

## **“Discipleship: Humbling!”**

(09-01-13)

Thomas Wheeler, chief executive officer of the Massachusetts Mutual Life Insurance Company told that once he and his wife were driving in the country, and he noticed they were low on gas. So, he pulled off the first exit and came to a dumpy little gas station with only one pump. There was only one attendant working so Tom asked him to fill it up while he checked the oil level.

Tom added a quart, closed the hood, and noticed that his wife was talking and smiling at the attendant. When they noticed he was looking at them, the attendant walked away and pretended as if nothing had happened. Wheeler paid the man and pulled out of the station.

Somewhat puzzled, he asked his wife if she knew the attendant. Well, she admitted she did know him. In fact, she had known him quite well. Not only did they attend the same high school, but they had also dated seriously for about a year.

Well, Tom Wheeler couldn't help bragging a little so he said, “Boy, were you lucky I came along. If you had married him, you'd be the wife of a gas station attendant, instead of a CEO.” To which his wife briskly replied, “My dear, if I had married him, he would be the CEO and you would be the gas station attendant!” *“Pride Cometh Before the Fall!”*

Open your Bibles to Luke 14. Jesus was spending time with some Pharisees at a dinner who thought that of all people they were the most important. But before we get too judgmental of them, we need to take a hard look at ourselves and think about what kind of people we can be! Sometimes we are selfish and self-centered. We feel self-important.

Look at verses 8-11 to see what Jesus says about us, *“When you are invited by someone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in a place of honor, lest someone more distinguished than you be invited by him, and he who invited you both will come and say to you, ‘Give your place to this person,’ and then you will begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when your host comes he may say to you, ‘Friend, move up higher.’ Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

By grace God changes our lives. We don't have to stand on our own strength to do the things God would have us do, or rely on our own desires to carry out God's mission for us in our lives! As a Disciple our worth comes from God alone!

As a Disciple, we need to deny ourselves! To deny yourself is to not focus on you, but see Jesus only! Everything in the world causes us to look at ourselves, but we must never forget, Jesus is our leader! So self-denial says, *“Jesus leads the way, I need to stay close to Him!”*

We cannot come to Christ unless we have a humble spirit. The proud don't seek Him because they feel they don't need Him. But we need to see God as the One Who has all majesty and power! We need to realize we can't be saved by our own power. It is Jesus alone Who transferred all our sins to His sacrifice on the cross. Humble Discipleship is based on the cross of Christ!

There was a statue of Jesus on the cross that someone stopped to look at. As he stood by it, he was confused and said, “But I can't see His face!” And somebody answered, “You have to kneel down to see His face.” You and I need to live every day of our lives kneeling to see the face of Jesus, our Savior Who suffered and died for us on the cross! Jesus said, *“If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”*

Living as a Disciple is a life of denial, cross carrying and suffering, because it's totally against the ways of the world! The cross means rejection and suffering. This doesn't sound

like something we would want to do, but Jesus said that's what life will be like for His Disciples! If we refuse to trust in Him and take up our cross, we forfeit our fellowship with Jesus!

True Discipleship is based on humble, faithful service based on the cross of Christ. Others won't understand why we do the things we do, but we're not doing them for our own glory but to give glory to Jesus! Everything we do must show Him!

Through the cross, we know we are loved. We know we are forgiven. Through the cross of Christ, and what He did for us, we have a relationship with God! Because of the cross, we're seen as His close Disciples!

Open to Hebrews 13. God has been very gracious to us. He doesn't count our sins against us. Instead, He offered His Son, Jesus Christ, for our sins and for the sins of all mankind. He shares His kingdom with us. In humble Discipleship, we can serve Jesus and others. We will be given a place of honor. We will receive God's grace.

Look at verses 15-16, *"Through him then let us continually offer up a sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of lips that acknowledge his name. Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God."*

Those who humble themselves will be exalted! Today, we've been invited to a very special feast. When we come with a humble spirit, and have confessed our sins to our heavenly Father, He puts His arm around us and leads us toward a banquet that's been prepared for us. We come as beggars, in need of God's redeeming grace. When we come, we receive more than we deserve!

May God, through His grace, and the power of His Spirit, give you, His humble Disciple, the power to change your life, so you might truly reflect His grace to everyone you meet!