

Preacher's Pen points

“We are Somebody Now”



I cringe every time I hear this line in a current TV ad. A Hispanic woman speaks about the difficulties she and her husband have had in managing their finances and the credit problems that have come as a result; but now through the help of a credit reporting agency she and her husband have been able to buy a home. And, because of it she says, “We are somebody now.”

“Somebodies” and “Nobodies”

I suppose what bothers me about this expression is the underlying assumption that who and what we are is somehow related to how much we possess. Presumably if someone does not own a home, for example, he is a “nobody”. But if one is able to buy his own home, then he is “somebody”. The world constantly uses this consumeristic ploy to motivate people to spend what they don’t have to buy things they don’t really need to keep up with people they don’t know! Everybody wants to be “somebody”; and so pressured by this desire, people are persuaded to spend a little more, ironically, to have a little more.

A Commentary from Jesus

Jesus, on one occasion while teaching the multitudes appears to have been interrupted by someone in the audience who was preoccupied with the mistreatment of his brother. He injected into Jesus’ lesson his concerns, “*Teacher, tell my brother to divide the family inheritance with me.*” (Lk. 12:13). Jesus’ answer was sharp and apt, “*Man, who appointed Me a judge or arbiter over you?*” (Lk. 12:14). The Lord would not be sidetracked from the important work of teaching to become an arbiter in a family feud over someone’s last will and testament. But he used the oc-

casional to speak to the apparent “greed” of these two quarreling brothers: “*Beware, and be on your guard against every form of greed; for not even when one has an abundance does his life consist of his possessions.*” (Lk. 12:15)

Perhaps there is no lesson more needed in our consumeristic society than this one. Too many Americans and immigrants who come here for the “American dream” are all too often preoccupied by one viewpoint—“If only I can make enough money to buy my own _____, then I’ll be ‘somebody’.” Jesus says in sharp contrast, “What you have, even when is a lot, is not your life!”

The Example of Jesus

Such words find validation in the example of our Lord Himself, who warned those following him: “*The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.*” (Lk. 9:58). To another whose preoccupation with wealth stood in the way of his decision to become a follower Jesus said, “*..sell all that you possess, and distribute it to the poor, and you shall have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.*” (Lk. 18:22) Both Jesus’ poverty and his exhortation to the rich ruler were rooted in the same conception. Underlying these statements and exhortations is the fundamental principle that our personal worth and value as a human being is not dependent upon what we have but what we are!

If God has blessed you materially, thank Him for it; but never let your wealth define who you are. And if you have little of this world’s goods and follow the example of Jesus, do not despair. You are already “somebody”!

—Johnny Felker (www.truthchasers.com)