He communicated that one night of good numbers really wasn't a big deal.
- He shared a number of observations that really took the wind out of my sails.

Basically, he did everything he could to bring me back down to earth.

Now here's why I'm telling you this story...

This is what I see Jesus doing w/ the 70 in the next verse...

Luke 10:18 And he said to them, **“I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven.**

The 70 were pretty excited about themselves, so Jesus reminded them of an account that was very sobering. It's as though Jesus said, *“Don't start thinking so much of yourselves. I saw Satan fall, and the same can happen to you.”*

The background to Jesus' words are in **Isa 14:12**. If you have a study bible it might already mention **Isa 14:12**. If it doesn't you can circle this verse and write, **“Isa 14:12.”**

Then go ahead and turn to **Isa 14**. I want to read these verses so we can see why Satan fell. You can mark your spot in Luke since we'll turn back to it.

A few introductory points...

Babylon is mentioned more than any other city, second only to Jerusalem.

Throughout Scripture it stands in rebellion to God. For example:

- The Tower of Babel was the first organized rebellion against God.
- Babylon was the enemy of God's people. They attacked the Jews, conquered Jerusalem, and destroyed the temple.
- The Bible fittingly ends w/ the destruction of Babylon in Rev 17 and 18.
- Just as the earthly Jerusalem is associated w/ Christ and the heavenly Jerusalem, the earthly Babylon is associated with the devil and his evil kingdom.

This is why it's fitting – when the Bible describes Lucifer's fall from heaven – to compare it with Babylon. Your Bibles have a title for this section, saying something about Babylon, but you'll see it slowly transitions to a discussion of Satan's fall from heaven.

Let's start at **verse 9**...

Isa 14:9 Sheol beneath is stirred up to meet you when you come; it rouses the shades to greet you, all who were leaders of the earth; it raises from their thrones all who were kings of the nations.

Sheol is mentioned three times in these verses, and it's best to think of it as hell; KJV and NKJV translate it as hell. The OT didn't have the same revelation of heaven and hell that we have in the NT, but we can tell that these verses are discussing hell, and not heaven.

The verse is describing excitement in hell associated with Satan's arrival. The inhabitants stand up in tribute, but it's done in a sarcastic, mocking way. Look at **verse 10**...

Isa 14:10 All of them will answer and say to you: 'You too have become as weak as we! You have become like us!'

Hell is the great equalizer. When anyone arrives in hell – whether it's the greatest king or the most pathetic, wretched person – they're all the same. Even Satan, who was heaven's greatest angel, will be as low as the lowest person. The devil rules the demons now, but when he gets to hell he'll be as weak and powerless as anyone else.

While we're looking at this verse, I'd like you to notice two things:

1. First, there's no annihilation:
 - a. These people are in hell and they're alive. There's even personal recognition...they know who the devil is when he arrives.
 - b. It reminds me of the Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus. The Rich Man was in torment, but he was still able to recognize Abraham.
2. Second, there's no pity hell. These people ridicule each other and make the punishment even more miserable.

Look what they say to the devil...

Isa 14:11 Your pomp (or splendor) **is brought down to Sheol** (or hell), **the sound of your harps; maggots are laid as a bed beneath you, and worms are your covers.**

In **Mark 9:48** Jesus said hell is a place **where their worm does not die and the fire is not quenched.** His words are taken from this verse.

Notice Jesus discussed **the sound of [Satan's] harps.** Ezekiel is the other passage that describes Satan's fall from heaven, and it also describes his association w/ music...

Eze 28:13 You were in Eden, the garden of God...The workmanship of your timbrels (or something similar to our tambourines) **and pipes was prepared for you on the day you were created.**

Isaiah and Ezekiel both allude to the fact that Satan had something to do with music in heaven, possibly overseeing heavenly praise. This is why some people say he was heaven's worship leader. Although we play musical instruments, Satan is described as though he was a walking instrument.

But all this beauty and talent made him prideful...and this brings us to Lesson 2...

LESSON 2: LUCIFER FELL BECAUSE OF PRIDE.

The following verses describe Satan's fall...

Isa 14:12a "How you are fallen from heaven, O Day Star (Day Star means Lucifer, which is why some Bible's say Lucifer instead of Day Star), **son of Dawn!**

You might have wondered earlier if we were talking about Satan or the King of Babylon, but this verse makes it clear. The title **Day Star, son of Dawn** probably also indicates Satan was trying to imitate Jesus, who is the **Bright and Morning Star (Rev 22:16).**

A number of church fathers, such as Tertullian and Milton – and commentators – such as John MacArthur – make a connection between this verse and **Luke 10:18.** If you write in your bible, you can circle this verse and write **Luke 10:18.**

Look at the rest of **verse 12...**

Isa 14:12b How you are cut down to the ground, you who laid the nations low!

The association with **nations** sounds odd, but consider the number of titles that make Satan sound like the king of the nations:

- **2 Cor 4:4** calls him the **god of this age**
- 3 times in John's Gospel he's called the **ruler of this world**

- When the devil tempted Jesus he showed Him the nations of the world and said he would give them to Him, b/c they belonged to him

So Satan really is the ruler of the nations...until he's sent to hell.

