

# LIBERTY TO THE CAPTIVES

*Prayers for... Freedom from Islam and Dhimmitude through the Cross*

MARK DURIE

In the video series, *Liberty to the Captives*, Dr. Mark Durie encourages Christian believers to humbly pray and renounce 1) **the Dhimma**, 2) **the Shahada**, 3) **lying**, and 4) **superiority**. For your convenience, the prayers follow—please reference the book for important background, instruction and testimonies. These prayers are taken from *Liberty to the Captives* (Salaam Ministries 2015). Copyright © 2010, 2013, 2015 Mark Durie. Reprinted by permission of Mark Durie. Scriptures taken from the Holy Bible, New International Version. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 Biblica. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

## 1) Freedom from the *Dhimma*

You may wish to pray these prayers for several reasons:

- You or your ancestors have lived as non-Muslims under Islamic rule, and accepted a *dhimma* pact, or have lived under conditions influenced by the principles of *jihad* and dhimmitude. You may, for example, be afraid of a *jihadi* terrorist attack
- Your personal or family history may have been deeply impacted by traumatic events, such as experiences of violence associated with *jihad* or other abuses which can occur under *dhimma* conditions. You may not even have heard of such events, but may suspect that they are a part of your family history
- You or your ancestors have been threatened by the Islamic *jihad*, and although there is no history of actually living under Islam, you wish to be free of the fear and intimidation
- You or your ancestors have lived as Muslims and you wish to renounce being party to the *dhimma* pact and all its implications

These prayers are designed to cancel the *dhimma* pact, together with all its implications, so that it will have no authority over your life. They are designed to resist and break all curses made against you or your ancestors because of being a *dhimmi* living in an Islamic state.

You may also be saying these prayers with a sense of sorrow for lack of knowledge in the past, and wish to stand in the truth of God's word. These prayers are designed to counter all the negative spiritual influences of dhimmitude, such as:

- Hurt
- Fear
- Intimidation
- Shame
- Feelings of Guilt
- Feelings of inferiority
- Self-hatred and self-rejection
- Hatred of others
- Depression
- Deception
- Humiliation
- Withdrawal and Isolation
- Silence

## Verses of scripture

The first step in preparing yourself for these prayers is to read verses of scripture. This is to affirm important truths, which underpin the prayers. It is suggested that you do this together with another person who can be your witness to saying these prayers.

God's love overcomes rejection

And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in him. (I John 4:16)

[Jesus said:] For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16)

Our inheritance is not intimidation: it is in God

For God did not give us a spirit of fear, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-control. (2 Timothy 1:7)

For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, 'Abba Father'. The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children, heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we also share in his glory. (Romans 8:15-16)

We are called to live in freedom

[Jesus said:] Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. (John 8:32)

It is for freedom Christ has set us free.

Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery. (Galatians 5:1)

Our bodies belong to God and not to oppression: our blood price has already been paid

Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body. (I Corinthians 6:19-20)

They will overcome by the blood of the Lamb... (Revelation 12:11)

Men and women are equal before God, and one group is not superior over another

... there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:28)

Our distinctive marks are not humiliation or inferiority, but Christ's victory, unity in Christ's love, and the cross

But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. (2 Corinthians 2:1-4)

May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. (John 17:23)

[Jesus said:] If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up

his cross daily and follow me. (Luke 9:13)

We have the power of the Holy Spirit to reveal the truth

[Jesus said:] Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment... (John 16:7-8)

[Jesus said:] But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. (John 16:13)

We have authority in Christ to overcome shame

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)

We have the right and the responsibility to educate ourselves and our children about spiritual matters

Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them. (Deuteronomy 4:9)

We have authority in Christ to speak the truth in love, with boldness

Death and life are in the power of the tongue, and those who love it will eat its fruit. (Proverbs 18:21)

Now Lord consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. (Acts 4:29)

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. (I Corinthians 13:6)

If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him and he in God. (I John 4:15)

So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. (Hebrews 10:35)

We can have confidence in the word of truth

God's testimony is greater, because it is the testimony about his Son. (I John 5:9)

