

The Humble Shall be Exalted

Pride and envy are two ugly traits. We see athletes brazenly promote themselves. Celebrities expect people to drool over them and receive special treatment. Our generation was not the first to have self promoters. The disciples had this problem. While walking to Jerusalem, the mother of James and John, asked special treatment for her sons. ***“And He said to her, ‘What do you wish?’ She said to Him, ‘Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom.’ (Matthew 20.21).*** She did not want much, she just wanted places of power and prestige for her sons.

This did not go over well with the other disciples for they also wanted to be at the right hand of Jesus. ***“And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers” (verse 24).***

Why did the disciples act this way? Why so selfish? Because, that is the way the world thinks. ***“But Jesus called them to Himself and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them” (verse 25).*** Could you imagine Pilate, or Herod, or Caesar, helping a poor widow? The way the world thinks, people of authority have servants to take care of them, and not the other way around.

It is at this juncture Jesus points out one of the differences between His kingdom and the kingdom of men. ***“Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant” (verse 26).*** This runs totally contrary to the way of the Gentiles.

Therefore, being great in the kingdom of God means being a servant. ***“And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave” (verse 27).*** Let us say you are a person of authority and have numerous servants or slaves. Which one would you value the most? Which one would you trust and want around you the most? Answer, the one that serves you the best. While living in a small Oklahoma town, we regularly

went to a pizza place in town. I do not remember much about the pizza, but I remember a young man who worked there. He was always efficient and seeing what we needed. I often thought that if I ever had a business, I would want him working for me. Why? Because he had the heart of a servant.

The role of the servant is to realize he or she are not serving themselves, but their master. Our Master is God and we are to do what He says. A good servant is not self centered except in trying to find ways to be even better at serving their master. This requires effort at improving your serving. Finally, it demands we humble ourselves before God and others.

Much of this runs contrary to the way people normally think. After all, who wants to be a servant? Most of the time we don't think too much of the guy across the counter at McDonald's or working the check out lane at Wal-Mart. When we do notice it is when they mess up. Every now and then I do notice the person serving me at McDonald's or at Wal-Mart. It is when I realize how good of a job they are doing. The same is said for God. He realizes when we are doing our best to serve Him and the really good servants are first with Him. ***"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up"*** (James 4.10).

What is the best example we have of a "good servant"? Jesus of course. ***"Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and give His life a ransom for many"*** (Matthew 20.28). Jesus, on the night of His death, and the disciples were together to partake of the Passover. They were in a house, but the master of the house was gone. Normally, either the master or one of his servants would wash the guest's feet. I can just see the disciples looking at each other and waiting until somebody washed their feet. They were surprised when Jesus started to do the job. ***"So when He had washed their feet, taken His garments, and sat down again, He said to them, 'Do you know what I have done to you? You call Me teacher and Lord, and you say well, for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an***

example, that you should do as I have done to you. Most assuredly, I say to you, a servant is not greater than his master; nor is he who is sent greater than he who sent him” (John 13.12-16).

The Christ, the Son of God, humbled Himself to the point of dying on the cross. He wanted to leave them and us an example of what it means to be a disciple of Christ. Jesus was crucified on the cross and raised to the right hand of God. While here upon earth, He was the humble servant. ***“And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2.8).***

We should never look at a job and think it is below us. If Jesus can humble Himself, we can do likewise.

In times past, problems among brethren have been due to pride and jealousy. Let us remember what being a Christian is about. - - Dennis Tucker