

LIGHTHOUSE OF HONOR

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(Esther 6:6)

Honor



Imagine you are on a small boat caught in a fierce ocean storm. As the towering waves crash all around you, your boat is barely able to stay afloat. With each passing second, you are driven closer to the deadly rocks standing guard offshore. Suddenly, you catch sight of a tiny, blinking light. Searching through the dark surf, you realize the light is your lifeline—a lighthouse.

Very few images reflect such security and hope as a lighthouse. In the same way that a lighthouse provides safety to a wayward vessel, honor builds safety in a relationship. To “honor” simply means to place high value, worth, and importance on other people by viewing them as priceless gifts—granting them a position in our lives worthy of great respect. Honor is a gift we give to others. It isn’t purchased by others’ actions or contingent on our emotions. We give others distinction whether or not they like it, want it, or deserve it. In marriage, honoring our mates gives legs to the words, “I love you.” It puts that statement into action.

Honor is not only the first step of love, it’s also the single most important principle for building an intimate relationship. Our favorite illustration of the unlimited power of treating someone as a priceless treasure is a story called *Johnny Lingo’s Eight-Cow Wife*, written by Patricia McGerr. The story tells of a young islander named Johnny Lingo who paid the unheard-of price of eight cows for a wife. Most wives cost two or three cows; four or five buys a highly satisfactory wife. What made this most unusual was that the woman Johnny was buying, Sarita, was unattractive—plain, skinny, and very shy. When the teller of this story met Johnny and Sarita, she was amazed, for Sarita had become a truly beautiful woman.

Because Johnny Lingo had considered Sarita to be worth eight cows, she began to feel and present herself as an eight-cow woman. Before Johnny entered her life, Sarita was a plain island girl. After he placed incredible value upon her, she was transformed into a confident, attractive woman with a lift to her shoulders, a tilt to her chin, and a sparkle in her eyes that no one could take away.

How many “cows” do our loved ones feel they are worth? The answer will give us an idea of how much we honor them.

HONORING THOSE WE LOVE

The apostle Paul encouraged the early Christians to honor each other when he wrote, “Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another” (Rom. 12:10). A good literal definition of honor is, “To give preference to someone by attaching high value to them.” Honor isn’t just important to relationships—it is absolutely critical. Without honor, people cannot even create a functional relationship, to say nothing of attaining intimacy.

Take the Pledge

Honor has to be the center of the marriage relationship, and it is not a difficult strength to master and practice. First, take the pledge. Spouses must consciously pledge themselves to put honor at the heart of their relationship. They must commit

themselves to consider each other worthy of reverence, praise, and honor without restriction. They must treat each other as treasures, and that attitude should govern all their actions and words. Why is it so important to look at our loved ones as special treasures? Because "where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matt. 6:21). Whatever we highly treasure, that's where our affections, desires, and enthusiasm lie.

When people learn to treasure their mates, their positive feelings for them increase as well. This is called "confirmation bias." Confirmation bias means that whatever people believe about others, positive or negative, they will find evidence to support the belief. This can have a major impact on relationships with loved ones.

If we do not see our loved ones as priceless treasures, then we will tend to focus on their negative actions. On the other hand, if we see them as wonderful treasures, then we will focus more on their positive behavior.

Take Action

Second, take action. One mate must not only pledge to honor the other, but they must also be able to convey that honor through their words, actions, and deeds. One way for a mate to take action is to list all the things they admire about the other mate. They should post the list in a highly visible place where they and, more importantly, their mate, can see it every day. They should consider their mate's personality, appearance, thinking patterns, faith patterns, shared values, parenting skills, concerns, opinions, and life goals. The longer the list, the bigger the lighthouse and the brighter the light.

Another way to take action is to keep track of the mate's positive behavior. In other words, one mate should try to notice methodically what the other mate already does that pleases them. In order to do this,

the couple must really look at each other and break through the barriers that obstruct their vision of each other's good deeds.

