**Compliments from Christ**

**Introduction**

1. Everyone enjoys a compliment from time to time.
2. However, compliments are only as valuable as the source from which they come:
   1. Speaking of the dishonest, and sinful – **Psalm 5:9; Proverbs 20:19**
   2. Paul defending himself against the idea of preaching from dishonesty, and with ulterior motives – **1 Thessalonians 2:4-5**
   3. Some hand out compliments that bear no true weight, but are used for dishonest gain, or simply thrown around with little thought as to validity. (People pleasers.)
3. To receive a compliment from the Lord would mean a great deal:
   1. Jesus always spoke truth.
   2. Jesus knows the hearts of men – **John 2:23-25; Acts 1:24** (when choosing Judas’ replacement)
   3. If He gave a compliment it was not misplaced, but a matter of truth.
4. Consider these times when Jesus complimented some based on their actions and character. If Jesus complimented them for these reasons, we would do well to imitate them, knowing that such is pleasing to the Lord.
5. The Genuineness of Nathanael **(John 1:47)**
6. The Common Problem Among Israel
   1. ***“an Israelite indeed”*** – in contrast to one who was “fake.” (As we might say.)
   2. **Romans 9:6; Galatians 6:16 (“this rule” is of v. 15)**– distinction between Israel of the flesh and spiritual Israel.
   3. The problem exposed:
      1. **Romans 2:25-29** – in discussion of affirming that the Jews were as guilty as the Gentiles – circumcision was only profitable if it was inward.
      2. Their actions and thoughts of heart did not live up to their name – Israel, the covenant people of God.
7. The Exception of Nathanael
   1. **John 1:47** – Nathanael was noted by Jesus as a genuine Israelite.
      1. Deceit – *dolos*, primarily “a bait, snare”; hence, “craft, deceit, guile,” (Vine)
      2. Putting something forth that appears as one thing but is in reality something else.
   2. Displayed by Nathanael:
      1. **John 1:45-50** – reacted with faith to the evidence Jesus presented of Himself as the Christ.
         1. **(v. 46)** – although confused about the suggested origin of Nazareth he did not dismiss it entirely, but went to see.
         2. **(vv. 48-49)** – Understood the implication of Jesus’ knowledge, and declared his faith accordingly.
         3. **(v. 50)** – this being done with far less proof than would be provided in the future.
      2. ***“in whom is no deceit”*** – especially concerning his desire for the realization of the Messiah, and that even though not understanding why He would come from a place like Nazareth.
         1. Where others rejected Jesus when He spoke of matters which contradicted their current views of the Messiah, and His kingdom.
8. Only Genuine Faith is Pleasing to God
   1. **1 Timothy 1:5** – sincere faith is what the gospel produces.
   2. Such will be tested by the word in the end – **Hebrews 4:12**
   3. Are we wearing the name “Christian” without having Christ truly live in us?
   4. Are we going through the motions?
   5. Could Jesus accurately complement our faith and character as being genuine?
9. The Great Faith of the Roman Centurion **(Matthew 8:5-10)**
10. The Quality of the Centurion’s Faith
    1. Displayed an understanding/faith in Jesus’ ability to heal – (**vv. 5-6)** – why he came to Jesus.
    2. Displayed a conviction of Jesus being one of great dignity and power – **(vv. 7-8)** – Not simply understood His ability, but His greatness – ***“not worthy”*** (Humility before the one he called **“Lord” – v. 6**).
    3. Displayed an understanding of the “why” concerning Jesus’ ability to heal, and grasped the implications of such authority **(vv. 9-10):**
       1. **Cf. Mark 2:10-12** – concerning paralytic – “power” – *exousia* – authority. (Proven authority to forgive by display of authority over nature to heal.)
       2. Centurion obviously knew of Jesus’ prior miracles AND MADE THE CONNECTION OF AUTHORITY OVER ALL THINGS.
       3. ***“only speak a word”* (v. 8)** – If He had such authority, then He didn’t need to be present, but only needed to say a word – AUTHORITY/POWER EXPRESSED IN WORDS (**cf. Psalm 33:6, 9** – creation by His word, spoke, commanded)
       4. His faith was not misplaced – **(v. 13)**
11. The Quality of Faith We Need to Possess
    1. The reason for Jesus’ display of power/authority in miracles – **John 20:30-31** – that we may have life in His name.
       1. **Acts 4:12** – salvation by no other name.
       2. **Luke 6:46; Colossians 3:17** – requires submission to His name/authority.
    2. We need this attitude – **Luke 5:4-5** – ***“nevertheless at Your word I will”***
    3. Faith that is commendable before God is that which submits to His word without question or hesitation. If God said, faith does, and does so without reply.
12. The Great Humility of John the Baptist (**Matthew 11:11)**
13. John’s Great Appointment and His Humble Execution
    1. **Matthew 11:11** – not saying John was the greatest, but he was not lesser than any before him.
       1. Most Jews weren’t receptive of John – **Matthew 11:18**
       2. Jesus is showing that they should be every bit as receptive of John than any claiming to be a prophet before him.
    2. Context:
       1. **Matthew 11:2-6** – John sent 2 of his disciples to inquire of Jesus whether He was the Messiah.
          1. Not that John was necessarily doubting – **John 1:29-31** – identified Jesus as the Christ before.
          2. Yet, his disciples disputed the fact – **John 3:25-26 –** as if in thought that Jesus should not be baptizing.
          3. Perhaps John sent them to prove to them what he already knew – he said ***“do WE look for another,”*** not “I.”
          4. **(vv. 4-6)** – Jesus assured that He was indeed the Messiah, and the miraculous works prove it.
