

Pk's Perspectives ... Be Real.

There is a great parable in Luke 18:9-14 that contrasts the difference between a man who presents himself as being more than he really is with a man who is brutally honest about his circumstances. Jesus makes it clear in verse 14 that He is impressed with the brutally honest man. Owing to the influence of social media in our culture, many people are “showing” a version of themselves that looks nothing like how they actually are. Filters, digital backgrounds, and slick editing tools allow someone to produce a cyber identity that is far different than their actual reality. I’m thinking God wants us to live authentic, transparent lives that reflect His mercy, grace, and glory. Consider this fable:

An emperor in the Far East was growing old and knew it was time to choose his successor. He called young people in the kingdom together one day. He said, “It is time for me to step down and choose the next emperor. I have decided to choose one of you.”

The kids were shocked! But the emperor continued, “I am going to give each one of you a seed today, one very special seed. I want you to plant the seed, water it and come back here one year from today with what you have grown from this one seed. I will then judge the plants that you bring and the one I choose will be the next emperor.”

One boy named Ling was there that day and he, like the others, received a seed. He went home and excitedly told his mother the story. She helped him get a pot and planting soil, and he planted the seed and watered it carefully. Everyday he would water it and watch to see if it had grown. After about three weeks, some of the other young people began to talk about their seeds and plants that were beginning to grow. Ling kept checking his seed, but nothing ever grew. Three weeks, four weeks, five weeks went by. Still nothing.

By now, others were talking about their plants but Ling didn’t have a plant, and he felt like a failure. Six months went by; still nothing in Ling’s pot. Everyone else had trees and tall plants, but he had nothing. Ling didn’t say anything to his friends, however. He just kept waiting for his seed to grow. A year finally went by and all the young people of the kingdom brought their plants to the emperor for inspection.

Ling told his mother that he wasn’t going to take an empty pot to the emperor but his mother said he must be honest about what happened. Ling felt sick to his stomach, but he knew his mother was right. He took his empty pot to the palace. When Ling arrived, he was amazed at the variety of plants grown by the other young people. They were beautiful — in all shapes and sizes. Ling put his empty pot on the floor and many of the other kids laughed at him. A few felt sorry for him and just said, “Hey, nice try.”

When the emperor arrived, he surveyed the room and greeted the young people. Ling just tried to hide in the back. “My what great plants, trees and flowers you have grown,” said the emperor. All of a sudden, the emperor spotted Ling at the back of the room with his empty pot. He ordered the guards to bring the young man to the front. Ling was terrified.

The emperor asked his name. “My name is Ling,” he replied. All the kids were laughing and making fun of him. The emperor asked everyone to quiet down. He looked at Ling, and then announced to the crowd, “Behold your new emperor! His name is Ling!” Ling couldn’t believe it. Ling couldn’t even grow his seed. How could he be the new emperor?

The emperor spoke to the gathered young people, “One year ago today, I gave everyone here a seed. I told you to take the seed, plant it, water it, and bring it back to me today. But I gave you all boiled seeds, which would not grow. All of you, except Ling, have brought me trees and plants and flowers. When you found that the seed would not grow, you substituted another seed for the one I gave you. Ling was the only one with courage and honesty to bring me a pot with my seed in it. Therefore, he is the one who will be my successor.” (author unknown)

Be real. Be honest & genuine. Grace & peace, love you. PK