

FEET ON THE GROUND, EYES ON CHRIST!

He made Himself nothing to serve us salvation -- He saved us to share in His glory.

Philippians 2:5-11

TEXT: *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death- even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

In Jesus' name, my fellow redeemed:

Back when my wife was in graduate school we traveled to University of New York, Stony Brook, where she did what she had to do for her Nurse Practitioner's degree, I had the chance to wander around Long Island and see the sites. One was Sagamore Hill, now a National Historic Site, which was the home of the 26th president, Theodore Roosevelt, from 1885 to his death in 1919. While he was president, he called this beautiful home his "Summer White House."

On the grounds of Sagamore Hill was a rock with a copper plaque secured to it with something Roosevelt is supposed to have said: **Keep your eyes on the stars and keep your feet on the ground.** For some reason I took a picture of that rock with Roosevelt's words emblazoned on it. Perhaps I thought that sometime I might be able to find a use for that saying of our 26th president, maybe in a sermon or something.

Well here it is: **Keep your eyes on the stars and keep your feet on the ground.** Nicknamed "Teddy," Roosevelt led an exciting and colorful life. And anyone familiar with his life, its ups and downs, its failures and achievements would say that Roosevelt's words were from personal experience.

The Apostle Paul, however, would tell us to have a different attitude about life than Theodore Roosevelt. His words, inspired by the Holy Spirit, tell us: *Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant...* Paul would adjust Roosevelt's advice by saying: **KEEP YOUR EYES ON CHRIST, KEEP YOUR FEET ON THE GROUND ...** Christ made himself nothing to serve us salvation. He saved us to share in His glory.

On Palm Sunday, Jesus rode into Jerusalem as somebody very special. People cheered: *Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!* Mk 11 Everyone thought that this Jesus of Nazareth had made it! Many of them had seen his miracles and in their minds, the sky was the limit! Their eyes and hearts were "on the stars!" Their dreams of a return to the golden age of Israel in the days of David and Solomon were about to come true! *Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!* Mk 11

This same starry-eyed attitude is deep-seated in the hearts of people today. Everybody wants to be somebody. You can see that like never before on the social media pages where people of all ages post pictures of themselves and boast of the most amazingly mundane feats of life. But what is even worse is to see parents pushing and driving their children to be social successes! They disguise this under the noble caricature of trying to send them to the best

schools, sending them to every football and soccer camp, and to attend every social function there is in order to have friends.

Don't get me wrong! There's nothing wrong with trying to give our children all that we can give them, except when we are teaching them to keep their "eyes on the stars" and to "follow their dreams" (or their parents' dreams) rather than to keep their eyes on Christ who made himself nothing in order to serve.

In less than a week those starry-eyed folks waving their palm branches would witness Jesus' fulfillment of Isaiah's ancient prophecy: ***He was despised and rejected by men, ... Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. ... we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted.*** Is 53 Who is willing to be despised and rejected by men in order to serve God and others? Who wants to be considered by society and even our friends as one whom God not only forgot, but one who is considered ***stricken ... smitten, and afflicted.*** ? Is 53 Not me! Not you! In fact we have contributed to Jesus' death with our own shame. He should hide His face from us!

Yet Paul writes: ***Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death- even death on a cross!*** Jesus did not stop being God when He was placed in Mary's womb. The Word, Who ***in the beginning... was with God, ... was God...*** Jn 1 and Who created all things, was made flesh... He came out of His mother's body just as do all baby humans. He went to school, played with brothers, sisters and friends, grew up into manhood just as all humans mature into being men and women, and never once sought to elevate himself any higher than what he was: the son of a carpenter from Nazareth.

But Jesus rode into Jerusalem as our King, and stood before Pontius Pilate. Pilate asked Jesus: ***Are you the king of the Jews?*** Jesus said: ***You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.*** Jn 18 Even as King, Jesus does not act like one. His servants do not fight. In fact, they all ran away! That's because this reason for His birth into this world was to serve the universal truth that all mankind is sinful and God's Son is come to take all sin away. His blood is true human blood, but it also is the blood of Almighty God! ***And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death- even death on a cross!*** By taking man's sin upon Himself, God made mankind to be somebody very special! God made man to be the righteousness of Christ!

Keep your eyes on the stars... said Teddy Roosevelt. No greater "Star" is there than Jesus Christ who came to serve us salvation. Paul says BE LIKE CHRIST! ***Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus!*** Jesus made Himself nothing to serve us salvation so that we might share in His glory.

Roosevelt's "keep your eyes on the stars" is not a good idea since Jesus tells us that the "stars" will one day fall. Jesus says: ***Immediately after the distress of those days 'the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.'*** ***At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.*** Mt 24 The stars will fall. That means that all man has done, all his glory and

splendor, all his dreams, fulfilled or unfulfilled, will come to a mournful end: ...*the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.* However, God's Elect, those predestined for salvation, will be gathered as Jesus himself declares: *And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.* There is nothing more important than to know where you stand, your loved ones, your children and grandchildren stand, when Jesus returns, not as humble servant to die for our salvation, but as the glorious King that He is from eternity.

What does this mean to you to "know where you stand" in regard to Jesus who is coming for His elect? How can I know that I will stand, that my loved ones will stand? Keep your feet on the ground, the solid ground of God's Word and promises of the Gospel. Baptize your children and then teach them what their Baptism means. By teaching them, you yourself will not forget! That famous passage from Romans 6 works well in this context: ... *don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.* Ro 6 This "new life" is our opportunity to humbly serve God and one another, not our own hopes and dreams. And as Paul goes on with that Romans 6 passage: *If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.* Ro 6 Thus, Holy Baptism itself is to serve as a rock solid footing for our feet of faith as we wait for our Lord's return. Don't just have your children baptized and then never again teach them what it means. As our Lord Jesus commands us at his Ascension: *Go and baptize all nations, TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU.* Mt. 20 With their eye on Christ and their feet on the solid ground of the Gospel that is preached again and again in worship, and your teaching them what their baptism means to them every day at home, you and your loved ones will stand on that Last Day with all the Elect of God!

Feet on the ground; eyes on Christ, and your godly attitude will be the same as that of Jesus Christ who served us salvation that we may partake of His glory forever in heaven. Amen