       2. **Matthew 11:7-15** – Jesus testifies of the validity of John’s ministry.
          1. **(vv. 7-10)** – while his countenance was not what the people would have expected (humble appearance – **v. 8** – **Mark 1:6**), John was indeed the prophet spoken of in Malachi 3:1.
          2. **(vv. 11-15**) – Accept that he is indeed “Elijah who is to come.”
             1. Some would not.
             2. The same would reject Jesus – (**vv. 16-19**) – not rejection with sound reason, but out of bias.
    3. John was described by Jesus as called to an incredible task – (**vv. 9-11**) – preparing the way of the Messiah.
       1. Yet, it is certain that John didn’t allow such to go to his head with pride – he lived a humble lifestyle, and simply fulfilled his ministry.
       2. **John 3:27-30** – in response to the complaint about Jesus brought by his disciples, John showed his humility in decreasing that the Lord might increase.
       3. Part of John’s greatness, as Jesus described, was his humility in doing nothing more, and nothing less than the Lord required of him, and hanging it up when it was time for the Lord to take the stage.
14. The Character We Must Possess in the Kingdom
    1. In comparison to John – **Matthew 11:11** – least in the kingdom of heaven greater than he.
       1. I.e. in regard to their being a part of something so great – such a great privilege.
       2. John – prepare the way of the Lord; Member of kingdom – realize the Lord’s rule.
    2. A requirement of entrance, and greatness in the kingdom – **Matthew 18:3-4** – humility.
    3. We need to be as John was – **John 3:30**
    4. **1 Peter 5:5-6** – we must be humble and submissive before God to be exalted – **v. 10** – called to His eternal glory.
    5. Are we living to promote Christ, or ourselves?
    6. Are we showing humility, or pride?
15. The Liberality of the Widow **(Mark 12:41-44)**
16. The Proportion of the Widow’s Offering
    1. **(vv. 41-42)** – She was poor, and monetarily did not put in much at all.
    2. **(vv. 43-44)** – However, Jesus noted the proportion of her gift in relation to her net worth:
       1. Gave from poverty.
       2. Put in ALL she had – her livelihood.
    3. This, after speaking of the corruption of the scribes – **Mark 12:38-40** – who did all for a showing, and took advantage of the weak for money – “devour widows’ houses”
    4. This kind of giving manifests one who possesses great qualities of godly character – love for God’s cause, self-denial, liberality, sincerity.
17. The Needed Spirit in Our Giving to God
    1. The same kind of spirit possessed by the poor widow is sought in us by God when we give.
    2. Macedonians as a similar example for the Corinthians, and us – **2 Corinthians 8:1-5** – eagerness, liberality, and selflessness.
       1. Note the example of Christ – **(v.v. 8-9)** – “testing the sincerity of your love”
    3. The standard of giving expected/required – **2 Corinthians 9:5-11**
       1. Generously, not begrudgingly; bountifully; with purpose; cheerfully; knowing God blessed you so you can give liberally.
       2. Proportion – **1 Corinthians 16:2** – as you prosper. (Will be different amount for different people, but the same character should be possessed.)
    4. COULD CHRIST ACCURATELY COMPLEMENT YOU FOR YOUR GIVING?
    5. NOT JUST IN MONEY:
       1. Are we only giving God some of what we can offer?
       2. Is anything being left on the table?
       3. Can we give more of ourselves?
18. The Devotion of Mary **(Mark 14:3-9)**
19. Mary’s Good Work
    1. Her action – (**v. 3):**
       1. Concerning the pouring of ointment on the head – “The only use of this was to refresh and exhilarate - a grateful compliment in the East, amid the closeness of a heated atmosphere, with many guests at a feast. Such was the form in which Mary’s love to Christ, at so much cost to herself, poured itself out.” (Jamieson-Fausset-Brown)
       2. An action according to culture which in its nuances (great cost of oil, and implication that it’s all Mary could offer) spoke of great love and honor for the Lord.
    2. The others’ reaction, and Christ’s estimation of the deed – (**vv. 4-9**):
       1. (**vv. 6-8**) – She did good to Christ who would be with them for a limited time.
          1. What she could – i.e. she wanted to show Him such love and honor and did only what she knew she could.
          2. (**v. 8b)** – not that she did it for that express purpose, but that is how Christ received it personally.
       2. **(v. 9)** – Christ thought so much of it that He saw it fit for the record of His gospel – 2000+ years later we are reading of Mary’s good work for the Lord as an example to follow.
20. We Should Do What We Can – No More, No Less
    1. She did what she could – **(v. 8)** – acted on the basis of what she had, and what was available to her.
       1. She did not think, “This oil is too expensive for Jesus.”
       2. She did not think, “Well, this oil, as expensive as it is, isn’t enough for Jesus.”
       3. She made no excuses, and took no delay, but “She has done what she could.”
    2. This is not an idea giving way for exploring excuses – “Well, this is all I can do.”
    3. It is an thought of encouragement to DO SOMETHING, and to EXAMINE SELF in order to DISCOVER WHETHER THERE IS MORE WE CAN DO.
    4. We will not reap if we do not sow – **Galatians 6:7-10**
    5. Parable of the Talents – **Matthew 25:15, 26-27** – according to his own ability – only based on what they could do.

**Conclusion**

1. Let us not seek praise from men, but praise from God.
2. Jesus did not hand out compliments lightly but did so from sincerity and truth.
3. We should follow the example of those complimented by Jesus, that we may receive the ultimate compliment from Him in the end – **Matthew 25:23**