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Luke

Chapter 3 - A Different Kind of Authority

A Hidden Prominence (vs. 23-31)

Luke 3:23-31: When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, the son of Eli, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi, the son of Jannai, the son of Joseph, the son of Mattathias, the son of Amos, the son of Nahum, the son of Hesli, the son of Naggai, the son of Maath, the son of Mattathias, the son of Semein, the son of Josech, the son of Joda, the son of Joanan, the son of Rhesa, the son of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, the son of Neri, the son of Melchi, the son of Addi, the son of Cosam, the son of Elmadam, the son of Er, the son of Joshua, the son of Eliezer, the son of Jorim, the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Simeon, the son of Judah, the son of Joseph, the son of Jonam, the son of

Eliakim, the son of Melea, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, the son of Nathan, the son of David.

Easy for you to say. I was just going to give you verse 23 and 31, but I said, “Nah.” It's called empathy. Throughout the Gospel of Luke, we have an emphasis. The great emphasis is oftentimes those things which we don't see, the hidden things. When you consider that man looks at the outward appearance and if you look in particular in Luke 3, at the very beginning,

(Luke 3:1) “Now in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea...”

Most people would be very familiar with these individuals, whether it's Herod or Pontius Pilate or the Caesar, they would know who these people are. What Luke would say is in the midst of these that are proud and powerful and prestigious, and really even prominent in the eyes of man, that's not who we're focusing on. So, out

of nowhere comes this guy by the name of John the Baptist, and nobody knows really who he is. It's kind of like when you go in the Old Testament, and you see a guy by the name of Elijah. He just pops in the page. Nothing says basically where he comes from, except it gives basically his area, but other than that you don't even know where this guy came from. The same thing is true with John the Baptist and what you have is a voice of one crying in the wilderness, a voice hardly identifiable, and he seems to have a great authority and great power, even to the extent in which people are being convicted and soldiers are coming to him and going, "What do we need to do?" Tax collectors are going, "What do we need to do?" and they're repenting. Why would they do that? I mean, this is a nobody out of nowhere, and yet he seems to have such great authority. One of the things that Luke is conveying to us is that the message itself has tremendous authority. The message itself, because of the One that he's pointing to, the Christ.

But all the way through the pages, even at the very beginning of the Gospel of Luke, we have conversations

and happenings that are being revealed to us that we wouldn't have known otherwise. I mean, you go into the Gospel of Matthew, and there is a genealogy there, but it's different than this one, and the list that's given to us, as we understand is Joseph's. As it comes to the end, you see that it was actually Joseph's genealogy or lineage that is given which is appropriate in the Book of Matthew because Matthew is going according to the Law as it begins to emphasize the kingdom of God and the Law of God. But we know that Christ didn't come from Joseph. He came from Mary. He's from Mary's seed and it was from God Himself.

So, as we come into this Gospel, we begin to read about individuals that we had no idea that they existed, and if you were to put them in, I guess a standard of prominence, they wouldn't be very high. As the Book of Luke begins and it talks about a person by the name of Zacharias, though he was a priest, he didn't seem to have great prominence in his priesthood. Nevertheless, God called him because of the genuineness of his heart and that he lived righteously. As well as his wife Elizabeth. But

quite frankly, had you not opened the pages of Luke, you would never know Elizabeth and Zacharias. As you begin to open up the page and begin to read about Zechariah and Elizabeth, you realize that she's very old and she's never had any children. Now, you wouldn't have known that otherwise, but she had been living in a kind of shame, and Luke tells us this. Luke will go on and tell us and really will convey within the passage that she has more faith than her husband who was a priest. So, this Elizabeth is brought really in the Gospel of Luke, to a greater prominence than Zacharias, who is a priest. Only in the Gospel of Luke will you see an individual by the name of Mary being described in such a way that you would think, "You're the greatest among women?" but you don't see that in Matthew. You don't see it in John. You don't see it in Mark, but Luke will elevate this one to a great status, and the conversation that she has with Elizabeth will actually be posted to us in the passage. Now, the conversation that is given and the great declaration of Mary that's given in the Gospel of Luke, for all we know, was not on a pedestal somewhere on some great Tabernacle or temple. It was between Elizabeth and

Mary. So, we're actually privy to a conversation in which is fairly private, if you think about.

