

A Declaration of Those Things Which Are Most Surely Believed Among Us

An Expositional Study of **The Gospel According to Luke**

Chapter 9- Luke 9:46-56

186- The Nature of True Greatness- Part 3

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Luke 9:46-56

46 An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest.

47 But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart, took a child and stood him by His side,

48 and said to them, "**Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great.**"

49 John answered and said, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name; and we tried to prevent him because he does not follow along with us."

50 But Jesus said to him, "**Do not hinder *him*; for he who is not against you is for you.**"

51 When the days were approaching for His ascension, He was determined to go to Jerusalem;

52 and He sent messengers on ahead of Him, and they went and entered a village of the Samaritans to make arrangements for Him.

53 But they did not receive Him, because He was traveling toward Jerusalem.

54 When His disciples James and John saw *this*, they said, "Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them?"

55 But He turned and rebuked them, [and said, "**You do not know what kind of spirit you are of;**

56 **for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.**"] And they went on to another village.

To the Glory of God

Now by the time that we get to **Luke 9**- the Apostles have been with Jesus now for over 2 years. You talk about an education! They have been with Jesus and watched Him and listened to Him 24 hours a day, seven days a week for over 2 straight years. So the next time you hear somebody say that all Biblical training and education is a waste of time- point out to them that the Apostles were the single most trained individuals that the world has ever known.

At this point in Luke's Story of Salvation- these men had been in the presence of Jesus Christ for 122,640 consecutive hours. And everywhere they go- it's a classroom and everything that is said and done is a lesson. So this is a *relentless* teaching. And we need to remember that everything Jesus ever taught to them was absolutely true and absolutely right.

Every statement out of His Mouth was a true interpretation of a Divine Mind. So these men were taught perfectly. They were taught perfect theology by a perfect Teacher. So the result of this is that these men were right. They knew what they knew and what they knew was true and right and correct and absolute. Let me show you an example of what I'm talking about. First turn with me to **1John 1:1-3**:

1 What was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—

2 and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

3 what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ.

Now after John tells you about Jesus in the first few words of verse 1 by saying that Jesus was eternal or in other words- that Jesus was God- he then immediately goes into his *own* qualifications in the remainder of the verse when he said:

... what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the Word of Life—

So John says here, that he and the other Apostles who literally spent so much time with Jesus actually saw Him with their natural eyes and they touched him with their natural hands. Now look what he says in verse 2:

and the life was manifested, and we have seen and testify and proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was manifested to us—

In other words- John is writing about what he and the other Apostles knew firsthand- not something they heard about or read about. And after the Apostle says that he and the other Apostles physically touched Jesus with their hands and saw Jesus with their physical eyes- he then goes on to say that he and the other Apostles testify to the rest of Mankind through their writings what “Eternal Life” really is and is not and what Salvation is and is not and the authority that John and the others use is that Jesus- as both God and Man- was manifested to them.

They heard Him they saw Him; they touched Him and He touched them and taught them personally. Now look again at verse 3:

what we have seen and heard we proclaim to you also, so that you too may have fellowship with us; and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ

So John is saying here that what the Apostles wrote down themselves or what they commissioned to be written down in the 27 Books of the New Testament is not something that they made up or something that popped up out of their own minds- but they wrote down exactly what they saw and what they heard directly from Jesus.

Now why did John and the other Apostles do this? Why did they write down what they saw and heard? Look at the next part of verse 3:

... so that you too may have fellowship with us...

Us who? Who is the “us” that John wants you and me to fellowship with? The Apostles. Why is that important? Because it was to them that Jesus and eternal Life was manifested. So if we want to know Jesus rightly and fully and if we desire to understand Salvation

correctly- then we must know and believe what the Apostle say about these things- because John says they got it right.

So being in fellowship with the Apostles is to not be physically around them since they are all dead- but it is to be in “fellowship” with what they wrote and taught or to be in alignment with what they wrote or in other words- to be in agreement with what they wrote and to understand and trust in what they wrote and to not be at odds with or in rebellion to what they wrote. Now look at the next statement in verse 3:

... and indeed our fellowship is with the Father, and with His Son Jesus Christ

Wow! John is saying very matter- of- factly that the Apostles fellowship is with the Father and with Jesus Christ. In other words- they got it right. So if we desire to be in right relation with Jesus- we must be in right relation with the Apostles. Now again, that doesn’t mean *physically*- because John and the other men whom God used to set up the Church have all been dead and with the Lord now for over 1900 years.

