

Lent 2021

A CHANGE OF
HEART
THE VACCINE FOR
ARROGANCE

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2021 LENT DEVOTIONAL

WEEK 5

Salem Bible Church

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Dr. Joseph L. Williams, Senior Pastor

Rev. Jasper W. Williams, Jr., Pastor Emeritus

Monday, March 22, 2021

Arrogance: The Babe in Christ

Scripture Reading:

And I, brethren, could not speak unto you as unto spiritual, but as unto carnal, even as unto babes in Christ. I have fed you with milk, and not with meat: for hitherto ye were not able to bear it, neither yet now are ye able. (1 Corinthians 3: 1-2 KJV)

Devotional Reading

This week, we will be discussing different stages of our spiritual transformation and growth. We will start when we first accept Christ and the roadblocks that are presented within each stage. This week's journey should be a good guide for you to indicate where you are in the process as well as how you could potentially prevent the ugly manifestation of arrogance within your life.

When we initially accept Christ, we start as "Babes in Christ." This term comes from Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus when he told him (John 3), that in order to enter the Kingdom of God a man must be, "Born again." Jesus compared the transformation of salvation or establishing a relationship with God as a type of "rebirth."

The term is clear because it tells us that our salvation is a starting point for us. It's a time for us to restart and reset. It's almost a time for us to start over and in essence, relearn everything we did when we were children!

This is where we all start; no matter how long or short you have been a Christian; however, there are stumbling blocks that can derail us at each stage of our transformation. Each stumbling block is a manifestation of arrogance that we all must watch out for!

While we are babes in Christ, it's important we don't remain babes in Christ! Sometimes our arrogance manifests by convincing us, "This is enough." Coming to church, listening to a word, streaming a service here and there will suffice for many; however, the way for us to grow and blossom is not to feel that our start in Christ is our end!

When we become a babe in Christ, we must celebrate our transformation; however, we must not stay there in an intentional undeveloped state. When a baby is born, it grows when it's fed! This should be the same for us. As we listen to the word and study it for ourselves, we must apply it; this is the only way for us to grow!

Reflection

If you are a babe in Christ, has your growth been slower than perhaps it should be? Have you been guilty of allowing your start to become an ongoing state of your spiritual progression?

Tuesday, March 23, 2021

Arrogance: The Toddler

Scripture Reading:

For the time will come when people will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. (2 Timothy 4:3-4 NIV)

Devotional Reading

Once we have entered the world, it's only a matter of time before the baby becomes a toddler! All parents know this stage all too well! When a child becomes a toddler, the child is entering its years of exploration and formation. The child's ability to walk allows the child the opportunity to explore, learn and grow. The child will learn things with and away from its parents. These are the most impressionable years and will, in many instances, determine the direction the child will go and grow.

The formation of a child's logic, speech and reasoning abilities are all formed within this stage. The child is creating a foundation that he/she will grow upon during these formative years. There are many bad habits children at this stage can form and if they are not broken or addressed, they can be issues in the child's later development.

When we enter this spiritual stage of our formative years, we are being formed and highly impressionable about our surroundings. This is a great time to develop as a child of God however, it's a time when our belief system and faith is really formed and

fashioned. Just as in all other stages, arrogance can rear its head. It's in these times we must be careful.

When a child is a toddler, the child is exploring! The child gets away from his parents to learn things that are not always in keeping with what is "good" for the child. Likewise, we can often find ourselves in a soup of unsound doctrines when we are at this stage of our spiritual formation. There are many books, ministries, and doctrines that are out there that are not good for us!

We can't allow the arrogance of our desired independence to lead us down a hole of bad unsound doctrine! Our spiritual formation must be built in the word of God. It is important that everything we learn is consistent with sound teaching. The future of our faith depends on our ability to soundly learn God's word correctly at this stage.

Reflection

When you were in this stage of your spiritual formation, did you find yourself learning things that perhaps were not ideal to your spiritual formative years? If so, what were they? How did you process the information you were exposed to?

Wednesday, March 24, 2021

Arrogance: The Teenager

Scripture Reading:

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen. (1 Peter 4:10-11 ESV)

Devotional Reading

Teenage years are arguably the best years in life! Newfound freedom, the ability to make decisions and personal explorations with self and friends are golden experiences! Some of the most memorable times in life are during the teenage years!

We are living in a time of social media. Although our teenage years are awesome years for us, it's a time when many teenagers can be caught up in the over inflammation of ego and self. Endless pictures, self-promoting and the revelation of one's life becomes an intoxicating experience for many teenagers. Many of them can learn that life is about themselves and not others.