If you look with me in Luke 1:46, you begin to hear what Mary is saying, and you realize that this in a way is kind of the theme of the Gospel of Luke as it begins to proclaim the humble and that God exalts the humble. We're familiar with passages like James and like 1 Peter, that says that "God is opposed to the proud but gives grace to the humble. Humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and He'll exalt you." We are familiar with those passages, but to actually see it unfold, I mean, we're seeing it. Who knows who Mary is? Nobody. Even if you go into the Gospel of Matthew, she'll be mentioned, but not in a place of prominence. However, in Luke 1:46, she's given such prominence that the words that she says to Elizabeth in what we perceive to be a quasi-private time, are being elevated and we have them forever in the word of God.

She declares:

(Luke 1:46) "... "My soul exalts the Lord,

(Luke 1:47) And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.

(Luke 1:48) “For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondslave...”

If you drop on down,

(Luke 1:52) “He has brought down rulers from their thrones,

And has exalted those who were humble.”

(Luke 1:54) “He has given help to Israel His servant...”

Obviously, the emphasis is humility and within the context of this, you not only see her proclaiming this by virtue of the Spirit of God, but it even talks about the Spirit of God is in Elizabeth and the baby is jumping inside of her. I mean, who would know that? This is virtually a private conversation. How does Luke get this information?

As it goes on, we have these dialogues with the neighbors and family that come into the dedication of the baby and then we have a guy by the name of Simeon which we have no idea who this guy is; a woman by the name of Anna, which has literally been lost in the realm of obscurity in the sense that she's been faithful all these

years, but who would know? But she's been faithful not because of the recognition of man, but she's been faithful because of her desire and her heart for God. She has a heart for God, and so she's been faithful all these years. Has God seen? I think sometimes our thought is, "Has God seen? Does God see the nobodies? Does He actually care for the people that aren't in prominent positions? Well, Luke will continue to emphasize this point. And if in fact you've ever felt like a nobody, if you've ever felt like, "Who am I? What can I do?" this is the gospel for you because in all of the pages you begin to see the Simeons and the Annas popping out, which we would have never known, had not the gospel been written. We realize that God works in the lives of those that would just humble themselves and obey God. I mean, here's this couple, they end up in Bethlehem. How did they end up there? They submitted to authority by taxation. I don't hear one word of them grumbling or complaining about it. They just go in obedience and it's by virtue of obeying God with humility that God places them exactly where they need to be in Bethlehem, where the Savior has to be born according to Micah 5. Everything begins to roll out and you can't help

but just read throughout, these are the humble; these are the nobodies; these are the people that would easily be overlooked. Why of all people, to come to the birth of Christ, would you choose shepherds, and you don't even choose the day crew? You choose the night crew to do it. So, all the way through you begin to see that these are fundamentally the list of the nobodies of the world that come from basically nowhere, and God goes, "These are Mine. These are Mine." You would think that Herod would be the one that would receive the gospel message from John the Baptist with open arms, but no, no, no. It'll be tax collectors that do that.

So, it shouldn't surprise us as we go through the pages, the way that this book is written, that it would go through the genealogy the way that it does. In this particular passage, though Matthew 1 would give us legal paternal lineage, that is to say the lineage of Joseph, this particular text would give us the lineage of Mary. Now, what's interesting about the introduction of it is that we don't see Mary's name. This is probably one of the reasons why people are oftentimes confused about it. I won't go into

much of the historical writings, but I do know this that there's some ancient historical writings of James the Just, the half-brother of Jesus, who refers to his parents, Mary and Joseph, and he actually lists in this particular ancient writing that Mary was the daughter of Eli which actually is what you're going to see in this particular passage in which it begins in verse 23,

(Luke 3:23) “When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age, being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph, the son of Eli.”

