

Madison Heights Christian Church
(Disciples of Christ)
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MADISON HEIGHTS MESSENGER

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Finding Favor with God

When the angel Gabriel visited Mary he said “you have found favor with God.” When I reflect upon all of the things that God could possibly say to me “you have found favor with God” is at the top of the list along with “well done my good and faithful servant.” The day of reckoning has been defined as the time when past mistakes or misdeeds must be punished or paid for. Ouch, that’s all negative with nothing positive. I prefer to redefine it as the time when you are face to face with God and you get praised for your devotion, hard work, and service. However, realism dictates that most of us approach the concept of the day of reckoning with apprehension. We know we are good but we also know that there is this little sin in the past that isn’t so little and there needs to be some accountability for it. We are a bit afraid of what God might say. It’s kind of like when the boss calls you into the office. You know you are doing a pretty good job but sometimes there’s a surprise. Unexpected problems and unforeseen circumstances arise and the boss has to address them and has called you in the office. Therefore, even though you are pretty sure you are doing well, you have this apprehension because of the uncertainty. You don’t know if there is a problem or a promotion on the other side of the door. It can be like the time when you were surprised by a bad grade on a report card. You knew you were doing well and thought you would have gotten a much better grade. But it is more like being in front of a judge, you swear your innocence but he pounds the gable and pronounces you guilty.

There is a disparity between your perception of yourself and the perception that someone else has of you. Our perceptions of ourselves tend to be much more favorable than the perceptions that others have of us. When it comes to finding favor with God, the goal is very important. We simply can’t afford to be wrong in our self perception. For me, the ultimate goal of my life is to get to heaven and hear the words “well done my good and faithful servant.” I want to see a smile on God’s face. I want God to be proud of me. That’s my goal. When I aim for my goal I want to aim high to give myself some room for error. In motivational speeches on goals and goal setting, Zig Ziglar tells the story of a boy back home that used to take a short cut across the field that was the home of a mean old bull. He said that the boy would run across the field toward a tree and if the bull was chasing after him he would aim high for a branch on that tree. To be safe he would aim extra high because if he were to miss it, he wants to have a chance to catch it on the way down. The lesson is that there are no guarantees that you will hit the goal that you are aiming for. Therefore, when striving to reach your goal of finding favor with God, it is best to aim high just in case you miss your target and need room for error. Since it is our goal to find favor with God, and this goal is of utmost importance, it is best to aim high, to do more and be more in devotion and service. Notice what Mary said at the end of her meeting with the angel “Here am I, the servant of the Lord.”

Of all the people on the earth, God selected Mary because Mary had found favor with God. Mary found favor with God because Mary’s attitude was that of a servant of the Lord. Mary was not a servant of the world with secular goals, ambitions, and dreams. Mary’s life was focused on being a servant of God. I hope this Christmas you take a break from the glamour of the season and take the time to reflect on the humility of Mary. She possessed an outstanding quality that made her special in the eyes of God. There were no decorations like we have today. I hope you aim high and make it your ultimate goal in life to find favor with God.

George