

Week of March 12 - The Humble Will Be Exalted | Small Group Lesson 1

Connect

Do you have or have you had any nicknames (maybe when you were young and/or at a particular place) you would like to share? What was the significance of that name?

Verses – Matthew 23:1-12 (CSB)

1 Then Jesus spoke to the crowds and to his disciples: 2 “The scribes and the Pharisees are seated in the chair of Moses. 3 Therefore do whatever they tell you, and observe it. But don’t do what they do, because they don’t practice what they teach. 4 They tie up heavy loads that are hard to carry and put them on people’s shoulders, but they themselves aren’t willing to lift a finger to move them. 5 They do everything to be seen by others: They enlarge their phylacteries and lengthen their tassels. 6 They love the place of honor at banquets, the front seats in the synagogues, 7 greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called ‘Rabbi’ by people. 8 “But you are not to be called ‘Rabbi,’ because you have one Teacher, and you are all brothers and sisters. 9 Do not call anyone on earth your father, because you have one Father, who is in heaven. 10 You are not to be called instructors either, because you have one Instructor, the Messiah. 11 The greatest among you will be your servant. 12 Whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted.

Study

1. In v.4, Jesus characterizes the religious practices taught by the Pharisees as "heavy burdens." False religious practices even entered the early church (see Colossians 2:20-23; Galatians 4:8-12). Compare this with Jesus' teaching in Matthew 11:28-30. What is the key difference in these teachings? (vv.11-12; Matthew 16:24)

2. Read Matthew 5:14-16. Jesus teaches us to do good works in the sight of others. Why is this behavior acceptable, and even promoted, yet the behavior of the Pharisees is condemned in today's verses? What is the difference? (See Matthew 6:1-4)

☕ **DISCUSS:** In vv.8-12 Jesus commands his own disciples not to use titles such as Rabbi, Teacher, and father in referring to themselves or others. Is it OK for us to use titles (e.g. Father, Pastor, Elder, Teacher, Evangelist, Doctor)? (see Romans 4:1; Colossians 3:21, 4:14; Philippians 1:1; 1 John 2:13)

🏃 **APPLY:** In what practical ways can we reflect Christlikeness while having titles and accolades? Would it be biblical to skip the titles and to start calling people by their nicknames and first names from today in public?

Share

Have you seen people with "big titles" act in humble ways? Share your experiences when you have witnessed such behavior.

Grow

Minister to one another through sharing praise and specific prayer requests.

- Pray for the Lord to help us to be humble before others.
- Would you like to share your love and hope in the Lord with **VBS 2023**? Contact: sumiko@tokyobaptist.org