

## **Glorify the Lord with Me!**

A terrible ice storm had hit Pittsburg, making travel almost impossible. At the height of the storm, a church family called their pastor about an emergency. Their little boy had leukemia and he had taken a turn for the worst. The hospital said to bring the boy in, but they could not send an ambulance, and the family did not own a car.

The pastor's car was in the shop, so he called a church elder. The elder immediately got in his car and began the treacherous journey. The brakes in his car were nearly useless. It was so slick that he could not stop for stop signs or stop lights. He had three minor accidents on the way to the family's house.

When he reached their home, the parents brought out the little boy wrapped in a blanket. His mother got in the front seat and held her son, and the father got in the back. Ever so slowly they drove to the hospital.

When they came to the bottom of a hill and managed to skid to a stop, the elder tried to decide whether he should try to make it up the other side or go down the valley and the long way around to the hospital. As he was thinking about this, he chanced to look to the right and saw the face of the little boy. The boy's face was flushed, his eyes wide with fever and fear. To comfort the child, he reached over and tousled his hair. The little boy looked up at him and said, "Mister, are you Jesus?"

Bruce Thielemann, who wrote this account in a magazine article, observed, "Do you know in that moment the elder could have said yes." Jesus is seen in the lives of His followers. Jesus came to help the helpless, giving His life on a cross to win our forgiveness, so that He could get us home to live with Him. As he served us, so we serve others. That is why we sing songs like, "In my life, Lord, be glorified" -- living for others, as He lived for us, gives Him "glory." Others see that glory as we do for them what he did for us and so are drawn to Him. Come glorify the Lord with me! Let us show His love and speak of His love to others.

This story of the elder in Pittsburg is especially important because it reveals some important ways that men can give glory to God. The Lutheran Laymen's League was originally a men's movement, though now, of course, it includes youth, couples, and many others in local congregations. Still, if you are a men's group, or if men have any part your group, it is important to pay some special attention to the ministry of men. Many men are finding it hard to understand their role as followers of Christ today. Maybe this study will begin the process of grabbing hold of the special gifts men can bring to this all important task of giving glory to God. If you don't happen to be a

men's group, it won't hurt you to better understand and support men in their service of God. After all, we are to glorify God together.

### **I. The Adventure**

The elder in Pittsburg jumped into his car and went out into the storm. A part of him didn't like it, of course. He was smart enough to know the danger. But there was another part of him that was thrilled to go out, to dare the storm, to meet the challenge. There was a task, an adventure, set before him and he was going to give it his all.

John Eldredge in his book, Wild at Heart, writes, "Eve was created within the lush beauty of Eden's garden. But Adam, if you remember, was created outside the Garden, in the wilderness. Only afterward is he brought to Eden. And ever since then boys have never been at home indoors, and men have had an insatiable longing to explore. Moses did not encounter the living God at the mall. He finds him in the deserts of Sinai, a long way from the comforts of Egypt. Adventure, with all its requisite danger and wildness, is a deeply spiritual longing written into the soul of a man."

David Murrow, in his book, Why Men Hate Going to Church, writes, "Men are hard-wired for risk taking. The number one killer of 15 to 24 year old males is accidents. Men pay higher insurance premiums than women do. Female investors hold less risky investment portfolios than their male counterparts and generally take fewer chances with their money. My wife Gina says, 'Women want safety, but we need risk. We need men to lead us to greater adventure.'"

#### 1. Read Matthew 4:18-22.

- a. Jesus was on the greatest adventure the world has ever seen. What was it? What was the risk? The danger? Why did He do it?
- b. Why did these men follow Jesus?
- c. What would you have done? Why?
- d. The disciples left all --was this a "stupid", "impulsive" and "unthinking" thing to do, or was it something "that needed doing"? What is the difference?
- e. Women tended to follow Jesus because of something He had done for them. Men were challenged, called. Why the difference? What is the implication for the way we involve men in ministry, such as the LLL, today?

2. Read Matthew 25:14-30
  - a. The servants who invested their talents are praised while the one who played it safe is cursed. What is he called in v.26? Is risk taking necessary to give glory to God? What kind of risk might that be? When does it give glory to God? When does it not?
  - b. What would have happened if Jesus had not taken the risk to come on His great adventure? What would have happened if the elder in Pittsburg had not taken the risk to go on his?
  - c. Why does the church need those who, in Gina Murrow's words, "can lead us to greater adventure"? What happens to the church without this spirit of adventure?

