

June 30, 2024 FPC Port Huron, Pastor Roxie, SERMON: The Sauls Teach Us: Pride and Humility Scripture: Samuel 9: 15-19, 10:1 King Saul Acts 9: 1-9 Apostle Saul Paul

INTRODUCTION

This is the **Final Act** in the Preaching Series of "Names: Same but Different"
We have seen **many Marys** come on stage. We have heard the **Josephs** from stage left: The Old Testament (Joseph with his many colored coat) and from stage right: the New Testament (Joseph, Mother Mary's husband and Joseph of Arimathea).
We came to know one of God's **script writers: John** who wrote the Gospel of John and the Book of Revelation. Then last week there was **James, one of the stars in the opening scenes of the Early Church.**

SAUL

Today, it is Saul—King Saul (from the Old Testament) and **Apostle Paul—Originally Saul—** (in the New Testament). **We will see the drama in both their lives which bring us, to our feet, as the audience in God's Playhouse.** When we look at all these people—Same Name; Different People—they are not just telling a story—They are **living** the story that God planned out for each of them.
They aren't just characters in a play—They ARE the play--they are REAL people, who trust God--responding to God as the Director of their Life's Play.
They have all taken their roles in God's story SERIOUSLY, trying to respond, to what is written in God's Grand Plan for them. **May it be the same for us.**

TAKING PART IN GOD'S DRAMA

You see, with the Marys, and the Josephs, and the Johns and the James, and now the Sauls. It is quite the dramatic play!! **But it doesn't stop with them.**
This Bible is not "all she wrote"—I mean this Bible is not "all God wrote."
God is still **calling people, like you and me,** to be a part of His Drama which is so much better than **all the "Drama" that is going on around us.**

NAME--SAUL

With that, let's get into the drama of the **Most Famous Sauls in the Bible—King Saul in the Old Testament and Saul—turned Apostle (which means "one who is sent") Paul (which means "humble"). That Saul/Paul is in the New Testament.**
Awhile ago, someone who is worshipping with us today and who has been a Christian for a very long time said to me: **"I had no idea that Saul/Apostle Paul was NOT one of Jesus' 12 Disciples."** Well, I can see how that could happen—Because some believe

that when Judas Iscariot betrayed Christ and hung himself, that Saul/Apostle Paul was the one who replaced Judas and was added to the list of Disciples/Apostles. Not so—Matthias—replaced Judas. But Saul/Paul) is also called an Apostle—**“One who is sent”—especially to the Gentiles—People who were non-Jews in that day—like us. We owe a lot to Saul/Apostle Paul—**Without him, we would not be Christians today. The “Jesus phenomenon” would have just been a “sect” in the Jewish religion. Instead, and because of Saul turned Apostle Paul, we know Jesus—his life, death and resurrection—and His claim to Be the Son of God—which He is.

MEANING OF THE NAME SAUL

The meaning of the name Saul means “Prayed for.” Very appropriate because the Israelite people (Old Testament) had prayed that God would choose a King for them to lead them on their way. God chose Saul to be their first King, as heard today in the Scripture reading. **The Gentiles,** (people who were not Jewish in the time following Jesus) knew nothing about Jesus. I am sure there were people in that day **Who Prayed that God** would reveal someone to share the news of Jesus with them. **Saul—turned Apostle Paul was that man.**

HUMBLE BEGINNINGS

Both men King Saul and Saul/Apostle Paul (Paul which actually means “humble”) grapple with both pride and humility. **King Saul was not born a King, and Saul of Tarsus was not born an Apostle. Both were Jews. Both came from the tribe of Benjamin** (which is the smallest tribe of the Israelite nation). Both were called by God to become Something Special: **King and Apostle.** They are both **called by God to a very special place** in God’s Salvation Drama. But both men have **drama in their own lives—In terms of “pride” and “humility.”** Both **men die fighting:** One for **his Earthly Kingdom (King Saul)** and One for **God’s Kingdom, in Jesus Christ** (Saul/Apostle Paul).

KING SAUL

If you want the whole story on King Saul, here is your assignment: Read I Samuel in the Old Testament. A rather dicey story of humility and pride. King Saul’s Pride wins out And the results are devastating. **Here’s the drama: Saul’s favor with God as King, does not last very long.** The Bible says, especially in I Samuel, that Saul’s kingship was taken from him when he succumbed to **his own pride, disobeying God and rebelling against God’s will. You see, King Saul begins to equate his own Wisdom with that of God’s.** During a key battle with the Amalekites, Saul chooses to do what he wishes rather than following God’s instructions. He values his own judgment over God’s.

When the **Prophet Samuel** confronts Saul and tells him of God's displeasure, it is already too late. An evil spirit has entered Saul and it is downhill from there. The Israelite Kingdom is taken from King Saul and given to his archenemy David—whom he has tried to kill several times. Saul tries to retain his power, but God's will is more powerful. Saul dies in battle by his own hand. **He goes from humility to pride. It is not a pretty ending.**

APPLICATION Pride does that to us—

Look at yourself—I have to look at myself—Look around you—our cultural/political landscape--and see what Pride does to us!! It is often rebellious, not even thinking about what God wants. **It is all about what we want!!**

SAUL/APOSTLE PAUL

Now fast-forward to the New Testament: Saul/Apostle Paul—a powerful man, Pridefully going around arresting and Approving of the death of new Jewish Christians. His prideful attitude say: How dare they believe in Jesus Christ and Throw away all the Laws and the Prophets. Saul is on his way to Damascus, as it says in Scripture, "breathing out murderous threats against the Lord's disciples." He gets permission to arrest them and throw them into prison—or worse—have them killed (like Stephen).