That was Mary's father recorded in that ancient, and there's been some debate. So, I don't know how dogmatic I would be about it. According to the Jewish Talmud in Jerusalem, it actually records Mary's father being Eli. So, there's really not as much a mistake or a misunderstanding about whose genealogy we're talking about here, but what's interesting is the way that it's introduced. If you look, it's literally wrapped in humility because you begin to realize that Mary's name is not even mentioned in this. Why doesn't Mary get credit? But Luke clearly has already given her great credit, as you look in

Chapter 1. I mean, you would almost have to say, "Where's Joseph?" by the time you're finished with Luke. Nevertheless, God is going to fulfill all righteousness, and God has these things called authority; He has this thing called order. I think sometimes our thought is if we abide by the authority in the order that God gives us that somehow, it's going to suppress us to the point of oblivion, and Luke is going to say, "Absolutely not." You do what is right and you walk humbly before God, it doesn't matter if anybody sees you. God does, and God's going to exalt you to prominence. The very fact that these individuals are recorded is in and of itself a testimony of God saying, "But I saw you." And I think it's one of the great concerns that we have, and I think when we begin to try to fight for some kind of notoriety, what we end up doing is literally making ourselves obscure. That prominence really only comes from God. Remember, humble yourself under the mighty hand of God and He will exalt you. Well, guess what, when He exalts you, it's like forever because God doesn't do anything temporary. You realize that it's within His power for you to be remembered. It's not a mistake that it's in the Gospel of

Luke that you have this man on the cross and the one thing he asks is to be remembered.

How would you remember these obscure, opaque individuals? Where are they? I don't even know who they are. The who's who of nobody's from nowhere is really all the list that you see. You have this one kid that has rejected his father, wanted his inheritance. This is a black sheep. You don't even want to talk about this guy anymore, and Luke puts him in a place of prominence. You go, "This is a prodigal son", and who doesn't love the prodigal son? Who doesn't think of the prodigal son? He's only listed in the Gospel of Luke, and God begins to remind us that He sees the heart and He sees the hidden things.

When you consider Mary, if you if you look in particular in Luke 2, you begin to see how she responds to the great news of the shepherds and the shepherds coming to Mary, remember? If you drop on down to Luke 2:19, what does it say?

"But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart."

I know we talked about this before, but who would know that? How could you know what somebody ponders in their heart? Mary didn't say anything. Mary didn't go around going, "You know what I'm pondering in my heart?" She was just pondering it, and the same thing is at the end, if you look,

(Luke 2:51) "And He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and He continued in subjection to them; and His mother treasured all these things in her heart."

These things that are being listed are hidden things.

When Peter writes in 1 Peter 3, "Let your adornment be the hidden things of your heart", he's actually talking about hidden things. I know that probably the one thing that seems to be the most meaningless oftentimes in our heads about the things that we do is what we think and how we feel deeply inside, but that's the greatest thing you could do.

One of the frustrating things in my mother's life at this time is that she doesn't feel like she's able to do anything. So, there's this great frustration, "What am I doing?" And we had this interesting talk the other day and I said,

“What do you want to do? You want to give a concert?” And she said, “Yeah, that would be kind of nice, to give a concert.” And I said, “Well, would a concert be greater than prayer?” And she said, “No.” I said, “Well, you can pray.” It's hard for us to imagine that in prayer we're actually doing something greater than us. Does it surprise you that the Gospel of Luke has the story of Mary and Martha? Does that surprise you at all? Doesn't it seem like it would fit in that you have this woman busy going around trying to do actual labor and thinking that that's a better thing to do, and God would say, “Mary's chosen the better thing because her heart's desire is being close to Me”, and that Luke would be the only one that would record that? See, all the way through the pages we're seeing that Luke is emphasizing if you have your heart right, God knows who you are. The Lord knows those who are His, and He's going to exalt you. He's going to remember you. He's got you. Now, here again, in the scheme of things, the world may not take notice; we may not do anything that outwardly would appear great. Let me just suggest to you that I don't know of any college that Mary went to. I don't know of any ministry that Mary

had. I don't know of any great thing that she did except she had a good heart, and it seems to be so powerful that she is literally declared the greatest among all women. Now, I've often said to myself, "I can do that. I can get my heart right." I may not be able to do great things for the world, but I can get my heart right and every one of us can. So, Luke is beginning to reveal to us these are the things that mean something to God; not that outward manifestation of power, prestige, or anything great that the world would look at.