The next two verses contain Satan's five **I will** statements. As we read them, notice how they're filled w/ pride...

Isa 14:13 You said in your heart,

'I WILL ascend to heaven; above the stars of God (he wanted to be the star that was above all others, including Jesus, the Bright and Morning Star...)

I WILL set my throne on high;

I WILL sit on the mount of assembly in the far reaches of the north;

Isa 14:14 I WILL ascend above the heights of the clouds;

(And here's the most outrageous and prideful statement that anyone could make, man or angel...) **I WILL make myself like the Most High.'**

People mistakenly say the devil said he would be greater than God, but that's not what he said. He said he would be **like [God]**...and that was bad enough.

If you write in your bible you can circle the words **I will make myself like the Most High** and write **Gen 3:5**. This is when Satan tried to pass along the same sinful desire to Eve when he told her, **"If you eat, you will be like God."**

DISCUSSION CONVERSATIONS W/ MORMONS – I would also say Satan has passed along this same sinful desire to them.

Look what this desire to be like God got him...

Isa 14:15 But you are brought down to Sheol (or hell), **to the far reaches of the pit** (which is another name for Sheol in the OT).

Notice the progression that's presented in these verses...

- In **verses 13 and 14** Lucifer said he would ascend above all others, but you can see where he ends up in **verse 15**.
- He thought he would be the brightest star that climbs to the highest point in the heaven, but he ends up being cast down to the lowest depths of hell.

It's the strongest contrast possible!

Look what everyone says when they see him...

Isa 14:16 Those who see you will stare at you and ponder over you: 'Is this the man who made the earth tremble, who shook kingdoms,

This isn't the mockery or ridicule we saw earlier. This is astonishment. Lucifer will be so humbled by God that everyone stares in amazement. Satan is unrecognizable in hell. They would never imagine the greatest angel and leader of the demonic realm could reach such a low point.

Isa 14:17 who made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities, who did not let his prisoners go home?’

The words **made the world like a desert and overthrew its cities** refer to the destructiveness of the devil. You can circle these words and write **John 10:10**, which is when Jesus said, **“The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.”**

At the end of the verse it says the devil **did not let his prisoners go home.**

These words create a beautiful contrast with Christ:

- You've got the devil who doesn't let people go free. He keeps people captive.
- But what does Jesus do?
 - **Luke 4:18** He “[proclaims] liberty to the captives [and sets] at liberty those who are oppressed.”
 - **John 8:36** If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.
 - Jesus told a parable about the strong man – who is the devil – and a stronger man – who is Jesus – binds the strong man plunders his goods, which refers to Jesus freeing the devil's captives: **Matt 12:29** **Or how can someone enter a strong man's house and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then indeed he may plunder his house.**

We could read a little further, but I want to stop here b/c it gives us the background we need for **Luke 10**. Go ahead and turn back there.

Jesus didn't want them to be prideful, and He used the devil as an example.

The lesson for us is when:

- We think about the devil...
- We think about his pride...
- We think about the consequences for him...

It should really sober us to the dangers of pride.

Jesus is going to give them – and us – a couple more reasons to be humble. Look at **verse 19...**

Luke 10:19 **Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you.**

Notice Jesus said, **“I have given you...”** which is really His way of saying...

“You only have this power and authority – and the victories you obtained by it – b/c I gave it to you. You didn’t earn it. It’s not b/c you’re better than anyone else.”

If you look back in **verse 18** they said, **“The demons are subject to us in YOUR NAME.”** It was even Christ’s name – as opposed to their names – that gave them the victories over demons. They really had no reason to be prideful.

In the verse Jesus said, **“I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions.”** Who is the **you**?

The seventy. Jesus gave them – not us – authority to do this.

I’ve told you a few times recently that we can’t take what’s described and prescribe it to us...and this brings us to Lesson 3...

LESSON 3: (PART I) JESUS DIDN’T GIVE US VICTORY OVER PHYSICAL SERPENTS...

This might sound like an unnecessary point to make, but there have been people who didn’t understand this. Here’s one example...

Pastor Wolford picked up poisonous snakes before his congregation, expecting God to protect him. In 1983 a snake bit him and he died. His son, Mack was 15 years-old at the time. When Mack got older he continued the snake-handling tradition he learned from his father. 30 years after the death of his father, when Mack was 45, he was bitten by a snake. He refused to receive medical attention, and after 11 grueling hours he ended up dying.

These accounts are tragic, because:

- Women lost their husbands...
- Children lost their fathers...
- Congregations lost their pastors...
- People lost their friends...

But probably the most tragic part is Christ’s bride looks bad:

- When David sinned in **2 Sam 12:14** Nathan told him, **“By this deed you have given occasion for the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.”**
- And this is one of those situations that causes unbelievers to say, *“Christians are crazy.”*

And why did these tragedies take place?

- Because these men misinterpreted Scripture.
- They made descriptive prescriptive.

In **Acts 28** Paul was bitten by a poisonous snake, and it didn’t hurt him. But he was one of the apostles who had this power and authority.