They overcame... by the word of their testimony. (Revelation 12:11)

We are not defenseless or weaponless, but are spiritually armed in Christ

Finally be strong in the Lord and in his might power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes. (Ephesians 6:10)

For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretention that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-4)

We can count it a joy to suffer in Christ's name

Consider it pure joy, my brothers,  
whenever you face trials of many kinds...  
(James 1:2)

The cross destroys Satan's power and draws us  
to freedom in Christ

[Jesus said:] Now the prince of this  
world will be driven out, but I, when I  
am lifted up from the earth, will draw all  
people to myself. (John 12:30)

The cross cancels the *dhimma* pact and destroys  
all its power

When you were dead in your sins and in  
the uncircumcision of your sinful nature,  
God made you alive with Christ. He  
forgave us all our sins, having cancelled  
the written code, with its regulations,  
that was against us and that stood  
opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it  
to the cross. And having disarmed the  
powers and authorities, he made a public  
spectacle of them, triumphing over them  
by the cross. (Colossians 2:13)

Understand as you pray that your prayers and  
declarations are powerful and effective. Agree  
with God that he wills to bring you into  
complete freedom. Agree in your spirit to  
accept the truth that Christ has accepted you,  
and wants to set you free from all the snares of  
the evil one. Resolve to confront and reject the  
lie which the *dhimma* pact imposes upon non-  
Muslims.

## **Prayers and Declarations**

### *Prayers of Confession*

*Loving God, I confess that I have sinned and*

*turned away from you. I repent and turn  
towards Christ as my Saviour and Lord. Please  
forgive me specifically for any times when I  
have intimidated others, and sought to impose  
inferiority, or humiliation on others. Forgive  
me for my pride. Forgive me for any times  
where I have abused or dominated others. I  
renounce all these things in Jesus' Name.*

*God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, I  
praise you for the gift of forgiveness won by  
Christ on the cross. I acknowledge that you  
have accepted me. I thank you that through the  
cross we are reconciled to you and to each other.  
I declare today that I am your child  
(son/daughter) and an inheritor of the  
Kingdom of God.*

### *Declarations and Renunciations*

*Father, I agree with you that I am not subject  
to fear, but am a child of your love. I reject and  
renounce the demands of Islam as taught by  
Muhammad. I renounce all forms of submission  
to 'Allah of the Quran', and declare that I  
worship the God of our Lord Jesus Christ alone.*

*We repent of the sins of our ancestors in  
submitting to the *dhimma* pact and its  
principles, and ask your forgiveness for their  
sins.*

*I renounce and revoke all pacts of surrender  
made by myself, or my ancestors to the  
community and principles of Islam.*

*I completely reject the *dhimma* and every one of  
its conditions. I renounce the blow on the neck  
in the *jizya* payment ritual, together with all  
that it represents. I specifically renounce the  
curse of decapitation and death symbolized by*

*this ritual.*

*I declare that the dhimma pact is nailed to the cross of Christ. The dhimma has been made a public spectacle, and has no power or rights over me. I declare that the spiritual principles of the dhimma pact are exposed, disarmed, defeated and disgraced through the cross of Christ.*

*I renounce false feelings of gratitude to Islam.*

*I renounce false feelings of guilt.*

*I renounce deception and lies.*

*I renounce all agreements to keep silent about my faith in Christ.*

*I renounce all agreements to keep silent about the dhimma or Islam.*

*I will speak and I will not be silent.*

*I declare that 'The truth shall set me free' (John 8:32) and I choose to live as a free person in Christ Jesus.*

*I renounce and cancel all curses spoken against me and my family in the name of Islam. I renounce and cancel all curses spoken against my ancestors.*

*I specifically renounce and break the curse of death. Death, you have no power over me!*