No, being in right relation with the Apostles means to be in right relation to what they taught. So if any of us ever hope to know Jesus rightly- then we must understand what the Apostles wrote down about Jesus and believe and teach that. Let me say this another way. If you are at odds with what the Apostle taught about Jesus- then you are at odds with Jesus. You cannot know Jesus correctly apart from knowing and believing what the Apostles wrote about Him. There is no such thing as knowing and loving another Jesus other than the one Jesus who has been revealed to us by Scripture- through what the Apostles wrote.

Conversely- you cannot be saved- unless you have been saved in the one single way that the Apostles have articulated Salvation to be. You and I go to heaven if we understand what the Apostles taught about Salvation and believe that. There is no such thing as being saved in a manner that is apart from the Salvation articulated by the Apostles.

Now there is not a single human being on earth today that can make a statement like that. Not one. I could never make a statement like that. You can be at odds with me all day long and still be right

with God. You can disagree with me and disagree with what I teach all day long and still be right with God. But you cannot be at odds with what John and Peter and Paul and James and the other Biblical writers wrote and still be right with God. If you are at odds with these men- with what they wrote here in the New Testament- then you are deceived and you are not right with God. That is exactly what John is saying here. So I am only right when I agree with what these men wrote down. Other than that- I am subject to being just as wrong as anyone else.

Now what could possibly be the basis for a statement like that? On what Authority could John make a statement like that? On the basis and under the authority and with the credibility that he and the other Apostles are the only men on the face of the earth who spent 24 hours a day and seven days a week and 365 days a year with Jesus for 3-1/2 years. His personal connection with Jesus and the fact that God honored what John and the other Apostles wrote down by confirming those words with signs and wonders and miracles and gifts of the Holy Spirit. That is his Divine credibility- and it is unquestioned. Jesus taught these men personally. And unlike what some of the leaders of the modern Church say today- these men *did* receive direct Divine Revelation. These men did have the capacity and the ability and the gifting to receive Divine Revelation directly from God and from Heaven itself. And what they received- they wrote down and that is what the New Testament is- a collection of the final; full; and complete Revelation of God that God gave to these men and to these men alone.

So that makes the Apostles to be the most unique people in all the world because nobody did and nobody will ever be able to do what they did. You see, they didn't just build a church building- they built the Church. They didn't just pastor a church- they established Christianity on the earth. They didn't just preach and teach the Truth- they received the Truth and wrote it down and made sense of it and they were also given the ability to correctly interpret the Old Testament as well.

And in addition to being right about everything they wrote in these Books- these men were given power and authority to represent Jesus Christ, and to proclaim the gospel of the Kingdom from town to town and village to village. And they were given so much authority that if they went into that place and somebody did not receive their

message- they were to pronounce a judgment on those people and shake the dust off their feet, and get out. That's quite a head-trip for a bunch of nobodies.

They were given authority and power to cast out demons. They were given the power to heal diseases. They were just common, ordinary guys- who were given this immense amount of Truth and Authority and Divine Power to manifest and teach and demonstrate in the Name of Jesus Christ and for His Glory.

And I'm telling you, for the most part, their flesh was having a very difficult time not being proud. And so, it was necessary for our Lord to teach them on many occasions what it meant to be humble. And one of those teaching opportunities is right here in **Luke 9**.

Now this is really three separate incidents. And as we go through these three events- we're going to go to school with the Apostles- with Jesus as our Teacher- not in the school of theology- but in the school of humility. So let's read **Luke 9:46** again:

An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest.

Now we need to know some things before we can understand verse 46. These men have just received their power at the beginning of Chapter 9- Power and Authority over demons, healing diseases, proclaiming the kingdom, pronouncing judgment on cities, shaking the dust off their feet. And verse 6 says that they went

"preaching the gospel, healing everywhere."

And in verse 28- to add to that- three of them- Peter, John and James- had an incredible experience up in a mountain with Jesus where the Lord pulled aside his flesh, and was transfigured before them and they saw the very Shikinah Glory of God. And these men also met Moses and Elijah up in that mountain.

Now, you talk about an amazing, astonishing, unique, unequalled experience. Here they are, with all this power, all this authority, this great kingdom message, the representatives of Messiah, having seen the greatest Old Testament figure, the law giver, Moses, the greatest Old Testament prophet in many minds, Elijah, personally, post-

resurrection, on the mountain, and the transfigured Christ. So it is really hard with all of that to be humble.

