

INTRO - In the early 2000's there was a popular management book entitled, "Good to Great." The main idea is that businesses, people, even churches can do well, but then settle for good, rather than doing the best they could do, from doing great.

I. Our Gospel teaches us about Christian living. Sometimes God's people can put important before more important, can put good before God's greater will.

A. Jesus was at the home of a leader of the Pharisees.

1. The Pharisees considered themselves the most righteous, and worked to keep God's law even better than others.

2. This man was a leader, best of the best.

3. Please note, Jesus is speaking to Pharisees and scribes. He is speaking to church people. He is speaking to us.

B. However, this religious leader did not totally understand God's law.

1. One area where the Jews were especially vigilant was in Keeping the Sabbath holy. They even made extra laws to make sure they did not work on this day.

2. But in keeping this one commandment, they missed God's greater commandment. **you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.'** (Mk. 12:30) And, **'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'** (Mk. 12:31)

3. An ill man was in front of Jesus. Jesus asked if it was legal to heal on the Sabbath. They would not answer. In keeping their idea of the 3<sup>rd</sup> commandment, they missed God's greater law, that when we love others, according to His commands, we then love God.

C. Jesus, being God, saw through the motivation for their outward keeping of the law, and that was pride and self-righteousness.

1. He saw them choosing places of honor at this meal, and saw they wanted to be honored by others. Such behavior was foolish, not only because there would be people present more honored than they, but because serving oneself is ultimately not keeping god's law.

2. Honoring themselves became more important than keeping God's law. Jesus tells them the better behavior than prideful keeping of the sabbath is loving others.

3. Instead of inviting other important people to your home, invite those who are ill, needy, poor, and can't invite you back.

4. Instead of working for the honor from others because you outwardly keep God's law, receive honor from God because you love Him by loving others, like the man with dropsy sitting in front of Jesus.

II. Do you know what the GOAT is in sports? Greatest Of All Time. People argue who the best basketball player, best football player, best baseball player, etc., was. Still none were perfect. In addition, they all grow old, and are no longer good. All fail.

The truth is, winning glory for ourselves is always empty.

A. No Christian is perfect.

1. Jesus says in John 8:34, **Anyone who sins is a slave to sin.**

2. God inspired Paul to write in Romans 3:23, **All have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.**

3. No one wins glory in God's eyes by their own righteousness. We are sinners!

B. But, rather than promoting our own glory there is one at the table who will call us up.

1. Jesus, the Son of God, lived a righteous life. In love He paid for our sins.

2. As we trust in Jesus, He forgives and saves us. He calls us higher in the **Resurrection of the righteous.**

3. We deserve condemnation, the lowest place. By grace He calls us to heaven, to the highest place.

C. Listen to what Scripture says about Jesus and humility, and exaltation.

1. <sup>5</sup> **Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus,** <sup>6</sup> **who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,** <sup>7</sup> **but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.** <sup>8</sup> **And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.**

Do you understand, The Pharisees, even though they were sinful men, were grabbing at the higher places of honor. Jesus, the righteous Son of God, did not grasp for the glory of equality with God, even though He is God. He humbled himself to become a man, in order to love us, to die for us on the cross, to save us.

2. Verses 9-11 of Philippians 2 then teaches, <sup>9</sup> **Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name,** <sup>10</sup> **so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth,** <sup>11</sup> **and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.** Jesus did not exalt himself, honor himself, the Father did, because in love Jesus humbled himself.

III. Remember, Jesus was speaking to religious leaders, to church people, He is speaking to us. **everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."**

A. First, pride, exalting ourselves, is foolish. We are sinners. When we realize we are lost, but that we are saved by Jesus, we can throw away foolish pride. We can love others because Jesus has loved us when we did not deserve it.

B. Second, Jesus called the men at the banquet to love **the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind,**

C. Who among the lowly needs the saving love of Jesus today.

1. Are you reaching out to them. Is Our Redeemer?

2. Whenever we share the saving love of Jesus, we do that.

3. But Jesus wants to to humble ourselves, to love others. We do this because Jesus loves us!

CONCLUSION - One of my favorite book series is the Mitford series by Jan Karon, which tells of a North Carolina, Bible Believing, Episcopal priest, Father Tim. One of his favorite sayings is, "If you keep your eyes on God's people, you will always be disappointed." He also says, if you keep your eyes on God you will never be disappointed."

It is good to seek to keep God's law. In a way, people will see and you will have some honor. But, if they look hard, they will also see that we all struggle inside, and we are all sinners, and we all fail. What the Pharisees needed to know, what we need to know, is that we are not perfect. Nevertheless, when we know our sin, and know the forgiving love of Jesus, we want to share that love. When Jesus lives inside us, and we love others, then people see not us, they see Jesus. That is the best because Jesus saves.

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How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!" (1 John 3:1 a)