

Sermon Summary: The Problem of Pride, 8/28

1. Sirach 10:12-18—a “church book” that early Christians used probably written around 180BC; it contains wisdom-sayings or advice for living; Sirach belongs to the Apocrypha (“things hidden or withdrawn”); these writings, though considered inspired and authoritative for Roman Catholics, were left out of the Protestant Bible that emerged in the 16th century.
2. The lectionary includes Sirach 10 as an option because it’s possible Jesus is alluding to it in today’s Gospel (not to mention more directly Proverbs 25:6-7). So what does it teach?
3. Sirach, like Proverbs, focuses on the sin of pride (not pride as confidence, but pride as **arrogance**). Pride happens when we try to “play God” in our lives for the sake of control. It’s “pretending to be more than we are” (Niebuhr). Examples of pride in the Bible/Christian tradition include Adam and Satan; interestingly enough, Paul calls Jesus the **second Adam** because he refused the temptation to be like God; he humbles himself (see Phil 2:5-8).
4. Hebrews, our second reading, provides us with a corrective to pride: mutual love.
5. The Gospel of Luke shows us how the Kingdom of God subverts pride (v. 11) and how a new kind of community, one based on inclusion, emerges as synonymous with God’s Kingdom.
6. Sum/take-way: the basic problem is pride; Christians counter pride in social relations by an ethic of mutual love” and by being content with what we have; Jesus calls us to a new way of living together—we invite people to be part of our community who cannot “pay us back,” one where the “rules of the game” differ from ordinary social relations.
7. Are we the church Jesus is calling us to be? If so, how? If not, what can we do differently?