

Addicted to Flattery?

The Discerner of Hearts

Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. ²⁴ But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all *men*, ²⁵ and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man. John 2 : 23-25

In other words this verse means, that Jesus did not believe in the testimony of man, because He knew the same tongue which now sings praises to Him, will also one day curse Him.

This holds good for us also. In today's world there are a lot of lying dissembling tongues wagging around us, especially if we have power of any kind.

We need to have the mind of Christ, so as not to fall prey to the flattering words of those around us.

I always get back to the famous Shakespearian tragedy, *King Lear*. A grand king laid waste all because he believed in the sugar coated lying tongues of his first two daughters, rather than the unflattering frank third daughter, Cordelia.

When Lear asked how much they loved (nothing but narcissism) Goneril and Reagan spoke lies of how much they love him, which the king believed.

But the clear headed Cordelia replied that she will only love how a daughter should love a father. She cannot love him more than her husband when she is married.

This throws Lear into a rage and he exiles Cordelia and divides his kingdom to Goneril and Reagan. As soon as the property changed hands, the elder daughters, chased him out like a beggar.

That is why it's a real tragedy. A great king reduced to a beggar because he listened what he loved to listen. Loving flattery cost him his kingdom, glory and power.

But it is more blessed to speak the truth. Though the truth teller may be despised and rejected, in the long run it will produce good fruit. But if a leader has itching ears, he would constantly want to hear how great he is, how wonderfully he preaches, how gallant he is, how munificent he is and so on.

Today more than many gifts we need the gift of discernment. A simple way to discern is to watch whether their words and actions match. Some people will speak of lifting mountains

for us, but they will not get up to make a coffee if we have a headache. Then you know what their words are worth.

Let us not fall for flattery nor let us needlessly flatter anyone. God knows our heart and one day He will judge us wisely. It will either be “well done,” or a slam of the door. Let us wait to get our due from the Lord, not from lying, dissembling lips.