

When the storyteller and I visited each other, we sometimes discussed God's Greatness, and our need to be humble before Him. We often considered the conflicts the Teacher had with some of the Pharisees, who thought that they were very much like God¹. We knew that God desires a broken and contrite heart², and that we must approach Him with the proper perspective as humans.

My friend then told the following parable:

There was once a great king, who was also a wonderful artist. He loved art, and viewed it as the ultimate Good for his people. In his kingdom, he created an artistic paradise, with gold streets³, mosaics on the city walls⁴, and beautifully composed gardens. He was a patron to all who followed him and pursued artistic expression themselves, and he loved his people with all of his heart. They did not all have to be artists, but they had to appreciate art. If they didn't understand art, then they did not understand the king.

He regularly came down from his high castle⁵ and walked through the streets to enjoy the beauty of his kingdom and to interact with his subjects. He wanted to make all of them great. Most of his people realized his love for them and loved him in return, but there were some who did not respect him. A few people thought only how great they themselves were, and though they claimed to be subjects, they rejected the king in spite of the great beauty that existed all around them. When the king realized those who were like this, he cast them out of the kingdom.

But he could not understand why in the midst of this wonderland there were those who did not appreciate what he had made. He was a jealous king⁶, not for himself, but for the Good that he represented and promoted. He demanded humility because it was a sign of recognition for the greatness of Art. And he expected all of his subjects to love it as he did.

The parable spoke to me of how strongly God reacts to our own sense of importance, in view of His tremendous Love for Good and hatred of Evil. God's glory is His Goodness, and we cannot be accepted by Him if we do not understand and recognize that.

1. Luke 18:9-14, the story of the Pharisee and the tax collector; there are many other instances
2. see Psalm 51:15 and Isaiah 66:2
3. Revelation 21:21
4. see Revelation 21:19, where jewels decorated the walls
5. see Psalms 18:35 (earlier NIV version)
6. Exodus 34:14