

Ordinary 18A - 2020

King and two beggars:

There is an old story about a king and two beggars dressed in rags. The king announced a banquet in honor of his son's wedding; anyone dressed in royal garments was welcome to attend. Both beggars longed to attend the banquet, but neither had any royal garments. The first beggar spent the day gathering lost coins and doing odd jobs. Finally, he went to the clothing merchant, presented his handful of coins, and asked for some royal robes. But the merchant laughed and said, "You can't buy royal robes for pennies, old man!" The second beggar had a different idea. He made his way to the king's castle, knocked on the gate, and asked to see the king. The guard brought him to the chamberlain, who took the beggar before the king's throne. The beggar, shaking with fright, bowed low and said, "Please, your majesty, if I may be so bold, may I have one of your old garments so that I, too, may come to the banquet tonight?" The beggar was shaking so hard that he could not see the faint smile on the king's face. "You have been wise in coming to me," the king said. He called to his son, the young prince. "Take this man to your room and array him in some of your clothes, so that he too may enjoy the royal hospitality on this glorious night." The story teaches that Christ doesn't love us because we **earned** his love by our **achievements**; he loves us because his **goodness** is unconditional and overflowing, **especially** in the face of our weaknesses, failures, and miseries. We need only cooperate with his grace. (*E- Priest*).

It Don't Add Up

Perhaps you have heard the story of the football coach who had two quarterbacks. The first team quarterback was gifted, aggressive, and a born leader. The second string quarterback was, let us say, limited. Oh, he was athletic enough but unfortunately, he lacked a mind for strategy. The championship game was in progress, the score was tied, the home team had the ball, and the clock was ticking down. An opposing player broke through the line of scrimmage and slammed the star quarterback to the ground with such force that the signal-caller had to leave the game. Time was running out. The coach had no choice but to put in the back-up. The substitute trotted onto the field, huddled the team, and strode up to the line of scrimmage. Surveying the opposing team, and much to everyone's surprise, he changed the play at the line. The ball was snapped, the quarterback

handed it off to the half-back who busted up the middle and sped all the way into the end zone with the winning touchdown! An amazing play. Moments later, in the ecstatic dressing room, the coach grabbed his second-team quarterback by the shoulder pads and said, "Son, that was great! How did you know to call that play?" The boy said, "Uh, well coach, it weren't easy. I got up to the line and looked across at two of the biggest players I've ever seen and I seen their numbers. One of 'em was wearing a six and the other one was wearing a seven, so I just added them numbers together and got fourteen and called number fourteen." The coach hesitated a moment and said, "But son, six and seven make 13." The boy, quite unmoved by the correction, said, "You know what coach? If I was as smart as you, we would have lost the game." Things do not always add up the way they are supposed to, do they?

Samuel Gobat was born in 1799 in the small Swiss village of Cremiue. After attending a local village school, he enrolled in a school in Paris for a year to study Arabic. In 1822, he became a missionary and sailed to Ethiopia. While laboring among the Druses tribes, one of their chiefs invited him to visit. Gobat was eager to accept the invitation and have the opportunity to share the gospel. But Gobat became ill and was forced to decline the invitation. The chief sent a second invitation but circumstances again forced Gobat to decline. A third invitation came and this time Gobat set out with a guide to the chief's home. While on the way, a hyena crossed the path of his superstitious guide and he would take Gobat no further. Gobat had to cancel his visit and then fulfill another commitment on the island of Malta. Some time later, Gobat learned that the chief had invited him to his home with the intention of murdering him. After the three hindrances, the chief acknowledged, "That man must be a servant of God, for though I sent messenger after messenger to bring him, he was always hindered."

The Law of Abundance

Stephen Covey, in his "Seven Habits of Highly Effective People", talks about the Law of Abundance vs. the Law of Scarcity. There's plenty to go around. And the more you give, the more you have to give. But how interesting! Covey writes about this, and folks act like it is new. Jesus performed it, 2000 years ago, on a rocky hillside in Palestine. There is plenty of Jesus to go around! (by Doyle Sager from *Everyone Ate, Everyone Was Filled*)