So they come down from the mountain, and Jesus demonstrates His Divine Power once again and they see all this and now they're having their argument in verse 46.

And you can just imagine how the argument would have gone. One of them says, *“Well, you never know- I could be the greatest one among all of us”*. But then James might have said, *“Well if it was going to be you- then you would have been up on that mountain with us- seeing what we saw.”* So right now- greatness is measured in spiritual experiences and the fact that none of them had a clue what Jesus was going to do before he did it has been forgotten here- the fact that some of them had an experience automatically means that they are the greatest ones.

And that is why we must never measure true greatness by the amount of Grace that God grants. None of these men were worthy to experience anything that they just saw. God was gracious to reveal Himself to them and it should have humbled them- not make them proud. Aren't you glad that we have risen above things like that? So you can't ever measure greatness by personal experiences- and those who do are making a terrible mistake.

Then one of them might then have begun to measure greatness by how much God used them and he might have begun to say something like, *“Well, over in the last village we were in- how many people did you heal? You only had three healings? Well, brother, I had five healings.”* So you can just imagine how this argument went on. Things like how many healings or how many demons cast out or who sits next to Jesus most often at dinner?

Now keep in mind that there are 12 Apostles. And there are four lists in the Bible of them, **Matthew, Mark, Luke** and **The Book of the Acts** each has a list of the 12. And in every list- there are three groups of four men and the men are always in the same group. The names are mixed within the group- but each man remains in their group. And the groups have descending intimacy with Christ. They were not all intimately involved with Jesus. And there were leaders within each group. Each group had a recognized leader- but in every case- the first name in all the lists is always Peter. Peter was not just the leader of his group- but he was also the leader of all the Apostles. That is what the Bible

teaches.

So to put it in Alabama English- there was absolutely a pecking order. It probably had something to do with the nature of the men and their natural giftedness. And it appears that they just sort of fell into those little groups- even though it might have had something to do with their personality. So group one was very bold. We don't have to question Peter's boldness, do we? I mean, if he wasn't in group one at the beginning, he would be in group one pretty quick. James and John are with him there- and they are called "sons of thunder"- so they thundered their way into group one, whether they were invited or not.

So you can see that there's a pecking order going on there. And so this debate that they are having in verse 46 was going on all the time. These were strong and competitive men and they lived in a world of hierarchical understanding. They lived in a world of ranking, which is still true in the world today. They were forever arguing over who is the greatest, and comparing all of their spiritual experiences and all their opportunities to display power and their intimate times with Jesus, and even this incredible experience on the mountain.

These were not soft and dainty men like Michelangelo portrays them in his famous painting. These were rough cut fisherman and hard working men with even a terrorist among them. And they were all competitive and they were all filled with arrogance and pride.

And on a good day- their pride is a struggle. But when you combine that with the fact that their message is right and that they have received amazing Authority from God- they are unable to deal with this lofty calling. It's hard to be humble when you're right. But it's necessary- because when you become arrogant about being right- you only prove that the rightness of your argument has brought the sin in your life to the surface.

And in this text, we're going to see Jesus teach humility. Verse 46 sets itself in Capernium- which was the central location for Jesus' Galilean Ministry- which had been going on for over a year now. And maybe this setting is in a home- maybe it's in Peter's home. They had just returned from traveling. They're back together again, and on the road and there was this argument.

And it was a heated one. In fact it got so heated, that James and John asked their mother to go to Jesus and plead their case to sit on His right and His left Hand. Now why did they do that? Because their

mother was related to Jesus' mother. So they thought they had the inside family track. Supposedly blood is thicker than water. But blood is not thicker than the Spirit of God. So they finally arrive at this place in Capernium, and this is what's going on. And now we will hear from Jesus about humility.

But let's look at this section of Scripture from the viewpoint of seeing this wicked sinful pride and what it does. Based on this text before us- I suggest to you that sinful arrogance and human pride does at least five things:

1. Pride Destroys Unity
2. Pride Seeks Superiority
3. Pride Reveals Depravity
4. Pride Rejects Deity
5. Pride Alters Reality

So let's examine these five things today.

1. Pride Destroys Unity

Luke 9:46a

An argument started among them...

Now there are a number of places where Jesus confronts and condemns human aggressiveness or what I call, "spiritual competition". Every single time people are comparing spiritual experiences to see which one is the greatest- you have spiritual competition going on and every time spiritual competition is going on- sin is at work,. It is never good; it always leads to bad things. People are always hurt and God is never honored when people are involved in spiritual competition.

