

The Common Blessing

And the common people heard him gladly. Mark 12:37

Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners for to hear him. Luke 15:1

Though God has endowed all of mankind with a free will, He has ordained some things that supersede our choices, such as when and where we are born. From the outset of life, we exercise our free will in many different ways, yet much of life is impacted by the surrounding influences of where we have been placed. The majority of us lead simple and common lives that have been influenced and shaped by our environment. Some of us achieve levels of excellence as perceived by the world's standards. Those individuals gain great recognition and usually are financially well compensated. Politicians, entertainment idols, athletes, and successful businessmen are among those who are highly esteemed. But there can be a trap in worldly recognition at every level; it often blinds us to our spiritual need. In the Book of Revelation, the Laodicean Church was *increased with goods and in need of nothing* and unaware of the fact that they were miserable, poor, blind, and naked.

Today's verses show that it was the common people and the outcasts who welcomed the words of Jesus. Was it because their lives were not insulated from the many hardships of day-to-day life? The uncertainty of their lives would cause them to welcome the hopeful teaching of an eternal kingdom. Their pride would blind the scribes and the Pharisees from knowing they were sinners in need of the forgiveness the Lord could provide. Difficulties can plant the seeds of yearning for a better and more satisfying life. Jesus had warned that it was easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven. 1Corinthians also states that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble are called. God certainly loves the mighty as well as the lowly, and the noble as much as the pauper, but what we see in the scriptures is that usually the common people responded more readily to the teachings of Jesus. They were not encumbered with self-importance and the fineries of this temporary world and could more easily embrace things of faith.

The people in the gospel accounts had the great privilege of being present when Jesus walked this earth. Though centuries have passed, those teachings the Lord gave them are available to us today when we open the pages of the Bible. If we allow, the impact of His word is as powerful today as in the first century. Heaven and earth will pass away, but His word will never pass away. May we be like the common people and *draw near unto Him for to hear Him*.

J. Ekis