



Jesus said to the apostles: "Who among you would say to your slave who has just come in from plowing or tending sheep in the field, 'Come here at once and take your place at the table'? Would you not rather say to him, 'Prepare supper for me, put on your apron and serve me while I eat and drink; later you may eat and drink'? Do you thank the slave for doing what was commanded? So you also, when you have done all that you were ordered to do, say, 'We are worthless slaves; we have done only what we ought to have done!'"

Introductory Prayer: Jesus, I believe in you, my Lord and my Creator! You have given me everything, and you owe me nothing. You have forgiven me everything when I owed you more than I could ever pay. I trust in your forgiveness and love, Lord.

Petition: Jesus, help me to be grateful to you.

1. Proud Attitudes: How often are we offended by how others treat us, by a lack of gratitude, respect or appreciation? However justified the reactions of our sensitivity, what lies at the root of our complaints is pride. Looking out from my own broken creaturely condition, I can't help but see myself for more than I am and expect more respect from everyone – including God. Yet, before God I am but a poor, tiny and dependent creature. From him I receive all that I am and need. How can I demand anything from him? Even worse, how can I complain when I recognize that I am an ungrateful sinner who has denied the rights and love of my Creator?

2. The Fundamental Relationship: Our culture has become one of "entitlement." We view ourselves as having rights – "just" expectations –, and we expect that much is owed to us. Thus, we see children demanding what they want, spouses expecting their preferences to be respected, and the belief that government must provide us with everything. God gets thrown into the fray as well, so that he, too, must deliver according to our attitude of spoiled children. What we forget is that we have received everything from God and we owe him everything. Jesus' image of the slave and master is not just a metaphor. Although his free and generous gift of redemption raises us up to the level of children and friends, he owes us nothing. Our fundamental relationship with God must be

that of a grateful creature with a loving creator. We must start there.

3. Humble Attitudes: Far from asking us to act as "worthless slaves," Jesus wants to free us from the pride that enslaves. The virtues of service, gratitude, honor and obedience may not be popular today, but they forever reflect the heart of a child of God. Jesus embraced all these virtues and the attitudes of humility that they require. My first duty in life is to serve and obey God. My duty of gratitude can never be exhausted, for he gives me so many gifts – life, faith, family, etc. –, and he leads me to a love that is self-giving rather than demanding my rights before God and others.

Conversation with Christ: Dear Lord Jesus, help me to embrace my condition as creature with humble simplicity. Open my mind and heart to the many endless expressions of your generous love. Teach me a gratitude that thinks more of you than of me.

Resolution: I will pray for the grace to show gratitude to God in my daily activities, striving to make these acts of gratitude occur.