*I declare that these curses have no power over me.*

*I claim the blessings of Christ as my spiritual inheritance.*

*I renounce intimidation. I choose to be bold in Christ Jesus.*

*I renounce manipulation and control.*

*I renounce abuse and violence.*

*I renounce fear. I renounce the fear of being rejected. I renounce the fear of losing my property and possessions. I renounce the fear of poverty. I renounce the fear of being enslaved. I renounce the fear of rape. I renounce the fear of being isolated. I renounce the fear of losing my family. I renounce the fear of being killed and the fear of death.*

*I renounce the fear of Islam. I renounce the fear of Muslims.*

*I renounce the fear of being involved in public or political activity.*

*I declare that Jesus Christ is Lord of all.*

*I submit to Jesus as Lord of every area of my life. Jesus Christ is Lord of my home. Jesus Christ is Lord of my city. Jesus Christ is Lord of my nation. Jesus Christ is Lord of all peoples in this land. I submit to Jesus Christ as my Lord.*

*I renounce humiliation. I declare that Christ has accepted me. I serve him and him alone.*

*I renounce shame. I declare that through the cross I am cleansed from all sin. Shame has no rights over me and I will reign with Christ in glory.*

*Lord, forgive me and my ancestors for all hatred towards Muslims. I renounce hatred towards Muslims and all others, and declare the love of*

*Christ for Muslims and all other people on this earth.*

*I repent of the sins of the church and of wrongful submission of church leaders.*

*I renounce alienation. I declare that I am forgiven and accepted by God through Christ. I am reconciled to God. No power in heaven or on earth can make any charge against me before the throne of God.*

*I declare my praise and thanks to God our Father, to Christ who is my only Saviour, and to the Holy Spirit who alone gives me life.*

*I commit myself to be a living witness to Jesus Christ as Lord. I am not ashamed of his cross. I am not ashamed of his resurrection.*

*I declare I am a child of the living God, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.*

*I declare the victory of God and of his Messiah. I declare that every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.*

*I declare forgiveness towards Muslims for participating in the system of dhimmitude.*

*Father God, please free me from the dhimma, the spirit of dhimmitude, and every ungodly principle attached to the dhimma pact.*

*I ask now that you fill me with your Holy Spirit, and pour upon me all the blessings of the Kingdom of Jesus Christ. Grant me grace to understand the truth of your Word clearly and apply it in every area of my life. Grant me words of hope and life, as you promised you*

*would, and bless my lips so I can speak them to others with authority and power in Jesus' name. Give me the boldness to be a faithful witness to Christ. Grant me a deep love for Muslim people and a passion to share the love of Christ with them.*

*I declare and ask these things in the Name of Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour. Amen.*

## **2) Freedom from the *shahada* and Muhammad's Example**

When Muslims recite the *shahada*, saying that Muhammad is Allah's Messenger, they endorse the Quran as the word of Allah. This also means they accept what the Quran says about Muhammad, including the obligations to follow his example, the threats and curses which fall upon those who do not follow Muhammad, and the duty to fight against all who do not believe and follow Muhammad.

Some of the negative aspects of Muhammad's example include:

- Violence and warfare
- Murder
- Enslaving others
- Revenge and retribution
- Hatred
- Hatred of women
- Hatred of Jews
- Abuse
- Shame and shaming of others
- Intimidation
- Deception
- Taking offense
- Self-vindication
- Feelings of superiority
- Misrepresentation of God's character
- The will to dominate others, and
- Rape

By reciting the *shahada* Muslims also endorse the Quran and *Sunna's* claims about Christ and the Bible. These include:

- Denial of Christ's death on the cross
- Hatred of the cross
- Denial that Jesus is the Son of God (and curses upon those who believe this)
- The claim that Jews and Christians have corrupted their scriptures, and
- The claim that Jesus will return to destroy Christianity and force the whole world to submit to Muhammad's Sharia

When someone leaves Islam, they should specifically reject and renounce the example of Muhammad, together with all the curses implied by the *shahada*. This means rejecting the belief that the Quran is the Word of God.

If the status of Muhammad as a Messenger is not explicitly renounced, then the curses and threats of the Quran, and Muhammad's opposition to the death of Christ and the Lordship of Christ can be a cause of spiritual instability, causing someone to be easily intimidated, and breed vulnerability and a lack of confidence as a follower of Jesus.

