

One Ladder, Which Wall?

EPHLOGUE

CHOOSE TO LIVE

*But the greatest among you shall
be your servant. Whoever exalts
himself shall be humbled; and
whoever humbles himself shall
be exalted.*

Matthew 23:11-12

*He [Jesus] humbled Himself by
becoming obedient to the point
of death, even death on a cross.*

Philippians 2:8

One Ladder, Which Wall?

You are sitting around the campfire at the end of a long day on the spiritual cattle drive still pondering the secret of life. You know: *the main thing*. Leaning back on a large rock, Curly, the ranch boss, asks, “What have you learned from the exchanged-life teaching?” You might reply, “Loosening one’s grip on the world and pursuing an obedient walk in fellowship with Christ produces an enriched life now and rewards in the future.” An approving grin comes over the leathery face and Curly probes further, “How does your answer relate to Christ’s response to both the lawyer and the rich ruler — ‘If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments?’” (Matt. 19:17). Before you answer the question, Curly would want you to again consider the timeline discussed earlier in chapter 11 (page 149). Keep in mind that both incidents took place during the last six months of Christ’s earthly ministry. It was during this time that the exchanged-life paradox was being taught. Do you think this is a coincidence or is His teaching related in its timing? Hopefully, you have connected the dots because Curly wants to ask you one final question,

*Do you know what the secret of life is **NOW**?*

Connecting the Dots!

The primary emphasis in both the rich-young-ruler and the exchanged-life passages concerned an enriched *life* that can be expe-

CHOOSE TO LIVE

rienced here and now. While eternal life and kingdom entrance was addressed within the *rich-ruler context*, the focus was on believers “coming after” and “following” Christ in discipleship, resulting in enriched living now and rewards in the coming kingdom. The same was true for the *exchanged-life context*. While misunderstood by many to concern only salvation, faithful obedience in Christian living or discipleship was again the focus. Jesus desired dedicated followers who would experience life in abundance and who would serve others.

Jesus’ own life brings perspective. He came to serve, not to be served. Christ demonstrated this servant role by washing His disciples’ dirty feet in the Upper Room (John 13:1-11). He echoed this sentiment when He said, “The greatest among you shall be your servant. Whoever exalts himself shall be humbled; and whoever humbles himself shall be exalted” (Matt. 23:11-12). Is this not what Paul penned when he wrote, “He [Jesus] humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross” (Phil. 2:8). Christ, first and foremost, came to serve. Humility is not equated with inferiority, but reflects your perspective of others in relation to yourself. That is Christlikeness.

Do you know how to really live? Do you want to know why you are here? This is really fairly simple. The hard part is deciding to take on Christ’s point of view. When others become more important than you, then it becomes simple to be successful in God’s way. Motivated by love and seeking the best for others, Christ gave up His own life for you and me. In turn, when we relinquish our self-rights and selfish pursuits, we begin to experience a life of service and richness.

Ladder Placement

So, go get your ladder. Which wall should you choose? Any option will take effort. Each requires work. You must do some climbing. Which will bring the best return on investment? Is it

EPILOGUE

chasing earthly riches like the rich fool (Luke 12) and the young ruler (Luke 18)? Or are treasures in heaven from the Savior worth your effort?

We all want to succeed. What is your idea of a successful life: lots of stuff or lasting service? Those are the options. The first is all about *you*; the latter is all about *others*. Against which wall is your ladder leaning? Carly urges you *to keep the main thing the main thing*.

Secret of Life:
*Lean your ladder
against the right wall
and keep climbing!*

