

Washington church of Christ

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washingtonnjchurchofchrist.com

Order of Services

Sunday, June 30, 2013

Song Leader	Tom Dolan
Prayer	Stan Thompson
Preaching	Ben Hall
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Scott Thomas
Prayer for the Cup	Dan Wydro
Prayer for the Collection	Bob Celentano
Assisting at the Table	Bob DeGrado
Scripture Reading	Patrick Wydro
Morning Closing Prayer	Ralph Ruggiero
Evening Opening Prayer	Antonio Ruggiero
Announcements	Derald Sanchez

Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Classes	7:30 pm
Thursday Morning Bible Study	11:00 am

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The First Requirement...

In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus sets forth the requirements, and principles, of the Kingdom of Heaven, which both He and John had announced was *"at hand."* (Matthew 3:2; 4:17)

In the book of Matthew we read;

And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings, that the people were astonished at His teaching, (Matthew 7:28 NKJV)

Jesus had touched upon every aspect of their lives and daily conduct. In the same way, many today are astonished, and renounce the Sermon on the Mount as being impractical, and the ideals it contains are said to be impossible to attain and achieve.

Jesus admitted the difficulty in meeting the standards when He stated in the course of the sermon;

"Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it. (Matthew 7:13-14 NKJV)

But, since Jesus came to *"seek and to save that which was lost"* (Luke 19:10), we can know that He was not deliberately setting the standard high in order to later condemn mankind. The nature and permanency of the Kingdom makes necessary these rigid requirements for those who would enter, and enjoy the many privileges of citizenship.

Inspired prophets had pictured the glory of this Kingdom for many years. Daniel described it as a *"kingdom that shall never be destroyed"*, and *"that shall stand forever"*. (Daniel 2:44) Isaiah prophesied that Jesus would *"establish the kingdom with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever"*. (Isaiah 9:7)

When a builder desires that a building stand for many years he will dig as deeply as necessary to create a solid foundation upon which to build it. Any competent builder will recognize the necessity of a good foundation. New York City is noted for its lofty skyscraper buildings. These amazing structures are resting solidly upon the firm ledge of rock which is known as Manhattan Island. By contrast, the building code of Tokyo, Japan restricts the height of buildings there because Honshu Island is nothing but sand. If a proper foundation is essential for temporal buildings, we may see why Jesus probed so deeply in the foundation principles of the Kingdom which shall stand forever.

There is great significance is the fact that Jesus made humility the first requirement for the Kingdom as He began the sermon with ...

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, For theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3 NKJV)

Beginning with Adam, obedience has always been the first step to being approved of God. And since obedience is defined as, "the performance of that which is required or enjoined by authority", it is reasonable to conclude that humility must precede submission. Webster further says, *"To constitute obedience, the act, or forbearance to act, must be in submission to authority; the command must be known to the person, and his compliance must be in consequence of it, or there is no obedience."*

According to this definition of valid obedience only those actions which are motivated by the desire to supply our spiritual deficiencies in the way God has prescribed can qualify as works of obedience. These commands of God are *"not grievous"* (1 John 5:3), if we are poor in spirit. Just as physical need will cause us to seek remedies, the realization that we are spiritually destitute will bring us into humble submission to the Will of God.

Can we see why Jesus states of the poor in spirit that *"theirs is the Kingdom of heaven"*? Later in His sermon Jesus stated,

"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. (Matthew 7:21 NKJV)

Only the poor in spirit will obey the will of God, and only the obedient will be allowed to enter into the Kingdom. Other scriptures which testify to the essentialness of humility remind us of God's disdain for human pride. At the head of the list of *six things the Lord hates is a proud look;* (Proverbs 6:17)

The Apostle Peter encourages humility through the assurance that,

"...God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." (1 Peter 5:5 NKJV)

God's requirement for humility was revealed to a proud Israel long ago;

He has shown you, O man, what is good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8 NKJV)

Despite the repeated warnings against pride, and the many exhortations to humility which are contained in God's Word, arrogance and rebellion against God are predominant traits of our time. Since human nature has changed very little since the beginning, it is not surprising that the same causes of pride which were condemned by inspired writers are prevalent today. Paul warns that worldly wisdom can be a source of pride when he wrote, *"knowledge puffeth up",* (1 Corinthians 8:1).

For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. (1 Corinthians 1:26 NKJV)

Then, as it is now, men who proudly conclude that they are wiser than God, refuse to obey their Creator. Self-righteousness caused the Pharisee praying to God to enumerate his own virtues rather than to humbly acknowledge his shortcomings. (Luke 18:9-14)

The core of poverty of spirit, the first requirement to enter the Kingdom, is a vision of better things. No man considers himself poor in material things unless he knows of better things than he possess. The Pharisee, of whom Jesus spoke in Luke 18, considered himself better than other men, and looked no higher, so he fell victim to self-righteous pride. The publican saw himself in relation to the Holy and Righteous God, and humbly asked for God's mercy. Those who are poor in spirit today will compare our lives to God's requirements, and obediently submit to His Will.

Our Prayer List...

Chrisanne Montgomery ... Doug Focht ... Joan Focht ... Jon Focht ... Georgia DeLorenzo ... Donna Banghart ... our young people here at Washington ... our members who are traveling ... the men and women in military service ... leaders of our nation ... leaders of our congregation ... our congregation.

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him." (1 John 5:14-15 NIV)

EVENTS AND NOTES

WE WILL NOT HAVE THE THURSDAY MORNING STUDY THIS WEEK IN FAVOR OF THE EVENING LADIES BIBLE CLASS

UPCOMING EVENTS THAT WE ARE AWARE OF ARE ...

- ▲ THE NEXT MEN'S BUSINESS/SPIRITUAL MEETING IS SCHEDULED FOR SUNDAY, JULY 7TH, STARTING AT 4PM.
- ▲ THE NEXT SUNDAY AFTERNOON LUNCH GATHERING AT MEADOW BREEZE PARK WILL BE ON JULY 14TH.
- ▲ THE NORTHEAST FC CAMP, JUNE 30TH – JULY 5TH.
- ▲ THE WASHINGTON LADIES' RETREAT – SEPTEMBER 6TH & 7TH.
- ▲ OUR FALL GOSPEL MEETING WITH JOE WORKS OF THE FAIR LAWN CONGREGATION ON OCTOBER 11TH – 13TH.