***The Honor of Jesus Christ

RV106-02***

We are studying Revelation 5:11-14, the closing verses of this chapter, on the universal adoration of God. This is segment number eight. The Lord Jesus Christ was the Lamb of God who was put to death to pay for the sins of all mankind. The demands of God's justice, calling for the punishment of evil, have thereby been satisfied by the suffering of Jesus Christ on the cross. The need for absolute righteousness to enter heaven has been met for the believing sinner by imputing to his account the absolute righteousness of Jesus Christ.

So, Jesus Christ, as the Lamb of God, has met the two primary needs. God's justice, which requires punishment for sin, has been satisfied; and man's need for absolute righteousness has been given to him by imputation since the sacrifice of the God-man, Jesus Christ, has removed completely the wall between God and the sinner, the Lord Jesus was raised from the dead to be the Firstfruits of all believers who also will follow in resurrection someday. That is an important thing to remember about the Lamb of God. Indeed, his death was very important, but his resurrection was equally important. His resurrection tells us that God's justice has been satisfied; that absolute righteousness has been made available to the believing sinner; and furthermore, that when the physical body of the believer dies, he will live again. Whatever the circumstances at the point of death; whatever the conditions; whatever the distress; whatever the way; and, whatever sorrow is left behind, it's all trivial and insignificant, because at that point, there is the glorious memory (the glorious realization) that there is going to be a resurrection.

It is important that we remember that we will follow Him in His resurrection, even as we have followed Him by the imputation of His death to our account. The total obedience of Jesus Christ to the Father's plan of salvation, and the unreserved expression of love in giving His life for all sinners, makes the Lord Jesus Christ worthy of universal praise.

**The Qualities of Jesus Christ**

So, John, in his vision in heaven, hears the angelic host in heaven, chanting a thunderous litany of praise to the God-man, Jesus Christ. We have this in Revelation 5:12. The litany includes these qualities: first, power, which is the capacity to make anything happen. Jesus Christ is proclaimed worthy of being omnipotent. Secondly, riches, which refer to material wealth without limit. Jesus Christ, the God-man, is worthy of all material possessions. Third, wisdom – the divine viewpoint values and insights into the true nature of things. Jesus Christ is worthy of knowing it all, and of having that total discerning missions. Number three was strength, which refers to physical strength of body – to good health. Jesus Christ is worthy of all physical capacity and accompanying good health.

**The Honor of Jesus Christ**

Now, we take up the next quality, and that is honor. The angels proclaim that the Son of God is worthy of all honor. In the Greek Bible, this word looks like this: "time." This is a word that connotes esteem for someone. It connotes the recognition of the dignity of a person, or the esteem that we hold for the position of that person in life. It is respect for the role and the task of a person in relationship to God's plan for him.

So, as we turn to the Bible to get some idea of how this word "time" is used, in terms of the concept of honor as esteem, we begin with 1 Peter 2:17. We read, "Honor all men." This is the verb form, which looks similar: "timao." The word "timao" is the same concept as the noun "time:" "Esteem all men." Everyone is to be honored. Why is every human being to be honored – even some human beings that are the biggest skunks that the human race has ever seen? They do things that we recoil from in complete revulsion. We consider them the lowest life form on the face of the earth, crawling out from under the rocks, but they are human beings. And this Scripture says, "We must esteem them."

**The Image of God**

The reason for that is twofold. One, because Genesis 1:26 tells us that human beings were made in the image and likeness of God. They have the capacity, unlike animals, for thinking. They have the capacity for making decisions, and for exercising of volition in such a way that their decisions make things better for them. Animals work by instinct. They do not proceed by cognitive thought. They don't perceive. They don't act upon thinking procedures. Because we are made even in the very reflection of God, in the fact that we are body, soul, and spirit, even as God is a triune person, yet we are one human being, we have a distinctively different characteristic from the animals. Sure, the animals can think, and the animals have certain qualities of the soul because they make decisions and they have certain feelings, but the animals do not have a spirit. That's the distinctive part. We have a God-consciousness capacity that animals do not have. Therefore, we have a thinking capacity that they do not have. So, I don't think I don't care how terrible a person is as a human being, God says, "You must have seen him because I am the pattern in which this person was created."