It is for this reason that this genealogy is written the way that it is, and we could clearly spend time. I always wrestle about these things because there's a story in every name. You have names such as "Melchi", which is "my king", and "flourishing", and "Jehovah has added", and all those wonderful words. There is literally a story in all the names, but the more I thought about it this past week, I didn't want you get bogged down in the names. So, I would encourage you to get into them. I'll share some of them as we go through, but I want you to step back with me and look at this from a distance. I want you

to see really what Luke is doing by the power of the Spirit of God as he begins to move us into this realm of, "You know those nobodies? Well, we're going to list them." And if you go through this genealogy, though, you might go through the genealogy of Matthew, and you'll go, "I know them. I know them. I know them, I know them," and even if even if it's notorious, you know them because of something they did wrong, but you know them because they were really seen as such. But you're going down this list and you're going, "I've never heard of that guy. I never heard of that one. I never heard of that one." And really, as you go through the Old Testament, you'd be hard pressed to find many of these. So, the list is very unique in which again, we have the nobodies of the Old Testament. When you consider the genealogies, you're actually going backwards and we're going to end up with Adam ultimately in which it takes us all the way back, and you would say, "Well, if you look at the genealogy of Matthew, it doesn't go all the way back to Adam. So, why would this go all the way back to Adam?" Well, if you remember, the promise was given to the women that "Through your seed, the Messiah will come." So, it has to

go back all the way to Adam because of that promise that was given to women. So once again, through nuance, I don't know, a hint, you know this is about the woman. Even though the man has an interesting position in which God has given him that authority, the woman is not lost in this at all. Mary's not lost in this at all.

So, if you just kind of read with me and I'm just going to point out specific things that will kind of draw out this wonderful principle.

(Luke 3:23) “When He began His ministry, Jesus Himself was about thirty years of age...”

verse 23. And when He that is, Christ began his ministry, Jesus himself was about 30 years of age. You know, you look at Acts 1:1 and Acts 1:22, it refers to the beginning of Jesus ministry and this would be the mark of it. This would be the beginning of Jesus Ministry. Now, you go, “Why is it telling us that it's at age 30? Because Jesus is submitting Himself; like you already said, as a 12-year-old, He was submitting himself to his parents. He is now submitting Himself to the Law. Throughout Numbers 4, as it refers to the Levites, will say He begins at age 30. Now,

there's another point to that as well when you look at 2 Samuel 5:4, and that is that He's specifically tied to, of course, King David and David began to reign at age 30. It's actually declared in that passage. So, what is the passage telling us? Well, obviously He's submitting Himself to the Law of the Levites, but if you look at David, one of the things that you saw with David, is that David had to go through a lot of humbling to get to the position. He had already been anointed at a very young age, but he's had to wait till 30. In fact, he came to the point where he goes, "I think Saul's going to reign, and I'm going to be dead. He's going to outlive me." And he had literally thrown up his hands and given up, and what we realize is that there was a humbling that was done in David's life, and it wasn't till the humbling was done that he was given the position that God had ordained him to receive. So, you have this interesting picture and the reason why it starts off, "was about thirty", is that it's identifying His submissiveness to that authority, that humility. He's not trying to be elevated with some great fanfare or anything like this. When it uses the phrase, "was about thirty years of age", you don't get the feeling like there was a certain

day of celebration where everybody marched down the road and had balloons or whatever they had back then, but things of great honor and dignity. He just enters into His ministry, and He entered in by identifying with the people, remember? He was identifying the baptism with the people in the sense of identifying with their sins, identifying where they were.

The way that it records, if you look, “was about thirty years of age”,

Now, watch the next phrase, “... being, as was supposed”.

Yeah, well, why is it saying that? Well, actually if you were to translate it, “according to how people were thinking”.

That’s probably a better way of putting the passage. “This was Joseph's son.” That's the way people were thinking,

but Scripture is making it clear that this isn't what it was.

You go, “Well, that's kind of unfair if everybody's thinking in this way. That's unfair.” And God goes, “Don't worry about what people think. Don't worry.” That's one of the

great crimes that we find ourselves falling into and one of the reasons why oftentimes our heart goes out of beat, is

that we're so concerned about how other people are

seeing us. We're thinking, "Well, how am I going to take credit for something if in fact they won't acknowledge that it was me?" And you don't really sense that Mary's going, "When is my name coming up?" Because it's a non-issue. "Oh, Mary's going to be forgotten." I think Joseph's more forgotten than Mary, and yet Joseph is the one that it seems that everybody is thinking, "He's the son." Scripture is just wonderful the way that it does things.

Look at the phrase here, "... being, as was supposed, the son of Joseph..."

