

The LORD Is There

Session 10. The Pride of Tyre

The God of the exiles judges every nation, and the fall of Tyre's prince shows what pride does to any creature that says 'I am a god.'

What We Found

While Jerusalem was falling, God's word went out over the whole map: Ammon, Moab, Edom, Philistia, Tyre, Egypt. We found one repeating pattern, because of what you did, therefore judgment comes, then you will know that I am the LORD. No nation was judged for being foreign; every nation was judged for malice, gloating, or pride, by the same standard God had already applied to Israel. The exiles' God is not a defeated local god. He is the judge of the nations.

In the prince of Tyre we met the sin the tradition associates with the angelic fall, in its purest form. His wisdom was real and his wealth was real; the text concedes both. His sin was the sentence his heart spoke over his gifts: 'I am a god.' We traced that sentence back through Scripture and found it is the serpent's original promise, and the same 'I will make myself like the Most High' that toppled Babylon's king. Every fall is the same fall: a creature reaching for the Creator's chair. Pharaoh caught the same disease from the other side, looking at the river that made Egypt and saying, 'My Nile is my own; I made it.'

And we found the counter-sentence. All through this book God calls his prophet 'son of man,' mere mortal, and Ezekiel answers to it. The man who accepts being merely a man becomes God's spokesman; the man who calls himself a god is told, 'you are but a man, and no god.' Tucked between the judgment oracles we also found two verses of pure promise: God will gather his scattered people, they will dwell securely, and they will know that he is the LORD their God. Even in the judgment chapters, judgment is not the destination.

Voices of the Church

St. Augustine, d. 430

St. Augustine's account of the two cities turns on two loves: a love of self carried as far as contempt for God, which builds the earthly city, and a love of God carried as far as contempt for self, which builds the heavenly one. Pride, on his reading, is not one vice among many but the founding act of the city that ends in ruin.

The City of God, Book XIV, chapter 28.

For the group. The prince of Tyre is the earthly city compressed into a single man. Every heart is laying foundation stones for one city or the other.

St. John Cassian, d. c. 435

Cassian, writing for monks, teaches in substance that pride is the most dangerous of all the vices because it attacks not beginners but the strong. It waits until the other sins are beaten and then corrupts the victory itself, whispering that our progress is our own achievement. It was pride that cast down the angel from heaven, and its remedy is to remember, gift by gift, that everything we have and everything we are is received.

Institutes, Book 12. Summary of his teaching, not a direct quotation.

For the group. This lands hardest on the genuinely gifted, the ones whose competence, like the prince of Tyre's, is real. Pride does not need false achievements; it prefers true ones.

St. Catherine of Siena, d. 1380

Her biographer, Bl. Raymond of Capua, records that in prayer the Lord taught Catherine the whole of wisdom in two short clauses: he is the One who is, and she, of herself, is the one who is not. Everything she was, down to her existence itself, was received from him moment by moment, and Raymond presents this single truth as the foundation of all her holiness.

Bl. Raymond of Capua, Life of St. Catherine of Siena. Summary of her teaching, not a direct quotation.

For the group. This is the exact inverse of 'I am a god.' The sentence Tyre's prince could not bear to say became the source of Catherine's freedom and joy.

Live It This Week

Practices

1. Each night this week, before sleep, name one specific gift from that day, your mind, a skill, a person, your existence itself, and thank the Giver for it out loud. One sentence is enough. This is Cassian's remedy in miniature: remembering, gift by gift, that everything is received.
2. Do one act of service this week that no one will ever credit to you, and tell no one. Let something good exist with your name deliberately left off it.
3. Pray the Litany of Humility once this week, slowly. If a line feels impossible to mean, pray it anyway and tell God it feels impossible; that honesty is itself humility beginning.

Scripture Memory

Ezekiel 28:26

"And they shall dwell securely in it, and they shall build houses and plant vineyards. They shall dwell securely, when I execute judgments upon all their neighbors who have treated them with contempt. Then they will know that I am the LORD their God."

Ezekiel 28:26

Go Further in the Catechism

- **CCC 391-392.** the devil and the demons were created good and fell by their own free choice
- **CCC 1866.** pride is named among the capital sins
- **CCC 2113.** idolatry divinizes what is not God, including power and money
- **CCC 2559.** humility is the foundation of prayer

Before next session. Read Ezekiel 34 before we meet again.