**Jesus Christ Died to Save *All* Men**

And secondly, we must esteem all men because the Lord Jesus Christ died to save them. We have this taught us in 1 John 2:2, where we read, "And He (that is, the Lord Jesus Christ) is the propitiation for our sins (the satisfaction to God for our sins), and not for our sins only (not for ours only), but also for the sins of the whole unsaved world (the sins of the whole world)." So, because the Bible tells us that Jesus Christ died for that lowest life form in the human race, that person must be esteemed. So, this word "honor" in the Bible means that you have a respect for this human being, and you exercise an appreciation because of what Christ did for this person, and because the pattern in which he was created.

Furthermore, the word is used in Romans 13:7 to give us a broad description of this concept of honor that we are to exercise. Paul says, "Render, therefore, to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; far to whom fear; and, honor to whom honor." Here we have our word "time" again – respect to whom respect is supposed to be given.

As you search through the Word of God and follow this word, you find some very distinctive declarations as guidelines to us as to how we are to exercise honor. Of course, we begin with the Lord Jesus himself. In John 5:23, we read, "That all men should honor the Son even as they honor the Father. He that does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Here we are told that whoever else we may esteem in life, we should esteem the Son. And we should esteem Him to the same degree that we esteem God the Father, indicating that there's no difference between them. They are both deities. Furthermore, the last part of that verse makes a very significant declaration. The person who does not honor Jesus Christ as being God does not honor the Father who sent Him.

There are a lot of preachers who do not believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God in terms of deity, and therefore, they look upon Him as a fine, good man who had some tremendous character and some tremendous teachings. But they reject Him as the divine Son of God. Yet, they talk about God the Father. They talk about the Fatherhood of God, and the imagined brotherhood of all men under that Fatherhood. But here, John says, "If you do not esteem Jesus Christ for what the Bible claims He is, and what He claimed to be as deity, then no matter what you say or what you think, you do not honor God the Father.

Take the whole community of the Jewish people: If there's anybody who thinks that they honor Almighty God, it's the Jews. If there was anything that a Jew would recoil from, it is the suggestion on your part that he does not esteem Almighty God. He would go into a convulsive fit on the spot if you declare that to him. And I don't care if he's the most nonreligious kind of Jew imaginable. He views himself as one who esteems almighty God. But the Bible says that that is not true, because that same Jew has rejected Jesus Christ. He does not esteem Christ as Savior (as deity), and therefore, he does not esteem Almighty God. He does not esteem the Father. No matter what he thinks, and no matter what he says, he is going to experience the terrible shock of discovering rejection by the God that he believes he honored.

It seems that Menachem Begin is probably very sick. He may, in fact, be terminally sick. We're getting more and more information filtered out to us that this man is on his last moments. Here's a man who has been prominent in the Jewish cause. Here is a man who is so oriented to the Word of God that he has run the Israeli government on the basis of Scripture, in terms of the land that God has promised to the Jew – their right by divine appointment. And he has driven the rest of the world crazy to say, "Hey, I have a right to the West Bank because God gave it to us, and I can show it to you in the Bible. It belongs to us, and so does some of that land on the other side of the Jordan River that we still don't have. This is our heritage, and I claim it on the basis of the authority of Almighty God."

That's a man who thinks that he honors God; that's a man who thinks that he has esteem for God the Father; and, that's a man who, in a very short order, is going to be out there in eternity. Do you know what he's going to find out? He's going to find out the significance of this verse. All men should honor Jesus Christ as the Son of God, even as they honor God the Father as the Almighty: "He that does not honor not the Son as being deity, and the One sent by the Father does not honor the Father who sent Him." So, it doesn't matter what Menachem Begin thinks; it doesn't matter how devoted he has been to scriptural authority; and it doesn't matter what vision that he has had for the Israeli nation in terms of Scripture. It's all for nought. The man will spend eternity in the lake of fire because he does not honor the Son, Jesus Christ.

