

Christ Forbids Self-Aggrandizement

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Bible Text: Mark 10:32-45; Philippians 2:3-11

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I wanted to talk this Lord's Day about the subject, "The Highest Seat and the Lowest Seat." And my mind was drawn to this passage of Scripture by events earlier in the week; Luke's gospel, the 14th chapter. The Lord Jesus has this to say, verse seven:

And he put forth a parable to those which were bidden, when he marked how they chose out the chief rooms; saying unto them, when thou art bidden of any man to a wedding, sit not down in the highest room; lest a more honourable man than thou be bidden of him; and he that bade thee and him come and say to thee, Give this man place; and thou begin with shame to take the lowest room. But when thou art bidden, go and sit down in the lowest room; that when he that bade thee cometh, he may say unto thee, Friend, go up higher: then shalt thou have worship in the presence of them that sit at meat with thee. For whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.¹

I said that these words were brought to mind by some events that took place in the last week. You know, it is not often when we reflect upon it. There is not often a chance to see opened up before our own eyes in a public way such a text of Scripture like this one. Perhaps none of us go to important meetings or fancy parties and I am sure that the hostesses nowadays have solved this problem with the use of little cards with the names of the people telling everyone where they are to be seated so there will be no confusions and no embarrassments. And we all know that if you read some of Jane Austen's books and other such things, there is a great deal of planning and thought put into who will sit next to who and who will sit in the chief place and who will sit across from them and on and on and on, an elaborate social ritual that takes place.

But this week there was a remarkable example of this passage brought to life in our local politics. Last Monday was the first meeting of the Board of Supervisors and I had suggested to several people this question: Will Willie Perkins assume that he is going to be the next Board Attorney and take his seat in the Board Attorney's position. And if he is not elected will he then have to get up and leave in humiliation and vacate it to another?

And people thought, "Well, that is an interesting question."

¹ Luke 14:7-11

And, sure enough, come the meeting time Willie Perkins took his seat in the place of the Board Attorney. Now, this was a presumptuous thing to do because his term as Board Attorney had expired. He was no longer the Board Attorney. He would have to be reappointed. But yet he presumed that he would be reappointed as the Board Attorney and so he took his place, his seat as the Board Attorney.

And then when the vote came down another person was elected Board Attorney in his place. George Chiles was the choice of the Board of Supervisors to represent them in court. And, sure enough, right there in front of everyone he had to stand up and gather up his papers and leave his seat and allow another to take it. And it was a interesting example of this text that the Lord Jesus...this parable as it says that he told to his disciples, the danger of taking the best seat and then being asked to vacate it in the place of another.

This text describes an example of a principle. And that is the principle against premature self-aggrandizement followed by the humbling by the hand of another.

I noticed another example of this principle that wasn't as stark as actually being asked to give up a seat, but nevertheless that displayed this principle. Sort of like the companion principle of not counting your chickens before they hatch. But if you had been following the...all of the ramp up to the election of the House Speaker, perhaps you might have been listening to Mississippi Talk Radio and heard all the gloating and all the pomposity and all the inflated predictions about how Willie McCoy was on the way out, getting...everybody get out of the way and he was defeated and all sorts of ridiculing and poking fun at Mr. McCoy's supporters. And they played over and over again poor Bennett Malone's statement that he stood by Willie McCoy because, he said, he wanted to be on the winning side. And they just hooted and laughed at it and talked about his impending humiliation and how humiliated all of Mr. McCoy's supporters would be when he was beat by Jim Smith and they were left with nothing.

Well, as it turned out Mr. McCoy prevailed. And so all of those crowings and those exalted words and hard words against other people turned to ashes in the mouth of the J.T. and Dave Show.

And, of course, they had it coming because they are loud mouths and presumptuous people who talk about things that they don't understand oftentimes and who make predictions that they don't have the power to carry out. Now there is this humiliation when their pride and their assumptions of how things would go are dashed to pieces. And now where is the exaltation and the vaulting and the glory, but taken away from them?

