



Daily Reflections

November 5, 2017

Scripture

Matthew 23: 1-12

Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples, saying,
"The scribes and the Pharisees
have taken their seat on the chair of Moses.
Therefore, do and observe all things whatsoever they tell you,
but do not follow their example.
For they preach but they do not practice.
They tie up heavy burdens hard to carry
and lay them on people's shoulders,
but they will not lift a finger to move them.
All their works are performed to be seen.
They widen their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels.
They love places of honor at banquets, seats of honor in synagogues,
greetings in marketplaces, and the salutation 'Rabbi.'
As for you, do not be called 'Rabbi.'
You have but one teacher, and you are all brothers.
Call no one on earth your father;
you have but one Father in heaven.
Do not be called 'Master';
you have but one master, the Christ.
The greatest among you must be your servant.
Whoever exalts himself will be humbled;
but whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

Our Scripture Reflection

Did Jesus really mean that we are not to call any man "father" or "rabbi" or "teacher"? Of course not! Jesus is using His words to make a point about the hypocritical leadership of His day. The scribes and Pharisees loved to have people grovel before them. But they were not humble before the people whom they were called to serve. Jesus illustrated with His very life what true leadership was to be like in His Kingdom. True leaders, leaders who follow and imitate Jesus, are servants of others.

Food for your Journey

Speaking of expectations, Susi Lockard writes in the May–June 2008 issue of The Upper Room(13):

When my children were infants and I rocked them to sleep, I sang to them and prayed for them. I remember holding my 14-month-old son and praying for his future relationships with his roommates, his friends, his wife. For years, I came back to the same prayer. I know I must have wearied the Lord with my prayers; but Matthew 7:7 tells us to keep on asking, seeking and knocking.

When my son went off to college, I couldn't wait to hear about his roommate. "Well, Mom, he is a recovering drug addict. He was sent here for a year of rehabilitation and is studying art, taking part in sports, and trying to re-enter normal life."

I felt as if God had let me down, and my disappointment came through. "I don't understand. I have prayed for 18 years for you to have a good roommate who would have a good influence in your life."

My son, wiser than I, answered, "Maybe his mother was praying the same prayer." My son knew that he had been nurtured all his life and now had a chance to nurture a young man with serious problems.

God answers our prayers from wisdom greater than ours. I thought that my son needed a strong Christian friend; God knew that my son needed to be a strong Christian friend.

A Prayer from the Heart

Dear Jesus, You are the model of humility. Remove my arrogance, Lord, and help me to be a humble and loving servant of You and others. Amen.