



Articles and Sermons :: The Obscure Saint

The Obscure Saint - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/5/1 23:04

The Obscure Saint
by Jimmy Humphrey

There is a natural tendency in mankind to seek to make a name for ourselves. As far back as the tower of Babel, we can see man do everything within his power to exalt himself, and secure his own recognition and place in this world. Glory-hungry, man seeks pride of place amongst his peers. He wants the honor of always coming in first place, and the benefits that accompany such prestige.

In contrast to the spirit which animates this world, Jesus Christ taught us that we should not be this way. In the kingdom of God, things are turned upside down. In the kingdom of God, those who wish to be first must get in the back of the line. Instead of accepting lofty titles such as father, teacher, or leader, one must shun such recognition and simply desire to be known as a brother. (Matthew 23:8-11) For those who do lead, they must not operate under the idea that they are somehow a king or CEO, but rather, they must follow the example of Christ and see themselves as nothing more than a slave who washes feet.

Unfortunately, as things stand at the present time, this ideal has yet to be fully realized in the Church. Though we have come out of the world and have been saved, like Israel after it had been delivered out of Egypt, our hearts and minds are still very Egyptian in their orientation. Though marching onto the land flowing with milk and honey, we find ourselves still longing for the leeks and onions of Egypt. A curious and unholy mixture has formed. A mixture which I believe the Lord wishes to drive out of us, and will one day ultimately accomplish.

The writings of John Maxwell, Andy Stanley, Bill Hybles, and other popular authors, while having many excellent things to say on leadership, are but examples of this unholy mixture. Such is why their books are as easily marketable in the Church as they are in the business world. These men do say many wonderful kingdom things. But Egypt is still flowing through their blood.

For when you consider the general thrust of their teachings, they are often doing nothing more than fueling the same mindset that moved men to erect the tower of Babel—how to make a name for yourself. “Do this, and people will see you... Do this, and people will follow you... Do this, and you will occupy important positions.” That’s why people read leadership books, is it not? “They” wish to be like the tower of Babel, so that “they” can stand head and shoulders above the rest, and be at the front of the line.

This is entirely contrary to the spirit of the Scriptures, and the example the Lord and His apostles left for us to follow. The apostle Paul said, “For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord, and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus’ sake.” (2 Corinthians 4:5; NASB) Ironically, leadership is not about leading but serving. It’s about being a slave. And I don’t mean in the overly clichéd “servant-leader” type mentality that many men have caused us to believe is Biblical, which in fact it is not.

The servant-leader model espoused by many is in fact a self-serving model. In it you do serve others, but ultimately you serve others so that you might make a name for yourself, and whatever empire you are building. You do it so that you might make your Church bigger, perpetuate your organization, and somehow gather more and more men unto you. Undoubtedly, these things are being done in the name of the kingdom of God. But at the end of the day, things are done with such a mindset that ultimately draws men, in some measure, unto themselves instead of fully unto Christ.

Paul said he didn’t do things that way. He never preached himself as “the man of God” who must be followed and obeyed as if he were some sort of king, or the head of some organization. Rather, he desired to preach Jesus Christ alone as Lord. He never sought to be a leader or draw men unto himself. If men rejected Paul, Paul was ok with that. For it wasn’t about Paul. The idea of being a senior pastor, regional overseer, or the chief of apostles would’ve offended Paul. In the mind of Paul, Christ alone could occupy such positions, for He alone is Lord. The only position the apostle Paul sought was that of a slave. There was nothing in it for him but Christ, and what he could do to see Christ named where Christ had yet to be named, and to see Christ fully formed in the life of another individual.

Instead of seeking to become a better leader, Paul would've sought how he could become a better slave. Indeed, such is how Paul lived. He lived simply as a slave of Jesus Christ. So much so that when we think of Paul, we cannot think of Paul without thinking about Jesus Christ. Can you say that of John Maxwell? Can you say that of Andy Stanley? Can you say that of Bill Hybles? Can others say that of you? Or instead of thinking of Christ, do people think about the empires you've formed, and the Babel's you've erected?

Consider the great pyramids the pharaohs built. The pharaohs probably never actually laid even so much as one brick in their construction. A large army of slaves actually built the pyramids of Egypt. Yet, when we look back in history, whose names do we remember in association with the pyramids? The names of the slaves, or the names of the pharaohs? The names of the pharaohs of course. Why? Because the slaves worked for the glory of their king. As a result, the names of the slaves have all but perished, but the name of their pharaoh lives on forever.

We need to embrace such a mindset when it comes to the kingdom of God. Instead of thinking of the "big plans" God has for "our" Church and "my" ministry, we need to embrace the mentality of slaves, in which we don't seek to draw any attention to ourselves, but to glorify Christ alone. A slave has no plan. He is simply concerned with the will and glory of His master. Slaves live quiet and obscure lives, and go uncelebrated. Therefore, we should seek to live obscure and quiet lives, away from all the pomp and celebration, humbly serving our Lord. Should we ever receive any fame or glory in this life because of the quality of the service we render unto the Lord, when men think of us, their thoughts should ultimately be drawn unto Christ, and not ourselves.

The end of all our service should result in us living as obscure saints who served a glorious Lord. There may indeed be many bright stars in the night sky. But you can only see them when the sun is hidden. But when the sun is visible, though the stars of the sky are still there, they are obscured to the point that you can no longer see them, because of the glory of the sun which eclipses the glory of the stars. May we so live our lives as slaves of Christ, who serve the Lord as unseen and unsung, because of the glory that is His alone.

Re: The Obscure Saint - posted by KingJimmy (), on: 2010/5/2 14:20

Thoughts?

Re: The Obscure Saint - posted by sojourner7 (), on: 2010/5/2 15:05

If Christ is to be magnified in our hearts
and lives; our attitude must be like that
of John {the Baptist} "He must increase;
as I must diminish."

John 3:30