**Children are to Honor their Parents**

Next, the Bible gives some advice to children in terms of esteem. That is in Ephesians 6:2 which is quoting an Old Testament principal. This is one of the moral commandments: "Honor your father and mother, which is the first commandment with promise." The first commandment says that if you do this, good things will happen to you. If you esteem your parents, good things will happen to you. Paul comes here in the New Testament and says, "That rule is an eternal rule. If you esteem your parents, good things will happen to you. Honor your father and mother." And as you go through life, you continue to do just that. You continue to esteem; you continue to honor; and, you continue to treat them with the respect that they deserve as parents.

**We are to Honor Marriage**

In Hebrews 13:4, we're told that marriage is an honorable relationship: "For marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled, but fornicators and adulterers God will judge." Here is a verse that our society scoffs at. It completely violates this, and does it now on an acceptable term.

"Time" magazine in a recent issue reviewed the middle 60 years of the 20th century – a period of years from 1920 to 1980. It went systematically pulling articles and comments out of past editions of "Time" magazine that reflected the big things that were happening during those years. As I read through those 60 years (that I personally recognized), the thing that was interesting was the gradual change from the early part of the 20th century to where we are today in terms of morality. There were articles there about people being put under arrest for adultery. An entertainer was described who was arrested for putting on an obscene dialog in a nightclub. Can you imagine anybody today in Las Vegas being arrested for obscenity in entertainment of any kind, or for any immoral immorality that is practiced? It has come now to the point, if they had updated it right to this year, where even the degrading practice of homosexuality is no longer held as a matter that the law is to stand in the breach, and to forbid as an evil that degenerates and deteriorates the society. You can just see how we have come down over the period of those 60 years.

So, the Word of God here says that we are to honor the marriage relationship. Marriage has been so undermined that, if you are an unbeliever, you have the odds two-to-one against you of a marriage that you enter into lasting for a lifetime. This is because of the whole trend, and the orientation, and the attitudes of our society. So, the immorality is accepted as a way of life. This is a problem for children who are growing up. This is one of the problems we face in the Berean youth clubs that we are struggling with: to teach young people to be different from society; to teach young people that our society (if you thought it was bad when you were growing up) that our society is indeed a sewage lot of the most unimaginable kind; and, that they must learn, and must look to the grace of God, to be willing to stand alone. That's the big problem. A young person has to be able to say, "That's OK. I don't do what all the rest of the kids do, because what they do is ungodly. And it's OK with me if that leaves me out. I have the character."

Now, unfortunately, some Christian kids just don't have the character. They don't have the potential manliness, and they don't have the potential womanliness to stand up against society – to stand up against their peers. They just flow with the stream, and they just don't have the internal fortitude to stand up for godliness. That is one of the major problems that parents face – to try to instill in their children that the thing that is most important in their life is to be willing to stand alone apart from the crowd, and to reject all of the evils that are accepted by the rest of their peers. And that will have a very definitive expression when they get to the point where they enter marriage.

God says, "We should have seen marriage and we should treat it, therefore, with the respect that it deserves as one of the divine institutions, and do not treat it lightly.

In 1 Peter 3:7, we're told that wives are to be honored: "In like manner, you husbands dwell with them (their wives) according to knowledge, giving honor unto the wife as unto the weaker vessel, as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered." The wife is to be esteemed, and she is to be esteemed in the realities of life that she is (compared to the male) the weaker vessel. Therefore, she is to be cared for and treated with consideration, and we are to act in respect to her accordingly – that she is to be esteemed.

Every now and then, when I have to perform a marriage ceremony, and I include this verse, you'd be surprised how many times I've had people (usually potential mothers-in-law) who come along and want me to remove this phrase, "the weaker vessel." You've got some gal who is a feisty feminist type, and they have actually come and said, "I don't want you to say, 'As unto the weaker vessel.'" I have to say, "Well, it's not my authority to change that. Now, a lot of the other words (if you don't like them), I'll change those because I make those up myself. But when I read the Bible, you'll have to talk to God. But you'll have to bring me a written notice. This is how we do it at Berean Academy. You have to have a signed statement from your parents to do things. And if your heavenly father gives you a signed statement that I can read to change it, I'll change it." Pretty soon, it begins to get through their brains that it's God's Word, and therefore, it is not optional for us to tamper with.

