

Devotional—Tour Week 8

"The Servant"

Matthew 23:1-12 (The Message)

Religious Fashion Shows

1-3 Now **Jesus turned to address his disciples**, along with the crowd that had gathered with them. "The religion scholars and Pharisees are competent teachers in God's Law. You won't go wrong in following their teachings on Moses. But be careful about following them. They talk a good line, but they don't live it. They don't take it into their hearts and live it out in their behavior. It's all spit-and-polish veneer.

4-7 Instead of giving you God's Law as food and drink by which you can banquet on God, they package it in bundles of rules, loading you down like pack animals. They seem to take pleasure in watching you stagger under these loads, and wouldn't think of lifting a finger to help. Their lives are perpetual fashion shows, embroidered prayer shawls one day and flowery prayers the next. They love to sit at the head table at church dinners, basking in the most prominent positions, preening in the radiance of public flattery, receiving honorary degrees, and getting called 'Doctor' and 'Reverend.

8-10 **Don't let people do that to you, put you on a pedestal like that.** You all have a single Teacher, and you are all classmates. Don't set people up as experts over your life, letting them tell you what to do. Save that authority for God; let him tell you what to do. No one else should carry the title of 'Father'; you have only one Father, and he's in heaven. And don't let people maneuver you into taking charge of them. There is only one Life-Leader for you and them—Christ.

11-12 **Do you want to stand out? Then step down. Be a servant. If you puff yourself up, you'll get the wind knocked out of you. But if you're content to simply be yourself, your life will count for plenty."**

Time for personal reflection (Tour Week 8):

Performing in front of a large audience can fill a person with a rush of adrenaline that can send a person flying sky-high (metaphorically speaking). Several repeated performances of good reviews can send a person's ego flying sky-high as well. How can I keep myself from sitting "at the head table at church dinners, basking in the most prominent positions, preening in the radiance of public flattery?" How important is it to the message of *Godspell* that I "step down?"

Verse 1 says, "Jesus turned to address his disciples." There are very few instances in the gospel where it is recorded that Jesus directly addressed his disciples. Why would this message He gives be important for them to hear as they are about to embark upon their assigned tasks?

"They talk a good line, but they don't live it. They don't take it into their hearts and live it out in their behavior. It's all spit-and-polish veneer." Am I certain, in my heart, that people in the *Godspell* audience cannot say this about me when the show is done?

"But if you're content to simply be yourself, your life will count for plenty." - I know that life has been not been easy this summer. I know things have been difficult and there have been hard times. However, through it all have I learned to be content to simply be myself, to simply be in Jesus' passenger's seat, how has this affected not only my own experience this summer, but the other members in the ensembles as well?