## Prayers

*I renounce the false submission as taught and demonstrated by Muhammad.*

*I renounce and reject as false the belief that Muhammad is a messenger from God.*

*I reject the claim that the Quran is God's Word.*

*I reject and renounce the *shahada* and every recitation of it.*

*I renounce saying *Al-Fatihah*. I renounce its*

*claims that Jews are under the wrath of God, and Christians have gone astray.*

*I renounce hatred of the Jews. I reject the claim that they have corrupted the Bible.*

*I reject the claim that God has rejected the Jews, and declare it to be a lie.*

*I renounce reciting the Quran and reject its authority over my life.*

*I renounce all false worship based on Muhammad's example.*

*I renounce all the false teachings about God which Muhammad brought, and the claim that Allah as portrayed in the Quran is God.*

*I renounce my dedication to Islam when I was born, and the dedication of my ancestors.*

*I specifically reject and renounce Muhammad's example. I renounce violence, intimidation, hatred, a spirit of offense, deception, rape, abuse of women, theft and all the sins which Muhammad committed.*

*I reject and renounce shame. I declare that there is no condemnation in Christ Jesus and the blood of Christ cleanses me from all shame.*

*I reject and renounce all fear incited by Islam. I ask God's forgiveness for having entertained fears due to Islam, and choose to trust in the God and Father of my Lord Jesus Christ in all things.*

*I seek God's forgiveness for any and all the ungodly deeds I committed because of following Muhammad as a messenger of Allah.*

*I reject and renounce the blasphemous claim that when Jesus returns he will compel all people on earth to follow the sharia of Muhammad.*

*I choose to follow Christ and him alone.*

*I confess that Christ is the Son of God, that he died on the cross for my sins, and was raised from the dead for my salvation. I praise God for the cross of Christ, and choose to take up my cross and follow him.*

*I confess that Christ is Lord of all. He rules over the heavens and the earth. He is Lord of my life. I confess that he will come again to judge the living and the dead. I cling to Christ and declare that there is no other name in heaven or on earth by which I can be saved.*

*I invite my Father God to give me a new heart, the heart of Christ, to guide me in all I do and say.*

*I reject all false worship, and dedicate my body to the worship of the living God, the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*

### **3) Freedom from Deception**

Pastor Damanik, who was falsely imprisoned in Indonesia for speaking up against the Islamic *jihad*, said this about truth:

... although truth is difficult and very expensive we don't have any choice. We have to be willing to pay the expensive price. The alternative is to say goodbye to the truth. The truth lover has to fight extra hard to be someone with an iron will and at the same time be a person with a pure and transparent heart (like glass). The iron will is strong; it cannot

be bent. It is unswerving in its commitment to truth... The glass heart is one that is clean from one's own hidden interests and personal agenda. As with glass, the truth lover is sensitive and easily broken over the injustice and falsehood in the world. This broken-heartedness is not a sign of weakness, but it is a sign of strength and power. He is strong willed and his sharp mouth is able to speak out in the face of untruth and the falsehood of his surroundings. His heart cannot be still or quiet. His heart is always full of fight against injustice.

The fact that God is truthful is fundamental for us entering into relationship with him.

God is relational: he binds himself into relationships with humanity.

Abraham:

I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. The whole land of Canaan, where you are now an alien, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God. (Genesis 17:7-8)

David:

You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one, I have sworn to David my servant, 'I will establish your line forever and make your throne firm through all generations.'" (Psalm 89:3-4)



God is unchanging and faithful to his relationships. He always keeps his word:

God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? (Numbers 23:19)

Give thanks to the Lord for he is good. His love endures forever. (Psalm 136)

[Speaking of the Jews] ... as far as election is concerned, they are loved on account of the patriarchs, for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable. (Romans 11:28-29)

... a faith and knowledge resting on the hope of eternal life, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time... (Titus 1:2)

Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. (Hebrews 6:17-19)