Whether it's marriage or friendship or whatever else, we can commit ourselves to building lighthouses of honor in our relationships that will protect us from the storms that will come. The higher the honor, the safer will be the relationship. Once we build a lighthouse, we will begin to come closer to the other person in very positive ways.

FURTHER MEDITATION:

Other passages to study about the issue of honor include:

- > Exodus 20:12
- > 1 Samuel 2:30
- > Proverbs 15:33; 20:3
- > John 5:19-23; 8:54
- > Romans 13:7

◊ Learn More: Turn to the key passage note on honor at 1 Peter 2:17 on page 1659. See also the personality profile of the wise men on page 1230.

LIVING BEFORE THE WORLD

¹¹Beloved, I beg *you* as sojourners and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul, ¹²having your conduct honorable among the Gentiles, that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may, by *your* good works which they observe, glorify God in the day of visitation.

SUBMISSION TO GOVERNMENT

¹³Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme, ¹⁴or to governors, as to those who are sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and *for the* praise of those who do good. ¹⁵For this is the will of God, that by doing good you may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men— ¹⁶as free, yet not using liberty as a cloak for vice, but as bondservants of God. ¹⁷Honor all *people*. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honor the king.

SUBMISSION TO MASTERS

¹⁸Servants, *be* submissive to *your* masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the harsh. ¹⁹For this *is* commendable, if because of conscience toward God one endures grief, suffering wrongfully. ²⁰For what credit *is it* if, when you are beaten for your faults, you take it patiently? But when you do good and suffer, if you take it patiently, this *is*

commendable before God. ²¹For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered for us,^a leaving us^b an example, that you should follow His steps:

²² "Who committed no sin,
Nor was deceit found in His mouth";^a

²³who, when He was reviled, did not revile in return; when He suffered, He did not threaten, but committed *Himself* to Him who judges righteously; ²⁴who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we, having died to sins, might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed. ²⁵For you were like sheep going astray, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer^a of your souls.

SUBMISSION TO HUSBANDS

3 Wives, likewise, *be* submissive to your own husbands, that even if some do not obey the word, they, without a word, may be won by the conduct of their wives, ²when they observe your chaste conduct *accompanied* by fear. ³Do not let your adornment be *merely* outward—arranging the hair, wearing gold, or putting on *fine* apparel—⁴rather *let it be* the hidden person of the heart, with the

2:21 ^aNU-Text reads *you*. ^bNU-Text and M-Text read *you*. 2:22 ^aIsaiah 53:9 2:25 ^aGreek *Episkopos*

KEY PASSAGE



Honor

ON YOUR HONOR

(2:17)

In order to "honor all people," we must show proper respect, value, and esteem to everyone. From the rich corporate executive to the common menial servant.

all people were created by God and honorable in His sight. No matter what race, color, background, family life, social position, economic status, or educational attainment, all people are to be treated as God's precious creations.

Believers honor others by not making comparisons. Comparing ourselves to others can make us feel either inferior or superior to them—then we may not feel that we can or want to share God's message of salvation with them. When we honor people, however, we see them as God sees them—in need—thus, we want to show them His love. We respect the rich and powerful person by being kind, caring, and compassionate. We respect the humble janitor by acting the same way. When we show honor to every one of God's creations, we honor Him. Honor is a gift that offers deep grace to our relationships.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about honor on pages 630, 631. See also the personality profile of the wise men on page 1230.

Let him refrain his tongue from evil,
 And his lips from speaking deceit.
 Let him turn away from evil and do good:
 Let him seek peace and pursue it.
 For the eyes of the LORD are on the
 righteous,
 And His ears are open to their prayers;
 But the face of the LORD is against those
 who do evil."¹¹

⁵For in this manner, in former times, the holy women who trusted in God also adorned themselves, being submissive to their own husband, as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord, whose daughters you are if you do good and are not afraid with any terror.

