

- I. The Radical Rightness of Realized Faith
 - A. Dave Thomas of Wendy's and the "MBA"
 1. One year he appeared on the cover of one of the company's annual reports dressed in a knee-length work apron holding a mop and a plastic bucket.
 2. For many years, a framed copy of that picture graced the back rooms and manager's office of most Wendy's.
 - a. That picture was built on the fact Dave was a self-made millionaire.
 - b. He didn't finish high school.
 - c. He worked his way up through the ranks of Kentucky Fried Chicken and then went off on his own to start Wendy's.
 - d. Here's how Dave explained that picture:
 - (1) "I got my M.B.A. long before my G.E.D.
 - (2) At Wendy's M.B.A. does not mean Master of Business Administration.
 - (3) It means Mop Bucket Attitude."
 - (4) Dave Thomas taught all of his employees that service comes before success.
 - B. Nehemiah's Story:
 1. Self-sacrifice in serving others points people to the glory of God in Jesus Christ
 - a. Prime Example of "MBA"
 - b. To use other language:
 - (1) Nehemiah shows us the radical rightness of realized faith
 - (2) Nehemiah's conduct puts on display what it means to live for God's glory in the day to day choices of our lives
 2. Nehemiah's entitlements
 - a. Economic advantage: an extravagant salary paid by from public taxes
 - b. Social prestige (even the governor's servants lorded it over the people)
 - c. Contractual exception to manual labor
 - d. Preferred estate development
 - e. Publicly funded luxury networking
 3. Nehemiah refused to indulge entitlements in order that the people might see not a greedy governor but a glorious heavenly Father acting through him for their good.
 - a. Nehemiah, mindful of the burden his indulgence would put on the people of God, and mindful that his behavior would reflect poorly on the glory of God, surrendered himself and his self interest to the cause of God's glory!
 - b. Nehemiah epitomizes the radical rightness of realized faith.
 - c. Nehemiah shows us that God's glory is exalted among the peoples when we refuse to indulge selfishness choosing instead reverence for God.

C. Culture of Entitlement

1. What is entitlement: the idea that an individual's desires are of greater value than community good such that individual desires deserve to be met even if others have to sacrifice to provide them.
 - a. Entitlement:
 - (1) The condition of having a right to have, do, or get something
 - (2) The feeling or belief that you deserve to be given something (such as special privileges)
 - (3) In its morally correct form, a person is perfectly justified in feeling entitled when they have a clear contract providing them a specific right.
 - b. The term "culture of entitlement" suggests that many people now have highly unreasonable expectations about what they are entitled to.
2. Ben Witherington, (Patheos.com)
 - a. "If you ask me the root of the problem comes from too much insistence on rights without an equal insistence on responsibilities, but perhaps there are many root causes.
 - b. Whatever may be the case, we now live in a culture where the large majority of the citizenry think they are entitled to all sorts of things beyond life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.
 - (1) They assume for example they are entitled to food without working,
 - (2) pensions without earning it,
 - (3) healthcare without paying for it,
 - (4) having things one's own way without voting for it,
 - (5) wealth without earning it
 - (6) protection of the law without sufficient taxes to support it,
 - (7) free education without paying for it,
 - (8) the right to live and work in America without having legal status or citizenship and on and on.
 - (9) Where exactly does one draw the line in these matters?"
3. Nehemiah's life points Christians living in the midst of a culture of entitlement to self-sacrifice as a means of directing others to the glory of God and not only to the glory of God, but to the glory of God in Jesus Christ.

D. Jesus (Phil 2:5-10)

1. Entitlements
 - a. In the form of God
 - b. Equal with God
2. Sacrifice
 - a. Made himself nothing
 - b. Took on the form of a servant
 - c. Being born in the likeness of men

- d. Humbled Himself
- e. Became obedient even to the point of death on a cross
- 3. Jesus' self-sacrifice points us to the glory of God
 - a. Hebrews 12:1-2 "who for the joy set before him"
 - (1) The joy of upholding God's glory in the past promises
 - (2) The joy of exerting God's glory in present salvation
 - (3) The joy of capturing God's glory in future final redemption
 - b. Jesus' self-sacrifice points us to the glory of God

II. The Radical Rightness of Realized Faith Today

A. But what of us?

- 1. If Nehemiah's life of self-sacrifice points to God's glory in Christ
- 2. If Jesus' life of self-sacrifice points to the glory of God
- 3. Then where should our life point, we you have committed our lives in faith to follow Jesus?

