

The Elder Brother Overcoming Pride and Entitlement

Last week we talked about the elder brother and all of us. The older brother is the darker side of us that we do not want to admit because no one wants to admit they are prideful and entitled. We deserve to have it our way, when we want it and how we want it.

A prideful entitled attitude puts the focus on ourselves and what we think we deserve rather than on the grace of God that brings life and grace to every fiber, nook and cranny of our lives.

So, the natural progression from a prideful and entitled heart in life is the downward spiral and lofty perch of judgment. You see, demanding what we believe we are due pushes us toward a prideful stance that hinders our ability to love people like Jesus loved people.

Our harsh judgment of others must be engaged within ourselves in order for healing to progress in their lives. Let's look at *Luke 15:29-30* "*look! All these years I've been slaving for you and **NEVER** disobeyed your orders. Yet you **NEVER** gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fatted calf for him!*"

Did you sense the accusations toward the loving father? Things like, "you **NEVER** gave me," Or, "when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fatted calf for him!"

Can you get a sense of the prideful judgments toward the younger brother as well, when he said things like, “This son of yours,” and then lists the offenses of his younger brother.... squandering all of his inheritance and squandered the fathers land with prostitutes.

But here’s what I want you to pay attention to this morning and I don’t want you to miss it, did you hear what is beneath the elder brothers words? Things like manipulation, anger, and righteous indignation all while sprinkled with bits of truth. And to be honest there was plenty of truth to justify the elder brother’s resentment and judgment. After all he was the son who endured and stayed behind and worked tirelessly.

He was the one who put his own blood, sweat, and tears into his father’s estate.

The elder brother wanted justice, and the fathers grace was getting in the way of all of that. The elder brother wanted to see what was clearly so wrong put right. Look with me to **Matthew 20:1-16**

“Or are you envious because I am generous? So, the last will be first, and the first will be last.”

That whole line of thinking offends the elder brother inside of me. The elder brother inside screams for justice, so we strive for perfection and then feel entitled to receive what we feel we deserve. In Romans 9:15-16 “For he says to Moses, I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion. It does not, therefore, depend on human desire or effort, but on God’s mercy.”

God’s grace is established on the sure footing of his perfect love toward us. His love opens the way for grace and forgiveness rather than judgment and condemnation that we rightfully deserve.

We are so inclined to put forth evidence to validate our righteousness and convince ourselves that we deserve more from our heavenly father. We say things like, “I was the one who stayed,” “Didn’t I obey everyone of your commands?” “Haven’t worked tirelessly for you?”

When others are not working as hard as we think we are, we become hard and justify our resentment. **The posture of entitlement that leads to judgment is fueled by insecurity.** To hide our insecure places, we throw out accusations and judgments upon others in order to feel better about our own deficiencies.

If we continue living from an insecure elder brother within ourselves and a conflict arises, we will let fear instead of love rule us. We will always choose to tear down instead of build up. We will always choose to accuse rather than show grace. Let me ask a probing question this morning, **how does your insecurity influence the way you judge and treat others? Do you have the ability to forgive or has the elder brother inside of you taking over your life?**

So, the kingdom of God mindset is this: mercy and humility rather than revenge and arrogance. **You choose.**