

# OF NO REPUTATION

*“...he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness.” —PHILIPPIANS 2:7*

Most people cannot help having a reputation, but it is wise to keep distant from it. Once we become interested in establishing a reputation, we then have to work at maintaining it, and therein lay the seeds to hypocrisy.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus tells us to be careful not to do acts of righteousness to be seen by men. He rebukes the hypocrites in their giving, praying and fasting for the purpose of being honoured by men. Rather than acts of righteousness, it becomes a performance for self-gratification, and Jesus says of them, “they have received their reward in full” (Matthew 6:2); their reward being a reputation they worked hard to establish with people, but leaves them bankrupt where it really counts before God.

After Jesus’ baptism, He was led by the Spirit for 40 days in the wilderness, and was both tested by God and tempted by the devil in His attitude towards reputation. On His 40th day, Satan took Jesus to Jerusalem and had Him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God, he said, “throw yourself down. For it is written: ‘He will command his angels concerning you, and they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone’.” (Matthew 4:5-6) In other words, “Get yourself on the map, Jesus. No one knows who You are. Jump down from here

and it will spread like wildfire who You really are.” But reputation was of no interest to Jesus. He answered, “It is also written: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test’.” (4:7)

The devil’s intent was to weaken Jesus by getting Him to act independently of His Father, but God’s intent was to strengthen Jesus for what lay ahead. During the course of the next three years, Jesus’ reputation would be torn to shreds. He would be abused, scorned, mocked, betrayed and crucified, but Jesus had proven in the wilderness that He did not care what others thought of Him, only that the will of His Father be done.

And that is God’s intent for us – that His will be done, regardless of what others may think. Any act of righteousness we do to be seen by others glorifies ourselves, and will not win favour with God. Caring about reputation and trying to maintain it will only serve as a ball and chain, weighing us down. It becomes a tiresome obligation that leads to hypocrisy as it maligns God’s true intent and purpose. Our concern should always be for the will of God, and we leave our reputations in His hands.

***PRAYER: Dear Lord Jesus, help me to be focused on your will being done, and not in acquiring and maintaining a reputation that pleases me. Thank You, Lord.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: Am I hindering my walk with God by trying to maintain a reputation I like?***