

## A towel or a robe

A new Rasmussen report indicates that only 56 percent of Protestants and 48 percent of Catholics view Easter as one of the most important holidays. Had the disciples been asked the same question immediately following the resurrection they most likely would have viewed the resurrection with even less significance.

After the resurrection the disciples were filled with unbelief. How is it that for 3 ½ years these disciples could walk and talk with Jesus and yet they did not grasp what it was that Jesus had tried to teach them about His death, burial, and resurrection. The problem that these disciples had was that they did not understand servanthood Christianity. They had a robe mentality. They were looking for royal status. They thought that Jesus was going to be the King. They thought they were going to be close to the throne of power once Jesus was made King of Israel. Now that Jesus was dead all their hopes of a mighty political kingdom was gone. Jesus indeed was the promised Messiah, but Jesus did not come as a royal mighty political king. Jesus came as a suffering servant. It was not until some time had passed after the resurrection that the disciples came to realize that they must also take up the towel of servitude if they were to be true disciples of Christ.

In Matthew 20:20-28 the mother of James and John approach Jesus and requests a robe (place of prominence) for her two sons. She had selfish motivations. She assumed that the kingdom was going to be established very soon in the future on earth and she wanted to lobby Jesus to give her two sons a place of prominence in the kingdom, perhaps a place close to the throne of power. A robe of prominence and prestige in the kingdom. Verse 24 tells us that the other 10 disciples became indignant and angry at the request of the mother. Most likely the reason the other 10 disciples were so angry is because they wanted the same position. The Lord reprimands them and tells them that they are acting like heathen kings of the

gentiles. Jesus then explains to them that the way to greatness is not in political solutions, not in the robe of power and prestige, but it is in the form of a servant of which Jesus is the greatest example.

In John chapter 13 Jesus is gathered at the last supper with the disciples. We see that Jesus rises from the table and lays aside his outer robes. Jesus took the towel, put it around His waist, poured water into the basin and began to wash and wipe the disciples feet. Jesus then commands that the disciples should wash one another's feet as well. Jesus says that His followers have one role that we should exhibit. It will not be the role of the robe (power) because that only belongs to Christ, but our role as disciples of Christ is that of the towel (servitude). We are to emulate the Saviors example of humility, obedience and suffering if we are to be effective in reaching the world for Christ.

We get the two kingdoms confused sometimes. In this worldly kingdom we are taught that if you want to be great you must wield power and prestige over others. In the Heavenly Kingdom greatness is judged by our servitude to Christ and to people. As children of the King we are to emulate Christ's values not this worlds values.

Jesus lived counter to his culture and so will each believer if we take the towel approach to serving our fellow man. The Jews thought that they were better than the publicans and sinners. The Jews thought because they were Gods chosen people and because they had the law that they were superior to the extent that they would not even fellowship with the sinners. In Luke 15:1-2 Jesus demonstrates His towel approach to servitude, Jesus ate with sinners. This just put the Jewish religious leaders over the edge when they saw Jesus eating with the publicans and sinners. To eat with someone is an important symbol of fellowship. The Jews in those days had a rule. The Jews were not to have fellowship with outsiders until they become like them (like the Jews). The Jewish

religious leaders wanted people to be like them. If the gentiles became proselytes and converted to Judaism then they would accept them, but not until they first repented and became like them. Jesus gives us the example in Luke 15 of servitude by going to where the sinners were and connecting with them in their environment and culture first before they repented, while they were still sinners.

When these disciples finally understood that their mission was not to make people like them, but to make people like Christ, it forever changed their lives and changed the world. Likewise when we get that straight in our lives that we are called to receive Jesus as Savior and then gird ourselves with the towel of servitude by sharing with others the life changing Gospel of Jesus Christ and living out the life and character of Christ before their very eyes we too through the empowering of the Holy Spirit can change the world for Christ, but it will not happen with a robe mentality of placing ourselves in a place of prominence inside the walls of the church waiting for the kingdom to come and ignoring the lost world outside.

Pastor, Randy Mason [www.libertybaptistofmarshalltown.com](http://www.libertybaptistofmarshalltown.com)  
Liberty Baptist of Marshalltown