

DON'T BLOW YOUR TRUMPET

Text: Luke 18 : 9 – 14

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Don't blow your trumpet is an idiomatic expression which simply means: Don't praise yourself.

Like the lizard, man would want to praise himself if he is not praised by others. Indeed, the natural is wont to praise himself for his feats, achievements, goals and successes recorded in life.

Christians are not exempted, as they are sometimes caught in the web of self-praise.

A typical example of someone who blew his own trumpet was a Pharisee as contained in a parable narrated by Jesus Christ (Luke 18 : 9 - 14). It could be seen from the parable that self-praise tantamount to self-righteousness (Luke 18 : 9). Therefore, as Christians, we should be wary of praising ourselves.

One dangerous aspect of self-praise is that it does not give room for improvement or advancement since the one involved has seen himself as having reached the zenith of whatever endeavour he is pursuing. He would not see challenges or obstacles that still need to be surmounted.

Of a truth, man needs to assess himself occasionally to ascertain if he is making progress or not.

II Cor. 13 : 5 states thus: "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates."

However, the focus of these assessments should be on one's weaknesses, lapses or failures in life pursuits (including the Christian race) rather than on one's strengths or successes. It is only by so doing that he would be challenged to do more. The Pharisee in question did not fare well in this regard (Luke 18 : 12).

Another attitude of a man who blows his trumpet is that he hardly sees others as being as good or even better than himself, and if he does, he would not compare himself with them but with those whom he considers to be worse than him (Luke 18 : 11). Nevertheless, the fact remains that there may be some people who may be as good or even better than a self-praise man without his knowledge (Prophet Elijah's case - I Kgs. 19 : 13 - 18).

Listen to Elijah: “- - I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Israel have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.” (I Kgs. 19 : 14).

And God's response, “Yet I have left me seven thousand in Israel, all the knees which have not bowed unto Baal, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.” (I kgs. 19 : 18).

Self-praise is a hallmark of a person who feels he has arrived. A man who praises himself actually despises others (Luke 18 : 9).

But Phil. 2 : 3 says, “Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves.”

Yes, self-praise also amounts to self-exaltation and pride (Luke 18 : 14). King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon fits into this description (Dan. 4 : 29 - 37). He was eventually humiliated by God for this act.

Hear him:

“ - - Is not this great Babylon, that I built for the house of the kingdom by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majesty?” (Dan. 4 : 30).

And Dan. 4 : 31 says, “While the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, saying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is spoken; The kingdom is departed from thee.”

Then Dan. 4 : 33 states, “The same hour was the thing fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar: and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles' feathers, and his nails like birds' claws.”

Some self-praise folks readily point to apostle Paul as somebody who indulged in self-praise (II Tim. 4 : 7 -8). Interestingly, it is the same Paul who expressed fear, and in fact, cautioned himself in other occasions against missing out from heaven after his much labour and commitment to the work of God, when he says in I Cor. 9 : 27,

“But I keep under my body, and bring it to subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway.”

Paul own up to his weakness and made a concerted effort to overcome it. This act cannot emanate from someone who claimed to have arrived.

It is the same Paul who was very zealous in Judaism and carried same to Christianity. This is the same man who decided not to marry for the sake of the gospel (I Cor. 9 : 5). He had close shave with death severally and was not deterred to carry on (II Cor. 11 : 33, Acts 21 : 10 -14). The Bible records,

“And as we tarried there many days, there came down from Judea a certain prophet named Agabus. And when he was come unto us, he took Paul’s girdle, and bound his own hands and feet, and said, Thus saith the Holy Ghost, So shall the Jews at Jerusalem bind the man that owneth this girdle, and shall deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles. And when we heard these things, both we , and they of that place, besought him not to go up to Jerusalem. Then Paul answered, What mean ye to weep and to break mine heart? For I am ready not to be bound only, but also to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.” (Acts 21 : 10 - 13).

Paul was also beaten for countless number of times and sailed through stormy and dangerous seas. He was imprisoned and persecuted both within and outside the brotherhood (II Cor. 11 : 23 - 33). A man of humility, devoid of greed, and was independent financially despite his high calling (II Cor. 12 : 13 – 16, Acts 18 : 3).

If you want the sound of your trumpet to be heard, then leave it for someone else to blow. That is when its sound becomes pleasant to the ears. Yes, let others praise you.