



Once a social worker, known for his many deeds of selfless service, was being honored at a public function, was asked what was his philosophy for all his success?

He told, "My philosophy is simple! 'What is right need not be popular always and what is popular need not be right always!'. Holding onto this philosophy has always helped me not to waver in my decisions with wrong influences – even when there was immense pressure, not to be discouraged when I know it was right – even when the whole world did not agree. Do we hold on to doing what is right even if those are not popular?"

The people of Israel in the Old Testament chose popularity over doing what was right and thus would go against the Mind of God! The First reading is this account of the people of Israel demanding for a "king" in order to 'identify themselves with all the surrounding nations' and thus gaining in popularity and reputation. "Now appoint for us a king to govern us like all the nations." (1 Sam 8:5) Israel was called "to be holy!" - "You shall be holy to me; for I the Lord am holy, and have separated you from the peoples, that you should be mine." (Lev 20:26)

The word for "Holy" in Hebrew is "Qadosh" "Qadosh" literally means "to be set apart for a special purpose!" Thus, the people of Israel were to have a distinct identity among all the nations of Israel, with the Lord God as their Only King ("The Lord will reign forever and ever" – Exo 15:18) and they, His Chosen People, – set apart to walk in His Paths!

"And I will take you for my people, and I will be your God; and you shall know that I am the Lord your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians" (Exo 6:7). But the people failed to hold on this "right" perspective of their calling and sought after "popularity" and identification as the other nations!

What about our lives? Do we allow "right things and right deeds" to have priority? do we give greater preference to the "popular ones" even if they are not right?

As Christians, we are called "to be different from the world" and not allow ourselves to be diluted and corrupted by the wrong influences of the world. "They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world" (Jn 17:16). Do we allow the Lord to be the Sole and Sovereign King of our lives?

1. Every time, we run after things which may be popular, but not right in the eyes of the Lord, we are rejecting the Kingship of God!
2. Every time, we go against the Virtues of the Kingdom in order to "please others or to fulfill our selfish desires" we fail to allow God to reign over us!
3. Every time, we disobey the commands and wishes of the Lord in order "to remain in good stead and in the well-liked and trendy books of others" we end up dethroning God, as the King of our lives!

The Gospel of the Day (Mk 2:1-12) presents some of the Scribes who remained closed to the "right things" that Jesus did – healing of the paralytic: spiritually and physically and were unwilling to usher in the Reign of God in their lives!

When hearts are closed, one fails to see the Presence of God – just like the people of Israel and the Scribes. When minds are unwilling to learn, one becomes rebellious and agitated – just like the people of Israel and the Scribes. May we hold on – firmly and with conviction – to the philosophy: 'What is right need not be popular always, and what is popular need not be right always!' and allow the Lord to always be the King of kings of our hearts, so that "we can sing forever of the Love of the Lord!" (Ps 89:1)

### **Let us pray:**

Lord help me to open my heart to see your presence and lead me to do with firm and conviction what is right in your sight and not to waver in my decisions with wrong influences and sing your Love through my loving deeds to all those who are in need.

**Jesus, I Trust In You**

