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Christmas Confession

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Christmas Confession

Abstract

"May you, out of the awareness of your own inability, receive the one who is able to do more than we could ever imagine."

Posting about Christ's ability to cover all our inadequacies from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/christmas-confession/>

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Disciplines

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Comments

In All Things is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

Christmas Confession

 [all in allthings.org/christmas-confession/](http://allthings.org/christmas-confession/)

Aaron Baart

Christmas confession: as a pastor, I always kind of dreaded the big holidays. It wasn't that I didn't enjoy Christmas and Easter services with all the gala they provided and the extra attention they demanded. I liked that part of it. And it wasn't even because while everyone else in the church was enjoying long weekends and time off with their families, I was working overtime. In fact, there was something about the weight of the events in the stories we recounted during these services that gave every other Sunday of the year its meaning. So that part of it too I actually liked.

What I didn't like about Christmas and Easter was more a general feeling of inadequacy. It felt as if every best thought I could put forward, every hearty song we would sing, every clever turn of phrase in an impassioned message I would deliver, simply fell short. The struggle was that nothing I could possibly offer and no amount of pageantry we would create could do justice to the stories in the texts I would read. And so, every time the big holidays rolled around, I felt like I had prepared a message and service that was woefully inadequate. Over the years, this started to develop an anxiety that would creep up on me during the Lenten and Advent seasons. I would feel it coming on, the self-imposed pressure that this was going to have to be great or at the very least, a tad better than last year.

But a couple years ago, while prepping a holiday message, I had a little personal break-through. It occurred when I realized that my woeful inadequacy was actually the point I needed to be making, not the obstacle I was supposed to overcome. For it is precisely because I can't, that he came. Now, maybe this sounds obvious to you and it should have been to me but consider this: at some point in time during today's festivities, you'll probably experience some sense of "it's not enough." Whether it's the gift for your kids that you wish could have been bigger or the dinner you prepared that somehow wasn't enough or maybe even the Christmas service at church that really didn't capture it all, the truth is, we all fall short. Over and over again. And that is why Christ came in the first place.

The past few months I have been re-reading the Gospel of Mark. Throughout his story we meet person after person that Jesus encounters and the reader is left asking each time, 'Will this person come and truly follow him? Do they get it?' We meet candidate after candidate who don't really get it (including the disciples) until the last possible follower is encountered immediately before Jesus is about to enter Jerusalem and the passion narrative is about to start. And when Jesus meets blind Bartimaeus his only question to him is, "What do you want me to do for you?" (Mark 10:51). Interestingly, this is the same question, word for word, that Jesus has just asked James and John only fifteen verses earlier (Mark 10:36). The question was quickly answered when selfishly, they had asked him for seats of privilege, at his right and left, when his kingdom was established. Despite walking with Jesus for three years and even after being two of the closest to him of those that did, they still couldn't see him clearly for who he was.

Contrast James and John with Bartimaeus whose lack of eyesight had nothing to do with a shortage of insight for as soon as Jesus gives him sight, he uses it to turn his gaze on nothing but following Jesus. We wait the duration of Mark's Gospel to find the one man with nothing to his name and not even eyes to even see the treasures of this world, let alone be captivated by them. But it is here, in the most inadequate of candidates that the model of discipleship is found. For it is Bartimaeus' woeful inadequacy that allowed him to see Jesus for who he really is.

May this Christmas be one for you of woeful inadequacy. May your gifts and meals and sermons and

moments all fall short. And may you, out of the awareness of your own inability, receive the one who is able to do more than we could ever imagine.

Merry Christmas!