A WORD TO HUSBANDS

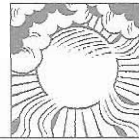
⁷Husbands, likewise, dwell with them with understanding, giving honor to the wife, as to the weaker vessel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life, that your prayers may not be hindered.

CALLED TO BLESSING

⁸Finally, all of you be of one mind, having compassion for one another; love as brothers, be tenderhearted, be courteous,⁹ not return-ness and fear; ¹⁰having a good conscience, that when they defame you as evildoers, those who revile your good conduct in Christ may be ashamed. ¹⁷For it is better, if it is the will of

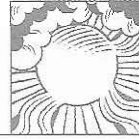
*He who would love life
 And see good days,*

3:8 ^aNU-Text reads *humble*. 3:12 ^aPsalms
 34:12-16 3:14 ^aIsaiah 8:12 3:15 ^aNU-Text
 reads *Christ as Lord*.



Beautiful (3:3, 4) These words do not mean that women cannot style their hair or wear jewelry. Peter's point was that women should not let their adornment merely consist of outward trappings. Instead, Christian women should focus on developing "the incorruptible beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit." Christian women certainly can have flattering hairstyles, clothing, and jewelry, but they should not be obsessed with their outward appearance. Their focus should always be on Christ and on developing character that is pleasing to God. Women who develop Christlike character are truly beautiful. **Topic: Women's Issues**

SOUL NOTE



Love and Honor (3:7) Husbands should honor their wives. Both Paul and Peter wrote that wives should submit to their husbands (Eph. 5:22; 1 Pet. 3:1); yet, both also wrote that husbands should love and honor their wives. A man who honors his wife will love, respect, encourage, and protect her. He will listen to her opinions, take her advice when he can, consider her needs, and encourage her gifts. When a husband treats his wife this way, she will have no fear of following the biblical instruction to be submissive to him. This paves the way for a healthy marriage and family. **Topic: Honor**

SOUL NOTE

GREETING TO GAIUS

The Elder,

¹To the beloved Gaius, whom I love in truth:

²Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers. ³For I rejoiced greatly when brethren came and testified of the truth *that is* in you, just as you walk in the truth. ⁴I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in truth.^a

GAIUS COMMENDED FOR GENEROSITY

⁵Beloved, you do faithfully whatever you do for the brethren and^a for strangers, ⁶who have borne witness of your love before the church. *If you send them forward on their journey in a manner worthy of God, you will do well,* ⁷because they went forth for His name's sake, taking nothing from the Gentiles. ⁸We therefore ought to receive^a such, that we may become fellow workers for the truth.

DIOTREPHES AND DEMETRIUS

⁹I wrote to the church, but Diotrephes, who loves to have the preeminence among them,

does not receive us. ¹⁰Therefore, if I come, I will call to mind his deeds which he does, prating against us with malicious words. And not content with that, he himself does not receive the brethren, and forbids those who wish to, putting *them* out of the church.

¹¹Beloved, do not imitate what is evil, but what is good. He who does good is of God, but^a he who does evil has not seen God.

¹²Demetrius has a *good* testimony from all, and from the truth itself. And we also bear witness, and you know that our testimony is true.

FAREWELL GREETING

¹³I had many things to write, but I do not wish to write to you with pen and ink; ¹⁴but I hope to see you shortly, and we shall speak face to face.

Peace to you. Our friends greet you. Greet the friends by name.

⁴ ^aNU-Text reads *the truth*. ⁵ ^aNU-Text adds *especially*. ⁸ ^aNU-Text reads *support*.

¹¹ ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit *but*.