B. Jesus sets an example for us to follow when He washes the feet of His disciples

- 1. John 13:3-15
 - a. Selfless self-sacrifice communicates in humility the glory of God's love for sinful human beings
 - b. Selfless self-sacrifice motivated by love demonstrates that God's love is present, personal, and practical
- 2. Horville Sash
 - a. A popular fable known as "The Last Wish of Horville Sash".
 - (1) had a very humble job in the offices of the largest corporation in the world.
 - (2) He worked as a mail clerk in the lowest reaches of the building doing what he could do to help other people with their jobs.
 - (a) Often he wondered what went on the floor just above his, but he never dwelt on it too long.
 - (b) Then came a day when Horville found a bug scurrying across the floor.
 - i) As the mailroom clerk, Horville had only bugs to command.
 - ii) He raised his foot to flatten the bug when it spoke: "Please don't kill me," it said. "If you let me live, I'll give you three wishes."
 - iii) Horville figured that even if he didn't get the wishes, a talking bug could make him a lot of money.
 - (c) So he let the bug live, and the bug asked him what he wanted for his first wish.
 - i) "To be promoted to the second floor," said Horville.
 - ii) The next day Horville's boss came in and told him he would move up to the second

- floor that very day.
- (d) Horville was immediately promoted and walked into the second floor like a conquering general, but soon he heard footsteps on the floor above him.
 - i) He said to the bug, my second wish is to be promoted floor by floor until I reach the very top; until I am in charge of the company.
 - ii) "Done," said the bug, and floor by floor he moved his way through the ranks:
 - a) 10th floor, 20th floor, 50th floor, 90th floor, and finally to the very top floor.
 - b) He was as high as he could go: Chairman of the Board; CEO; corner office on the top floor of the building.
 - (e) Then one day he heard footsteps above him.
 - i) He saw a sign that said: STAIRS.
 - ii) He went up and found a rooftop and there he found one of his clerks near the edge of the building with his eyes closed.
 - iii) "What are you doing?" Horville asked.
 - iv) "Praying," came the answer.
 - v) "To whom?"
 - vi) Pointing a finger toward the sky the boy answered, "God."
 - (f) Panic gripped Horville.
 - i) There was a floor above him?
 - ii) He couldn't see it.
 - iii) All he saw was clouds.
 - iv) He couldn't hear the shuffling of feet.
 - v) "Do you mean there is an authority over me?"
 - (g) Horville summoned the bug.
 - i) It was time for his third and final wish.
 - ii) "Make me God," he said.
 - a) "Make me the highest.
 - b) Put me in the kind of position only God would hold if he were here on earth."
 - (h) The very next day Horville Sash awakened to find himself in the basement, sorting the mail, and doing what he could to help others be the best that they could possibly be.
 - i) For Jesus said, "Whoever wants to be great

among you must be your servant.”

- C. We are called to selfless self-sacrifice for the glory of God in order that others may see God’s glory in our commitment to Him
 - 1. We may not all lead a ministry or task force or new initiative for God but we all have an influence on the people around us.
 - 2. Whether you realize it or not, people are watching you, just as they watched Nehemiah and the disciples watched Jesus.
 - 3. Your words and your example are having an impact, positive or negative, on the people around you.
- D. Application Questions to Consider
 - 1. Who sits at your table and shares your meals?
 - a. Are the lonely there? The broken? The hurting? The defiant or rebellious?
 - b. Who does your compassion and love for Jesus reach on a personal basis?
 - 2. Who is on your list to actively help grow in hope?
 - 3. When was the last time you put the needs of others ahead of your own out of reverence for God?
 - 4. How are you setting an example of what it means to prioritize God’s glory in life?
 - 5. When was the last time you surrendered to God, gave yourself to Him and said, “Okay, God. Here I am. I’ll step out in faith and go first.”
- E. Conclusion
 - 1. Nehemiah’s self-sacrifice points us to the glory of God in Jesus Christ
 - 2. Christ’s self-sacrifice points us to the glory of God in present salvation and future final redemption.
 - 3. Where does your life point?