

Honor Christ by Honoring Others – Romans 12:9-21; Matthew 25:31-46

Good morning. Today we continue our series on honor by looking at how we *Honor Christ by Honoring Others*. Over the last month or so we've looked at honoring parents, honoring God in everyday life, honoring our neighbors, and honoring Christ at the Lord's Table. This morning I want to bring those threads together by going back to one of the ways in which we honor our Savior: first we'll take our posture from **Romans 12:9–21**, and then we'll move to the associated action Jesus describes in **Matthew 25:31–46**. This morning's message focuses on how honoring one another becomes outreach to the least and, in doing so, honors Jesus every step of the way.

Posture: Mutual Honor in the Church

Before we get into the meat of today's message, I believe I need to spend a moment explaining why "posture" should matter to us as believers. Biblically speaking, when we speak about someone's posture, we're not speaking about their physical stance. Instead, we are speaking about our spiritual stance; first toward God, then to our fellow believers, and finally to the world around us. When we consider all our relationships, our spiritual stance (posture) in each of those is extremely important. If we desire to portray Christ in ever thing we say and do, then a properly formed spiritual stance is imperative. A stance formed by grace and the power of Christ living in us displays to others where our heart is oriented. Are you humble or proud? Are you receptive or resistant? It also demonstrates to others whether we live surrendered lives or rebellious lives. Are you obedient or defiant? Are you trusting or fearful? And, finally, a properly formed spiritual posture informs others about whether we serve with compassion and gratitude, or whether we serve out of obligation and entitlement. What kind of attitude do you truly have?

Let me give some weight to these thoughts by providing you with some familiar examples from the Bible. You've read from **James 4:6** that, "*God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.*" *Humility* is a posture. You also know the importance of David's words from **Psalms 51:10**, "*Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.*" A *right spirit* is a posture. And likewise, Paul's command from **Galatians 5:16**; "*But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh.*" *Being Spirit-led* is a posture. Finally, the Shema found in **Deuteronomy 6:5** commands, "*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.*" *Whole-person allegiance* is a posture. Each of these examples describe a deeply seated spiritual posture that describes our inner attitude and our hearts orientation towards God and others, which then expresses itself through outward obedient behavior.

Now, let's read **Romans 12:9-21** and hear what Paul feels is the "right" posture that shapes everything we do. He says, "*love must be genuine.*" In other words, love must not be manufactured and fake. It must be sincere and from a sincere heart. He says, "*abhor what is evil.*" A heart bent towards Jesus will be disgusted in the evils of this world. Some texts even use the word – hate. Paul goes further in stating, "*hold fast to what is good.*" If we allow the Spirit of God to truly work in our lives, then we will run away from evil and run toward all that is

good. Then Paul reiterates his belief on love, “*love one another with brotherly affection; outdo one another in showing honor.*” The key phrase for us is: “*outdo one another in showing honor.*” That’s not a passive suggestion. Instead, it is a direct, ethical command for the church.

Mutual honor is the spiritual posture that makes all Christian service ring true. It means we give preference to others by placing their needs ahead of our own. We also go out of the way to protect one another’s dignity by guarding reputations and refusing to give and/or receive gossip. Then we are quick to praise the good we see in others by celebrating their gifts and blessings rather than hoarding our own recognition. These things matter because they shape the very nature of our outreach. Pride makes our service look performative, but humility fills it with dignity. Romans 12 reminds us that honor grows from sincere love, not from obligation or showiness. Nor is it concerned with numbers and transactions.

The health of our church can be found in the posture of its members. We can see it through small, practical markers. Like – does our language treat people as “image bearers” rather than as “clients.” Or do our schedules make room for others’ needs? Or does our recognition publicly thank the visible while privately encouraging the shy. When such habits take root, they form a community ready for Christlike action.

Action: Serving the Least

In Matthew 25 Jesus gives a vivid picture of the final judgment. He separates the sheep from the goats based on one criterion: how they treated the hungry, thirsty, stranger, naked, sick, and imprisoned. Let’s read this passage together. **Read Matthew 25:31-46.**

Jesus says that when we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the sick and imprisoned, and welcome the stranger, we are doing it to him. The surprising claim is this: service to the least is service to the King. Notice the connection here. Romans 12 forms a people who honor one another. Matthew 25 shows that honoring the least is how we honor Christ. The posture of mutual honor inside the church cannot help but overflow outward. When we give preference to others in the body, we begin to give preference to the needs of our neighbors as well.

Why is this so important? Why does Jesus identify with the least? Because in the incarnation he took on our weakness and in the cross he bore our shame. The judgment scene reverses expectations: the honored are those who served quietly. Serving the least is not a way to earn salvation; it is the fruit of a heart already shaped by Christ.

Call to action

This week I want to challenge you to participate in two things. First, will you find a way to honor someone inside MFBC. Maybe it’s praying with them? Maybe it’s sending them a note of encouragement? Maybe, it’s inviting them out to a cup of coffee. The idea is to trust the Spirit that lives inside you to lead you into an act of honor. Then, simply be obedient to that call.

Second, will you also find a way to honor someone outside of MFBC who is in need?

Admittedly, this will be more of a challenge. But will you trust God to carry you through? Will you trust the love He has for you to spill over into your actions toward this other person?

When we honor one another in the church and then honor the least in our neighborhood, we are living the gospel visibly. We are sharing Jesus with those around us. Both in word and in deed.