SOUL NOTE



Health Maintenance (2) Concern for people's physical, emotional, and spiritual well-being go together. Some people think the body doesn't matter, so they either neglect themselves and the bodies God gave them, or they indulge in sinful behavior, thinking that it doesn't matter. Both attitudes are mistaken. We should not obsess with our appearance or health, but we should do our best to maintain a certain level of health so that we can serve God to the best of our ability. It's wrong to neglect or indulge ourselves; instead, we should keep a healthy balance so that we can be ready to serve God wherever He may call us. **Topic: Health/Spirituality**

SOUL NOTE



Honorable Mention (5-8) When churches care for their missionaries and teachers, they honor God and "become fellow workers for the truth." All believers are called to share the Good News and make disciples, but not all are called to travel, preach, or serve as missionaries. But certainly everybody can support those who do. Gaius was commended for being hospitable to these traveling teachers, and that goes for all of us. We please God when we receive workers hospitably, help meet their needs, make them comfortable, and then send them on their way "in a manner worthy of God." God's laborers for the truth deserve honor. **Topic: Honor**

that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

THE FLIGHT INTO EGYPT

¹³Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Arise, take the young Child and His mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I bring you word; for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him."

¹⁴When he arose, he took the young Child and His mother by night and departed for Egypt, ¹⁵and was there until the death of Herod, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying, "Out of Egypt I called My Son."^a

MASSACRE OF THE INNOCENTS

¹⁶Then Herod, when he saw that he was deceived by the wise men, was exceedingly an-

gry; and he sent forth and put to death all the male children who were in Bethlehem and in all its districts, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had determined from the wise men. ¹⁷Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying:

¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah,
Lamentation, weeping, and great
mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children,
Refusing to be comforted,
Because they are no more."^a

THE HOME IN NAZARETH

¹⁹Now when Herod was dead, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph,

2:15 ^aHosea 11:1 2:18 ^aJeremiah 31:15

PERSONALITY PROFILE



Honor

THE WISE MEN: HONORING THE KING

(MATTHEW 2:7-11)

When the incarnation took place, many people traveled great distances to honor God in the flesh. Angels flew in from the heavens. Shepherds came in from the hills. And several wise men journeyed from the East to honor this new King.

Matthew's version of the story of Christ's birth opens with a group of Eastern "Gentiles,"—probably Persian astrologers or magicians—referred to as "wise men" (or "magi," from the Greek). They arrived from the East to honor the child who was born "King of the Jews." They informed the people of Jerusalem that they had seen His birth announcement in the stars.

The significance of their trip to Palestine is twofold. First, their arrival and questions challenged Herod, who considered himself to be the king of the Jews. He was disturbed by this report that another King had been born. Herod was a man without honor who craved honor. He instinctively wanted to destroy anyone who might threaten his hollow kingdom. He had the scribes identify Bethlehem as the likely birthplace of a special King, according to the prophecy of Micah 5:2. Herod intended to murder the competition. Without honor, he couldn't even imagine that his opponent was really God.

The second importance of the wise men's trip was that it showed the universality of Christ. He was not only King of the Jews, but the King of kings. The wise men teach us that true seekers everywhere will honor Christ. We don't know what stars they saw, but they received God's guidance. We don't know what questions they asked, but we know they found some answers. They arrived in Palestine seeking the whole truth, prepared to worship even a little child.

A person who understands honor and humility has already learned a great deal about a relationship with God. The wise men had the right kind of faith. Hebrews 11:6 describes them: "For he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him." God met these men at the point of honor.

To Learn More: Turn to the article about honor on pages 630, 631. See also the key passage note at 1 Peter 2:17 on page 1659.

CITIES OF REFUGE EAST OF THE JORDAN

⁴¹Then Moses set apart three cities on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun, ⁴²that the manslayer might flee there, who kills his neighbor unintentionally, without having hated him in time past, and that by fleeing to one of these cities he might live: ⁴³Bezer in the wilderness on the plateau for the Reubenites, Ramoth in Gilead for the Gadites, and Golan in Bashan for the Manassites.