I think of this passage. The Lord Jesus refers to a passage in the Proverbs. I have been struck lately by how often things that the Savior said are reencapsulations of things that have been said already in the Old Testament, things that the Jewish people ought to have already known. But what does the writer of Proverbs say in Proverbs 25, verse six?

Put not forth thyself in the presence of the king, and stand not in the place of great men: For better it is that it be said unto thee, Come up hither; than

that thou shouldest be put lower in the presence of the prince whom thine eyes have seen.²

So, you see, this is a principle against presumption. And I think that the root error that these two texts are warning against—if you really boil it down—is the error of assuming authority that is another’s. In other words, it is the place of the person who calls the feast to make the table sittings, is it not, because he has the authority. It is the place of the Board of Supervisors to pick who the Board Attorney will be. It is the place of the State Legislature to pick who its speaker will be. It is the king’s authority to determine who will be before him and who will be at a more humble station.

But, you see, a person who places themselves in those positions has attempted to seize the authority from another and the right to appoint oneself to honor when there really is another one that has that right. And sooner or later, if you make a habit of doing that, that other person whose true right it is will call you up short and you will be humiliated in public.

You see, Mr. Perkins presumed upon the board’s authority in deciding who would fill that seat. And so did the people who operate the talk radio shows presume on the authority of the legislature as to who would occupy that seat.

There is a story of renown that the great classical composer Beethoven, as he composed his great Third Symphony, which we call The Eroica Symphony, had written up a title page to dedicate it to Napoleon, the French leader. And that when news came to Vienna that at his coronation as emperor Napoleon had snatched the crown from the hands of the archbishop and placed it upon his own head, that Beethoven, in disgust, tore up the dedication sheet and dedicated the symphony to another. You see, he had a revulsion against that presumptuousness that takes the authority and seizes it for exaltation of oneself.

But, you know, these days humility seems to be out of style. All of our television programs are the latest information and titillating news about the high and mighty, about the entertainment moguls and the political elite and so forth. And people today are taught by example to push and to shove and to grab and to take and to self promote. And not really caring who has the authority to elevate them, but to seize that authority themselves and to promote themselves to a higher position.

And, unfortunately, in our society often times it is the case that such activities go unpunished, that the people get away with it, that it actually works sometimes. Sometimes you can bully yourself into the highest station, into the best seat if you have the clout and you have the lawyers and you have the media support and so forth and so on. And yet in tension with this brazenness and this lack of humility there is still in many people a vestige of a resentment and an opposition to those who attempt to seize positions to which they are not qualified.

² Proverbs 25:6-7

I think that perhaps I might be the only person in the world that takes umbrage whenever I see a political candidate run for an important office when he has never bothered to try to get involved or to help out in matters relating to that office in the past. How often we see in our own community people who run for office who, before they made their announcement, never darkened the door to attend a board meeting or to attend a City Council meeting or to watch or to keep themselves informed. But now all of the sudden they put themselves forward as being great candidates to take charge. They want to be in the highest station without having paid their dues at the lower levels.

How many times do we know a person who steps forward and says that the only way he can be of assistance in a particular enterprise is to be in charge. He can't actually do any of the work or get anything accomplished or put his back, his shoulder to the wheel. All he can do...the only contribution he can make is to run things. And if people won't let him run things then he will run off and leave and leave off all the work and all the danger and all of the labor to the people that were doing it before he put himself forward.

But this is the way that lost and sinful men think. It wouldn't cross their mind to actually try to pick up a spade and do some work first before they put themselves forward to be placed in charge.

It seems that the Lord Jesus would have us understand that there is a better way, there is a better way to attain to position or station of leadership of importance, that is to perform a service that is essential, to do the work of the leader before you expect to be promoted to be the leader. And oftentimes this isn't possible. But in those cases where it is it is a prudent method to show people that you have the ability to do the work. And then perhaps they will say, "Well, you are so good at it, why don't we just put you in charge?"

