

Standing on a Level Place

Luke 6:12-19

I have long believed that the issue of 'authority' in the local church is the Achilles heel of evangelicalism. Evangelicals disagree over polity, theology and eschatology, but we're similar on the issue of authority. God gives certain people authority - usually men, pastors and husbands - and all others must fall in line. Jesus called His disciples and the next thing said is *He came down with them and **stood on a level place***. High places speak of authority. High places represent power. High places intimidate others to submit.

On **Mount** Moriah God spoke to Abram and tested his faith (Genesis 22:1-3).

On **Mount** Sinai God gave Moses the law (Exodus 24:12; 31:18; and Nehemiah 9:13-14).

On the **Mount** of Temptation the devil offers Jesus Christ the kingdoms of the world (Matthew 4:8-9).

On the **Mount** of Transfiguration Jesus Christ's glory as God is revealed (Matthew 17:1-8).

On **Mount** Calvary God spoke to the world through the death of His only begotten Son (John 3:16).

One would think that the King of the universe would use brute force to demand obedience. Not Jesus. He spoke of Himself as ***the Son of Man***. This was a favorite designation of Himself (used some 90 times). *"He humbled himself...becoming a bond-servant"* (Phil. 2:6-7). How level are the places where I stand?

I. Do I see everyone else as important and valuable as I?

Compared to the world's ways, the Kingdom seems upside/down; leaders *serve*, and *servants* lead.

(A). Is there a level place in my life in terms of human equality?

Mahatma Ghandi moved to South Africa after graduating from law school in London in 1891.

He was investigating religions and religious texts, his favorite was the "Sermon on the Mount."

Entering a church, he was greeted with "Where do you think you're going kaffir?" (a racial slur).

Ghandi would later say, "I like your Christ. I do not like Christians. You aren't like your Christ."

"There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). In Christ's kingdom, giftedness, not gender, defines service.

(B). Is there a level place in my life in terms of spiritual authority?

We Christians individually serve the body of Christ through the anointed giftedness each of us has received. Nowhere in Scripture is any human being ever given the role of having "authority."

Jesus absolutely forbids the type of leadership that the world loves to practice (Matt. 20:25-26).

II. Do I see myself as important and valuable as others?

The level playing field works both ways; selflessness **and** self-confidence. Insecurity is simply another form of pride; it very well could be the most insidious form, because the bearer of it doesn't see it.

But you might object and say, "*But aren't Christians 'servants' of others? Servants aren't equal?*"

The mind we are to have is that of a 'bond-servant' (Phil. 2:6-7). A bond-servant is equal, but willing.

"When you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve six years, and in the seventh he shall go out free, for nothing. But if the slave plainly says, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free,' then his master shall bring him to God, and he shall bring him to the door or the doorpost.

His master shall bore his ear through with an awl, and he shall be his slave forever" (Ex. 21:1-6).

Though I am completely free, I am compelled by my love and gratitude to serve Him who loves me.

III. Do I see myself walking with Jesus in a journey of love?

Too many of us see the world as a stage. We are the performers and Jesus is the critic who judges.

Jesus chooses to walk with us in this journey that we call life (see **Matthew 1:1-6** of *The Message*).