

(For Monday, July 24, 2017) Whose interests do your leaders pursue?

“As the old saying goes, ‘From evil doers come evil deeds.’ So my hand will not touch you”
(1Sam.24:8, NIV)

There are certain Scripture verses that seem almost trite in their obvious nature. This is one of them. Yet, if you look at our present-day world for even a little while, you’ll note how applicable this observation of David remains. The political leadership of today is rife with those pursuing goals either for themselves, or for a select few of their constituents. It would seem that today we are willing to give our leaders a pass on what is appropriate in word and deed, as long as they are pursuing objectives we agree with. We say things like, “Well, he might be a scoundrel; but at least he’s **our** scoundrel.” But the time-proven truth is, a man or woman who pursues our interests through selfish, boorish, or biased behavior will eventually produce our own undoing.

What about you? Do you seek the interests of God’s Kingdom in your leaders, or your own?

(For Tuesday, July 25, 2017) Do you realize how majestic you can be?

“In your majesty ride forth victoriously in behalf of truth, humility, and righteousness. Let your right hand display your awesome deeds.” (Ps.45:4, NIV)

It may seem contradictory to believe that majesty should be manifest in truth, humility, and righteousness, or that acts of this nature should be awesome in character. I think this is due to how confused we have become regarding the real essence of these values. The title of “Majesty” is reserved for monarchs. We have become used to associating this with the power and authority accorded a despotic leader. However, the real authority of a king that mattered to the common people was the ability to dispense justice and righteousness, to protect the people from disaster, and to provide for their common welfare. These were the attributes of a king important to the people, when they described his “Majesty.”

So, have you figured out just how majestic your actions can be as a true Christian?

(For Wednesday, July 26, 2017) Are you looking for evidence of Kingdom dwelling?

“We must go through many hardships to enter the Kingdom of God’ they [Paul and Barnabas] said.” (Acts 14:22b, NIV)

When Paul talks about the need for sustaining hardships to be in God’s Kingdom, he knows of what he speaks! He has just been stoned and left for dead in Lystra. (See Acts 14:19-20) I suppose it’s possible to think about this verse as Paul’s declaration that the Christian must endure hardships in this life in order to be “certified” as God’s children in the next one. But I think this declaration by Paul has much more to do with our here-and -now. When we experience adversity in this life and overcome it by God’s grace and mercy, our faith in Him is strengthened, and we come to realize his sovereignty, not just in the coming Kingdom but in our present-day world. So it is through these hardships that we come to understand we are already dwelling in the Land of the King.

Have you stopped to notice evidence of the Kingdom of God in which we dwell? Because this evidence is really all around us every day!

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(For Thursday, July 27, 2017) Just how comfortable are you with salvation?

“Then the people began to plead with Jesus to leave their region.” (Mk.5:17, NIV)

This verse has always distressed me. Jesus has just healed the man in the Gerasenes from his demonic possession by a legion of demons. Yet, rather than rejoicing at the relief gifted by God’s mercy to this wretched, tormented soul, the people of that region simply wanted Jesus to depart. I suppose, as has been suggested this reluctance to welcome Christ on their part might be due to the fact that some of them got their livelihood from raising pigs, a herd of which Jesus had just condemned to drowning. But a persistent troubling thought that always occurs to me when reading this passage is that people are often willing to turn away from God’s offer of salvation, when that offer presents us with something which requires us to leave our comfort zone.

Are you willing to embrace the unfamiliar and the discomfiting in order to welcome salvation for yourself, and for those you hold dear? Or are you more concerned about the pigs?

(For Friday, July 28, 2017) What’s your job description?

“At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him.” (Mk.5:30a)

This verse is unusual in that it describes what Jesus felt as a healing miracle was being enacted through him. And the verse specifically says that the healing of the woman with the twelve-year hemorrhage happened because power went out from Jesus. And notice that this miracle occurred not from any form of bodily contact with the Christ – not through the deliberate laying on of hands, or making mud to place on her body. No, for this suffering woman it was only needful for her to be close enough to touch the hem of his robe, so to be in Christ’s presence. Could this mean that every time an unexplainable miracle of healing happens after the faithful pray, it means that some more power has gone out of Jesus into the world of our day? If true, that means that you and I are enabled with nothing less than the God-given ability to transmit the power of Jesus into the lives of others.

Hmmm... “Jesus Transmitter.” Talk about a job description!

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