But, you know, there is a false view about the way the free market works. A lot of people have the notion that the way people get to the top in the economy is that they take up a top position without any merit whatsoever, that they get all the breaks and they use their pull and this, that and the other to get to be in charge of things and to be at the top of their industry. Whereas in truth, in a real free market where people buy and sell things in freedom and they make business contracts and arrangements for mutual benefit, the real way to promote oneself and the way to promote a company and the way to make a profit is by performing useful tasks and services and providing a product that people need by a benefit; in other words, by being a servant to them in a sense, a self employed servant, yes, but nonetheless providing for them something that they truly need. And that is the best way, the honest way in which a person might profit and in which a company might profit and might grow. And those are the best companies and the most solid companies and the companies and the entrepreneurs that have the respect of the people that they do business with.

But, you know, this text as being a warning against presumptuousness in the taking of the place of honor and being subject to being humiliated by the person who has the real authority, this text has—as does almost everything the Lord Jesus said—it has a gospel application, doesn't it? Because what has man done but exalt himself to the highest seat?

What has man done but to try to shove aside the almighty from his rule over his creation and to take charge? What is rebellion? What is the self will of man? What is his impudence against the commandments of God, but a taking of that seat of honor and of rulership, of seizing it in his own heart and life and taking it unto himself?

What did the serpent say to Eve? That if she would just disobey God she would be like God, wouldn't she? "Ye shall be as gods..."³ That was his talk to her. And it appears that it had some effect upon her as she went on to violate the commandment of God.

So this is the call that the devil places in each heart of lost man, not that the Lord's will would be done, but that my will would be done. And so you see we all, in some way or another, have transgressed this commandment that the Lord Jesus gave in this parable. We have all taken the best seat, or tried to at any rate. Man doesn't want there to be anyone sitting above him in rulership and in power. And how true this is even of people today who proclaim a modern truncated gospel of a Savior, but not a prince, because lost man would like to avoid the judgment, but he still doesn't want a ruler, does he? He would like to take the Lord Jesus as Savior, but not as prince. There is no need to take a lower seat under this false gospel. There is no need to be asked to move down to a position of humility before the throne of heaven. You can still run your own life. You can still be the hard charging, take charge, sitting in the seat of power person that you always have been. It is just that you can now have some fire insurance against the judgment.

But, you know, to come to Christ according to the true gospel is to surrender the chief seat and to move down to the lowest seat. It is to put the Lord Jesus in the seat of power and to sit only at his feet.

And, you know, one day there will be a time when humanity that has not surrendered that seat of power to the Savior, when there is no choice...there will be no choice for them. When death comes it rips the sinner from their own seat, from their own thrones in judgment and they will be forced to the lowest seat in condemnation.

Now, we have all assumed—in our sin against the Lord and our rebellion and in Adam's fall—we have all assumed the authority to aggrandize ourselves and to take away the Almighty's place. But how often the Savior commands humility and service to each other, especially in the context of his Church.

We read this morning passages, two passages that explain the Lord's command that there should be humility and humbleness amongst God's people, not always a striving to take the best seat, to take the power, to take the rulership. And how often men seize places of honor, exalting themselves even to the very seat of Christ in the Church? Surely the worst example of this is popery where this man assumes even the titles of the Lord Jesus and supplants the offices of Christ as high priest, supplants even the office of the position of the fatherhood of God to his people. He becomes the holy father. He becomes the intervener, the intermediary between God and man. He becomes the one who even can

³ Genesis 3:5

change the Word of God by his *ex cathedra* statements. He has seized that seat which belongs to our Lord Jesus Christ.

But, you know, we have little popes in many churches and denominations, don't we? It is a joke, isn't it, about how in many Baptist Churches the preacher is the Baptist pope and he rules over all the people and he won't brook any controversy or dissent. And usually he either dominates the church or gets run off or splits the church, but never...often times in these situations never is there any subjection and submission one to another in the fear of the Lord. We can all think of examples of this in the Christian community in various churches where people have seized hold of the seat of power and of the seat of honor. And from there they lord it over people when they ought to be taking a seat a little lower and let Christ resume his seat as head of the church.