See that? Now, if your Bibles are accurate, which I think most of them are, it'll have the word the word "*the*" in italicized. Does it, in yours? I don't know. Maybe not. But if it does, it's correct. The word "the" is not in there. Now, I know this is just a minor detail, but it's a big point in the Greek language, that if there's not the article, then it's basically saying he's not the father.

If you go on, you'll see,

(Luke 3:24) "the son of Matthat, the son of Levi, the son of Melchi..."

The article is with all of those. The only place where there's no article, "the" is with Joseph. So, Scripture is clearly identifying the fact that this is not the case. However, he's seen this way. When you come to the end of this Gospel, and you see Jesus on the cross, and of course, people are wrestling and saying, "He's not the king. He's not the king," but it ultimately ends up, "This is the King of the Jews." You realize that God always has the last word. So, as this lineage goes through, that's exactly what God has conveyed to us. "It doesn't matter if anybody knows. I know." and this is the lineage.

So, as it goes through, it is also important to realize that there's repetition. I think one of the things that was clarified as you were looking at the names, and you were going, "I saw that name before." I don't know, was it "Matthat" or "Mattathias"? But that particular name is actually repeated over and over again, along with "Joanan", which would also be a form of "John". So, why is it repeated so many times? Let me just show you where it is in verse 24, as it starts going down the names. Of

course, it is interesting that “Eli” means “ascending”. So, it is this great ascension of God.

(Luke 3:24) “the son of Matthat...”

Then if you look in verse 25,

“the son of Mattathias...”

And then if you look at verse 26, don't we have another one? Then, we look at verse 27, you have a guy by the name of “Joanan”. Then if you drop on down to verse 29, you have a guy with the name of “Matthat” again, right? Then, you have a guy in verse 30 by the name of “Jonam”, which is basically the same thing as “John”, again. Every one of those names refer to “gracious gift”. Whether it's “Matthat” or whether it's “Joanan”; “Joanan” is emphasizing a gracious gift; “Matthat” is actually emphasizing “gift of God”, but every one of them is emphasizing God's gift. Now, once again, these are all obscure individuals which you would be hard pressed to recognize any one of them, but God is declaring throughout that His design is to be gracious and give through this lineage. You see the “gift of Jehovah” declared all the way through the passage. Now, peppered

in between are names like “the eyes of Jehovah are upon those that work hard”; all the things that that you begin to see, but what is repeated over and over again is that God desires, and it's very clear, to give a gift.

As it comes towards the end and as you come towards verse 31, and I actually want to cut off in verse 31 because ending at David is a great place to end until we go all the way to Adam.

(Luke 3:31) “the son of Melea...”

Which is basically “a dear friend”.

“... Menna, the son of Mattatha...”

Once again, “the giver; the giving one”.

“... the son of Nathan...”

Now, what would you think Nathan would mean? Let's just think really hard. “Giver”. You're right, “giver.”

Nathan actually is a form of John, believe it or not. That's where you get Jonathan. So, it ends with, what?

“... the son of David.”

“The beloved”.

The passage is revealing to us that this interesting list full of givers or actually more specifically, full of God giving through these people, and what you realize is, “I didn't know that. I didn't know that. I didn't know that.” And God says, “But I did, and I remembered them. And these are the obscure; these are the forgotten; these are the nobodies, but these are the ones that I am going to exalt because of their heart.”

Now, we've got to note this as you come to the end of verse 31, and that is when it comes to the son of Nathan, the son of David; well, remember the genealogy of Matthew in Matthew 1 is, let's see, who did David have as a son? Solomon. Solomon was the great son that everybody remembers, right? But Nathan, who's Nathan? Well, David had quite a few sons, there's no doubt about it, but did you know that Nathan was actually one of the sons that was born to Bethsheba as well? So, Solomon was, but Nathan was too. You go, “I hardly ever heard of Nathan.” And you know what? It's actually believed that Nathan was given the name “Nathan” because of the prophet Nathan. Remember the prophet Nathan when

