



The Kingdom Perspective

Climbing Your Stairway to Heaven

Hello this is Pastor Don of Christ Redeemer Church. Welcome to The Kingdom Perspective!

Self-advancement and self-justification are intuitive to the human heart. We constantly not only put ourselves first, but also justify why we do it. As Katharine Roberts, director of Verity Fellowship puts it: “[A]ccording to the world, life is like a ladder. At the top of the ladder is success, and at the bottom of the ladder is failure. Apart from Christ, we all naturally see life through this lens.”

Even the Apostle Paul admits this was his operating grid. Before meeting Jesus, he describes his life as a sort of ladder climbing narrative: “...I was *advancing* in Judaism beyond many of my own contemporaries...” (Galatians 1:14)

Later he describes his “advancement narrative” to the Philippians, “...If anyone...thinks he has reason for confidence in the [himself], I far more: circumcised on the eighth day, of the people of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; as to the law, a Pharisee; as to zeal, a persecutor of the church; as to righteousness under the law, blameless.” (Philippians 3:4-6)

Paul’s pedigree was impeccable and performance impressive.

Now, there’s nothing wrong with having an impressive background or with working hard to better yourself. Self-improvement per se is not a sin. In my opinion, we could use a little more of it. However, when you believe your performance or pedigree IS your identity (your true self) or that it gives you worth before God, then trouble ensues. The only sure place to put your hope is not in your pedigree or performance, but in God himself. He alone is our glory, our shield, and defender.

And that’s something to think about from The Kingdom Perspective.

“For I would have you know, brothers, that the gospel that was preached by me is not man’s gospel. For I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. For you have heard of my former life in Judaism, how I persecuted the church of God violently and tried to destroy it. And I was advancing in Judaism beyond many of my own age among my people, so extremely zealous was I for the traditions of my fathers. But when he who had set me apart before I was born, and who called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, in order that I might preach him among the Gentiles, I did not immediately consult with anyone; nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were apostles before me, but I went away into Arabia, and returned again to Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and remained with him fifteen days. But I saw none of the other apostles except James the Lord’s brother. (In what I am writing to you, before God, I do not lie!) Then I went into the regions of Syria and Cilicia. And I was still unknown in person to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. They only were hearing it said, ‘He who used to persecute us is now preaching the faith he once tried to destroy.’ And they glorified God because of me.”

~Galatians 1:11-24 (ESV)

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