

## **Entitlement, Pride and Covetousness**

### *Prayer*

We are given so many promises in God's word and God is so good that many feel that they are entitled and even deserve what they alone perceive is owed to them. Even the word entitlement has become a household word in Canada. Some wonder have we become a society of entitlement.

Have you ever felt like you have been treated unfairly when you didn't get what you wanted? Did the pastor feel treated unfairly because he didn't get a quad this year? Did you feel treated unfairly because you didn't get that promotion, that raise or that vacation that you have wanted?

Friends this morning, I am discussing the very human trait of entitlement. This has huge impact on our material lives. Many struggle to keep up with the Jones'

I know of one young man who was doing well for himself and he bought a travel trailer. He was very happy with it and was proud of the fact that he had worked hard and saved up the money to buy it... His brother seeing what he had bought went out and bought a bigger and more elaborate model not because he desired to have a nice trailer but to best his brother.

Now the brother who had purchased the first trailer became many things: He was now jealous and covetous of what his brother had.

Isn't it interesting that his pride in accomplishment, his actual accomplishment and his joy were all robbed from him? Why the change in his feelings?

Every year products come out with a new look or a better this or that. Why? Simply put it is because the marketing industry knows about the covetous nature of people. The latest model with go faster stripes is always the best. It is the next great thing.

Why do people decide that what they purchased and earned is no longer good enough? Why do they feel they need to keep up with the Jones'? Why do people feel that they deserve what another has? Why do human beings torture themselves this way?

We cannot find what we need in the things of this world. The enemy traps us into a competition to trick us and rob us of our joy and our abundant life. In this state we can never be "happy" with where we are at in life and enjoy God. We always want something better and so become distracted from what is important.

When we pull apart entitlement we see pride, covetousness and a sense of deserving the best of everything. Today, I want to ask the question, why don't some feel that what they have is good enough and remain happy in it?

Entitlement, covetousness and pride lead us away from God. They are contrary to his great plan.

Now that we have looked at the material, let's look at the kingdom of God for a minute...

Some Christians who struggle in this area find it really hard to reconcile the fact that God the Father actually makes hard choices. The reality is that some people will be with him in heaven and others will not. As human beings and because of this entitlement predisposition we decide that this is unfair and because it goes against modern thinking many consider this unfair. Kindness and living a good life are godly traits, but they cannot replace Jesus.

Yet he clearly says in Matthew 7:21-23:

*“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’”*

But surely, our God, who is the God of Love, is big enough to overlook the sin of the unsaved and forgive them anyway. A lot of the unsaved are good and caring people, many are kind, they simply don't believe in Jesus. Surely because they are such amazing people they are entitled to eternal life too...

Friends, our culture is slow to recognize that without Jesus there is no way to heaven. The purity of God demanded a perfect sacrifice to cover us for all our sins. God has graciously allowed all who will come and simply believe in his Son eternal life. Yet, in our modern world so many feel entitled to the reward without the commitment.

In Romans Chapters 9-11 it becomes apparent that some Jewish people are in God's family while others are not.

Let's look at 9:14,15

What then shall we say? Is God unjust? Not at all! For he says to Moses, *“I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.”*

Now move down to verses 25-28

*As he says in Hosea:*

*"I will call them 'my people' who are not my people; and I will call her 'my loved one' who is not my loved one," and, "In the very place where it was said to them, 'You are not my people,' there they will be called 'children of the living God.'" Isaiah cries out concerning Israel: "Though the number of the Israelites be like the sand by the sea, only the remnant will be saved. For the Lord will carry out his sentence on earth with speed and finality.*

Let's place this in context: The apostle Paul has just shared that we have a totally amazing connection with God through the Holy Spirit, and yet he mourns for those who stubbornly refuse Jesus.

Paul has been on mission to bring people to Jesus and despite many years of work, many people rejected what he had to say concerning Jesus. In verses 1-3 Paul is so upset that he wishes he could become a curse himself, if only the people would turn to Jesus.

As we look down into verses 4,5 Paul tells us that they had so much going for them. These people were supposed to be Israel, governed by God. Paul is grieving for the lost because God had shown them his love and adopted them. At Mt. Sinai he showed the Israelites his glory. He made wonderful promises to those who would seek a relationship with him.

How interesting is it that these same people didn't even recognize Jesus and the leaders of the church felt threatened by him and put him to death.

In their minds they had a image of God that fit their wants and desires. Jesus challenged their thinking. In 2 Kings 17:15 we read: *"They despised his statutes and his covenant that he made with their fathers and the warnings that he gave them. They went after false idols and became false..."*

Many rejected God... Doesn't that mean that God's plan for them kind of failed?

Let's look at verses 6-13

God's plan didn't fail because many Jewish people rejected Jesus. The truth is that you are not a Christian by being born a Jew. Not every Jew is a part of his chosen spiritual Israel. (See Ch. 11) There is a requirement upon us, salvation is not automatic, we must choose to become a part of God's family.

Our Lord God wants to be merciful and gracious towards us all.

Turn with me to Exodus 34: 6,7

*"The Lord, the Lord, a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in*

*steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin..."*

Friends, we do not have a malicious God, He is a God of love who stands ready to show his mercy. He has sent his Son so that ALL who choose to believe in Jesus would receive his mercy. Our God is gentle, he doesn't force himself on anyone; rather he provides a way of escape.

1 Timothy 2:3-5 says: *"God our Savior, who desires all people to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."*

We cannot earn God's favor, he owes us nothing and yet in Jesus he gives us everything.

Let's now look at verses 19-29

Our God sent his Son who by his blood redeemed us, propitiated us, justified us and reconciled us to the Father. In short, he purchased us with his blood, He took our place on the cross, he stood before us and made us legally right before the throne of God.

God has done much for us, but we are not entitled to his grace or salvation, we are given this because of his love for us. We have only to respond to his Son.

You see, many misunderstand the nature of God. He is pure, he is fair, he is just, he is merciful, he cannot abide sin, he will not tolerate being in its presence. This is why Jesus is required, he wraps us up in his righteousness so we are pure to approach the Father. He covers us with his sinless blood.

Here is the reality God is sovereign, Our God calls everyone to come to him, but not everyone will respond. Entitlement is a trap of the enemy to have a good person destroyed because they believe they can earn God's favor by works and clean living. While God loves those things, there is no way to God the Father except through Jesus Christ. We need the covering of his blood.

In verses 30-33 Paul tells us that trying to attain righteousness by ourselves is a waste of time. In our own strength we cannot do it. That is what the Jews did and why so many failed.

But I need you to notice that despite their failures toward God, He reached down in his love and mercy and GAVE us righteousness so that we could not boast or feel a sense of entitlement through our own goodness but rather that we would appreciate the sacrifice in Christ who made a way for us.

In our culture of entitlement, covetousness and independence, as Christians we are not entitled to anything, but we have through God's grace and mercy been given everything.

I would like to add a personal note here: I believe that God has done things in this way so that we don't have to worry about being good enough or righteous enough. As we love God and allow the restorative work of the Holy Spirit in our lives we are given the strength through his joy to overcome. I find this freeing because I can spend more time focusing on his love for me and how I can love Him back.

As mankind we feel that we are entitled to reach up to God, when the entire message has been an infinite God reaching down to us. He has already extended his hand in love.

God is looking for a remnant in his church that will love him and believe in his Son and accept his gifts.

Man made religion has always been about our reaching out to God. The truth is God has reached down to us; we need to humbly accept what he have graciously given.