As we enter the “teenage” years of our spiritual formation, we are at risk of the same travesty happening to us! May people become wrapped up into themselves at this point and feel their faith is all about them. You can see many people who want to hear the word for themselves, read the word for themselves and worship God for themselves. If all your faith is wrapped into yourself, how can you be a servant of God in the Kingdom of God? (refer to devotion entry on “Babe in Christ”)

Arrogance can rear its ugly head in the fashion. It can cause us to have good intentions about God and faith; however, we aren't using our faith to impact the lives of others. At this stage of our spiritual formation, we should be focused on growing God's kingdom by serving others as God commanded. We should be focused on leading others and teaching others as we have been taught.

The foundation of God's kingdom revolves around the service of others. Each person must see that he or she has a place in the kingdom of God within the capacity of service. The place we have in the kingdom of God is not for ourselves but so others can be positively impacted by what we can offer through service. This manifestation is the byproduct of our faith in God.

Reflection

Have you ever been guilty of allowing your faith to cause you to focus on yourself? Have there been times when you could have been better at allowing your energy to be on others through the act of service?

Thursday, March 25, 2021

Arrogance: The Adult

Scripture Reading:

And Jesus answered them, “Have faith in God. Truly, I say to you, whoever says to this mountain, ‘Be taken up and thrown into the sea,’ and does not doubt in his heart, but believes that what he says will come to pass, it will be done for him. Therefore, I tell you, whatever you ask in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. (Mark 11: 22-24 ESV)

Devotional Reading

When we are children, we all desire to one day be “grown!” This is the ultimate state of living for any child. You can have your own house, drive your own car, and do your own thing! Being an adult is something every child wants until you become an adult! What makes being an adult so difficult is you have to make things happen all by yourself. With freedom comes responsibility.

Being an adult isn't easy! You have a family, children, bill payments and the constant worry of future, retirement, and health. This can split and divide us and it can take us in directions many do not want to go in. Sometimes life can become such a responsibility that it tests our faith. We can have so much on our plates that we spend all of our time thinking about ourselves and dealing with our own problems.

It's in these times our faith can not only be tested but it can become stale! Stale in that, it's not fresh and the vigor and excitement that we once had have left us. This is how arrogance creeps into our lives. It can cause us to forget everything we have learned and know to be true. Arrogance can cause us to depend on ourselves and not on our God!

Arrogance, during this time, can cause us to live in pride never telling anyone else about our problems or issues because we are too worried about what others may think. The Body of Christ is a concept that allows us the understanding that we aren't the only ones apart of the community! There are times in life when the answer to our problem may not be in a sermon, a message or a song but in the testimony of someone else.

When we enter this stage of our spiritual formation it's important for us to not allow the weight of life to dim the light of our faith. This is the time for us to use our faith to help us live beyond the weight of our own circumstances.

Reflection

Have you ever been in a pit of your life where life became "too much?" Did you allow those struggles to keep you from the things God had for you?

Friday, March 26, 2021

Arrogance: The Old Man/Woman

Scripture Reading:

So, I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (1 Peter 5:1-5 ESV)

Devotional Reading

If we are blessed, we can live a long life full of joy, happiness, and experiences. This is the goal of every person. Life has so much to offer; the only way to experience as much of it as we can is if we live a long life.

No matter how long you live or how good or bad life is, we all come to our end. No man or woman can live forever and because of this fact, we as believers can rejoice because through Christ there is more after this!

The issue with this stage in life is when we pass away to be with the Lord, who will carry on the work of the kingdom? Moses had Joshua, John preceded Jesus Christ and Paul influenced the life of Timothy. Each of these biblical characters had some type of mentor who carried on their work!

Many times, as we enter this stage of our spiritual formation, we forget all the knowledge we have been able to gain and learn in our lives. Wisdom is knowledge gained through experience. The wisdom many of us have doesn't need to go with us, but rather it needs to be imparted into someone else.

Arrogance can make us think that our knowledge belongs to us. Arrogance can cause us to not see how our faith and life's journey can be a great value for someone else. Arrogance during this time can cause us to look at our end and not how we can be intricate to someone else's beginning.

Every person in life needs to be a mentor to someone else. Imparting wisdom and knowledge are something we all need to do. Not only does mentorship help others but it allows you to see those things you experienced weren't experienced in vain!

Reflection

Have you ever been a mentor to someone else? How have you allowed your life's lessons help someone else?