

Change Agent

“Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven”. — Matthew 5:3

What does it mean to be truly human? We excuse any personal impropriety by saying, “I am only human.” However, we expect others to act humanely even forgivingly toward us. We hold others to a higher standard than we hold ourselves to, “How easy it is to excuse my fault!” So we expect others to do the same for us. If the world is ever to be a better place, it will never be because others have changed over to my standard of goodness—why, I cannot even meet my own. A better world begins with a better me.

When Jesus steps away from his family’s construction company to begin building the kingdom of heaven, what material does he select? He selects the dis-spirited, the disenfranchised, the put-down and put-away, the overlooked, the throw-aways, the unloved, the decidedly un-powerful, the worthless and the hurting. These are “the destitute of spirit”. Three types of people fill the world: those who hurt others to get what they want, those being hurt and those who look on but do nothing. If we must choose among these options, may I suggest we choose to be the put down? Our culture measures success by the ability to dominate the competition. If I can put down others, crush them and use them to get what I want as I cast them aside, then I am powerful and successful. People have become obstacles to my happiness so I will use them to whatever end that suites me. However, Jesus calls us to be something very different.

We buy, barter and steal affection from others to boost our status and prop up our egos. We bully others into our point of view by crushing any dissenting voice in our hearing, yet we do this in a most civilized fashion so as not to call attention to our cruelty. We shove others out of our way; and when any complain, we call foul by saying we only do so in jest. We pepper detractors with barbs and pigeonhole them with put-downs and insults to cover our tracks. In making them the butte of our jokes, we hope to keep the spotlight on some negative aspect of their personality until we discover some other less fortunate to peck and prey upon. This we call campaign strategy.

We do all this under the guise of adopting and building a superior culture or advanced system that makes all others obsolete. Armed with the latest facts and figures, we prove our methods and performance to be superior to all other candidates. Without realizing it, we have adopted an “us-versus-them” mentality wherein the “us” is always right and the “they”, whoever they are, are always wrong. Superiority breeds superiority, we muse. The superior never stops their quest for dominance and conquest until all have capitulated to their superiority and praise them for their unequivocal goodness. Is it any wonder the world is in such a mess?

The world does not need more of superior systems, cultures and methods but more of superior people—people who will not step on others to take a step up, people who look to God as being superior rather than themselves, people who risk their status to help those being preyed upon and people who dare to change the world by starting at the bottom. As long as I am full of myself, confident in my own ability and power hungry, I can never do the will of God. His Spirit—not mine—must fill every crevice of my soul. His love must change me into a change agent—compassion that shakes me up so much on the inside that I must do something about what I see. If the world is to change, it is because I first have changed and am changing all I can see as I follow the model Christ left behind. What did he do? He left everything behind, stepped down to our level and chose the worthless, abandoned and disposable to build his kingdom upon.

Jesus calls us to be salt and light—to make the world different because of his Spirit living in us. He came to our side when we did not deserve his consideration. He chose us to be on his team when no one else would pick us. He covers our every fault and calls on us to do the same for each other. If the church is not a perfect place, it is because we have forgotten what he calls us to be and we do not realize who we are. In essence we have lost our “I-am-here-with-you-ness”. We have been called to each other’s side, not to domineer but bring out the best in each other. My goodness and your goodness spur us on to His Goodness. He must live in us. For him to be alive in me, I must retreat from my warped sense of justice and honor so his love works in me and through me to change me into what he desires.

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