

## Accidental Pharisees – It's Not Everyone's Calling

It's Memorial Day weekend... The day we remember and give thanks to all those who have lost their lives in service to our country!

It is right & good to honor them for their sacrifice... **But are we all called to lay down our lives for our country in the same way that they have?**

As citizens of the United States, are we all called to serve in the military? Are we any "less-than" if we don't bear arms or lose our lives in combat?

We honor the fallen... but what about the nurses/doctors, farmers, engineers, manufacturers, seamstresses, politicians, stay at home parents, taxpayers, etc. **We would not be successful without all these people doing their part!**

We are not all called to the same tasks... same pursuits... same sacrifice! **So it is also in the Kingdom of God...** lived out in the life of the Church!

There have been many who have been martyred for their faith... we honor them too... as well as the many still fighting the good fight of the faith!

**Some fight the good fight overseas on the mission field, while others do so in their own backyards!** Some proclaim the gospel from mountaintops and pulpits, while others do so at their dinner tables! Some stand before kings and presidents, and others sit beside elementary school students...

Today we also honor & recognize our Kids Hope ministry at Kidder school! **Is what takes place for 1 hour, once a week, with 1 child any less significant in God's Kingdom, than what is happening right here & now in church?**

But some will say "You can't even share your faith there because it's in the public school!" **That's true, but you can live out your faith for all their eyes to see...** There are some weeks when I feel like my engagement with Kids Hope was the most important thing I did for the Kingdom of God that week!

Why do we tend to elevate certain things/people over others? Scripture talks about special honor being given to those who teach the Word, but that doesn't mean that preaching in a pulpit will necessarily bear more fruit for the Kingdom of God than what is spoken in homes, classrooms, 1 on 1's...

**The Pharisees of Jesus' day were experts in elevating certain religious behavior & actions above others!** And the outcome of such is always elevating certain people in God's family above others, pitting one against another!

Is God honored, and His Kingdom advanced, when we say/think/do such things?

- I'm the lead pastor... you are just the custodian...
- I lead a small group of 20 people... you meet with one kid once a week...
- I've gone on every mission trip... you've just stayed home & prayed...
- I lead worship at church... you just sing "Jesus Loves Me" with your kid...
- I passed out 100 gospel tracts this week... you sat with 1 child in school...
- I adopted an orphan child from war torn Africa... you do adopt-a-staff...

Why do we do this? **Why do we compare & measure our effectiveness against each other?** B/c of sin... Because there's a little pharisee in all of us!

But we are not all called to do, and be, the same in the Kingdom of God! **Kingdom effectiveness is not based on our comparison of ourselves to others, but based on us being faithful to God's call on our lives!**

God has called me to be your lead pastor and preacher... that does not make me a better Christian than anyone else... it's simply my part to play!

If God hasn't called you to be a pastor/preacher, then don't feel obligated or pressured to fill those shoes... just **fill your own God-given shoes!**

If God calls you to play your instrument for Him... Care for little ones in the nursery... Be a stay-at-home mom... Home-school your kid... Meet with someone else's kid once a week at their school... Pray for & encourage a staff person...

**Let's celebrate all the different callings, & roles, that the people of God fill in God's Kingdom work!** Let's stop comparing... & let's just play our part!

I don't normally wait until the end of the sermon to read the Scripture & proclaim the Word, but I wanted to set the table for what it's about to say!

What do we know from Scripture about Joseph of Arimathea? **Jesus was buried in his tomb!** A seemingly insignificant & "less than" role in the story.

We are tempted to think even less of him because of what the few verses that speak of him in Scripture actually have to say about him.

**Matthew 27:57** - It tells us that he was rich... and that he was a disciple of Jesus, but one whose name had not been brought up in Scripture before...

**Mark 15:43** - He was a member of the Sanhedrin (those who turned Jesus over to Pilate)... it also says he was one looking for the kingdom of God...

**John 19:38** - He was a secret disciple of Jesus, out of fear of the Jews...

**Luke 23:50-51** - He was a good & righteous man... who had not consented... What if Joseph didn't show up & play his part? What if you or I don't? Someone else's calling is not our own... What we do with ours is what matters!

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