

HONOUR FOR HONOUR

I Samuel 2:30.

The attitude toward God which we assume is plainly of the utmost importance. Our relation to others is of minor importance in comparison with our relationship to Him. This is everything. Our attitude toward Him is naturally and necessarily one or other of two kinds. We either honor Him or despise Him. We honor Him by reverence, trust, prayer, obedience, fidelity, and living to His glory. We despise Him by forgetfulness, unbelief, self-will, pride, selfishness, disobedience, and sin of every kind.

To honor God is to know Him, to reverence Him, and to love Him. He whose heart cleaves to God will show it in his daily conduct. He will be careful to consult God's Word for direction, and to observe His statutes. He will honor the Lord with his substance, and with the first-fruits of all his increase. He will make it his aim, and hold it his chief end, to glorify God.

Why is there so much suffering in the world today? It is because of human sin. We have dishonored God. Anselm, in his medieval way, said, in effect, that man had dishonored God by failing fully to yield his will to God. The will of God is righteousness and peace.

This text states the fact that men can honor God. It will sober any soul to pause and ask, What can I do to honor the God of this universe? God is high and holy, so sublime and superior, that men feel unable to honor Him. But, men can honor God. They can do so in various ways.

I. Men Honor God.

1. By their attitude toward Him.

We honor Him by an exalted idea of His perfections. We do not honor Him unless we think of Him as the infinitely holy one, righteous in all His ways and holy in all His works, as being free from the very shadow of imperfection, possessing every excellent quality, and all in infinite degree, as transcending, in the excellent perfection of His character, the highest thought of His creatures, as being infinitely better than the best conception we are able to form of Him.

The Psalmist declared: "Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised." "The Lord made the heavens. Honour and majesty are before Him; strength and beauty are in His sanctuary." The Lord God created all things. He is in all, under all, and above all. He gives all life and sustains life. He placed all the planets in position and holds them there. Truly "the Lord reigneth." Men honor themselves and God by acknowledging this position of God.

2. Through worship in His name.

"O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness." "Give unto the Lord the glory due unto His name." The Lord is to be praised for His matchless name. He is the God of grace and goodness; the God of justice and righteousness; the God of love and mercy; the God of beauty and holiness; and the God of might and majesty. Man may worship God. He can magnify God in his own heart and before men. Man can glorify the name of the Lord. All men should adore the Lord God.

3. By faith in His Word.

We honor God by reverencing His Word. That Word is the expression of His mind and will, and by all who honor Him it will be treated with the profoundest homage. God-fearing, God-honoring people give heed to what He says, prayerfully seeking to understand its meaning, to credit its testimonies, to obey its requirements.

"O Lord, I have said that I would keep thy words." The Lord has revealed Himself to man. He created man and reserves the right to speak to him. The record of the revelation of God to man is in the Bible, the holy Word of God. Man honors God when he hears this Word, believes it, accepts it, and seeks to live by it. He honors God when he can say, "Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path." Also, "Thy Word have I hid in my heart that I might not sin against thee." Surely all men should believe God and accept His Word. He who accepts God's Word honors himself as well as God.

4. Through gifts for His cause.

"Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of thine increase." Proverbs 3:9. Since man lives, moves, and has his being in the Lord, and receives every good and perfect gift from Him, the Lord God has a right to expect generous gifts out of what a man earns. God is honored when man makes a gift in the Lord's house on the Lord's Day for the Lord's work. Man can honor God by giving his substance into the Lord's treasury.

5. By obedience to Him.

The lives of many people are voicing a plain refusal to have God rule over them. In so doing they dishonor Him. But by a sincere effort to obey we honor Him. Much depends, too, upon the spirit in which we obey, not so much because we feel we must, as because we love Him and really wish to please Him by doing the things He requires.

6. Through service in His kingdom.

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." It is the plan of the Lord to use saved people to aid Him in His work. Man can honor God in giving his life for consecrated service in preaching, teaching, singing, visiting, comforting, and praying in the name of and for the sake of the kingdom of God. Serve the Lord with gladness. Honor the Lord in service.

In these and other ways man can honor the Lord God.

II. God Honors Men.

It is easy to see that God honors men far more than men honor Him.

1. God honors men in creation.

When He had created the heavens and the earth and the other living creatures, He said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness." "And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Thus God created man with a physical, mental, social, and spiritual nature. "Thou hast made him (man) a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour." Thus man is "fearfully and wonderfully made." God has honored man in creating him in His own image and likeness.

2. God honors men with Salvation.

After God created man in His own image, man disobeyed God and became sinful and passed this sinful nature on to all descendants. The Word describes all men as it says, "There is none righteous, no, not one." "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." But God loved sinful man and sent His only begotten Son into the world to reveal His love, and to die that sinful men might be saved from sin. God saves man from the guilt and penalty of sin and from the habit and dominion of sin, and gives him eternal life. What an honor!

3. God honors men in adoption.

When the Lord saves one from sin he becomes a child of God and is a member of the family of God. "As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God." In the family of God, His children take on the nature of God and strive to

attain His characteristics. "Now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him." What honor God bestows upon men!

4. God honors men as co-workers.

"We are laborers together with God." When the Lord saves a person from sin and takes him into His family, He gives that person some work to do in His kingdom. God calls Christians to serve in all phases of His work. The joy of it all is that God works with His own and helps them to accomplish His will in His work. The Lord bestows such honors on men as to permit them to work with Him in His high and holy work.

5. God honors men with help.

"My God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus." God is ready, able, and willing to help all men in every need. God is ready to save the lost, to comfort the sorrowing, to strengthen the weak, to give peace to the troubled, and to supply all the needs of all His people. He graciously invites all to come to Him for help. He will not turn any soul away. He will supply every need. He will satisfy every righteous desire. God honors men. Text.