INTRODUCTION TO GOD'S LAW

⁴⁴Now this *is* the law which Moses set before the children of Israel. ⁴⁵These *are* the testimonies, the statutes, and the judgments which Moses spoke to the children of Israel after they came out of Egypt, ⁴⁶on this side of the Jordan, in the valley opposite Beth Peor, in the land of Sihon king of the Amorites, who dwelt at Heshbon, whom Moses and the children of Israel defeated after they came out of Egypt. ⁴⁷And they took possession of his land and the land of Og king of Bashan, two kings of the Amorites, who *were* on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun, ⁴⁸from Aroer, which *is* on the bank of the River Arnon, even to Mount Sion^a (that is, Hermon), ⁴⁹and all the plain on the east side of the Jordan as far as the Sea of the Arabah, below the slopes of Pisgah.

THE TEN COMMANDMENTS REVIEWED

5 And Moses called all Israel, and said to them: "Hear, O Israel, the statutes and judgments which I speak in your hearing today, that you may learn them and be careful to observe them. ²The LORD our God made a covenant with us in Horeb. ³The LORD did not make this covenant with our fathers, but with us, those who *are* here today, all of us who *are*

alive. ⁴The LORD talked with you face to face on the mountain from the midst of the fire. ⁵I stood between the LORD and you at that time, to declare to you the word of the LORD; for you were afraid because of the fire, and you did not go up the mountain. *He* said:

⁶ 'I *am* the LORD your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.

⁷ 'You shall have no other gods before Me.

'You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of *anything* that *is* in heaven above, or that *is* in the earth beneath, or that *is* in the water under the earth; ⁹you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, *am* a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth *generations* of those who hate Me, ¹⁰but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

¹¹ 'You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain, for the LORD will not hold *him* guiltless who takes His name in vain.

¹² 'Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the LORD your God commanded you. ¹³Six days you shall labor and do all your work, ¹⁴but the seventh day *is* the Sabbath of the LORD your God. *In it* you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your ox, nor your donkey, nor any of your cattle, nor your stranger who *is*

4:48 ^aSyriac reads *Sirion* (compare 3:9).

SOUL NOTE



Honor Your Parents (5:16) God stated in His Ten Commandments that He requires all people to honor their parents. Adults can honor their parents by treating them with respect and helping to meet their needs, especially as they become elderly. Doing so will be a great lesson to their children. Parents must teach their children what it means to "honor" them. This can be done as Mom and Dad honor Grandpa and Grandma, and as they honor God as their ultimate authority. Children will see and learn what it means to honor one's parents and then to honor God as one's ultimate authority as well. **Topic: Honor**

And Ziba said to the king, "Indeed he *is* in the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, in Lo Debar."

⁵Then King David sent and brought him out of the house of Machir the son of Ammiel, from Lo Debar.

⁶Now when Mephibosheth the son of Jonathan, the son of Saul, had come to David, he fell on his face and prostrated himself. Then David said, "Mephibosheth?"

And he answered, "Here is your servant!"

⁷So David said to him, "Do not fear, for I will surely show you kindness for Jonathan your father's sake, and will restore to you all the land of Saul your grandfather; and you shall eat bread at my table continually."

⁸Then he bowed himself, and said, "What is your servant, that you should look upon such a dead dog as I?"

⁹And the king called to Ziba, Saul's servant, and said to him, "I have given to your master's son all that belonged to Saul and to all his house. ¹⁰You therefore, and your sons and your servants, shall work the land for him, and you shall bring in *the harvest*, that your master's son may have food to eat. But Mephibosheth your master's son shall eat bread at my table always." Now Ziba had fifteen sons and twenty servants.

¹¹Then Ziba said to the king, "According to all that my lord the king has commanded his servant, so will your servant do."

"As for Mephibosheth," *said the king*, "he shall eat at my table^a like one of the king's sons." ¹²Mephibosheth had a young son whose name *was* Micha. And all who dwelt in the house of Ziba *were* servants of Mephibosheth. ¹³So Mephibosheth dwelt in Jerusalem, for he ate continually at the king's table. And he was lame in both his feet.