## **II. The Cause**

John Eldredge again: "A man must have a battle to fight, a great mission to his life that involves and yet transcends even home and family. He must have a cause to which he is devoted even unto death, for this is written into the fabric of his being." Our elder in Pittsburg had such a cause. He had to get that little boy to the hospital. Why was that his job? Because it was the right thing to do, and he was the one called on to do it. It was what Jesus would want Him to do -- Jesus the Master who calls us to follow and leave all behind, Jesus who must be served even if it means a dented car or death. This is what it means to follow Jesus. We don't follow Jesus "in general" but in each specific challenge that comes our way. Men are built to overcome obstacles. We are at our best when handed a goal, especially if we can see how overcoming it will really make a difference -- like getting a little boy to a hospital. We value the efficient, effective, "make it happen" approach. But that means we have to understand the goal and the obstacles that need overcoming.

1. Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 and 1 Corinthians 6:19-20.
  - a. What has Jesus and His cross done to you?
  - b. What is now the goal of your life?
  - c. How does this give "glory" to God?
2. Identify how each of the following is an obstacle to the goal above:
  - a. Romans 7:18-25
  - b. 1 John 2:15-17
  - c. 1 Peter 5:8-9
3. Read Ephesians 6:10-20
  - a. What does "put on" mean?
  - b. How do we overcome the enemy?

- c. What is the goal, the outcome, which we fight for (v.19-20)?
- d. What is (should be) the goal of the Lutheran Laymen's League?

### **III. The Character**

Character is defined as the distinctive trait, essential quality, or nature of a person. Our elder from Pittsburg showed up. We could call him dependable, responsible. He risked his car in the storm – right priorities, courage. Got the boy and his parents to the hospital – skillful, competent. Stayed calm and ruffled the boy's hair to comfort him – thought of others instead of himself. How would you describe his "character"? How did the little boy describe it? Lets take a closer look at the kind of character traits which give glory to God.

1. Read Matthew 20:24-28
  - a. How would you describe the character Jesus describes here?
  - b. How does this describe Jesus?
  - c. Why would anyone want to act this way? See v. 28
2. David Murrow, in his book referred to earlier, makes two lists of characteristics:

Competence	Love
Power	Communication
Efficiency	Beauty
Achievement	Relationships
Skills	Support
Proving oneself	Help
Results	Nurturing
Accomplishment	Feelings
Objects	Sharing
Technology	Relating
Goal oriented	Harmony
Self-sufficiency	Community
Success	Loving cooperation
Competition	Personal expression

He has shown this list to hundreds of people, and 95% of them, he reports, will say that the right side is the best representation of true Christian values. But he culled this list from the 1<sup>st</sup> chapter of Men are From Mars, Women are From Venus. When most people think of Christ and his followers, they think of feminine values. David Marrow rightly asks, "Which list describes Jesus?" Aren't both sides true of Him? Early Christians were known for risk taking, power, aggression and heroic

sacrifice as well as these other traits. To the degree that the church has become lopsided and unbalanced toward these feminine values, that is the degree, he suggests, that men no longer feel comfortable in the church and its worship and have dropped out of active participation. It is not that one set of characteristics is better than the other, but that we need both.

Go through the left hand list above and talk about how each of these characteristics could be seen in the church. What would each look like in action? For example, has your group ever thought of offering free car repair or oil changes for widows or divorced women, handyman repairs for the elderly, helping someone in the congregation balance their books, building something for the community or on a mission trip, doing something about crime or safety in the neighborhood, father/son retreat etc.? How might working on these characteristics give glory to God? Would they involve more men? How might this effect your congregation?

3. Read John 13:12-17 and Galatians 6:1-2.
  - a. Why did Jesus wash the disciples' feet?
  - b. What were the disciples supposed to do for each other?
  - c. Why do men need to be in a fellowship of men?
  - d. David Murrow: "Deep in his heart, every man wants to be a part of a team that does something great...a band of brothers who attempt the dangerous, the outrageous, the impossible." But, he observes, "In the church we form relationships the feminine way. We put people in a circle and ask them to share. But men form relationships while doing something else – driving a truck, going fishing (think of the first disciples), painting a wall, or working on a car. Have you ever noticed when a man wants to talk, he'll often suggest going for a drive? Men are intimidated by face-to-face communication. Women form relationships face-to-face; men form relationships side by side." How could you use this observation to build a better band of brothers? How could your LLL group help? Why would David say, "Come let us glorify the Lord TOGETHER?" Couldn't he glorify Him alone? What would be missing?