

PRIDE AND ARROGANCE

Ezekiel 31:10-13

Friday, March 23, 2018, 33rd Day of Lent

An initial reading of this passage indicates it is about a tree that grew beside a river. Birds made their nests in its branches. Wild animals gave birth to their young under it. Powerful nations lived in its shade. But as the tree became taller than all others, it became proud and arrogant. Because of its wickedness, the Lord sent an army to destroy it. The tree's boughs were broken off. Those who had lived in its shade abandoned it. Birds plucked off its twigs. Wild animals lay among its branches. Interpreters say the subject of this parable is Assyria or Egypt. But the message is about the danger of pride and arrogance. It serves as a warning for us.

The late novelist, poet and lay theologian C.S. Lewis is credited with saying, "Pride gets no pleasure out of having something, only out of having more of it than the next man... It is the comparison that makes you proud: the pleasure of being above the rest. Once the element of competition is gone, pride is gone."

Lewis also is credited with saying, "A proud man is always looking down on things and people; and, of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you."

Are we proud of a new car, a beautiful house or an accomplishment at work or school? Who is truly responsible for the good things in our life? Arrogance often accompanies pride.

It was Leo Tolstoy who said, "An arrogant person considers himself perfect. This is the chief harm of arrogance. It interferes with a person's main task in life — becoming a better person."

How do we treat those who are less powerful? Do we insist its "My way or the highway"?

Prayer: Lord, as we reflect upon scriptures this season, help us to recognize our pride and arrogance, realize the danger they pose, and choose humility instead. Amen.

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