So, the Word of God says, "The wife does have a certain relationship with the male husband, and he is to act accordingly." It is a pity for the woman when he does not act accordingly – that he does not recognize her as the weaker vessel, and he is to, therefore, seek to carry her along accordingly, so that she may function to her maximum wellbeing.

Furthermore, 1 Timothy 5:3 tells us that honor is to be exercised by Christians toward those who are widows: "Honor widows that are widows indeed." A widow is to be esteemed for the problems that come to her life now that she is on her own; particularly a mother whose husband dies, and there are small children in the home, and she is burdened with the problem of rearing children. Again, the Bible never designed single-parent families. This is another dishonor toward our society. We have single-parent families like you wouldn't believe. In fact, one of our teachers at Berean Academy recently said that she was talking to someone, and she said, "It is amazing the idea that this person was conveying was that the single-parent family was the norm. And that in the classroom, we were to treat that as practically the norm, so that if some poor kid came, and he had a mother and father at home, he was to be viewed as disadvantaged." That's what it has come to. It has come twisted around so that if you are so unfortunate as to have a mother and father, you're disadvantaged.

Widows are made by their husbands dying, but the same effect is created when there is a divorce, or somebody deserts, and those people must be treated, the Word of God says, with the special esteem and consideration for the additional burden that they must carry, now alone, that ordinarily would never be placed upon their shoulders.

In Leviticus 19:32, we have another area of esteem. This same concept is found in the Old Testament. This is toward those who are elderly: "You shall rise up before the white-haired person, and honor the face of the old man, and fear your God. I am the Lord." What that verse says is that you are to treat with esteem – you are to honor the person who is older. You are to look upon him as someone who knows something of merit to you. So, when those who are the oldest among us walk by, you should stand somewhat at attention, and show the esteem. We hope that you will observe that.

**Honor Civil Authorities**

However, the Word of God also tells us that we are to esteem civil authorities. 1 Peter 2:17: "Honor all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king." We are to esteem the king – esteem the civil rulers. Here again, you have a basic biblical principle. If there is any area of life that it is difficult to execute, it is this one. There are so many politicians that you cannot esteem; that you cannot honor; and, that you have to distinguish in your mind – this person is a bum. This person is totally disoriented to the Word of God. This person is a horrendous disaster to civil society, but he holds an office that we esteem.

Part of the thing you have to recognize here in the Scriptures is that you distinguish between the person who is filling the office, and the office itself. The concept of government is a divine institution. That we must esteem, and that's what the Scripture is pointing to. But you may have a king sitting upon that throne who is a tyrant, and yet you deliver him into the hands of God. In a constitutional republic such as ours, you have freedom for removing those people if the people have been determined to do so. And you must esteem civil authorities (constituted authorities). That is one of the one of the things that children have to learn. When we break their will at home, their rebellion against authority is what we're dealing with, and that is to teach them to properly esteem constituted civil authority.

**Esteem the Pastor-Elder of the Local Church**

1 Timothy 5:17, we're given another object to esteem, and that is the task for elder of the local church: "Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double-honor, especially they who labor in the Word and in doctrine." In the local church, there is to be an esteem for the authority of the pastor-elder, and esteem for his authority means that you ask questions. Before you make moves, you say, "What do you think?" If you don't ask that question, you'll make terribly disastrous moves. If you don't ask that question, you have demonstrated a lack of honor and a lack of esteem for both the office and the person who, at that particular point, fills that office. It is a disaster for local church life when the people do not understand that that person, who has been placed in the authority by their recognition of God's call to that particular assembly, now is the authority that they are to consult. And if they do not consult concerning the things they do, then they do not demonstrate esteem.