Because Pride always destroys the unity of the Spirit. And this is one thing that is always stamped down when God is exalted. Human pride had a hard time to flourish where God is preached and taught and believed as being Sovereign. You see part of believing that God is Sovereign is to know that Man is not. And therefore- everything that God allows or causes with us is by Grace. And God deals with Man by Grace because none of us is worthy. And part of the reason why this is- is so that God will always stamp down our remaining pride

The Doctrine of the Absolute Sovereignty of God and the Doctrine of Total Human Depravity puts a lid on spiritual competition and hinders human pride and arrogance better than anything else. That is why there is so much of these two Truths in the Bible. And yet- even at that- we must place our pride on top of the table and look at it and we must talk about it as the real danger that it is and we must recognize pride as the monster that it is- or it will consume us.

Now these men were a team. They were a unit. They were one. They weren't supposed to be competing with each other. But they were called, commissioned, commanded, empowered as an apostolate. They were the first generation of gospel preachers who would give their lives for Christ, and needed to yield their hearts to one another, and not destroy the unity of that crucial mission. And this is huge.

Even when Jesus was at the end of His life- right near the cross- speaking to them about His Own personal suffering- It was hard to move their attention to that, because they were too busy alienating each other with their desire for personal glory. These men debated and argued about this right up to the very end. It really wasn't until after the Resurrection and they saw Jesus after he rose from the dead and they were endued with Power from on High- did they ever get a grip on their self-righteousness and pride.

So we need to know that pride destroys unity. It did it here and it does it with us and it did it in the church at Corinth where Paul writes this in **1Corinthians 1:11-13**:

11 For I have been informed concerning you, my brethren, by Chloe's *people*, that there are quarrels among you.

12 Now I mean this, that each one of you is saying, "I am of Paul," and "I of Apollos," and "I of Cephas," and "I of Christ."

13 Has Christ been divided? Paul was not crucified for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

So the people at Corinth were elevating one leader above the other- rather than loving and serving Christ in humility and brokenness. Look what Paul wrote to this same Church later on in **2Corinthians 12:20&21**:

20 For I am afraid that perhaps when I come I may find you to be not what I wish and may be found by you to be not what you wish; that perhaps *there will be* strife, jealousy, angry tempers, disputes, slanders, gossip, arrogance, disturbances;

21 I am afraid that when I come again my God may humiliate me before you, and I may mourn over many of those who have sinned in the past and not repented of the impurity, immorality and sensuality which they have practiced.

All of this is a result of pride. That's why in **Philippians 1:27**, Paul says:

... conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ, so that whether I come and see you or remain absent, I will hear of you that you are standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Strive together for the sake of the gospel." Strive together, not competing with each other. Now please turn with me to **Philippians 2:2**:

2 make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose.

3 Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves;

4 do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others.

5 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus,

6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped,

7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Pride destroys unity. And you talk about unity in a church until you're blue in the face, but as long as pride exists, it destroys relationships.

So when we fall to the level where we are more concerned about others than ourselves, when we are more eager to honor ourselves than we are

others- then there's some room for humility. Look what the Apostle Paul wrote in **Colossians 3:12-17**:

12 So, as those who have been chosen of God, holy and beloved, put on a heart of compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience;

13 bearing with one another, and forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you.

14 Beyond all these things *put on* love, which is the perfect bond of unity.

15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body; and be thankful.

16 Let the word of Christ richly dwell within you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms *and* hymns *and* spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God.

17 Whatever you do in word or deed, *do* all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks through Him to God the Father.

So Pride ruins a unified testimony for the Gospel.

2. Pride Seeks Superiority

Luke 9:46

An argument started among them as to which of them might be the greatest.

Pride always desires superiority over others. Pride seeks to elevate itself. Pride compares itself with everybody else, like Paul said in **2Corinthians 10:12** about the false teachers,

"they compare themselves to themselves."

This is what Jude said heretics do. In **Jude 16 &17** he said:

16 These are grumblers, finding fault, following after their *own* lusts;

17 they speak arrogantly, flattering people for the sake of *gaining an* advantage.

