

10. November 2020

“The Way of Humility”

Lk 17:7-10

'Which of you, with a servant ploughing or minding sheep, would say to him when he returned from the fields, "Come and have your meal at once"? Would he not be more likely to say, "Get my supper ready; fasten your belt and wait on me while I eat and drink. You yourself can eat and drink afterwards"? Must he be grateful to the servant for doing what he was told? So with you: when you have done all you have been told to do, say, "We are useless servants: we have done no more than our duty."'

There is hardly a text in the New Testament that can lead us so clearly into humility, because it places us in the reality of our existence in the following of the Lord! Whatever the Lord entrusts us with - even if it is the greatest task - it is important for us to realise this Word in depth. We only do what is our task, and any personal elevation and the associated building up of one's own person is of evil! We owe it to the love of God to do what is ours in order to carry out the ministry! How God in his infinite generosity rewards and evaluates us, we will see in eternity! Let us hope that our reward will be to be very close to him! In the meantime, we will do what we have been asked to do by looking at him!

Don't get it wrong: it is not a question of taking the attitude of an oppressed slave and obeying the Lord in bondage! But we can consider this word as an advice from the Lord to counter the great danger of pride! Pride is the real and dangerous evil that can afflict us. We remember that it was pride that made Satan no longer want to serve; and pride - namely, wanting to be like God (*cf. Gen 3:5*) - also played a mayor part in original sin!

But how can we overcome this pride, which accompanies us so easily and quickly implants itself in our heart? Let us take the example given to us as learning on this path:

We notice that we have done something well. The joy of it is legal! But in order to avoid the pride that would then lead to the exaltation of one's own person, we must first thank the Lord! Only with his help - be it direct or indirect - was the good deed possible! Even in the first step, gratitude prevents us from looking at ourselves and raising our own person. If we consciously owe someone else -

namely the Lord - then we open our inner being to God and realise the given situation in the right way!

Then one can hide behind the good work, so to speak, i.e. one does not expose it in order to provoke corresponding reactions in other people. We have only done our duty, and all the praiseworthy things that have happened should be attributed to the Lord! If other people praise us, then we carry this to God and put it in the right proportion!

It will be unavoidable that proud and vain feelings will still beset us. We can, however, refuse to give them our approval and overcome them in prayer. Here prayer is also a kind of spiritual self-education to lead us into the right attitude before God. It is helpful to invoke the Holy Spirit and also to meditate on appropriate passages of the Holy Scriptures. In time the unwelcomed thoughts and feelings will then become weaker, because we have refused to give our affirmation to them! The Lord knows our efforts and will look at our intention and not at feelings and thoughts we do not want!

By consistently distancing ourselves from all attitudes within us that are in conflict with the way of following Christ, and by practising the right attitudes with the help of God, we also participate in our inner purification. For when we encounter our pride and the corresponding thoughts and feelings in concrete cases with the invocation of the Holy Spirit, then the pride becomes weaker and we have taken steps in the right direction!

How liberating it will be when this Word of the Lord becomes more and more realised in us and we do everything without attracting attention, without being fixed on us and without having to boast - just when we do everything for the glory of the Lord, praise to him now and in eternity.