

## Matthew 23:8-12 Letting Christ be the Master and Learning to be a Servant

Introduction: In this text Jesus said in effect to His disciples, "Don't you be like the scribes and Pharisees." In verse 2 we are told that the scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. In verse 6 we are told that they seek the chief seats at the feasts and synagogue. They sought two things: (1) the praises of men (2) authority over men. They loved to be called "rabbi" for the same reason, verse 7.

### I. Learning to let Christ be the Master.

#### A. Jesus said, "But be not ye called Rabbi."

1. The word rabbi is a Hebrew word meaning literally "My great one" or "My master."
2. Jesus was soon to leave His disciples and He knew that they could set up the same system of rabbis in Christianity that the Jews had in Judaism.
3. He had earlier warned them not to pattern church government after Gentile government. (Matthew 20:25-26) and now He warns against patterning after the Pharisees.

#### B. The reason which Jesus gave is "For one is your Master, even Christ," verse 8.

1. Christ is Master over the church and Master over the individual.
2. Since Christ is Master over the church then you cannot be the Master. (Not you – not me.)
3. You cannot try to be the Master without placing yourself in competition to Christ.
4. We are not even our own Master and certainly not the Master of others. (Christ is our Master too.)

#### C. A second reason which Jesus gave is "and all ye are brethren," verse 8.

1. No one is the Master, not even Peter.
2. Each member of a New Testament church has one vote.

#### D. Jesus also said "and call no man your father on earth . . ." verse 9.

1. The word, father, is not used here in a family sense.
2. Jesus does not forbid a child to call his dad "father."
3. Jesus uses the word in a religious sense.
4. No man in the church has authority over the church like a father has over the home.
5. In spite of this command from Jesus, one religious group insists on calling their clergy "father."
6. Jesus said, "for one is your Father which is in heaven," verse 9.

#### E. Again in verse 10 Jesus said, "Neither be ye called masters."

1. He had already said as much when He said, "Be not ye called Rabbi."
2. He says it again for emphasis.
3. And again He adds, "For one is your Master, even Christ." (This too deserves emphasis in our own lives. We are not our own; we are bought with a price.)

#### F. Now all of this is not intended to mean that there would be no positions of leadership within the church.

1. Jesus Himself had appointed the twelve apostles to positions of leadership.
2. Each church would have a pastor or pastors.
3. Each church would have teachers.
4. Each church would have deacons.
5. But all of these leaders are to serve under Christ with Christ Himself still the Master of all, Ephesians 5:23.

#### G. No church leader has any authority to go beyond the word of the Lord.

1. Yet just recently the Mormons elected a new head of the Mormon church and one church leader said that the words of their leader would be equal to and sometimes supersede the words of the Bible itself.
2. The Roman Catholics believe the same thing about the words of the Pope.

## II. Learning to be a servant.

- A. Jesus said that if we want to become great we should not seek to become masters but servants, verse 11.
- B. Do not wait to be elected to a position, but find some way to be of service to the Lord and to others. (Volunteer your service. Don't wait to be asked.)
- C. It does not have to be something big or something that will draw the praise of men.
- D. There are many things that one can find to do.
  - 1. Around the church there are many things. (Fix flowers, pick up paper or cans in the ditches, paint, repair, build, buy some needed item, plant flowers.)
  - 2. Around the community. (Sick to visit; elderly to see; mow grass for elderly, shop; visit nursing home, write letters, etc; visit the unchurch.)
  - 3. Assist church auxiliaries. (V.B.S, nursery, Youth for Christ, etc.)
  - 4. Support a mission work; adopt a T.B.I. Student.
- E. Jesus warned that if you try to exalt yourself you will be abased, but promised that if you humble yourself and serve then you will be exalted, verse 12.

Conclusion: No one can make Christ his Master who will not trust Jesus as Saviour.

Those of us who are saved know to let Christ be our Master and we know that we are to serve. The problem is in putting this into practice in our lives. After salvation, the biggest problem of life is keeping self in line with the Master's will.

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