

THE BLESSING OF HONOR PRT 10

I have been teaching you a series titled **THE BLESSING OF HONOR** for the past 9 weeks and today I will be doing the last part of that series.

Matthew 10:40 He who receives you receives Me, and he who receives Me receives Him who sent Me. 41 He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a just one in the name of a just one will receive a just one's reward.

This morning, I want to finish off this series by teaching you on the subject matter **HONORING CHURCH LEADERS.**

- The way you act toward, speak to, and think about your church leader determines your level of honor towards the leader.
- At the same time, the way you honor a leader speaks of the way you honor the one who sent him. In other words, the way you honor church leaders shows the way you honor God.
- There is nothing that has tripped many well-meaning believers as the issue of rightly honoring church leaders.
- You will find that there are extremes to this aspect – on one end, you have people who honor church leaders to the point of worshiping them and on the other end, you have people that have no regard for church leadership.
- People who struggle with honoring church leaders, will make statements like; I serve God and not a man, I fear God and not a man, I am accountable to God and not to a man.
- These two polar ends have caused people to go astray, resulting in no accountability and a lack of blessings coming towards the followers in the church of Jesus Christ.
- Seated here this morning, can you say you truly honor the leaders that God has put over you?
- Many church leaders suffer at the hands of followers who display hypocritical honor - on the outside they act as if they honor their leaders whilst their hearts are full of dishonor.
- Honoring your pastor is a heart issue and from time to time your honor is tested – the pastor asks the members to attend a special meeting, only 5 people attend, or he asks you to come and help with a project at church and no one attends. Whenever a church behaves in that manner, that church honors its leaders outwardly but dishonors them inwardly.
- Whenever the church does not pay attention to instructions given by the church leadership, that church does not honor its leaders.
- Remember, to honor is to place value and weight on something. Don't tell me you honor your pastor, but you don't take his word seriously.

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Hebrews 13:17 Yield to those leading you, and be submissive, for they watch for your souls, as those who must give account, that they may do it with joy and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.

- God instructs followers to obey, to yield and to submit to their leaders – it is not a suggestion but rather a command.
- Let's stir the hornet's nest this morning – do you show up to church on time, do you dislike your pastor when he talks about giving or talks about sin issues, do you constantly ignore your leader's communication, do you find yourself making excuses for not attending certain meetings? Answers to these questions, will confirm whether you honor your church leaders or not.
- If you value God's word, you will value your pastor's word as long as they are aligned with God's word - Matthew 10:40.
- God put in place the church in order to create a channel through which you can receive from Him.
- It is through the church and by implication the church leadership that your life will flourish. In other words, your relationship with the church and its leadership, will determine your prosperity, success, and happiness in life.
- Knowingly or not knowingly, I have seen Christians who are more aligned to parachurch organisations more than their local church. They faithfully support the vision and leadership of those parachurch structures but not the vision of their local church.
- The sad issue is that when those same people need counsel, need prayer, need to be visited, they come to church – the very church that they don't support.
- God created the church to meet the spiritual needs of His people and not parachurch structures – any parachurch structure that needs to function well, should find a way of aligning itself with the body of Christ. It is the church that was mandated to disciple nations.

Psalms 92:13 Those that are planted in the house of LORD JEHOVAH and in the courts of our God, will flourish.

- It does not say those who attend but rather those who are planted – these are people who are fully committed to serve the Lord through the local church. These are the people who serve and obey the church leadership.
- A person who is planted in the church does not take lightly the leader's words – it is the leader's words that shape where the church is going, it is the leader's words that release a blessing over their life.

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1 Thessalonians 5:12 Dear brothers and sisters, honor those who are your leaders in the Lord's work. They work hard among you and give you spiritual guidance. 13 Think highly of them and give them your wholehearted love because of their work

- One of the ways of honoring your church leaders is to think highly of them. In my 29 plus years of walking with the Lord, I have discovered that people who have a healthy view of their church leaders, are the most fulfilled, peaceful, and happy of all the people.
- I am not talking about those who hero worship their pastors but those who highly think of and give wholehearted love to their pastors.
- God, through Paul was telling the church at Thessalonica how to honor their leaders – they were to think highly of all God honoring leaders, greatly value the office of the ministry, show affection in all proper ways; why because they work hard at guiding them spiritually.
- Unfortunately, in our liberal churches, where there is no longer an emphasis on respect for pastors, we now have believers, who think they could do a better job, they see their pastor as someone who can be easily be done away with, and they treat the pastor just like any other guy. They see the pastor as someone filling a role that anyone can just fill – in other words, there is no more weight placed on the position and function of a pastor.
- Anyone who holds a shallow view of their church leaders will not flourish as much as they should.