David had committed that adulterous affair? In the process of committing an adulterous affair, Nathan the prophet came before him, and he says, "Let me tell you a story about a guy who had just this one little lamb and then a guy had all these sheep and he's very wealthy. What does he do? He destroys this one so that he could have the one little lamb that he doesn't have." And he says, "What do you think we should do, David?" David says, "We should kill him." And Nathan goes, "It's you. You took Bathsheba away from her husband. You did this." So, through that relationship, that child dies, and David and Bathsheba have another son, Solomon, but believe it or not, they have 2-3 more from Bathsheba in Jerusalem, and one of them will be Nathan. Named probably because of this great prophet, but more specifically, I think it's interesting to note that he's listed at a time when he would be literally lost in obscurity. Because guess who was reigning when he was alive? Solomon. His brother was reigning. Who doesn't know about Solomon and the greatness of Solomon and how it literally overshadowed everybody else, because it's all about Solomon and all of his greatness? I mean, even

when you consider all of the sacrifices that Solomon did and the dedication of the temple which he built, how great Solomon is? Not even listed in Luke. Nathan is, and Scripture seems to say the lineage was from the humble. It wasn't from the great. We feel lost, we feel like "Who am I? I'm just a nobody," but all the way through the pages of Luke, he's going to show us that you do the right thing, you have the right heart. God sees. He'll reward. It doesn't matter how grand it appears, God will remember, God will reward. God knows those who are His. As I was thinking, in particular about some of the stories in the Gospel of Luke, whether it be the good Samaritan in Luke 10; if I was the good Samaritan, I would say, "Why should I do any good? Nobody's going to believe me, I'm a Samaritan. Nobody likes anything that I do." And what's interesting about the story is that Jesus tells it in such a way that there seems to be no audience when the Samaritans doing what he's doing. He's just helping this person that has been abandoned on the road by a Levite and by a priest. They passed by and could care less, but this guy that is really an outcast of the world, he stops, and he just can't help but take care of this person and

make sure that he's comfortable and he's cared for. You go, "Well, who's going to reward him? Who's going to pay him?" It doesn't matter. He's not forgotten. He's not lost in obscurity. He's remembered forevermore.

Another passage that was meaningful to me when I considered it, was Luke 18, if you look with me. Have you ever asked yourself, "Why should I bother praying when there are a lot of more holy people than me that could really pray and really get things done?" Actually, it's probably one of the reasons why people ask people to pray, especially if you can talk to the pastor. He's far more holy than you. I only wish that were true. Of course, you have these priests that dress in the garb, and of course, obviously if they have that kind of garb, they must be really holy, but the feeling is, "How could I accomplish anything in my prayers? Why would God talk to me at all, or listen to me at all?" And wouldn't you know that Luke 18 records this one incident that no other gospel records in which the publican the sinner and the Pharisee are both sitting down at the same time praying? The Pharisee goes, "I thank God I'm not like this guy." And the publican

goes, "You've got to have mercy on me. Please have mercy on me." Jesus goes, "Who do you think We heard?" You mean You heard the nobody? You heard the person that matters not to anybody else? The one that is looked down on by everybody? That's the one You heard?" I mean, you remember the woman coming up out of the street and she was the one that wiped Jesus' feet with her hair and was crying, and she was a woman of the street. Why would anybody think at all that she would be close to God? Yet, God says to the Pharisee, "She's a lot closer to Me than you are because she hasn't stopped loving Me since the day I walked in."

Let me show you this. I just love the distinction of the Gospel of Luke. All these pictures that are so unique to the Gospel is giving us this wonderful message. In Luke 21, you're looking up at the treasury, and of course, you're seeing a lot of people giving a lot of money, and I think sometimes people go, "Why should I give anything? There are a lot of people that are a lot richer than I am. I mean, I'm going to give something, and it's not even going to make a clink in the offering plate. Why should I even

bother?” Because God sees you. You're doing it for God, right? It's the heart that He cares about, right?

(Luke 21:1) “And He looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury.

(Luke 21:2) And He saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins.”

Which you would be hard pressed to actually cause them to equal a penny.

(Luke 21:3) “And He said, “Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them.”

“Why do good? Nobody sees. Why pray? I'm not that righteous. Why should I give? I don't even have that much.” It doesn't matter. It's about the heart.

