

Pharisees Love Positions and Titles of Honour

by Zac Poonen

The sermon warns against the dangers of seeking positions and titles of honour, which can lead to pride and a desire to be put on a pedestal, and instead encourages followers of Jesus Christ to be servants and to follow the teachings of Christ.

Scripture: Matthew 23:6

Topics: "Humility", "Servant Leadership"

Description

Zac Poonen addresses the issue of pride and the desire for honor among church leaders, particularly highlighting the behavior of Pharisees who seek prominent positions and titles. He warns against allowing oneself to be placed on a pedestal, emphasizing that true leadership comes from serving others rather than seeking recognition. Poonen encourages believers to rely solely on Christ as their leader and to seek God's guidance rather than following human authority. He critiques the modern-day equivalents of Pharisees who impose their authority on others, urging a return to the freedom of the Spirit over legalism.

Transcript

They love to sit at the head table at church dinners, basking in the most prominent positions, preening in the radiance of public flattery, receiving honorary degrees, and getting called 'Doctor' and 'Reverend'. Don't let people do that to you, put you on a pedestal like that (Matthew 23:6-8 - MSG).

Pharisees love the honour of becoming elders in a church. And Pharisaical wives of elders are also proud of the honour their husband has. If you have the tiniest bit of pride that you are an elder in a church or that your husband is an elder, you are certainly a Pharisee of the first order. Such elders can only build Babylon. There is no difference between the Pharisees of those days who loved to be called "Rabbi" and the Pharisees of today who love to be called, "Pastor", "Reverend", "Right Reverend", "Father", and all the other ridiculous titles that Christian leaders have taken to themselves. You can have that spirit even if you call yourself a "Brother" - but with a capital "B". Such Pharisees love to sit on platforms at all public functions to be recognised as "Pastors".

I got a letter some years ago from a Bible Seminary in USA offering me an honorary doctorate, because of my Internet ministry and all the books I had written. They asked me just to fill up a form and return it. I never replied. Would Jesus have been interested in getting an honorary doctorate? Certainly not.

The above passage goes on to say,

Don't let people put you on a pedestal. You all have a single Teacher, and you are all classmates. Don't set people up as experts over your life, letting them tell you what to do. Save that authority for God; let him tell you what to do. No one else should carry the title of 'Father'. You have only one Father, and He's in heaven. And don't let people maneuver you into taking charge of them. There is only one Life-Leader for you and them " Christ. Do you want to stand out? Then step down. Be a servant. If you puff yourself up, you'll get the wind knocked out of you. But if you're content to simply be yourself, your life will count for plenty" (Matthew 23:8-12 - MSG).

Many believers in our churches have tried to get me to take charge of their lives. They ask me to tell them what they should do. I refuse to tell them. I give them my suggestions and then tell them, "Now go and ask God first whether you should do as I say. If He doesn't give you peace about it, then throw away my advice and do what God tells you to do. Your only leader must be Christ".

There are many church-leaders who do not follow Christ's teaching in this area but who love to tell people how to run their private lives. Such elders are Pharisees who are building Babylon. They are under the law themselves and they bring their flock under the law too. They do not know the freedom of the Spirit, because they love titles, position and honour.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/zac-poonen/pharisees-love-positions-and-titles-of-honour/>

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