1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in Word and doctrine. 18 For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle the ox treading out grain," and, "The laborer is worthy of his reward."

- This is the only place in scripture, you will find double honor regarding authority – it tells you how God views His servants. It means that ministers of the gospel are to receive twice the honor given to any other leaders.
- How do we do this practically? It means that our behavior and outlook towards Christian leaders should be with the greatest of respect – unless they instruct you otherwise, address them formally like pastor, sir, mrs out of respect.
- When leaders are teaching us, we should listen attentively, instead of allowing our minds to wonder around.
- To talk to the person next to you when the service is ongoing is dishonoring to the one speaking, just walking in late for a service or walking off because the pastor is running late is dishonoring to the leaders.
- You honor God's servants by looking for ways to serve them without being asked, in carrying out your task, seek to do things better, with excellence.

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- Free your leaders of unnecessary admin and dealings so that they can pay attention to their core business. The core business of elders is to pray for you and to teach you God's word.
- When the church leadership has no one available to run errands like picking people who want to come to church, to sort out the sound system, to pack chairs – it means that their attention is being drawn from their main function and that impacts on their effectiveness.
- My wife and I are not seeking for honor – when a pastor seeks for honor, that pastor is out of step with God's heart. Jesus says that He craves no human honor – John 5:41.
- As a pastor, whenever honor is shown to me, I receive it with humility – the context is that when people honor me, they are honoring Jesus and secondly, when people honor God's servants, those people stand to be blessed by God in an extra-ordinary way.
- Over and above honoring your church leaders by making it easy for them to lead you, Paul was also saying those who labour in the Lord ought to be remunerated well. That was the main context of the verse we read.

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- Elders who do their job well, deserve to be remunerated twice as much. This raises the eyebrows of many believers. Without putting it in so many words, some believers think that pastors should not take their kids to private schools, they should not drive decent cars, they should not have a house with a guest bedroom and yet the same people buy those things for themselves.
- You need to understand that it is Jesus who appoints those in ministry and when you honor them, you honor Jesus and when you receive them, you receive Jesus.
- By remunerating your pastors well, you are placing value on them and by implication, you are placing value on the one who commissioned them.

1 Samuel 2:30 For I will honor those who honor Me, but those who despise Me will be disdained.

- Everytime you honor a servant of God, God is indebted to you and He will honor you in return.
- Studies have shown that churches that financially honor their leaders, have members that generally do well financially and in their social lives and the opposite is true. Churches that struggle or don't give to ensure that their pastors are well taken care of has individuals who struggle financially and otherwise.

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- Some people will tell you that they would rather give to the poor than paying their pastors a decent salary – this is steeped in false humility because you are saying you know better than God who commands that His servants be looked after.
- I am aware that there is a small fraction of God's servants who have abused the system, but most servants of God are well meaning and are sold out for the gospel.
- Many of them have and continue to sacrifice for the gospel. You will be amazed by what type of life pastors live – it is not the usual type of life.
- When you honor your church leaders, there is an increased grace that flows through them to you.
- When a servant of God feels treasured and valued, they are able to fully release what they carry.

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- When you place honor on your pastor, he or she can release the reward he carries on his life – the spiritual guidance, the covering in prayer, the teaching of scriptures, the spiritual wisdom that he imparts.
- No one is free to give what they have if they know that they are not valued and they are taken for granted.

Matthew 13: 57 And they took offense at Him. But Jesus said to them, "Only in his hometown and in his own household is a prophet without honor." 58 And He did not do many miracles there, because of their unbelief.

- Jesus had the ability and the anointing to heal but because they didn't value Him, a spiritual dynamic kicked in, which resulted in no results.
- What you value will appreciate – when you become familiar with someone, you start disregarding them, thinking they are like any other person.