

Pastors Thoughts of the Week

The Ugly Duckling Syndrome

The LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart. I Samuel 16:7

When Hans Christian Anderson penned his famous tale of a duckling who was ridiculed and rejected by his peers but later grew into a beautiful swan, he confessed that he was writing his own autobiography. Like Anderson many people have suffered the ostracizing insults of their rejecting coevals. Perhaps they were cast out of the "in crowd" because they weren't as pretty as the cheerleaders, or as coordinated as the star athletes, or as cerebral as the honor students. They were forced to struggle with the bitter sting of being rejected by elitists that decided who was or wasn't to be admitted into their insular society. It was a lonely, depressing existence for many that led to copious tears and even morbid considerations. But with time, self-worth would be found apart from group acceptance. In many cases such rejection led to seeking the acceptance of the only One that really mattered.

Our culture has wrongly set the crown of success on the heads of the least worthy of such adulating attention, while at the same time depreciating those who possess requisites that are hidden from human observation. To these, the persona non grata of the world, God has reserved an eternal consolation: "The Lord GOD which gathereth the outcasts". It will be, after all, "that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called". What an ironic reversal is about to upend the perverted social order.

The text reminds us that it is not the acclaim of a mercurial world that we should curry, but the acceptance of a holy God. The world will bestow its honors on those whose beauty, wealth and power are manifested by tangible evidences, while the Lord bestows His on those who "serve God acceptably with reverence" from "the hidden man of the heart".

David was the runt of the Jesse's family yet God saw in Him the potential that would ultimately equip him to be the leader of the mighty nation. And a millennium later the Son of David would be born in humble surroundings with "no beauty that we should desire him". His disfigured, crucified form was so revolting that at first sight one would be compelled to turn away and hide "our faces from him". But from the hideous scene a transcendent beauty emerged. In transfigured ecstasy the victorious Savior arose with "healing in his wings". And from His heavenly throne He graciously invites the outcast, the poor, the ugly, the learning disabled, and the unpopular to "Come Unto Me!". What a beautiful transformation is awaiting!

Have a blessed week,

Pastor

Faith cometh by hearing: and hearing by the word of God Romans 10:17