But as surely as God is faithful, our message to you is not 'Yes' and 'No,' but in him it has always been 'Yes.' (2 Corinthians 1:18-20)

But in the Quran, this is not Allah's personality:

God leads astray whomsoever He will, and He guides whomsoever He will; and

He is the All-mighty, the All-wise. (Q14:4, Arberry)

The true God of the Bible wants us to be like him:

The Lord said to Moses, "Speak to the entire assembly of Israel and say to them: 'Be holy because I, the Lord your God, am holy.'" (Leviticus 19:1-2)

One of the ways we show God's holiness is by being truthful, living in truth, because God is true. Satan loves to put lies into our hearts. God's truth protects us:

... for your love is ever before me, and I walk continually in your truth. (Psalm 26:3)

Into your hands I commit my spirit; redeem me, O Lord, the God of truth. (Psalm 31:5)

Do not withhold your mercy from me, O Lord; may your love and your truth always protect me. (Psalm 40:11)

Truth cleanses us:

Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me. Surely you desire truth in the inner parts; you teach me wisdom in the inmost place. Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. (Psalm 51:5-7)

Jesus is full of truth:

We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:4)

We are called to walk, to live in truth:

But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God. (John 3:21)

In the gospels, Jesus says 'I tell you the truth' 78 times, and declares that we can only come to God through truth:

God is spirit, and his worshippers must worship in spirit and in truth. (John 4:21)

Jesus answered, 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.' (John 14:6)

Paul speaks of the incompatibility between lying and following Christ:

We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious; for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for adulterers and perverts, for slave traders and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the glorious gospel of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. (I Timothy 1:9-11)

### *A cultural issue*

According to Islam, lying is permitted under certain circumstances. God deceives people in the Quran. Sometimes lying is obligatory. (See discussion of deception and *taqiyya* in *The Third Choice*, p. 56ff).

Types of lies which Sharia law endorses include: lying in warfare, husbands lying to wives, lying to protect yourself, lying to defend the Umma,

the self-protective lying (*taqiyya*) when Muslims believe they are in danger.

In Islam it is permitted to deny your faith. But a Christian cannot live this way:

Whoever acknowledges me before me, I will also acknowledge him before my Father in heaven. But whoever disowns me before men, I will disown him before my Father in heaven. (Matthew 10: 28-33)

Jesus said: Let your 'yes' be yes and your 'no,' be no.

### **Prayers and Declarations**

*I thank you Father that you are a God of truth, that you shine your light into the darkest night. Today I choose not to live in darkness, but to dwell in your light.*

*Please forgive me for all the lies I have spoken. I have so often chosen the path of comfort and what is easy, not what is right. I ask you Lord to cleanse my lips from all ungodliness. Give me a heart which delights to hear the truth, and a mouth ready to make the truth known to others.*

*Give me courage to take comfort in the truth, and to reject the lies.*

*Today I reject and renounce the use of lies in my everyday life.*

*I reject all the teachings of Islam which are used to justify telling lies, including *taqiyya*. I choose to turn away from all lying and deception. I choose to live in the truth.*

*I declare that Jesus Christ is the Way, the Truth and the Life. I choose to live under the*

*protection of his truth.*

*I declare that my security is in you, and the Truth shall set me free.*

*Please show me heavenly Father how to walk in the light of your truth. Give me the words to speak, and a way to walk in, which is based upon your Truth.*

#### **4) Freedom from Superiority and Entitlement**

In Islam there is a great emphasis on superiority, on who is 'the best'. The Quran says that Muslims are better than non-Muslims:

You are the best nation every brought forth to men, bidding to honour, and forbidding dishonour, and believe in Allah. Had the People of the Book believed, it were better for them; some of them are believers, but the most of them are ungodly. (Q3:110)

And Islam is supposed to rule over other religions:

It is He who has sent His Messenger with the guidance and the religion of truth, that He may cause it to triumph over every religion. (Q48:28)

There are also many hadiths of Muhammad which place a great emphasis on superiority.