I think of examples of people who have been models of obedience to Christ's command in this matter. Certainly the name of Henry Morris comes to mind. What a gentle person. What a humble person. What a person who is easy to approach unto and who all the people who dealt with him remarked about how self effacing he was. And even though he was subject to such bitter attacks by lost and wicked men, he was very gentle and very slow to defend himself. And he was a model, really, of the proper behavior of a person who, while he had a position of leadership in Christ's Church, nevertheless he approached it with a humble spirit.

I think of one of the most captivating characteristics of the Brethren in many of their assemblies that they strive—perhaps in some cases without success, but in many cases with success—to maintain this humility amongst the brethren.

Somebody said, "The problem with being in Brethren Church is you can be in the Brethren Church for 40 years and never rise above the rank of brother."

And to the proud heart that is an impediment, isn't it? How could you get to be in charge in a situation like that? And yet how much better it conforms to the teachings of the Lord Jesus. How often Christian leaders assume these high positions and the immediately eschew all accountability and they don't even believe they have the responsibility to answer honest questions that people put to them, things that people don't understand, things that people need clarification for. They just brush them off and dismiss them and make an accusation that you are just trying to refuse to submit to lawful authority. And they lord it over the Lord's people.

I heard of a case a couple of weeks ago of a church in Greenville, South Carolina, an independent Baptist Church in which some of the members began to question how the money was being spent in the church. And the church didn't make any public report of how the money was spent. So they asked could they see the books? And they were put off and they were put off.

And finally they told them, "Ok, Monday you can see the books."

But the problem was Sunday they excommunicated them. So then they told them, “Well, sorry. Now you can’t see the books because you are not a member anymore.”

So they sued to see the books. So this is the ludicrous position that we find ourselves in when people try to seize that best seat in the house and won’t behave with humility and humbleness towards their fellow believers.

How quickly leaders in the church, in some cases, take on the position of the Charles I or Charles II...the king can do no wrong and he is not subject to any question or any rebuke of any kind or even any approach in humbleness to try to explain a question that people might have.

But, you know, Jesus commanded otherwise, didn’t he, in Matthew’s gospel the 23rd chapter at verse five. What did he say about the Pharisees?

But all their works they do for to be seen of men: they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments, and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi. But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, even Christ; and all ye are brethren. And call no man your father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in heaven. Neither be ye called masters: for one is your Master, even Christ. But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.⁴

That is the teaching that the Scriptures have for us and that so often seems to be lost amongst the Lord’s people. But, you know, there is a rebuke. Certainly the greatest rebuke, the bitterest rebuke against such self-aggrandizement must be in the Savior’s own example. We read that passage in Mark 10 this morning. And I remember that time when it struck me that the Savior is describing to his people his humiliation and his death. It is a striking thing. He is describing to them his humiliation and his death and his resurrection.

And what does the next verse say? The next verse says that James and John come to him to make a request. “They said unto him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on thy right hand, and the other on thy left hand, in thy glory.”⁵

How could they be thinking about themselves when they should have been thinking about the work that their Savior was about to accomplish for them? But they were thinking only of themselves. What a humiliating rebuke this must have been to them later when they thought, “How could we have been so blind and so selfish as to be talking about our own exaltation when the Lord Jesus was trying to tell us about his great work at Calvary

⁴ Matthew 23:5-12

⁵ Mark 10:37

which now we see, which now we are rejoicing in, which now we remember around the Lord's table?" a rebuke to the haughty men in the church ought to be the Lord Jesus' humiliation for us.

What does it say at the end of the passage in Mark 10 at verse 42?