These are people who are just nauseatingly proud. Sick- self-elevating people. They love to be noticed and praised. The Apostle John ran up against these arrogance people and in **3John 9&10** he said:

9 I wrote something to the church; but Diotrephes, who loves to be first among them, does not accept what we say.

10 For this reason, if I come, I will call attention to his deeds which he does, unjustly accusing us with wicked words; and not satisfied with this, he himself does not receive the brethren, either, and he forbids those who desire *to do so* and puts *them* out of the church.

Jesus Himself castigated this spiritual arrogance and in Matthew 23:6-12 He said

6 They love the place of honor at banquets and the chief seats in the synagogues,

7 and respectful greetings in the market places, and being called Rabbi by men.

8 But do not be called Rabbi; for One is your Teacher, and you are all brothers.

9 Do not call *anyone* on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven.

10 Do not be called leaders; for One is your Leader, *that is*, Christ.

11 But the greatest among you shall be your servant.

12 Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted.

You want to be great? Then be a servant. This relentless search for superiority is part of the fallen world where everybody fights for the top. It is the struggle within marriages where wives sinfully seek superiority over the husband. Pride always seeks superiority. A proud heart is constantly trying to be on top.

3. Pride Reveals Sin

Luke 9:47a

But Jesus, knowing what they were thinking in their heart...

Remember back in Chapter 5 when the scribes were thinking about Jesus? They were reasoning in their minds about Jesus and in **Luke 5:22**- the good doctor wrote:

But Jesus, aware of their reasonings, answered and said to them, "Why are you reasoning in your hearts?"

Whoa. Nobody needed to tell Jesus what was in the heart of a man. He knew what was in the heart of a man, John 2 says. So how would you like to spend three years, 24/7, with God reading your thoughts? You'd say I might have to forfeit my ministry. I might have to forfeit my calling.

Well, in reality- this may be the greatest evidence of God's Grace in using us because He does know your thoughts. He knew what these men were thinking in **Luke 9**. He knew the debate. He understood the sin that was in their hearts. Pride is sinful. You're exposed. And that is really sad.

Some might say, *"Well, I don't want to be proud because I don't want to create discord and disunity and destroy relationships"* which pride does. Or they could say, *"I don't want to be proud and live in an environment where you have to find some sort of spiritual pecking order where everybody considers honors and achievements and all that kind of stuff. I don't want to get caught up in that."*

But then if that is true- then we shouldn't be thinking that way in our hearts- because sooner or later, if that's how you think in your heart, that's how you're going to be. Given enough time- whatever is in your heart will always come out. Time and truth go hand in hand. Given enough time- the truth about who you really are will always show up and show out.

A proud man may keep his arrogance under wraps for a while- but not forever. And I really believe that is one reason why some pastors have a very short ministry. As soon as the congregation finds out that they're driven by a proud heart- they lose their credibility.

But we need to know that the Lord is reacting here- not just to pride because of the damage it does to unity and not because of the fact that pride seeks superiority- but Jesus is reacting because pride is sinful. And you cannot do anything to ever make pride to be godly or holy. It isn't godly and it isn't holy and it will never be godly or holy. Pride and human arrogance is *always* sinful and it is *always* wrong.

And so, knowing what they were thinking in their heart –look at what Luke says Jesus did next:

Luke 9:47b

[Jesus] **took a child and stood him by His side,**

Now according to the sister verse in **Mark 9:36**- this was a child who was small enough to hold and yet grown enough to stand up before Jesus picked the child up. So this was a “little child”.

Now there is another sister verse to **Luke 9** and it is **Matthew 18**- so please turn with me to **Matthew 18** and let's read what Jesus said about this. **Matthew 18:1:**

1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and said, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

2 And He called a child to Himself and set him before them,

3 and said, "Truly I say to you, unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

4 Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

So you can't even enter the Kingdom unless you come to Jesus as a child. So what's the image here? What does Jesus mean by this statement? There is no personal achievement and no accomplishment with a child. So we have to come to Jesus- completely void of anything on our own that can earn us any place with God. I don't care how many degrees you have or how widely you've read or how clever you are in communication or how much money you have or how strong a leader you are or how many people worked for you or how many people you have commanded- you must come to Jesus as child. Complete trust and complete dependency and absolutely no independence.

Because what is basic about a child is that there is no greatness to a child- none. Children just aren't great. So true greatness- greatness with God is best illustrated as becoming as trusting and as dependent and as unaccomplished as a child.