The consequences are that God will deal with them accordingly. This is just as He always dealt with Israel, when Israel refused to consult with Moses saying, "Moses, what do you think? What is God's direction as you understand it?" When they did not do that, they got into trouble. When they didn't do it, God stepped back and said, "Go ahead. Go right down the road. I'm going to let you make that move. As you go along, you will learn to you will have cause to regret it. And you will look back upon it, and you will say, "Why didn't we have the good sense to ask before we jumped in?"

**Esteem your Employer**

In 1 Timothy 6:1, there is another object of esteem: one's employer: "Let as many servants as are under the yoke count their own masters worthy of all honor, that the name of God and His doctrine be not blasphemed." What you have here is in terms of what was a slave society. You have masters and slaves. But the same principle applies in terms of our society – in terms of employers and employees. The person who is your employer deserves your esteem, and you work for him because you esteem him. You work for him because you honor his choices. When you do not want to work for him; you decide that he's dishonest; or, you decide that he's evil in what he's doing, then you cease to work for him. But while you are under his employ, and while you are in his pay, you deliver the services that you have agreed upon, and you thereby demonstrate esteem for him as your employer. Historically, in our society, we refer to that as the work ethic.

Out of the Protestant Reformation, there grew a very distinct concept between personal prosperity and the Word of God, and that was summarized in the concept of the work ethic. The Word of God says that you are not to steal, but that you are to labor with your own hands so that you may receive the fruits of your labors, and that you may then distribute them to yourself and to others as God leads you and as others are in need. That is the principle of the Word of God. The early history of the United States was based exactly on that. People worked; people were permitted to keep the benefits of their labors; and, people distributed them according to divine guidance. And those who did not work were not prospered. And if a person was not prospered, it was because he was violating this work ethic principle. The Word of God, says, "Esteem your master; provide the work; and, then you will have fruits of your labor to enjoy."

Of course, when government gets in, it messes up that system. Government siphons off the capital (the savings) of people; the society then is weakened; and, it cannot be productive. The reason that the United States has been the most prosperous nation on the earth, and the reason that it has developed such a high standard of living is because so much money was left with the people who earned it. Therefore, they accumulated savings – savings that were of real value. And when there are savings in the bank, then the banks can make loans and can provide the capital for the business stimulation and business operation. But when people personally do not have savings that they are putting into the banks, the whole system collapses.

So, esteeming your employer has a great deal of personal significance to your personal prosperity. The government is in the forefront of violating this principle of not esteeming the employer. We have an amazing anti-business mentality in the government today such that you wonder where the crazies all came from. That anti-business attitude is the attitude which has existed in other parts of the world, and which has brought people down to poverty and to a low standard of living. So, don't get caught up in that. The Word of God says, "You honor the person who's making it possible for you to become prosperous through your labors.

**Esteem your Physical Body**

1 Thessalonians 4:4 adds the item of the Christian's physical bodies: "Every one of you should know how to possess his vessel (that is, your physical body) in sanctification and honor – in sanctification that is being set apart to godly purposes and in personal esteem. Do you esteem your body? What do you eat during the week? Every day when you sit down to eat a meal, look at this and say, "If I eat this, am I demonstrating esteem for my body?" You just take a look at all those things that we eat and ask, "Is this esteem for my body?" And the consequences are that the body is a chemical factory. If you don't provide the chemicals, it won't work.

The body is also controlled by the head all the way through, not only in terms of its nerve structure controlled by the brain, but also in terms of its thought structure. It's becoming more and more evident to the medical world that people that have a bad mental attitude are creating physical breakdowns in parts of their bodies. They have a bad mental attitude. They have a mental attitude which is not stabilized by the Word of God. As the Bible stresses, the mind of Christ is what we possess. And this is a mind not of fear, but a mind which is stable. When that mind is not centered on God and upon the principles of the Word of God, then that mind enters a position of instability. When the mind is in that kind of a state, it affects the body.

So, the Word of God says to learn to possess your body in esteem. So, therefore, what you think is important. When the Lord Jesus came to this earth, it was something brand new – a person who was God, but He was a human being at the same time. When He came to this earth, God the Father invented a system of functioning for the Son – a system of power, a power base. And that power base was love. At the heart of everything that Jesus Christ did was this power base of love. What in fact was happening was that when He came, He was testing out the power base. He was testing out the power system that God had provided for Him as a human being. And that power system was love.

