

✠ Luke 14:1-11 ✠

IN NOMINE IESU

True humility is not denying what God has done through you. We often hear from those who help others that they haven't done anything but that it was God who helped their needy neighbors. While it is true that it is God who helps all those in need – which is everybody – it is equally true that it is by the children of men that He helps us all. In other words, God helps you and your neighbor by the means of people. If you do a kindness to someone and are thanked for it, don't demean God's will and means by shaking the "thank you" off as if you did nothing. Moreover, don't insult God by saying you did nothing while He desires to help your neighbor through you and give you the glory of being the vessel of help in the time of need. Simply say "you're welcome" "glad to do it" "anytime" and move on to the next needy person. There is a reason we feel good when we help someone: we are co-operating with God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in caring for our neighbor.

By the same token, when someone helps you, don't forget to tell that person that you thank God for them. It is your heavenly Father who sent them to care for you. The farmer, the banker, the candlestick maker, are all here so that God may care for and serve His creatures. God gives you life, but it is your mother that gave birth to you. God sends rain on the fields and make the seed grow into wheat and crop, but the farmer harvests the fields and begins the process of getting that grain to your mouth so that you may eat and live. So also God cares for the poor and watches after the widows and orphans, He feeds the hungry and houses the homeless all through the children of men. Whether they know it or not, whether they believe it or not, all men are used by God for His purposes. Even the hater of God is used by God to care for the children He gives them, feeding and housing them.

Fathers, don't give your duties as father and husband, as the head of the family, to your wives. Wives, don't take authority from your husband as the head of the family. Children, don't act like adults who are free from parental authority. Like it or not, though we are all created equal, created in the image and likeness of God, our vocations are not all equal. We are not all judges or businessmen. We are not all farmers or policemen. We are not all pastors and teachers. We are all placed into a vocation so that we may care for and help our neighbor.

This is all the more true for us who have been baptized into Christ and share in His life through His blood. We know the truth, and the truth has set us free to be the people God intended us to be. We are the Church and we, more than any else, give freely for it has been freely given to us. We are not free to be greedy and selfish. We are not free to let our neighbor come to harm. We are not free to destroy our neighbor's reputation with lies and gossip. We are free to give everything we have to the poor, for such did Christ do for you. We are free to protect our neighbor and help him to protect what is his, even as your heavenly Father protects you and what is yours. We are free to defend our neighbor's reputation; to speak well of him and explain everything in the kindest way. We are free to love one another even as God in Christ loves us.

So go out into the world, having tasted and seen that the Lord is good, and in humility serve and protect your neighbor in life and limb, possession and reputation. For this is true humility: to know who you are and behave accordingly. God has given you each a vocation. You are all either a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, or wife, and we are all workers and neighbors. True humility is living the life God has given to you. Fathers and mothers, don't exacerbate your children, but raise them in the fear and instruction of God. Children, obey

your parents as unto the Lord, for God has given you your parents to discipline you, train you in the way that you should go. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no benefit to you. Everyone submit to the governing authorities for it is God who gives them to you. For the one who exalts himself will be humbled and the one who humbles himself will be exalted.

Do not presume to be what you are not, for such thoughts are full of pride and vainglory and you will be humbled by God. The citizen who presumes to be the lawman and takes the law into his own hands to bring justice to a criminal will soon find himself sharing a cell in county lockup with the one he thought to bring to justice. The politician who serves himself will soon find himself out of job, for he is God's servant to serve the people. The preacher who does not preach the whole council of God in the authority of his office, failing to exhort, reprove, rebuke, and encourage, will soon find his hearers following myths and false teachings to the peril of their souls and his. He will have failed in his vocation as preacher and steward of the mysteries of God. And the hearer who fails to hear will soon be humbled. He who has ears to hear let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.

A student is not above his teacher. We should not presume to teach when we have been called by the Spirit to hear and obey. If anyone thinks he has mastered his Teacher's lessons – the Ten Commandments, the Creed, and the Lord's Prayer, which is the whole sum and epitome of the entire Scriptures, let him humble himself and learn again these things of God lest God humble him with strict discipline and forbearance. It is Christ who teaches and who is your Teacher. He teaches you through His Word and Sacraments just like school teachers teach through words and actions.

Let the Word of God have its way with you. Let it convict you in your sin so that it may heal you with the words of Christ, your sins are forgiven. Let it humble you now so that you are not humbled on the Day of Judgment. Christ has redeemed you, a lost and condemned person, purchased and won you from all sin, from death, and from the power of the devil; not with gold or silver, but with His holy, precious blood and with His innocent suffering and death. Do not exalt yourself and say you have no sin to repent of. Do not exalt yourself by taking the seat of honor when it is Christ who sits at the right hand of God. Let the Word of God humble you so that God may exalt you.

And so He does. He exalts the sinner by inviting him to share in the Feast of Heaven. He lifts us who are lowly high, giving us the seat of honor in His kingdom, a place at His Father's Table. And this holy Meal strengthens your faith in God and your love for your neighbor. You have a godly vocation of loving your neighbor, do not set yourself in the seat of honor, waiting for others to serve you. Humble yourself and wash one another's feet. Give your last crust of bread to your hungry neighbor. Let him who insults you and mocks you also be he who receives from you good and kindness. For such did Christ do for you. And what is a Christian but a little Christ? Bringing the Good News of the kingdom into the world by loving his neighbor and doing what God has called him to do in this life.

In the name of the FATHER and of the ✠ SON and of the HOLY SPIRIT.

✠ AMEN ✠