Assignment:

You need to read the Book of Acts—New Testament: it tells all the gory details but also the **amazing acts of God on Saul's life**—Knocking him off his horse, Blinding him, calling him to be one of God's messenger of Jesus Christ. Changing his name from Saul to **Paul (which means humility.) A Drama of Pride and Power becoming Humble and Healing; Finding Faith in God, through Jesus Christ. Humility is our way of finding God in the midst of all the Drama in our Lives. It is a better way!—Frankly, it is the only way to live life fully.**

NOW TO MAKE THIS RELEVANT

Here is the Definition of Humility:

Humility is a modest view of one's own importance; thinking along the lines of: "There may be a better way than my way."

HUMILITY IN THE BIBLE:

There are **83 verses** on Humility in the Bible about humility. Look them up. You will be amazed how central humility is to the Biblical Drama.

Some people, like theologians J. Brian Tucker and David Finkbeiner, would go so far as to say: "To be humble is at the heart of what it means to be like Jesus. ...Humility is central to who Jesus is and what He did **for all of us**, in His life, death, and resurrection."

FUNNY JOKE

Humility and Pride have sparked a whole array of funny jokes. Here is one of those jokes. After getting settled in the new town, a farmer went to church for the first time. He found that the people in the church gossiped and shunned him for his poor appearance. After the service, the preacher went to the farmer and told him that "In this town, we get dressed up for church." "But I am a humble farmer with no better clothes than these. What shall I do?" "Pray to God the preacher replied. "He will tell you what to do."

That next week the farmer came back to church wearing different clothes, but they were no better than the other set of clothes he had on before. The preacher interrupted the service to berate the farmer. "Didn't I tell you to ask God what to wear to come here?" Yes sir, you did. And did you do that?" Yes, sir I did. And what did God tell you to wear? Well, to be honest, God didn't know. He said He's never been I this church before.

INTERESTING STORIES

There are also plenty of interesting stories about Humility and Pride.

Here is just one of many: A young man was leading Youth Night at his church. He had his lesson all ready and struts up to the pulpit. He opens his mouth though, to find nothing comes out. He stutters and tries with all his might but finally he just has to walk off with his head down. He asks his pastor later: "Why couldn't I speak?" And his pastor says, "If you had gone up there, the way you came down from there (with humility), you'd be going down the way you went up! (with a sense of confidence and accomplishment). "

REVETING IDEAS COMING OUT OF BOOKS IN THE BIBLE (*James 4: 8-10*) (*Tim Keller*)

"The thing we should remember from meeting a humble person is how much they seem to be totally interested in us. Because the essence of -humility is not thinking more of myself or thinking less of myself, **it is thinking about myself, less."**

EXPERIENCES

And then we have our own experiences which teach us—teach me--as the two Sauls have taught us about Pride and Humility.

LEON—CHESS GAME

It was yesterday morning, when I am working on this sermon, that we hear from our oldest daughter, Tabitha—she is with her family in Leeds, England, visiting her in-laws. She tells us that our grandson, Leon, who is now 14, reads for recreation—how to make the moves in a chess game. He has gotten rather good at it and rather “prideful” about it. My husband **Bill** uses the words: **“Arrogant and Haughty.”** You see, Bill lost to this young whipper snapper, last summer when they played chess on the last day of their summer visit to us. **Oh, what a wonder it will be when Tabitha’s Family gets here in the middle of July.** There will be lots of opportunities to play chess and for me to preach to my own family (particularly Leon) about pride, (arrogance and haughtiness) and humility. Of course, these words will be coming from grandma, who knows nothing about chess.

TRANSITIONS

To end I just want to say that in the month of July, the New Preaching Series will be about Transitions—Humility and Pride are so evident when there is **change in our lives. Holding on and Letting Go.** We will look at **both Jesus and Saul/Apostle Paul** who had to humbly rely on others to continue the spread of God’s Good News, in Jesus Christ. Major Change—Major Transition—Major Movement in Pride and Humility. **This Transition Theme is very appropriate** since this church and these worship services will be in Transition, in the coming months, as I leave as your pastor and the new pastor comes. I know, God is Good, and it will be a time of **Grace, and Confidence and I hope, more than anything, Humility.**

Let us not forget: God Writes the Drama of Life. God the **Father** is the **Script Writer.** God the **Holy Spirit** is the **Backstage Director.** **Jesus has the Lead Role—And We get to Co-Star with Jesus. What else could we ask for? May we do it with all Humility—**Knowing it is not about us—**It is not about you—It is not about me—It is about God, in Jesus Christ and His love for us. Trust Him. And in that trust, God will not disappoint you.**