

“The One Who Honors Me, I Will Honor”
(1 Samuel 2:30)

I. Introduction.

A. Orientation.

1. Last week, we looked at something very important, so I wanted to review it briefly: how to know God’s will.
 - a. It’s not as simple as receiving a Word from the Lord or being “led by the Spirit.”
 - (i) You can’t expect the Lord to speak directly to you – as He did on certain occasions in the past – since He finished giving us the Scriptures, He no longer communicates in this way.
 - (ii) You also can’t trust your gut feelings – that’s not how the Spirit leads – there is no such promise in Scripture – you will more often be led astray than find the Lord’s will down this path.
 - b. The Spirit does guide, but He does so through His Word and Providence – primarily the Word – and so if you would know His will:
 - (i) You must fear the Lord – be really afraid of offending Him.
 - (ii) You must study His Word – to know His revealed will.
 - (iii) You must do what you already know – you can’t expect more light if you’re not willing to follow what light you have.
 - (iv) You must pray for further illumination and direction – continue to seek Him for His guidance.
 - (v) And you must also allow Him to lead you through His Providence, but only as far as it is consistent with His Word.
 - (vi) If you do these things, you’ll find that you’ll never be without the Lord’s guidance in any situation.
2. This evening, let’s consider one more blessing that comes from walking with the Lord: honor. Our passage shows us this by way of negative example and by way of positive statement in the case of Eli.

B. Preview.

1. Eli was a son of Aaron, and as such was a priest.
 - a. This was a great honor from the Lord.
 - b. But with every great honor also comes a greater responsibility – to use this position to honor the Lord – this is where Eli had failed.
 - (i) His sons were very wicked.
 - (a) They would not only take those sacrifices the Law allowed for the priests, but also parts of the peace offerings that were meant for the one offering and his family.
 - (b) And they were prostituting the women who served at the doorway of the tent of meeting.

- (ii) Eli knew what they were doing.
 - (a) He knew they had seriously dishonored the Lord; but he only admonished them.
 - (b) When they had failed to honor the Lord, their honor should have been removed.
 - (c) In doing this, Eli had also failed to honor the Lord, and so the Lord was about to remove the honor that He had given him, as well as his life.

2. The Lord goes on to give us a very important principle, one we would all do well to listen to: “Those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me will be lightly esteemed.” In light of this, let’s consider three things this evening:
 - a. What honor is.
 - b. What honors you can expect from the Lord in this life and after this life, if you will glorify Him with your life.
 - c. How you can honor the Lord and so receive greater honor from Him.

II. Sermon.

A. First, what is honor?

1. In this case, honor is receiving credit, recognition, fame or some other reward for doing something outstanding. We’re all familiar with the principle of honor in our culture.
 - a. Honor can be given for a variety of things.
 - (i) For doing something outstanding in sports – setting a new record.
 - (ii) For doing something outstanding in medicine – discovering an important cure.
 - (iii) Or in politics – bringing peace between warring nations.
 - (iv) Or in literature – writing a great novel.
 - b. And honor can be shown in a variety of ways.
 - (i) A gold medal at the Olympics.
 - (ii) The Nobel Prize for discovering a cure.
 - (iii) The Nobel Peace Prize for bringing peace.
 - (iv) Or the Pulitzer Prize for some great literary work.
2. Honor is something we all seek at one level or another – everyone likes kudos, recognition, to know they’ve done something well.
 - a. But you need to be careful for whom and from whom you seek this honor:
 - (i) Whether you are seeking honor for yourself from the world.
 - (ii) Or whether you are seeking honor from the Lord.
 - b. The outcome of both is really quite different:
 - (i) If you seek honor for yourself from the world, you might get it temporarily, but you will lose it in the end – every gold medal, every Heisman Trophy, every Nobel and Pulitzer Prize will one day be burned up and forgotten along with the rest of the world.
 - (ii) But if you seek for that honor the Lord gives, you will never lose it.

- (a) As Philip Doddridge writes in his hymn “Awake, My Soul, Stretch Every Nerve,” “That prize with peerless glories bright, which shall new luster boast, when victor’s wreaths and monarch’s gems shall blend in common dust.”
- (b) The saints gain a prize they will never lose, which is why they were willing to live and die that they might gain it.

B. Second, what kind of honors can you expect to receive from the Lord in life and after this life, if you spend your life seeking to glorify Him?

