

## The Reversal of Status

Thirty-first Week of Ordinary Time – November 5, 2017 – Matthew 23: 1-12

Today, Jesus is proposing a reversal of status that comes most often from humanity's misguided understanding of success. We all suffer from this flaw. We "worship" sport figures, rock stars, politicians and those who have risen to a high economic status. This includes religious leaders, self-made prophets and religious zealots. For some reason we humans want to carve out of our lives another person who represents great achievement.

Jesus is saying that this is counter to God. None of what we have belongs to us including our own lives. We, as followers of Christ, are called to practice what we preach in Christ's name. We must take up the status of servant.

Jesus has challenged the actions and attitudes of the scribes and Pharisees this week. **"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."** This message is for us as well. How often do we judge another, refuse to forgive, carry a long standing grudge and refuse to embrace another because we have some sense that we are better than them?

This might be our spouse, one of our children, a co-worker or the kid who bags our groceries at the store. We hold them hostage by our self-made rules, judgements and moralizing. We pass them by without a move to embrace them as an equal before God.

So what cures this human flaw? Jesus says this week that it is he and only he who can move us. It is only when we turn our lives toward God, toward Christ, that we can live without the need of human success. With Christ we can embrace everyone.

Jesus tells us that it is his example that we must follow. **"The greatest among you must be your servant. Whoever exalts himself will be humbled; but whoever humbles himself will be exalted."** Quite a reversal from our human definition of success.

Blessings!

  
Sue Schettler