In 2 John 5, for example, John, in this little epistle, touches upon that very thing: "And now I beseech you, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto you, but that which we had from the beginning – that we love one another." This is talking about the power base that the Father created so that the God-man could function on it in this world: "This is love: that we walk after His commandments." Now you're back to that principle that you know so well. Unless you know doctrine, you're incapable of loving: "This is the commandment that, as you have heard from the beginning, you should walk in it." Then he goes on to describe how there are deceivers in the world bringing false doctrines concerning the person of Christ, and tearing it all up.

Now, that is a tremendous truth. That is why we are constantly told to love one another, because when you have a mental attitude love, then you have a mind that isn't lousing up parts of your body. Then you have a mental attitude that is exercising esteem toward your physical body. It is the people who are hating; the people who are jealous; the people who are envious; and, the people who are grinding away in their emotions toward other people who are the people that are having physical breakdowns as well. The two go together.

So, this was the power base that enabled Jesus Christ, as the God-man, to live in Satan's world. And don't forget that that world is characterized by three things: arrogance; rebellion; and, hatred. At the heart of everything that is Satan's power base is arrogance. And the motivation is hatred. Arrogance expresses itself as rebellion; and, hatred expresses itself in a variety of envy and slander and so on. If you're going to operate in this world on Satan's system, you will operate on arrogance, and you will operate on hatred. The result will be physical breakdown. If you operate on God's power base, which is love provided by God the Holy Spirit in the believer, then you will have a totally different mental attitude, and it will affect your physical structure.

So, I caution you again about these mental attitude sins that are extremely costly in the effects upon our physical bodies. To do that is not to fulfill 1 Thessalonians 4:4 in esteeming your vessel.

**Esteem People who are Producing Divine Good**

In Romans 2:10 is another objects for our esteem and our honor. That is the people who are producing divine good: "But glory, honor, and peace to every man that works good; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek." Honor and esteem the person who is producing divine good. This is the same principle which is enunciated in Matthew 25:21: "His Lord said to him, 'Well done, you good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over few things. I will make the ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your Lord." This is the pattern that those who produce divine good are to be respected. They're to be esteemed. Those who do not produce divine good are not to be treated with esteem. It's a very serious sin not to give a, "Well done, you good and faithful servant" to the person who has been producing divine good. When you do that, you have put yourself right in line for divine judgment and discipline, and you can count on getting it. When your divine good production is not honored, we are told that we are not to faint in well-doing, for we will be rewarded in time.

You may be at the opposite end of the line where you are not receiving esteem for divine good production. The Word of God tells you to be careful not to rise up and say, "I deserve better. I don't deserve being treated like that." because the next thing you'll do is go out for vengeance. But what you should do is go to the Lord and say, "Now, here's the situation. Here are the individuals, and I know commit them to your vengeance; to your justice; and, to your dealing with them, and I want to stay out of the way." If you don't, you may find that when God cracks the whip on those who do not esteem divine good production, you may just get in the way, and get a slash yourself.

This is not a small thing when God says, "Honor those who produce divine good." This is as the Lord Himself will do. He will say, "Well done, you good and faithful servant. You had this and this and this, and you performed faithfully." Now you step up, and you perform even more."

Hebrews 3:3 gives us a very important area of our esteem in terms of the creation that is around us: "For this Man (the Lord Jesus) was counted worthy of more glory than Moses inasmuch as he who had built the house had more honor than the house." Moses was a great man. The Jews highly esteemed him. But the writer to the Hebrew says, "Jesus Christ was the one who Moses represented; who built everything in creation that Moses was honoring; and, who Himself was the fulfillment of all the tabernacle, the worship, the ritual, and the system that Moses was engaged in. Moses was great, but he was not greater than the person who put it all together. He was not greater than Jesus Christ, who was a builder."