There's a passage in Ephesians, if I could just have you turn there, which kind of puts it really in the practical realm of whether you're a young person or whether you're on the job working or whatever, you want to do what you do for God. “Who sees?” He does. It doesn't matter how little you feel you are or how insignificant you feel you are or how out of sync or that you even feel

worthy. It has nothing to do with that. If you'll come to God with a genuine and sincere heart, He'll see you. He'll work on your behalf, and He'll do great things through you. Who would ever think that they would be recorded forever in Scripture by just remaining chaste? Who would ever think that through the process, think about Elizabeth, all those years that she had hoped that she had a child and could not, and then God says at her old age, "You'll have a child." Who would think that Anna, all those years of service; I'm sure they probably just took her for granted, as somebody that usually sweeps the floor. She usually does these things. That's what she does. She does it every year all the time. Right on time. Who would ever think that faithfulness would be rewarded? When you blend in and you're the kind of the wildflower of religiosity, God sees.

Ephesians 6 says this,

(Ephesians 6:1) "Children obey your parents..."

"My parents aren't always thankful that I obey them. They don't always recognize how wonderful I am." It does say,

“in the Lord”, doesn't it? Because that's what makes it right.

(Ephesians 6:2) “HONOR YOUR FATHER AND MOTHER (which is the first commandment with a promise),

(Ephesians 6:3) SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.”

Somebody had called me up the other day and they were saying, “I took this medicine. I think it's going to make me feel better. I think it's probably going to give me some length of days.” And I said, “Well, I know this, if you honor your mother and father, it will.” Better than a pill. Think about that. Think of all the medications that you could take, and I'll even throw in vitamins with that one; all the vitamins and all the medication you can take.

What's the thing where God controls? I've always laughed at the fact that I've never known my mother ever to exercise. She doesn't take any medication and she doesn't take vitamins. So, I told her, “You must have been really honorable to your parents.” That’s the only thing I can figure.

(Ephesians 6:3) “SO THAT IT MAY BE WELL WITH YOU, AND THAT YOU MAY LIVE LONG ON THE EARTH.”

(Ephesians 6:4) Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord.

(Ephesians 6:5) Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ.”

Who sees me? My boss doesn't recognize that I'm doing him a favor. He doesn't recognize when I work extra hard and stay a little bit later for him. He doesn't even recognize. In fact, I don't even think he cares.” It doesn't matter. You're doing what you're doing in the sincerity of your heart to Christ, and He sees. If you humble yourself under the mighty hand of God, He will exalt you. I don't know when the time is, but it's at the right time. I know it was a surprise to Simeon, and I know it was a surprise to Anna that they would be actually the ones that would see the Christ out of all the people. Peter writes, “Prophets long for that day that they would see it.” And then Peter

says, “It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but You.”

“Slaves, be obedient to those who are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in the sincerity of your heart, as to Christ.”

And in case you didn't get it,

(Ephesians 6:6) “not by way of eyeservice, as men-pleasers, but as slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart.”

Who sees the heart? Yeah, He's the only one that sees that. “And Mary pondered these things in her heart.” Your ponderings, your thoughts, the genuineness of those, God sees, and He'll reward, and you'll see that over and over again in the Gospel of Luke. The nobodies, God wants to give them great gifts. God wants to give them great things, and you begin to see the prodigal son was given not only forgiveness but a greater love with his father than ever before. A Samaritan was given a name that he never had, and God allowed him to have a name not only for himself, but for all the Samaritans that would come after him. We would even have a ministry called

“The Good Samaritan”. Can you imagine that? We'll remember these individuals because they all had one thing in common, they all were allowed to draw close to Jesus, and when they drew close to Jesus by virtue of having the right heart, they were never forgotten.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we give You thanks for Your promises to us that guarantee that our name is written down in Glory. Your word tells us that You opened up the Lamb's book of life, and in Malachi, You opened up the book of remembrance. Forgotten by the world? Probably. Unknown by most? Absolutely, but not forgotten by You, and eternally remembered and beloved. Father, I come before You and I know that one of the great surprises of heaven is going to be who's in the prominent place. You tell us the greatest in Your kingdom is the servant of them all, and it's just hard for us to think that way. In fact, You reveal to us that oftentimes it's the ones that have no prominent ministry that You will exalt in the greatest ways. Not

because of what they did, but because of who they were and because they loved You.

Your heads bowed and your eyes closed. What we are asking you to do is keep your heart sincere. Much like what we were talking in the first service with a good conscience. If you'll remain there, God will work. God wants to give you good things. We wouldn't see the repetition of giving if that were not so, and He wants to give to those that will humbly just simply have the right heart before Him. Now, the question is, will you do that? Do you believe that this is where the power of God is? If you do, look forward to some great things.