

TWO HUMPS OR ONE?

Ken

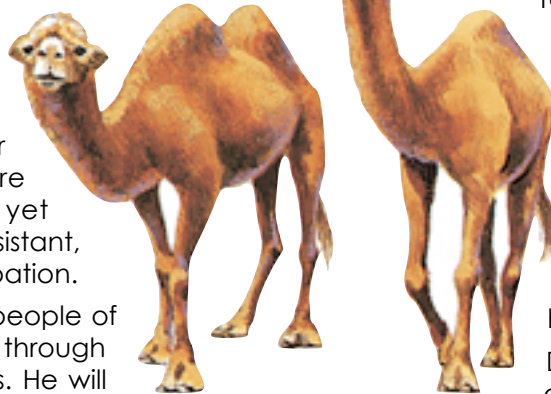
Imagine a young missionary visits your church seeking prayer and financial support for a unique mission. He's given five minutes during the worship service in which to explain his calling and ask for support. He is targeting a culture largely ignored by the church, yet understood as particularly gospel-resistant, and he's elated to invite your participation.

The young man will live among the people of this culture, building relationships through joining in their traditions and hobbies. He will adopt many of their cultural norms such as dress, food choices, language, even entertainment. Sounds like an average missionary, right? Wrong!

This missionary needs a new car, a set of golf clubs, a new wardrobe and a country club membership. His calling is to spread the gospel to the wealthiest culture in his own city. Would you open your wallet and contribute? Would you be more inclined toward support if he were ministering to the poor?

We generally don't see wealthy people as needy, even concerning the gospel. Despite Jesus' words to his disciples, that, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God" (Mk 10:25), we see rich people as "all set," as we say here in Maine. Jesus' point here is that the rich may be tempted to rely on themselves rather than on God. It's an important message for the wealthy, but it shouldn't be lost on the rest of us either.

At Free Grace, we have a time of confession built into our worship service. Recently, during that portion of the service, I was quietly praying to



God, imploring him to change me. This is usually a good prayer, is it not? The kind of prayer all of us have offered to God?

Yet, I realized during that time that I desired personal change more than I desired God's mercy. More specifically, I desired change more than I desired God himself. Ouch!

Desiring godliness is obviously good, but to desire godliness above God's mercy is to desire his very throne. At the pit of my heart lies one who doesn't want to lean on God, and instead wants no needs at all, save for those I can satisfy on my own. But this won't lead to victory; rather, I will become like a desperately large camel in search of the world's largest needle. Fortunately there is hope, even for men posing as large, gangly mammals.

Jesus continues in Mark 10 to explain the poverty of man's ability to save himself, but then reminds his disciples, and all of us, that "all things are possible with God" (v.27). That's a promise that begins for us with a desire for God's mercy, not a desire for self-sufficiency. Not a desire to be so changed as to render God unneeded, but an understanding that on this side of heaven no one is "all set."

Contemplating
the cross



Good Friday Service

4.22.11
7:00 PM



Acadia in the spring
taken on Mar 25

The flawless object throws into perspective the mediocrity that surrounds it. We are reminded of the way we would wish things always to be and of how incomplete our lives remain.
Alain de Botton, The Architecture of Happiness.

IT'S COMPLICATED

The web site Facebook has a place to share your relationship status. You can be single, engaged, married, in a relationship, etc. One you see frequently is, "It's complicated." So often that is the truth of our relationships, isn't it? They are never easy.

This isn't just true of our romantic relationships, but all of our relationships - including together as a church. Our relationship with God brings us into very real, very intimate relationships with each other. And these relationships are complicated.

And just like any other complicated relationship, our relationship together as a church requires effort. We have to work at it. We have to open ourselves to others and invite them in to our lives. And we have to be available to enter into their lives.



- to Eric for building our new wall to replace the old handrail. We're safer and it looks great!

- to all who helped with the black out curtains: planning, making, and hanging. The difference is clearly visible.

CONTACT INFO

160 Canal St
Lewiston, ME 04240

207.513.1355

Upcoming Events

Mondays 7:00 PM @ the church

Who's Afraid of Doctrine?

Exploring the unfolding story of God's relationship with his people

7 Apr 5:30 PM @ the church

Music Night

Brainstorming, refining, mentoring, jamming

13 Apr 5:30 PM @ the Root Cellar

Youth Dinner @ the Root Cellar

Building relationships by serving the youth of downtown Lewiston

21 Apr 8:00 PM @ GridIron

Men's Night

Enough said

29 Apr 5:30 AM @ the church

Gal's Royal Breakfast

Girls of all ages watching the fairy tale wedding of William & Kate

To be a true minister to men is always to accept new happiness and new distress, both of them forever deepening and entering into closer and more inseparable union with each other the more profound and spiritual the ministry becomes. The man who gives himself to other men can never be a wholly sad man; but no more can he be a man of unclouded gladness.
— Phillips Brooks

This means that we laugh together and we cry together. We work together and we play together. We eat together and we hurt together.

Thank you for living this out recently. Thank you to all who helped care for Justice recently. Thank you to those who have helped Jake and Monique as they have faced his finger injury and surgery. Thank you to those who helped Sky move, both times.

This is one of the great things God has done for us, giving us each other and creating in us a genuine desire to care for each other. Continue to live this out this month by inviting someone over to dinner (or out to dinner). Invite someone over to play games or watch a movie together. Pick a project you have been meaning to get done and invite someone to tackle it with you. Enjoy each other and the complicated relationship to which God has called us.

VISIT OUR WEB SITE AT WWW.FREEGRACE.US

FIND US ON FACEBOOK