1. First, what can you expect to receive in life?

- a. There are things that you might not consider honors that you will gain:
 - (i) The confidence that you are the Lord’s and on your way to heaven.
 - (ii) The help that He promises to give you.
 - (iii) These are honors of a sort – rewards, blessings for trusting Jesus and following Him.
- b. But there are others:
 - (i) The honor of a good name: “A *good* name is to be more desired than great wealth, favor is better than silver and gold” (Proverbs 22:1).
 - (ii) That the Lord would preserve something of your life or work to encourage successive generations of believers.
 - (a) This is what He did with Martin Luther, John Calvin, Jonathan Edwards; George Whitefield, John and Charles Wesley, Augustus Toplady, and Daniel Rowlands; with Charles Spurgeon and J. C. Ryle.
 - (b) Certainly there are those whose names we will never know in this life that the Lord will greatly honor in heaven.
 - (iii) Perhaps He will allow you the honor of bearing the marks of your sacrifice for Him.
 - (a) As Paul writes, “From now on let no one trouble me, for I bear in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus” (Gal. 6:17).
 - (b) It’s an honor to be persecuted, to suffer in His place.
 - (iv) On the other hand, He might give you power, position, and riches as He did David or Solomon, or a long life as He did Methuselah or Moses, as we saw in our meditation, “How blessed is the man who finds wisdom and the man who gains understanding. For her profit is better than the profit of silver and her gain better than fine gold. She is more precious than jewels; and nothing you desire compares with her. Long life is in her right hand; in her left hand are riches and honor” (Prov. 3:13-16).
 - (v) Or He may honor you by prospering some great thing you attempt for His glory, as He did with Paul when He empowered him to evangelize nearly the whole world – though he was called to this work, he could have lost that honor through sin (1 Cor. 9:26-27).
 - (vi) There are many other honors the Lord will give to those who honor Him.

2. What honor can you expect to receive from the Lord after this life?
 - a. First of all, He will give you heaven – heaven is where the Lord truly honors His servants.
 - (i) Jesus said to His disciples, “You are those who have stood by Me in My trials; and just as My Father has granted Me a kingdom, I grant you that you may eat and drink at My table in My kingdom, and you will sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel” (Luke 22:28-30).
 - (ii) This was their particular reward; but for you, “And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or farms for My name’s sake, will receive many times as much, and will inherit eternal life” (Matt. 19:29).
 - b. In heaven, there are,
 - (i) Places of honor: “To sit on My right or on My left, this is not Mine to give; but it is for those for whom it has been prepared” (Mark 10:40).
 - (a) This may not be referring so much to His throne as to His table.
 - (b) At His table are places of honor as there would be at any great banquet.
 - (ii) There are also degrees of glory and blessedness:
 - (a) That’s why Jesus tells you, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt. 6:19-21).
 - (b) And Paul says, “According to the grace of God which was given to me, like a wise master builder I laid a foundation, and another is building on it. But each man must be careful how he builds on it. For no man can lay a foundation other than the one which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if any man builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each man’s work will become evident; for the day will show it because it is *to be* revealed with fire, and the fire itself will test the quality of each man's work. If any man’s work which he has built on it remains, he will receive a reward. If any man’s work is burned up, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire” (1 Cor. 3:10-15).
 - (iii) The Lord is no man’s debtor. He will repay the service His servants render.
- C. Finally, how can you honor the Lord more so as to receive greater honor from Him?
1. First, you must walk with the Lord.
 - a. You must trust Jesus and His atoning death to save you.
 - b. You must repent of your sins – things you’ve done wrong and things you haven’t done right.
 - c. And you must follow Him wherever He leads you.
 2. Second, by sacrificing for Him.
 - a. One of the qualifications for walking with the Lord is taking up your cross.

- b. This means, among other things, making whatever sacrifices He calls you to make.
 - (i) Jesus will receive the greatest honor because He made the greatest sacrifice – as the Table reminds you.
 - (ii) The greater the sacrifice the Lord calls you to make – and that you actually make – the greater honor He will give you.
3. Finally, by becoming the servant of all.
- a. When the disciples were jockeying for position, Jesus told them this, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who have authority over them are called ‘Benefactors.’ But *it is* not this way with you, but the one who is the greatest among you must become like the youngest, and the leader like the servant” (Luke 22:24-26).
 - b. The more you humble yourself and sacrifice your own honor in the eyes of others for Jesus Christ, the more He will honor you.
4. We all want honor – the question is, What kind of honor do you want?
- a. Do you want honor for yourself from the world?
 - (i) You might get it, but you won’t be able to keep it.
 - (ii) Be aware that if you seek after it, and the world gains your heart, you may also perish with it. John writes, “Do not love the world nor the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh and the lust of the eyes and the boastful pride of life, is not from the Father, but is from the world. The world is passing away, and *also* its lusts” (1 John 2:15-17).
 - (iii) Those who are worldly will not see heaven.
 - (iv) If you seek the glory of the world, the Lord may remove from you what you have, as He did Eli.
 - b. Or do you want the honor that comes from God? John writes, “The one who does the will of God lives forever” (v. 17).
 - (i) If you seek honor from God by honoring Him, He will honor you in this life and allow you to keep that honor forever.
 - (ii) May the Lord grant to each of you, especially our youth, to choose wisely.
 - (iii) If honoring the Lord is your choice, then know the Lord has laid a table for you, to encourage and strengthen you in your attempt to honor Him.
 - (iv) Let’s spend a few moments in prayer to prepare ourselves to come now to this spiritual meal. Amen.