

“From Birth, A King Without Dignity”

...Jesus took him aside from the crowd, by himself, and put His fingers into his ears, and after spitting, He touched his tongue with the saliva... [Mark 7:33]

A Birth Without Dignity

It has always struck me deeply that it was likely that Jesus was born in the presence of more animals than people.

Where were the kings to see him right after he was born? Where were the high priests? The prophets? The nobles? The governors? When my wife and I (hopefully) are able to have a child through pregnancy, that child will be celebrated and made over as if he or she were royalty. Yet Jesus was not. At least not for several months.

I mean, God is sovereign and no doubt controlled the events surrounding the birth of Jesus. He enabled a virgin to get pregnant, convinced Joseph to stay with her and moved them to Bethlehem to fulfill a several hundred years old prophecy. So why were Mary and Joseph relegated to such undignified quarters that Jesus was laid in a feeding trough for animals? Isn't this the King of the Jews and the God of Christianity we are talking about here?

From before moment one of his life, God shows us through Jesus how little human dignity matters to him.

What does dignity mean to you?

A Life Without Dignity

Beyond the Manger we see Jesus living without dignity. For him to have left Heaven where he was worshiped 24 hours a day by millions of angels, other beings and most of creation to come live among us was a loss of dignity in and of itself. But he didn't come as a Heavenly King to be an earthly king. No, he came to be poor (2 Corinthians 8:9) and homeless (Luke 9:58). He came to serve his followers as the lowest slave would (John 13:1-17). He came to teach people that when you are insulted in the most offensive way possible, you don't fight back but rather take the completely undignified response and let them get away with it (Matthew 5:38-43).

He came to be misunderstood and rejected and mistreated by even his own family.

What does dignity mean to you?

A Death Without Dignity

Again, I'm entirely certain God controlled the timing and circumstances of when Jesus was on Earth and that Jesus did not have to live during the time when Romans had mastered the art of humiliating a person before they killed them.

It wasn't just an excruciating way to die. It was being mocked with a crown of thorns, being spat upon, being paraded around almost entirely naked in full view of the world. It was being whipped so badly his appearance was marred beyond recognition. I think it is fair to say that Jesus died with as little dignity as possible. By means of torture, shame and death reserved for the worst criminals, people we know deserve dignity the least. I think God wanted it this way. It was for this reason Paul said, I think, that Jesus was obedient unto death, "even death on a cross."

How odd is it that Jesus' amazing, supernaturally conceived birth was so private and yet his horrific, dehumanizing death

was so public?

What does dignity mean to you?

The story of Christmas, the true, historical story of Christmas, is never as pleasant as we want it to be[1. As [“Labor of Love” by Andrew Peterson](#) captures so well.]. It was a story of being overlooked. Of being discarded to living with the animals. Of being born without dignity. And it was not by accident. It was the pattern for the rest of his life, even unto death.

So yet again, I ask, *what does dignity mean to you?* Do you desire it? Do you react vindictively when it is taken from you, even slightly? I know I do. To Jesus it apparently was not high on his list of human values. It was God’s plan for him and I’m certain it is his plan for us.

So this Christmas if someone curses us in traffic, if we somehow get overlooked or underappreciated, if family mistreats us, if in anyway we feel our dignity being threatened...let us remember the baby lying where animals fed. Let us remember that in the same passage above where Jesus was obedient unto the most humiliating death we are told to “have this attitude in you which was also in Christ Jesus”. We know Christmas is not about the festive secular aspects primarily, that it’s about Jesus. May this Christmas we live as he did, even if it costs us some dignity.