Here's what's really interesting about this passage...

Jesus might be discussing protection from physical serpents...but I don't think that's the case. I don't know why they would need to be immune to snakes. We saw last week that they weren't going to be facing physical opposition until later in Christ's ministry when He started facing more rejection.

Instead, I think Jesus is speaking of spiritual protection, and this brings us to the next part of Lesson 3...

LESSON 3: (PART I) JESUS DIDN'T GIVE US VICTORY OVER PHYSICAL SERPENTS (PART II) BUT HE GAVE US VICTORY OVER THE SPIRITUAL SERPENT.

Col 2:15 says [God] **disarmed demonic rulers and authorities, and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them [at] the cross.**

This is referring to the victory we're given over the demonic realm.

JM said Jesus' words "*appear to be figurative terms for demonic powers.*"

This fits the context for five reasons:

1. First, the 70 were talking about demons. Since they were talking about demons it would make sense for Jesus to respond with a comment about demons...as opposed to a comment about physical snakes.
2. Second, if you look back at **verse 19** Jesus said, "**I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, AND OVER ALL THE POWER OF THE ENEMY.**" It sounds as though Jesus wasn't talking about **serpents and scorpions**. It sounds like He was talking about the devil and his demons.
3. Third, this fits the rest of Scripture where the devil and his demons are compared with serpents and scorpions:
 - a. In **Gen 3**, **Rev 12**, and **Rev 20** – 9 times total to be exact – the devil is called a **serpent**.
 - b. When the 5th Trumpet Judgments takes place and the demons are released, **Rev 9:10** compares them w/ **scorpions**.
4. Finally, **Rom 16:20** says **The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.** This creates the imagery of Satan being a serpent that's crushed under our feet...and fits the context of the 70 triumphing over – or **crushing** – demons under their feet.

So what Jesus does now is He stops them from focusing on the victories that could make them prideful and He redirects them to something that should really humble them...

Luke 10:20 NEVERTHELESS, do not rejoice in this (or don't be puffed up about this), that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven."

They were focusing on the wrong victories:

- They were focusing on their victories over the devil.
- They should've focused on Jesus' victory over sin and death.

The key to interpreting this correctly is the word **nevertheless**, or in other translations Jesus said, "But..." or "However." These are words of redirection:

- The disciples were excited about power over demons, but they should be excited that they were saved by grace through faith.
- Jesus is telling them not to be so enthralled w/ the supernatural power and authority they had. Instead, they should be enthralled w/ their salvation.

They were settling for scraps: salvation is much greater than being able to cast out demons.

When Jesus said their **names [were] written in heaven** He meant their names were written in the Book of Life or the Lamb's Book of Life. They had two great reasons to rejoice about this, and they're the same reasons we can rejoice:

1. First, if your name is in this book you get to go to heaven.
2. Second, if your name is in this book, you don't have to go to hell:
 - a. **Rev 20:15** If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.
 - b. **Rev 21:27** Nothing unclean will ever enter [the New Jerusalem]...but only those who are written in the Lamb's book of life.

And this brings us to Lesson 4...

LESSON 4: OUR SALVATION SHOULD REMOVE PRIDE.

This has as much application for us as it had for them:

- The 70 weren't supposed to be prideful because of any victories they experienced.
- We shouldn't let any victories in our Christian lives make us prideful.
- Just like Jesus wanted to bring the 70 back to the reality that their names were written in heaven so they could be humbled.
- We should reflect on our names being written in heaven and it should humble us too.

And here's why...

Your name is in the Book of Life if you're a believer, but your name wasn't written in the book WHEN you became a believer. Any idea when?

Rev 17:8 every believer's name has been in **the book of life FROM THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD.**

This is pretty amazing. Your name was in the book thousands of years before you were born, or thousands of years before you could ever do anything to get your name in the book.

You can read Jesus' words like this...

“Don't be puffed up – or proud – that the demons are subject to you. Instead, be humbled that your names are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.”

Eph 2:8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 NOT A RESULT OF WORKS, SO THAT NO ONE MAY BOAST.

Four other verses – **Rom 3:28, 11:6, 2 Tim 1:9,** and **Titus 3:5** – make the same point:

- The NT is overwhelmingly clear that we're saved by grace through faith, and not by works.
- This truth should humble us!

Let me conclude by saying this...

There are lots of things we can think about that should remove pride. For example:

- We can think about our failures...
- We can think about how much better others are at things than us...
- We can think about the sacrifices others have made for Christ...and how small our sacrifices look compared to them...

But in this account Jesus gives us two truths – that when meditating on them – should humble us and remove pride:

1. First, the devil's fall from heaven. When we think about why he fell, it should sober us to the danger of pride.
2. Second, Salvation is the greatest gift we can receive and when you consider what you contribute to your salvation – which is nothing – and you consider what Jesus contributes to your salvation – which is everything – it should remove any hint of pride.

If you have any questions about anything I've taught this morning, or you'd like prayer for anything, Pastor Doug and I will be up front after service and we'd consider it a privilege to be able to speak w/ you.

Let's pray.