THE AMMONITES AND SYRIANS DEFEATED

10 It happened after this that the king of the people of Ammon died, and Hanun his son reigned in his place. ²Then David said, "I will show kindness to Hanun the son of Nahash, as his father showed kindness to me."

So David sent by the hand of his servants to comfort him concerning his father. And David's servants came into the land of the people of Ammon. ³And the princes of the people of Ammon said to Hanun their lord, "Do you think that David really honors your father because he has sent comforters to you? Has David not *rather* sent his servants to you to search the city, to spy it out, and to overthrow it?"

⁴Therefore Hanun took David's servants, shaved off half of their beards, cut off their garments in the middle, at their buttocks, and sent them away. ⁵When they told David, he sent to meet them, because the men were greatly ashamed. And the king said, "Wait at Jericho until your beards have grown, and then return."

⁶When the people of Ammon saw that they had made themselves repulsive to David, the people of Ammon sent and hired the Syrians of Beth Rehob and the Syrians of Zoba, twenty thousand foot soldiers; and from the king of Maacah one thousand men, and from Ish-Tob twelve thousand men. ⁷Now when David heard of it, he sent Joab and all the army of the mighty men. ⁸Then the people of Ammon came out and put themselves in battle array at the entrance of the gate. And the Syrians of Zoba, Beth Rehob, Ish-Tob, and Maacah *were* by themselves in the field.

9:11 ^aSeptuagint reads *David's table*.

SOUL NOTE



Honorable (9:7) Mephibosheth was the son of Jonathan, David's best friend. With Saul and Jonathan dead, Mephibosheth was technically in line for the throne. Threats to David's position were not unusual (even his own sons would try to take his throne), but David's dealing with this potential threat was unusual.

Instead of killing the potential rival, as most kings would, he brought Mephibosheth to live in the palace with him. This act honored a promise that David had made to Jonathan (1 Sam. 20:14, 15). At risk to himself, David kept his promise. Honorable people keep their word.

Topic: Honor

1 The burden^a of the word of the LORD to Israel by Malachi.

ISRAEL BELOVED OF GOD

"I have loved you," says the LORD.

"Yet you say, 'In what way have You loved us?'"

Was not Esau Jacob's brother?"

Says the LORD.

"Yet Jacob I have loved;

3 But Esau I have hated,
And laid waste his mountains and his heritage
For the jackals of the wilderness."

4 Even though Edom has said,

"We have been impoverished,
But we will return and build the desolate places,"

Thus says the LORD of hosts:

"They may build, but I will throw down;

They shall be called the Territory of Wickedness,

And the people against whom the LORD will have indignation forever.

5 Your eyes shall see,

And you shall say,

"The LORD is magnified beyond the border of Israel."

POLLUTED OFFERINGS

5 "A son honors *his* father,
And a servant *his* master.

If then I am the Father,
Where is My honor?

And if I *am* a Master,
Where is My reverence?
Says the LORD of hosts

To you priests who despise My name.

Yet you say, 'In what way have we despised Your name?'

7 "You offer defiled food on My altar,
But say,

'In what way have we defiled You?'

By saying,

'The table of the LORD is contemptible.'

And when you offer the blind as a sacrifice,

Is it not evil?

And when you offer the lame and sick,

Is it not evil?

Offer it then to your governor!

Would he be pleased with you?

Would he accept you favorably?"

Says the LORD of hosts.

"But now entreat God's favor,

That He may be gracious to us.

While this is being *done* by your hands,

Will He accept you favorably?"

Says the LORD of hosts.

10 "Who is *there* even among you who would shut the doors,

So that you would not kindle fire *on* My altar in vain?

I have no pleasure in you,"

Says the LORD of hosts,

"Nor will I accept an offering from your hands.