The religion of Islam has had a deep influence on Arabic culture, shaping it over more than a thousand years. In Arabic cultures, concepts of 'honour' and 'shame' are very important, and people hate to be made to seem inferior. When there is conflict, there is often a recourse on humiliating others, and on seeking satisfaction for a sense of offense.

When someone leaves Islam, and decides to follow Christ, they need to renounce the emotional worldview in which a person needs to feel superior to those around them, and gains satisfaction from this.

The key to being released from this oppressive way of viewing the world is the example of Jesus Christ. This is beautifully expressed in the second chapter of Paul's Letter to the Philippians:

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.

And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that

Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father. (Philippians 2)

From time to time a question came up among Jesus' followers as to who was or would be the best among them. They wanted to know who would have the place of honour in Jesus' Kingdom.

Then James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came to him. 'Teacher,' they said, 'we want you to do for us whatever we ask.'

'What do you want me to do for you?' he asked.

They replied, "Let one of us sit at your right and the other at your left in your glory.'

'You don't know what you are asking,' Jesus said. "Can you drink the cup I drink or be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with?"

'We can,' they answered. Jesus said to them, 'You will drink the cup I drink and be baptized with the baptism I am baptized with, but to sit at my right or left is not for me to grant. These places belong to those for whom they have been prepared.'

When the ten heard about this, they became indignant with James and John. Jesus called them together and said, 'You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, **whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all.** For even the son of Man did not come to be

served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.' (Mark 10:35-45)

When Jesus refers here to the 'gentiles', he means all the nations. It is a universal trait of human nature to want to feel important. Like James and John, human beings all over the world seek the best seats or the places of greatest honour. Jesus responds to this desire by explaining that if his disciples truly want to follow him, they have to learn how to serve others. In very practical ways, Jesus showed how this worked. He 'made himself nothing' (Philippians 2:7), even to allowing himself to be crucified, the most disgraceful death known to people at this time.

The desire to be superior to others is a great trap for human beings. In the Garden of Eden, the snake tempted Eve with this, saying 'you will be like God' (Genesis 3:4). On this basis, Eve went along with what the snake wanted.

A great deal of trouble and pain is caused in this world by people wanting to be superior to others.

The heart of Jesus is quite different. He chose to serve, not to dominate. He did not kill, but offered his life for others. The true follower of Christ does the same. He or she gains no pleasure from any sense of feeling superior. True Christ-followers are not afraid of shame or what other people think, because they trust in God to vindicate and protect them.

The danger of feeling superior comes out in the story of the prodigal son (Luke 15:11-32). The 'good' son felt himself to be superior and was unable to join his father's party for the long-lost son when he returned. For this he was rebuked by his father. The pathway to real success, in God's eyes, is to seek to serve others, not to lord it over them.

## Prayers and Declarations

*I thank you Father that I am wonderfully made, because it is you who made me. Thank you that you love me and call me your won. Thank you for the privilege of following Jesus Christ.*

*Please forgive me for entertaining the desire to feel superior. I renounce and utterly reject such desires. I refuse to take comfort in feeling better than others. I acknowledge that I am a sinner, like everyone else, and I can accomplish nothing without you.*

*I also repent of and renounce feelings of belonging to a superior group or background. I confess that all people are equal in your sight.*

*I repent of uttering words of contempt for others and rejection of others, and seek your forgiveness for all these words.*

*I reject thinking less of people because of their race, their gender, their wealth, or their education.*

*I acknowledge that it is only by the grace of God that I can stand in your presence. I separate myself from all human judgment, and look to you alone to save me.*

*I specifically renounce Islam's teaching that the righteous are superior, that Islam makes people successful, and that Muslims are superior to non-Muslims.*

*I reject and renounce the claim that men are superior to women.*

*Heavenly Father, I turn away from every false sense of superiority and instead I choose to serve you.*

*Lord, I also choose to rejoice in the successes of others. I reject and renounce all envy and jealousy of others.*

*Lord, please give me a sound and accurate judgment about who I am in you. Teach me the truth of how you see me. Help me to be content as the person you have created me to be.*