

The Proud and Arrogant Are Coming Down

While preaching this past Sunday and elaborating on the conversion of Saul of Tarsus to Paul the Apostle, something unusual happened. As I began commenting on Acts 9:6, something stirred deep in my heart. I suddenly stopped in the middle of my message and found myself praying, "O God, bring down the proud and arrogant leaders in our nation, both political and religious."

Acts 9:6, where this experience occurred, reads, "*Trembling and astonished, he said, 'Lord, what will You have me do?'*" Saul, who was on his way to Damascus to arrest followers of Jesus, had just been just been struck down by a bright light from heaven. Lying in the dust, he heard a voice saying, "Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" Astonished and trembling, he inquired as to the identity of the voice and heard, "*I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting*" (Acts 9:5).

As I elaborated on the intensity of this encounter for Saul, I suddenly realized that the proud and arrogant Saul, who was bent on destroying this new Jesus Movement, had been brought down and humbled in the dust of the Damascus Road. It was at that moment that I spontaneously lifted up the prayer to God that He would bring down the proud and arrogant leaders in our nation, both political and religious.

God Hates Pride

God hates pride and both James 4:6 and 1 Peter 5:5 quote Proverbs 3:34 that warns, "*God resists the proud but gives grace to the humble.*" Paul warned against putting a novice (one new to the faith) into a place of leadership, "*so that he does not become prideful and fall into the condemnation of the devil*" (1 Tim. 3:6).

Pride is deadly because it asserts the "self" or ego against God. The middle letter of pride is "I." Pride is the root of all sin for the end of all sin is self-gratification. It was pride that brought down the beautiful archangel, Lucifer. It was pride that caused our first parents to declare their

independence from God and think they could be gods and make it on their own. Their prideful action plunged the world and the human race into what is theologically known as the fall, which opened the door to sin, evil and death. No wonder that Proverbs 16:18 warns, *"Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall."*

Pride Destroys Revival

Some years ago I was in a "revival" church and scheduled to speak that Sunday morning. It was a very festive atmosphere. But as people shouted, danced and ran, I heard the words in my mind and heart, "The stronghold of deception is pride," and I knew I was to speak on that topic.

When the service was turned to me I announced my theme and then shared with the congregation why that especially during times of revival we must guard against pride. I explained, and gave examples, how many men who were mightily used of God were brought down by pride, because they got an inflated idea of their own importance because of God's blessing on their lives. I told a sobering story of one of the most powerful healing evangelists of the 1940s-'50s and how he began to think he was Elijah, ushering in the second coming of Christ. I also told of his tragic end.

At the end of the service a somberness and quietness seemed to pervade the atmosphere. The people who were running and shouting earlier seemed almost afraid to move. After the benediction the people departed very quietly, almost speaking in whispers.

I later said to the pastor, "I hope I did not squelch the enthusiasm of your congregation. "O no," he replied, "In fact you were so on target that I may be accused of bringing you in to preach that message." He then shared examples of how pride had crept into their "revival" and was creating havoc in their congregation.

Charles Finney, who has been called the Prince of Revivalists, commented on how in the midst of a revival Christians often "sin against their own mercies, because they get lifted up with their success, and take the credit to themselves and do not give glory to God." He further elaborated, saying:

"Perhaps it has been published in the papers what a great revival there has been in that church, so that they begin to think how high they will stand in the estimation of other

churches all over the land, because they have had such a great revival. And they get puffed up and vain and they can no longer enjoy the presence of God. The Spirit of God withdraws from them, and the revival ceases."

We Must Deal With the Pride

A number of years ago I was sitting in a "Revival Now" conference when I suddenly had an overwhelming urge to bow down before the Lord. I considered how to respond for it was during a time when people were being called to come forward to receive prayer for a fresh touch of God in their lives. The urge to bow before the Lord would not go away and I finally turned and bowed at my seat.

As soon as my knees touched the floor I heard the voice of the Lord as clear as I have ever heard it. I heard Him say, "I am going to be doing some incredible things in the days ahead; and when you see My power and My glory, this is to always be your posture. You are to bow down and acknowledge that I am the Sovereign Lord of this universe."

I believe God is about to deal with the pride in America and in the American church. The proud and arrogant are coming down. Isaiah 2:11 says, *"The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."*

We can, however, avoid His discipline by humbling ourselves. I know someone will say, "But we are living under grace." That is true and Paul, the preacher of grace, said in 1 Corinthians 11:31-32, *"For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are disciplined by the Lord, so that we might not be condemned with the world."*

The Power of Humility & Prayer

For several generations, the first immigrants to America would set aside days of what they called "prayer and humiliation." It was not a time of groveling or self-flagellation, but a

time of confessing the sin of pride and the sin of trusting in themselves and their own strength instead of totally relying on the Lord. Out of their days of "prayer and humiliation" emerged the most powerful nation on earth.

We should not be surprised for God promises that those who will humble themselves, He will exalt. 1 Peter 5:6 says, *"Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."* And Isaiah 66:3 says, *"But to this man I will look, even to him who is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembles at My word."*

It is time that we as American Christians humbled ourselves before God, confessed that in our pride we have relied on our own strength, and confess how much we need Him. This could lead to a Third Great Awakening that will change the very course of this nation. If we do not humble ourselves, we can expect to be humbled. The proud and arrogant are coming down.

Dr. Eddie Hyatt is an author, revivalist and Bible teacher. His latest book, *The Faith & Vision of Benjamin Franklin*, is available from Amazon. You can read about his vision for America and another Great Awakening by visiting his website at .