11 For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down,

My name *shall be* great among the Gentiles;

In every place incense *shall be* offered to My name,

And a pure offering;

1:1 ^aOr *oracle*

SOUL NOTE



Only the Best (1:6-14) When a guest is coming, we clean up the house and prepare refreshments. If the visitor were a dignitary, we would make more extensive preparations. If VIPs are treated like that here on earth, how much more honor should people show to God? Like the people of Malachi's day, however, we often relegate the heavenly King to the margins of our lives (1:6), giving Him less than our best. Our Savior deserves the best of our time, talent, and treasure.

Topic: Honor

Him, they took the purple off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.

THE KING ON A CROSS

²¹Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross. ²²And they brought Him to the place Golgotha, which is translated, Place of a Skull. ²³Then they gave Him wine mingled with myrrh to drink, but He did not take it. ²⁴And when they crucified Him, they divided His garments, casting lots for them to determine what every man should take.

²⁵Now it was the third hour, and they crucified Him. ²⁶And the inscription of His accusation was written above:

THE KING OF THE JEWS.

²⁷With Him they also crucified two robbers, one on His right and the other on His left. ²⁸So the Scripture was fulfilled^a which says, "And He was numbered with the transgressors."^b

²⁹And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, "Aha! You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, ³⁰save Yourself, and come down from the cross!"

³¹Likewise the chief priests also, mocking among themselves with the scribes, said, "He saved others; Himself He cannot save. ³²Let the Christ, the King of Israel, descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe."^a

Even those who were crucified with Him reviled Him.

JESUS DIES ON THE CROSS

³³Now when the sixth hour had come, there was darkness over the whole land until the

ninth hour. ³⁴And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?" which is translated, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"^a

³⁵Some of those who stood by, when they heard *that*, said, "Look, He is calling for Elijah!" ³⁶Then someone ran and filled a sponge full of sour wine, put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink, saying, "Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to take Him down."

³⁷And Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and breathed His last.

³⁸Then the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. ³⁹So when the centurion, who stood opposite Him, saw that He cried out like this and breathed His last,^a he said, "Truly this Man was the Son of God!"

⁴⁰There were also women looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the Less and of Joseph, and Salome, ⁴¹who also followed Him and ministered to Him when He was in Galilee, and many other women who came up with Him to Jerusalem.

JESUS BURIED IN JOSEPH'S TOMB

⁴²Now when evening had come, because it was the Preparation Day, that is, the day before the Sabbath, ⁴³Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent council member, who was himself waiting for the kingdom of God, coming and taking courage, went in to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁴⁴Pilate marveled that He was already dead; and summoning the centurion, he asked him if He had been dead for some time. ⁴⁵So when he found out from the

15:28 ^aIsaiah 53:12 ^bNU-Text omits this verse.

15:32 ^aM-Text reads *believe Him*. 15:34 ^aPsalms

22:1 15:39 ^aNU-Text reads *that He thus breathed His last*.

SOUL NOTE



All Honor and Praise (15:16-32) Jesus was treated horribly throughout His final hours. He was arrested like a criminal. He was spat on and beaten. His close friend Peter denied ever knowing Him. The Roman leader condemned Him without any case, and His own people called for His execution and chose a murderer to be released in His place. The Roman soldiers mocked His claims to be a king, and then crucified Him between two robbers. Jesus, the Son of God, experienced such dishonor so that one day He could bring us into glory with Him. He deserves our honor and praise every day. **Topic: Honor**

Baptist;^a but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.”

²⁹And when all the people heard *Him*, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. ³⁰But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by *him*.

³¹And the Lord said,^a “To what then shall I liken the men of this generation, and what are they like? ³²They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying:

‘We played the flute for you,
And you did not dance;
We mourned to you,
And you did not weep.’

³³For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ ³⁴The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ ³⁵But wisdom is justified by all her children.”