You and I have to constantly be on our guard that we don't esteem something from creation greater than the Creator. That's what Romans 1 tells us was the downward path of mankind to where they forgot about the living God, and began worshiping idols and animals. They became more engrossed with their material possessions (something that God had created) than the God who had created it. He warned Israel when they went into the Promised Land that they would be tempted to do that very thing, and Moses pled with them, "Don't think more of the prosperity you're going to enjoy. Don't think more of the milk and honey that's flowing in this land than you do of the God who provides that milk and honey.

In Proverbs 3:9, we were told that Christians (believers) are to honor God with their money and with their material possessions: "Honor the Lord with your substance, and with the firstfruits of all your increase." That's an interesting verse. Honor the Lord with the first money that comes in – out of your paycheck, before you pay the light company, and the department store, and the car company, and all of those other people. First of all, you give it to God. That's number one. You honor God with your money in this way.

Christians who are in temporal fellowship are declared to be vessels that God esteems for His use. That's why it's important to maintain confession of known sins. 2 Timothy 2:20-21 say, "But in the great house, there are not only the vessels of gold and the silver, but also of wood and of earth, and some to honor and some to dishonor. If a man therefore purges himself from these (evils that he's just described), he shall be a vessel unto honor, sanctified and fit for the Master's use, and prepared under every good work.

It doesn't matter how much ability; how much talent; or, how much gifts you have – whether we would describe you as a gold type of vessel, or just pottery. Whichever you are, if you are in temporal fellowship, you will be a vessel unto honor that God will use.

In John 4:44, we are given a warning (an occupational hazard) of the Christian life and service: "That honor (esteem) is denied the prophet from among his own people. For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country." Be prepared to expect that for your services. You will not be honored by the very people who are the beneficiaries of your life.

Furthermore, Proverbs 26:1 gives us a very important guideline for the exercise of our esteem: We don't give it to fools: "As snow in the summer, and as rain in harvest, so honor is not fitting for a fool." We don't want the snow to be falling in the summertime when it's harvest time. We don't want a heavy rain when it's about time to harvest. So, you don't fittingly give honor to a fool.

Proverbs 26:8: "He that binds a stone in a sling, so, is he that gives honor to a fool." If you're going to use a slingshot, you don't tie your stone in it so that it can't fly out. That goes nowhere. It achieves nothing. And when you give esteem to a fool, you've achieved nothing. The Bible says, "When you spot a fool, don't give him honor. It's a waste."

However, when you think you're getting esteem, you want to be careful. Mark 7:6 tells us that some honor is false pretense: "He answered and said unto them, 'Well has Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites. As it is written, this people honors me with their lips, but their hearts (their real thinking) is far from me.'" So, the Lord Jesus knew about those who were honoring Him falsely. So, don't take all those compliments seriously that people give. Remember that the people who praise you today will be ready to cut you down tomorrow. That's how it is when you move in a world of the sin nature.

As we've already seen, John 5:23 declares that those who do not honor Jesus Christ do not honor God the Father. In John 8:49, the Lord Jesus Christ gave honor to His Father by proclaiming the truth of doctrine, and for that true service, He was called a demon-possessed person: "Jesus answered, 'I do not have a demon, but I honor My Father, and you do dishonor Me.'" Because He was speaking the truth to them, they told Him, "You're of the devil. You've got a demon in you. That's why you talk the way you do." He was upsetting the human viewpoint orientation. For that, He was accused of being demon- possessed. Jesus says, "No, because I'm giving you the true doctrine, I am honoring the Father, but because you are rebels against that, you cannot esteem what I'm giving you." The Lord God honors those who serve Jesus Christ. So, for all of these reasons, we see that the Lord Jesus is worthy of complete honor. He will never fail or disappoint those who esteem Him. The Lord Jesus Christ is held in constant contempt in Satan's world. But one day, all of mankind is going to be forced to honor Him. Philippians 2:9 says, "Wherefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every time should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." All of mankind will one day esteem Him, both internally and externally. We who are united to Jesus Christ, as His body and bride will one day share the honor of the whole creation with Him. He is indeed worthy of all the esteem and honor that we can direct toward Him.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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