But Jesus called them to him, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: And whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.⁶

And then he says why it is. It is his own example, isn't it? For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."⁷

I am sure when we see the Lord Jesus in glory we will remember this was the one who humbled himself to be a servant unto his people and to deliver us from the bondage that our own wickedness had brought us into. How can any of us exalt himself above that humility and compassion and service of the Lord Jesus? It is unseemly and it is disgraceful

Do you remember Paul's exhortations in the passage we read in Romans 12? Just three verses. First verse there, "For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith."⁸ And then verse 10. "Be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love; in honour preferring one another."⁹ And verse 16. "Be of the same mind one toward another. Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits."¹⁰

The Scriptures tell us that the Lord has chosen mostly the meek and the lowly, doesn't it? In 1 Corinthians chapter one we have those well known verses.

For ye see your calling, brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; And base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: That no flesh should glory in his presence.¹¹

⁶ Mark 10:42-44

⁷ Mark 10:45

⁸ Romans 12:3

⁹ Romans 12:10

¹⁰ Romans 12:16

¹¹ 1 Corinthians 1:26-29

How many times have you heard people complain that the people that the Lord...that are in the church are just too ignorant and too silly and too weak and no wonder we can't get anywhere? But the Lord's supposed to be the one that is making all the progress here. He has chosen the weak things of the world to confound the might, that there would be no glorying in anything that we do, that all the glory would be in the work that God does.

We ought to respond to those people that it just proves that God is still acting and saving the same way that he always did, that not many mighty and not many noble and not many wise men...That is not to say that people shouldn't be wise in the Lord. But this idea that we are going to recruit some really rich and powerful and savvy people into the church so we can make some progress and get somewhere is just not according to the way the Scriptures have revealed the Lord will operate.

And, you know, in thinking about this subject of meekness and lowliness some people have a higher view of themselves than they ought, but perhaps some have a very low and pitiful of themselves, perhaps they are dissatisfied, perhaps they think that no one notices them and that they have no impact on the world or that they have little dignity. And those are the kind of people that the Lord rejoices and exalts in redeeming.

When you have these thoughts—if you have these thoughts in your heart—just remember these things. No matter how low estate you feel you are, no matter how humble you might feel you are, always remember that there was none more humiliated than the Lord Jesus. There is no one more put upon than the Savior. He had...

What did Isaiah say? All our iniquities were laid upon him. He was taken, “as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.”¹²

No matter how lowly or humble you might feel you are, always remember that the Lord Jesus stepped far lower in his humility than any of us would ever dream of. He stooped low enough to carry your burdens, to assume your troubles, to carry your labors.

And, you know, all of us here the other thing we ought to remember is to put in context our lowliness. You know, there isn't a believer in this room here today that, in fact, isn't more honored and more comfortable and more empowered and has more dignity than 99% of all the saints that have ever gone before us. Millions and millions of believers have lived and died in this world in the last 2000 years and in poverty, in oppression, in sadness and nobody knows their grave, nobody remembers who they are but the Lord. Surely we live in happy times compared to so many of those who have gone before us. And surely we have the ability—no matter how humble our position—to leave a mark at least as great if not the same as those marks left by those who no one remembers, except the Lord. And, you know, when it is the Lord that remembers you, really it doesn't matter whether anybody else does.

And then, finally, on this subject think of it this way. The more low, the more unimportant, the more weak and powerless, the more unnoticed you might feel yourself to be, you

¹² Isaiah 53:7

ought to consider how much your low estate magnifies the glory and the mercy of God in the saving of yourself that the great God of all the universe took notice and took pity upon such a one as we ourselves.

And so, in a sense, the lowlier and the more humble that you consider yourself the more greatly is magnified and exalted the grace of God. So your low estate can become a matter that exalts and magnifies the glory of God.

“What is man, that thou art mindful of him?”¹³

What did the psalmist say?

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him?¹⁴

Surely it may be said of each of us, perhaps more to those who consider themselves of low estate, “Amazing grace, how sweet the sound that saved a wretch like me. I once was lost, but now I am found. I was blind, but now I see.”

