

Above and Beyond

READING
Luke 17

Whenever you've done all the things directed for you, say, "We're useless slaves, because we've only done what we should've done."

Recently I watched a 40 year old video of a preacher talking about "A Palace for God".

Basically, God had told Moses that he wished to live in a tent. A fairly elaborate tent, but a tent none the less.

Five hundred years later David, king of Israel was living in a luxurious palace and he decided that God should have a palace too. So he undertook to build God a palace, a luxurious, grand, temple. Permanent, made of stone, decorated with gold.

Not because he wanted to disobey God (who expressly said he wanted to live in a tent), but because he wanted to go beyond what God required and to bless him because of who he was.

In the same sermon the preacher referred to something Yeshua said in Luke 17.

"whenever you've done all the things directed for you, say, 'We're useless slaves, because we've only done what we should've done.'"

Wouldn't that be a good slave? Wouldn't a useless slave be the one who didn't do what he was supposed to have done?

Yeshua's point was this. If all you do is what you have to do, ... then you are useless to him.

The Pharisees were like that. They turned what God said into a list of rules, and taught that if you kept these rules you would be praised by God. But then they became very legalistic about it all.

One day Yeshua said to them, "Woe to you Pharisees! Because you are giving a tenth of your mint, and rue, and all your herbs, but you are ignoring justice and the love of God. You must do these, (without letting go of those)."

Pleasing God is not about keeping rules or doing just what he says.

If God says give 10% and you break out your calculator and work out what is 10% of your income after tax... and give exactly that... How is that going to please God? What does that show about your heart?

God is pleased when you overflow with generosity. When you give without even counting whether it's 10%, or 20%, or even 50%.

Soldiers do exactly what they are told. Slaves do exactly what they are told. Pharisees do exactly what they are told.

But God's children look for ways to bless him above and beyond what he commands. And to show him how greatly they value the simple fact that they are allowed to be his children.