

**Devotional Thoughts :: God's Honor Code**

**God's Honor Code - posted by roadsign (), on: 2010/11/26 14:56**

"How gladly would I treat you like sons." Jer 4:19

"... that might receive the full rights of sons." Gal. 4:5

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"I love you as a son!" These words fell on the ears of a little girl as she lay on her bed in a Christian hospital near her village. Her father had just told her that he valued her as much as he did a son. This was unheard of in her Muslim culture. The little girl was deeply touched. Western women might take offense at this father's words - unless they understand the father's heart and the context of his culture. Then they would know that he had actually bestowed great honor on his daughter. This father had previously encountered Christ, and was showing evidence of changed thinking - countercultural thinking.

Many biblical concepts come alive when seen from the perspective of the biblical world - like the words: "full rights of sons". In the ancient Near East, the role of the son was of great importance because inheritance was transferred from father to son. When the early Christian converts learned that through Christ they received "the full rights of sons" they would have realized this meant that regardless of their societal position (or gender), they had been adopted by God into a highly favored position: They had become rightful heirs in the Father's household. Such honor would have brought inexpressible joy to the countless who could never escape from their societal shame - be they the poor, the deformed, women, children, or the outcasts.

Biblical societies lived by a code of honor and shame; so when Jesus presented his listeners with God's honor code (the Beatitudes), they would have known that this was the way to be "blessed", that is, honored and favored by God. The ones favored by God were those who admitted they were spiritually needy, they were the spiritually thirsty, the meek, merciful, pure, peacemakers, and so forth.

This honor code was radically counter-cultural, and those who lived by it would inevitably be dishonored in society. They would even face rejection and persecution. This is why Jesus concluded his Beatitudes with reassuring words: "Rejoice and be glad for great is your reward in heaven." :12 In other words, these people could accept their suffering joyfully by remembering that their full inheritance was yet to come!

Our society is not more inclined to favor those who live by God's honor code. Still, these are the people on whom God bestows the full rights of sonship:

"Theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

In other words, theirs is "the full measure of the blessing of Christ." Rom. 15:29

Diane