Our lowliness—whether it be actual or just in our own minds—ought not to be a matter of depression or sadness. It ought to be a matter of exaltation that the glory of God is revealed and the mercy and the love of God towards such a humble person that he would take notice of us and that he would redeem us and that he would love us. Our littleness and lack of importance magnifies the glory of the Lord in taking pity on us and saving us and bringing us into his family. So use your low estate to magnify the Lord in your heart and in your prayers and in your thanksgiving.

What did Paul say at the end of 1 Corinthians one? “That, according as it is written, He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”¹⁵ The glory ought to be all the Lamb’s and none of ourselves’.

And to those who feel that they are a step above their brethren in the Lord I would remind you of that story that is told—I believe it is by Violet Bonham Carter—about her conversation with Winston Churchill at a table in which he went on in long discoursing about the fact that man is a worm, man is nothing, how he is crushed by the events of the universe and so forth. And then he paused and said, “But I do believe that I am a glow worm.”

This is the little straw that some people grasp at. They like to talk about the humility and lowliness of man, but then they like to take comfort in the fact that they might be just a little step above. They might be a little more important, a little more special.

¹³ Psalm 8:4

¹⁴ Psalm 8:3-4

¹⁵ 1 Corinthians 1:31

But I submit to you that when we behold the glory of the Savior and of the angels and of heaven itself then we will all realize that those qualities and abilities and assets that we presumed made us glow worms were really nothing at all. What a delusion we will be stripped of when we behold the king in his beauty.

This text, this parable of the Lord Jesus about the highest seat and the lowest seat, not only does it describe the humiliation of a person who takes too high a seat for himself and is asked to move down to a lower, it also is a parable that describes the exaltation when a humble man is told to come up hither and sit in a better seat. For the ruler of the feast may come to the man of humility and say, "Come up higher and sit."

And so this parable describes, does it not, a condition of all believers. It describes the position of all the believers. Think, first of all, about this Lord's Table that we come to. You see, we have been invited to sit at the table with the Lord. We have been invited to sit at the table of the Son of God, the King of Glory. He has invited each of his people to come around this table and to remember and to celebrate his sacrifice for him. That is a place of high privilege and honor to be seated at the king's table. And, you know, in Christ the Scriptures tell us we are sitting at God's throne. In Christ we are seated in heavenly places.

You see, our near kinsman the Lord Jesus sits in glory and he represents us there and we sit there with him. In Ephesians two at verse six it says about us that:

[He] hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."¹⁶

Oh that passage in which Peter describes the people of God.

But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: Which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.¹⁷

And not only have we been asked by the king himself to come up higher and sit in a better seat on account of the Lord Jesus, one day we will be exalted above angels, won't we? Do you remember what Jesus said to his disciples in Luke 22 at verse 29?

¹⁶ Ephesians 2:6-7

¹⁷ 1 Peter 2:9-10

And I appoint unto you a kingdom, as my Father hath appointed unto me; That ye may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.¹⁸

You see, we have been invited to sit at the head table with the Lord of glory on account of our Savior.

You know, someone said once that, “How could that be? It must be a very big table.”

But, you know, God has the power to resolve those things, doesn't he? He can make us sit with Christ for all eternity. That is the seat that we are to be invited up to when we get to glory.

But, you know, there is a final thing about this text as is often the case when the Lord Jesus exhorts his disciples or warns his disciples about some conduct that very often the text in some measure applies and is acted out by the Savior himself, because when he spoke these words about being asked to take a lower seat, you see, he knew what it was to be asked to take a lower seat, not because he had improperly seized too high a seat. He was always the King of Glory. He was the creator of this world. He had the right to sit at the throne. He hadn't taken a seat by presumption. But the Father asked him to take a lower seat that he might save his people and he stepped down from that high seat and took a lower place. And he did it voluntarily and he did it cheerfully to save his people, the ones who had tried to seize the seat of the almighty in their rebellion and sin.

