

Entitled

by Anton Bosch

We must recognize that we are not entitled to anything and adopt a humble and servant-hearted mindset, as demonstrated by Jesus' example.

Scripture: Proverbs 11:2, Matthew 5:12, Acts 20:31, Romans 12:3, Galatians 6:3, Philippians 2:3, 1 Thessalonians 2:9, James 4:6, 1 Peter 5:5

Topics: "Humility", "Entitlement"

Description

Anton Bosch preaches about the dangerous mindset of entitlement that has infiltrated society and even the church, emphasizing how entitlement is rooted in arrogance, selfishness, and self-centeredness. He highlights that true entitlement belongs to Jesus alone, who surrendered His rights for the sake of saving us, despite being entitled to supreme honor and worship. Bosch challenges believers to shift from an entitled mindset to one of humility, contentment, and gratitude, reminding them that God's blessings are out of His love and grace, not owed to us.

Transcript

The word "entitled" seems to have changed its meaning recently. The word and its root dates from the 14th century, but in recent years it has taken on a new shade of meaning. Originally the word meant that someone was legally "entitled" to some privilege, benefit or property.

Today the word has more to do with what people feel they have a right to, irrespective of whether that right has any legal, moral or other foundation. Disadvantaged people everywhere feel they are entitled to a better deal. Lazy people feel entitled to society providing them with a decent lifestyle. Children feel they are entitled to parents who will provide for them, even when the "children" are grown-up (at least in years). Most people feel they are entitled to a government that will fix all their problems, give them free housing, pensions, free medical and free food even though they, themselves, have never made any contributions to society.

Entitlement assumes certain "rights". One problem is that most of the time those rights exists only in the mind of those who feel they are entitled. The bigger problem is that such rights invariably infringe on the legitimate rights of others. For example the person in LA who drives a big SUV feels entitled to ignore everyone else on the road's rights. Thus entitlement always has a price which has to be paid by disadvantaging someone else.

Entitlement is rooted in arrogance. Jacob Zuma and Tiger Woods both feel they are entitled to sleep with every woman in sight simply because they are who they are. After all, they are the president of a country and (arguably) the best golfer ever.

Entitlement is just another word for selfishness and self-centeredness. The entitled see only their want, needs and rights and care nothing about those of others.

But, that is exactly what we expect from unbelievers who see themselves as the final authority and the ultimate goal of everything. The scary thing is that entitlement has infiltrated the church and most "christians" feel they are also entitled to all sorts of things. Part of the reason for this is the influence of the world but a substantial part of the blame lies at the door of preachers. Preachers and "christian" writers have for a while now, propagated the message of entitlement. According to them, we are entitled to happiness, a wonderful life, riches, health, success and even salvation. None of this, of course is true but it has not stopped people from changing their attitude from one of humility, contentment and gratitude to one of arrogance, discontent and assumption.

The truth is that we are not entitled to anything, except God's wrath. God does not owe us salvation or a good life. It is just not in the Bible. He saves us because of His amazing grace. Once we are saved, we are entitled only to suffering, servitude and brokenness. Yet, again because of his great grace, he does bless us with all manner of spiritual and temporary blessings. But that is exactly what these things are: they are His blessings because He loves us. We do not deserve them and He does not owe us and we are entitled to nothing.

If anyone was entitled, then Jesus was. He was entitled to the supreme position in the universe, to the worship of angels and all of creation. He was entitled to erase all of mankind with the earth that had been contaminated by man's sin. He was entitled to expect kings to bow in the dust before Him and for all of mankind to cower in humble reverence. Yet He was born as a servant and died on the Cross. He never asserted his rights (and He had real rights). He never assumed that people would recognize that He was entitled to their worship and allegiance. He simply surrendered all His rights for the sake of saving us.

Where then do we get the idea that we are entitled to respect from the world or even respect from other Christians when no-one respected Him? Why are we entitled to a life void of suffering when Jesus, and all the prophets suffered for the sake of the Kingdom? (Matthew 5:12). Why are we entitled to a cruise to heaven when Paul and others who went before us had to labor night and day (Acts 20:31; 1Thessalonians 2:9)? Why are we entitled to be served when others were spent in serving? Why are we entitled to be loved, when we do not love? How can we be entitled to all the benefits of a wonderful church body when we will not contribute to it's health? Why is it that those who bring nothing to potlucks are the ones who feel they are entitled to the best and most and are entitled to complain when the food is not just as they want it to be? Why is it that the members who cause the shepherds the most trouble and disrespect the shepherds most are entitled the most honor and attention? Why on earth are those who make the least sacrifices entitled to make the most demands and those whose lives least reflect Christ entitled to having the biggest say in the church?

Just as entitlement in the world assumes certain "rights", so those in the church who feel they are entitled, assume that they have rights that they never had. They have never understood that they have no right to be saved, to be in a good church or to have others run around and serve them.

Entitlement is rooted in arrogance - the arrogance that deceives us to believe that we are wonderful people because we have never seen the wretchedness of our sin and flesh. Or maybe arrogance that is borne out of an inability to remember that all we are, have and hope to be is because of His unmerited favor. Arrogance that sees everyone else as inferior leads to a feeling of entitlement. But then, no Christian sees others as inferior, its just that we are obviously superior!

Entitlement is founded in the worship of self. When we become the centre of the universe and when God, the church and others revolve around us - then off course we are entitled to all sorts of privilege (or so we think).

But rather: "Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself. Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others. Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross." (Philippians 2:3-8)

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