A SINFUL WOMAN FORGIVEN

³⁶Then one of the Pharisees asked *Him* to eat with him. And *He* went to the Pharisee’s house, and sat down to eat. ³⁷And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that *Jesus* sat at the table in the Pharisee’s house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, ³⁸and stood at *His* feet behind *Him* weeping; and she began to wash *His* feet with her tears, and wiped *them* with the hair of her head; and she kissed *His* feet and anointed *them* with the fragrant oil. ³⁹Now when the Pharisee who had invited *Him* saw *this*, he spoke to himself, saying, “*This Man*, if *He* were a prophet, would know who and

what manner of woman *this is* who is touching *Him*, for she is a sinner.”

⁴⁰And *Jesus* answered and said to him, “*Simon*, I have something to say to you.”

So he said, “*Teacher*, say it.”

⁴¹“There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴²And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell *Me*, therefore, which of them will love *him* more?”

⁴³*Simon* answered and said, “I suppose the one whom he forgave more.”

And *He* said to him, “You have rightly judged.” ⁴⁴Then *He* turned to the woman and said to *Simon*, “Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave *Me* no water for *My* feet, but she has washed *My* feet with her tears and wiped *them* with the hair of her head. ⁴⁵You gave *Me* no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss *My* feet since the time I came in. ⁴⁶You did not anoint *My* head with oil, but this woman has anointed *My* feet with fragrant oil. ⁴⁷Therefore I say to you, her sins, *which are* many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, *the same* loves little.”

⁴⁸Then *He* said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

⁴⁹And those who sat at the table with *Him* began to say to themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”

⁵⁰Then *He* said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

MANY WOMEN MINISTER TO JESUS

8 Now it came to pass, afterward, that *He* went through every city and village,

7:28 ^aNU-Text reads *there is none greater than John*. **7:31** ^aNU-Text and M-Text omit *And the Lord said*.

SOUL NOTE



Highest Honors (7:44–47) *Simon* the Pharisee had brought *Jesus* into his home for a meal, but he had neglected to honor *Jesus* with the basic hospitality of the day—washing *His* feet and anointing *His* head. A “woman in the city who was a sinner” (7:37) came and honored *Jesus* by pouring on *His* feet valuable anointing oil and by shedding tears of repentance. She knew who *Jesus* was, and her sinfulness broke her heart. *Jesus* forgave her. We honor *Christ* when, like this woman, we see our need for *His* sacrifice on the Cross, accept it, and worship *Him* for who *He* is. **Topic: Honor**

possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. ¹⁹Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,"^a says the Lord. ²⁰Therefore

*"If your enemy is hungry, feed him;
If he is thirsty, give him a drink;
For in so doing you will heap coals of fire
on his head."^a*

²¹Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

SUBMIT TO GOVERNMENT

13 Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. ²Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. ³For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. ⁴For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. ⁵Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. ⁶For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. ⁷Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR

⁸Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled

the law. ⁹For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness,"^a "You shall not covet,"^b and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."^c ¹⁰Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of

PUT ON CHRIST

¹¹And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. ¹²The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. ¹³Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. ¹⁴But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.

THE LAW OF LIBERTY

14 Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. ²For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. ³Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. ⁴Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand.

⁵One person esteems one day above an-

12:19 ^aDeuteronomy 32:35 12:20 ^aProverbs 25:21, 22 13:9 ^aNU-Text omits "You shall not bear false witness." ^bExodus 20:13-15, 17; Deuteronomy 5:17-19, 21 ^cLeviticus 19:18

SOUL NOTE



All the King's Men (13:1-7) Governments are put in place by God. At times they are peaceful and helpful to their subjects; at other times they are harmful. Rome under the Caesars was no exception. The *pax romana* (Roman peace) created outward tranquility in the empire, but at times people would be persecuted or dealt with unjustly. Today's situation is much the same, and so is Paul's advice: "Be subject to the governing authorities." Obey the laws; pay taxes; honor leaders. This does not mean following the law of the land when it is against God's will, but it does mean being a respectful, law-abiding citizen. After all, our witness for Christ is at stake. **Topic: Honor**