What does it say of Christ? “He made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.”¹⁹

But, you see, having taken that lower seat the Lord Jesus knew that soon the Father would come to him and tell him to come up hither to the highest. For what does it say? “Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name.”²⁰

And the Lord Jesus, having taken a lower seat, the Father:

...raised him from the dead, and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places, far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come: And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.²¹

¹⁸ Luke 22:29-30

¹⁹ Philippians 2:7

²⁰ Philippians 2:9

²¹ Ephesians 1:20-23

You remember what it says about the Lord Jesus' exaltation as our great high priest in Hebrews five?

And no man taketh this honour unto himself, but he that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not himself to be made an high priest; but he that said unto him, Thou art my Son, to day have I begotten thee. As he saith also in another place, Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchisedec.²²

The Lord Jesus has been exalted to the highest seat in glory from the lowest seat that he took for the sake of his people.

There is something interesting about the Lord's Table that we have been invited to. And that is this, that in the whole scheme of things about our salvation and about the Lord Jesus, though he sits in high honor and majesty now, yet the thing he asked us to remember was the depths of his humiliation when he went to the cross in the place of his people. He asked us not to remember, we are not asked to remember the exaltation of Christ—though there is nothing wrong with remembering it and glorying and rejoicing in it—we are asked, specifically by him, to remember the sacrifice of the humble and lowly Lamb. We are called upon to remember the lowliness of Christ, the place that he voluntarily placed himself in, the lowest place of shame and dishonor at Calvary. That is what we are asked to remember.

You know, Willie Perkins hopes everyone forgets the time he was asked to take a lower seat. And in our own hearts whenever we are humiliated in public we don't seek to remember it. We seek to cover it up and minimize it. But the Lord Jesus asks us to remember that time when he sunk to that low position at Calvary in our place.

What does the song writer say? "By weakness and defeat he won a glorious crown, brought all our foes beneath his feat by being trodden down." This is the humiliation of Christ at the cross that we are called upon to remember and even as we remember it we know that this is the cause by which in our own hearts that before all the angels we might cry out the words, "Hark those bursts of acclamation. Hark those loud triumphant chords. Jesus takes the highest station, oh, the sight that it affords. Crown him, crown him, crown him King of Kings and Lord of Lords, King of Kings and Lord of Lords."

The Lord Jesus has exemplified—as only he could—the truth of this text of Scripture. And may we remember his humiliation and his exaltation as we consider how we ought to behave in our life in this world and amongst the brethren in this church.

Let's give thanks for the Lord's Table that reminds us of that sacrifice which the Savior made at the cross. Let's give thanks, first, for the bread that reminds us of his body broken for us.

²² Hebrews 5:4-6

Oh God, we thank you that the Lord Jesus humbled himself to be made like unto his brethren. And thou hast prepared a body for him that in that body he might bear all our iniquities and all our shame on the cross, that it might be torn and riven, that it might be that great carriage by which he carried away our sins, by which he suffered our judgment in our place. And we thank you that you have raised him up and exalted him at your right hand. Help us to have the attitude of Christ, of humility and giving place to those around us and to exalt in your mercy and love for such humble and such lowly people and that we might look forward to seeing Christ in his beauty and to the rejoicing and joy which we will have at his appearing one day. We pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen.

And the Scriptures say that on the night he was betrayed he took the bread and he blessed and he broke it and he said, "Take and eat. This is my body which is broken for you. This do in remembrance of me."

Let's give thanks for the cup that reminds us of the blood poured out for us at Calvary. Brother Witten, I would like to ask you if you would give thanks for the cup.

And after they had supped he took the cup and he blessed it and he said, "Drink ye all of it. This cup is the New Testament in my blood for the remission of sins."

And the Scriptures tell us that as often as we eat this bread and drink this cup we do preach the Lord's death till he comes.

Let's sing number 64 in the black book, His be the victor's name by weakness and defeat. He won a glorious crown. Fought all our foes beneath his feet by being trodden down." Number 64. Let's sing this together.