



APPRAISALS

CLEMENT YEUNG

INTERODUCTION

One time a group of Jewish leaders at Capernaum came to Jesus and asked for a big favor. A Roman captain there had a servant who was on his deathbed. He prized him highly and didn't want to lose him. Since the captain had been sympathetic to the Jewish community and had helped them to build their synagogue, the Jewish people urged Jesus to heal the servant.

"He deserves this. He loves our people." They explained.

When Jesus agreed to go to his place, the captain sent friends to meet Jesus saying, "Master, I'd be embarrassed for you to come to my house because I am unworthy. I am not that good a person. Just give the order and my servant will get well."

To a military officer, an order is a command that needs to be carried out no matter what the cost may be.

Jesus was impressed by such remark. "I have not seen such simple trust, not even among the Israelites." He then gave the order and the servant was found cured when the messengers got back to the Roman captain's house.

HUMAN APPRAISAL

"He deserves this.....". This is how many people view their lives. If I give money to the church and volunteer to help out in various programs, God should take care of me accordingly.

When a businessman made a big profit during the last recession, the local church rejoiced and gave thanks with the man. They all commented that he deserved that

because he had been faithful in all that he did.

Another time when a missionary couple came back on furlough with a mentally retarded baby boy, the church members were all shocked. They mumbled among themselves, "They deserve better than this....." Some even quietly asked, "What have they done to deserve such punishment? "

SELF APPRAISAL

"I am not that good a person," said the Roman captain. Such a self appraisal coming from the mouth of a Roman officer was indeed amazing. The Roman soldiers were not famous for their gentility or courtesy, especially towards the Jews.

This particular captain was different. Not only was he sympathetic to the Jewish community, he also treated his dying servant as a dear friend.

"I am not that good a person." This did not imply a poor self esteem but rather a deep understanding that whoever would cure a dying slave must be caring and compassionate. When faced with such a healer, the captain frankly admitted his own weakness.

GOD'S APPRAISAL

The Roman officer suggested that Jesus might simply command the illness to go away from a distance. He knew Jesus could do it.

"I've yet to come across this kind of simple trust anywhere in Israel," Jesus commented.

This is how God appraised the situation-by the kind of simple trust. Such trust is

based not on the severity of the illness but on the mercy of the Lord that we pray to.

Time and again I have been put to shame by the simple faith of my six-year old boy. For him, once something has been committed to God is counted as done. No wonder Jesus challenges us to be like children so that we may understand the things of the kingdom of God.

RE-APPRAISAL

When we go through life, it is important that we understand God's appraisals. Human appraisals demand answers and rewards. When we don't get what we think we deserve, we are driven to depression and desperation. When we start to trust God with a simple faith as His children, we will have a much better understanding of ourselves as well as the things happening around us.

It's time for re-appraisals.

TO RECYCLE

Sazzane Hè

Ecology is a big issue nowadays. The future of our planet depends mostly on the pattern of relations of plants, animals and people to each other and to their surroundings.

As for garbage, especially poisonous one, it can seriously pollute air, water and soil. But what to do with all these mountains of used, damaged or unwanted matters coming from our households and from our workplaces?

Well, most of waste materials can be recycled : paper, glass, metal and so on. Worthless things like dead leaves can also be treated : they produce energy when they are

burned and then they become natural fertilizers of high quality.

We also can go through God's recycling plant. Then God will change our worries, bitterness, irritation or other bad feelings into energy for prayer, and what is wrong with us will become positive again.

God is holy and His children are supposed to be holy too. Though we can not escape from our human condition (weakness, imperfection) we can escape from the Law of sin, by putting our sins into a cleansing process. Just don't let our hearts become a rubbish dump ! 