So what the New Testament teaches is that a believer is a child. Now in the 1st Century- children were considered the weakest and the most ignored and the most vulnerable of all people. They had very little value- since most children didn't survive to become adults. And Jesus takes this little child as an illustration. And He is teaching the Apostles- *“Look, you got the wrong perspective. You're viewing yourself*

as if you're kings, as if you're great men. You've got this whole thing reversed. You are not kings- you're children. And it is your sin of pride that fails to recognize your complete dependence on Me and how I disdain human achievement and accomplishment." We must remember over and over again- **God resists the proud.**

And this coming to Jesus in a child-like dependency is reflected throughout the entire New Testament- which is why the New Covenant to the Jews and Christianity to the Gentiles was so radical. It completely ignores what Man elevates and it elevates what Man ignores. Human pride that is fueled by accomplishment and associations and talent and money and political connections and pedigree have absolutely no bearing at all with God- in fact those things do nothing but hinder you. Christianity is all about Grace and Mercy and therefore the Church is made up of the weak and the outcasts and the poor and the least among us.

Now I just want to say a few words about the distinction between being "*child-like*" and being "*childish*". Being child-like is what the Bible teaches. It is being completely dependent on God as a child is completely dependent on its parents. Being child- like means coming to God with no preconceived ideas and making no demands. Children have no rights and have no power and have no authority and make no demands. Children haven't done anything so they take no pride in their own accomplishments or their own worth and value. Children are fully trusting because they are utterly dependent. So being child-like is good; it is the Biblical pattern and something that we must pray about becoming and strive to be.

However being *childish* is *not* what Jesus is talking about. Being *childish* is to pout when you don't get your way and to make huge demands and to rebel and to be offended on a regular basis. Being child- like is Biblical because it is the epitome of humility while being *childish* is destructive because it is the epitome of selfishness and self-centeredness. So being child- like is godly but being *childish* is sinful.

4. Pride rejects Deity

Luke 9:48

and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great."

Now in a very unique way- Jesus was saying here that children do belong to Him. Children are the Lord's. All children belong to God- even the children of Muslims and the children of atheists. And I believe and teach that. But even more than that- Jesus is talking about those who are His Own.

In **Matthew 18:3**- Jesus made that crystal clear. He said,
unless you are converted and become like children, you will not enter the kingdom of heaven.

So in order to be child-like- we must be converted. So that means that being child-like is not normal or natural to us. It is unnatural and it is abnormal for a grown man who has labored and built and studied and learned and accomplish things in this life to set all that aside and become child- like.

In fact Jesus says here that unless and until you have been converted by a Sovereign Act of God the Holy Spirit- you will not be child-like and if you are not child-like- you cannot enter the Kingdom of Heaven. So this is just another way of saying that unless a person has been born again by the Spirit of God- he cannot be saved.

So then all of us are children in the Kingdom- meaning our entrance into God's Kingdom is all of Grace and we are without any merit, and without any achievement, and without any accomplishment. And **Matthew 18:4** says,

Whoever then humbles himself as this child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

So that is the pathway to true greatness. You pray and you struggle against your natural and normal inclination to be prideful and arrogant and you humble yourself by the Power of the indwelling Holy Spirit. You starve yourself from those external influences that encourage your pride and you feed yourself on those external influences that encourage humility. Now look what Jesus said in **Luke 9:48**:

and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in My name receives Me, and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me; for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great."

So since every true genuine believer is a child- then everyone who receives a true believer receives the Lord Who saved that believer. And whoever receives the Lord Who saved a believer- receives God Who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son.

But pride rejects the Presence of God in other believers. So when I receive a genuine believer- I am receiving the Christ Who saved that believer. So as a Christian- how can I say that don't have time for that believer or that I reject that believer? I can't. Yet lost people do that all the time. They reject genuine believers all the time. But when they do that- Jesus said they are actually rejecting God. Unbelievers not only reject believers *personally*- but they reject what believers say and what believers teach. And that is because they are dominated by pride. So pride rejects Deity.

5. Pride Reverses Reality

Luke 9:48b

... for the one who is least among all of you, this is the one who is great."

Now that upsets the world. It completely overturns conventional wisdom and turns it on its head. The world teaches that whoever is most is great. Whoever is biggest is great. Whoever accomplishes the most or whoever accumulated the most is great.

But Jesus said that that is the reverse of what is true. What the pagan lost world teaches about greatness is actually the opposite of what is true. Pride reverses the reality of true greatness.

So Jesus just flipped conventional wisdom on its head and said whoever is least among you- that is the one who is the greatest.

Let's pray.

