

Briefing Document-Honor God and He Will Honor You

March 8, 2026

Executive Summary

The following document synthesizes the core message from the service held on March 8, 2026, which examines the biblical concept of honor based on *1 Samuel 2:30*. The central thesis posits that Christianity fundamentally inverted the traditional Roman understanding of honor. While the Roman world—and much of modern society—views honor as a competitive, public status rooted in power and reputation, the Christian faith redefines it through the lenses of humility, love for enemies, and sacrificial power. By examining the crucifixion of Jesus Christ as the ultimate "shameful" act transformed into the ultimate "honorable" act of love, the discourse encourages a shift in focus from worldly recognition to a life that prioritizes God's righteousness and grace.

The Cultural Evolution of Honor

The concept of honor varies significantly across cultures and historical eras. Understanding these differences is essential to grasping how the Christian message challenged the prevailing norms of the first century.

- **Ancient Roman Honor:** In the Roman Empire, honor was a public status and a competitive commodity. To gain honor, one often had to take it from another. It was defined by rank, power, and loyalty to Rome, with the avoidance of public shame being the highest priority.
- **Modern American Honor:** In the United States, honor is largely viewed through personal ethics, integrity, reputation, and accountability. However, the document notes a parallel between Roman public forums and modern social media, where reputation is digital and status is measured by visibility and "likes."
- **Other Cultural Contexts:** In cultures such as Mexico, honor is deeply tied to family pride, dignity, and the respect of elders and parents.
- **The Christian Inversion:** Christianity "flipped" these concepts. It asks followers to honor a crucified man—an act that Rome intended to be the ultimate mark of shame—and proclaims that those who are "last" in society will be "first" in the kingdom of God.

Three Pillars of Redefined Honor

The source identifies three specific ways in which Christianity redefined the traditional understanding of status, relationships, and power.

1. Redefined Status: Humility over Rank

In the Roman Empire, honor was reserved for the elite. Christianity, however, posits that God values humility over social or economic standing.

- **The Last Shall Be First:** Citing *Matthew 19:30* and *20:16*, the teaching emphasizes that God honors the humble and overlooked. *“The last will be first, and the first last” (Matthew 20:16).*
- **The Role of Grace:** The Kingdom of God is built on grace rather than entitlement. Grace humbles an individual and removes the grounds for boasting. As the document states: "Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less."
- **True Greatness:** According to the scripture, greatness in God’s eyes is not about position or wealth but about a heart that depends on God and serves others without expecting a reward.

2. Redefined Brotherhood: Loving the Enemy

While Roman power was demonstrated by defeating and publicly shaming enemies, the Christian mandate is to extend "brotherly" care even to those who hate you.

- **Broadening the Definition of "Neighbor":** Traditional religious leaders of the past tried to narrow the definition of "neighbor" to only those who shared their beliefs. The biblical definition, however, is much broader.
- **Old Testament Precedents:**
 - *Deuteronomy 22:1* commands: *“You shall not see your brother’s ox or his sheep going astray, and hide yourself from them; you shall certainly bring them back to your brother.”*
 - *Exodus 23:4-5* extends this even to enemies: *“If you meet your enemy’s ox or his donkey going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again. If you see the donkey of one who hates you lying under its burden, and you would refrain from helping it, you shall surely help him with it.”*
- **The New Testament Command:** Jesus explicitly instructs followers in *Matthew 5:44*: *“But I say to you, love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you.”*
- **The Example of David:** King David exemplified this by mourning for his enemies in "sackcloth," an outward sign of deep inward sorrow and humility, rather than celebrating their downfall.

3. Redefined Power: Sacrificial Love

The Roman definition of power was domination. In contrast, Christian power is defined by sacrificial love, exemplified by the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

- **The Power of the Cross:** To the Romans, the cross was foolishness and shame. However, *1 Corinthians 1:18* states: *“For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.”*

- **Agape Love [^1]:** This is defined as loving without strings attached or agendas. As noted in *John 15:13*: “Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one’s life for his friends.”
- **The Reality of the Suffering:** The source provides a graphic account of the "scourging" and humiliation Jesus endured. This included:
 - **Scourging:** A brutal Roman practice using a leather whip embedded with bone or metal to tear the flesh.
 - **Dehumanization:** Jesus was surrounded by a garrison (between 200 and 600 men), stripped naked, and mocked with a scarlet robe and a crown of thorns.
 - **The Symbolism of Nakedness:** Just as Adam and Eve realized their nakedness after the fall, Jesus bore the shame of nakedness on the cross to pay for human sin.

Conclusion and Application

The overarching directive found in *1 Samuel 2:30* remains the focal point: “For those who honor Me I will honor, and those who despise Me shall be lightly esteemed.” The document concludes that honoring God involves prioritizing a relationship with Him over the pursuit of worldly status, political alignments, or digital reputation. By acknowledging the sacrifice of Christ and walking in humility day-to-day, believers are promised that God, who knows their every need, will provide guidance and honor in return.

Greek Terminology Guide

| Word | Phonetic Pronunciation | Brief Definition |
|--------------|------------------------|---|
| Agape | uh-GAH-pay | The highest form of love; a selfless, sacrificial, and unconditional love that seeks the best for others regardless of their actions. |

[^1]: Referring to the "agape" love mentioned during the analysis of sacrificial power and the essential meaning of Christ's love for his friends.