

The Ultimate Super Competent!

On a recent trip to Wisconsin our family visited the Mall of America. The mall is amazing. Constructed in 1992 it consists of over four million square feet of shopping. Forty million people visit the mall every year. It is about to undergo a billion dollar expansion. While shopping I met a recent Russian immigrant named Nadia. She asked, "If Jesus is the Messiah why did so many of His own people reject Him?" The answer, in part, is found in Mark 4:35-41!

The events of Mark 4 occurred on the same day as the official rejection of Jesus. The spiritual leaders of Israel turned against Him that day. The Pharisees led the nation in rejecting Jesus. At the end of an exhausting day Jesus and the disciples crossed the Sea of Galilee. Even with modern equipment many people today refuse to sail the Sea of Galilee. The lake is long, narrow and shallow. It is bordered by the Mediterranean Sea and the desert. The wind hurtles down from the north, catches the mountains and is funneled into angry storms.

As they crossed the lake, a great windstorm arose. Waves covered the boat. Water rushed in faster than they could bail. The disciples, experienced sailors, were terrified. Jesus slept in the stern. The disciples woke Him. Accusingly, they asked, "Do You not care that we perish?" Like many today they accused God of not doing enough to prove His love for them.

Jesus arose and rebuked the wind. The Bible actually says that He muzzled the wind. Two miracles took place: the wind ceased and there was a great calm. Not even a ripple remained on the surface. Amazingly, the disciples were more afraid after the storm ended! They feared the One able to rebuke the wind more than they feared the storm and the waves. The disciples feared exceedingly. They asked, "Who can this be, that even the wind and the sea obey Him?"

In the 1970's Laurence Peter and Raymond Hull wrote a bestselling book entitled The Peter Principle. They studied the corporate world and discovered that most people are promoted to their level of incompetence. A person does well in a job and is therefore promoted. This continues until he reaches his level of incompetence at which point the process is stopped. The results are devastating for both the corporation and the individual. The authors concluded that only two groups of people avoid this predicament: the super incompetent and the super competent.

The super incompetent person never demonstrates any excellence and is therefore not promoted. He is quickly forced out of the organization. The super competent person never demonstrates incompetence and therefore continues his upward trajectory. How does the super competent person reach the top? Unfortunately, their research found that he doesn't. The super competent person is a threat to those above him. They recognize that he will take their jobs! The super competent person reaches the top by moving from organization to organization each time attaining a higher level of responsibility.

Some may argue that everyone knows a person who started as a clerk and ended as the chief executive officer. Peter and Hull would argue that these exceptions simply prove the rule. R.C. Sproul says, "Whatever the true statistics are, the indisputable fact remains that there are numerous occasions where super competent people are frozen at a low level because they threaten those above them."

Jesus was the ultimate super competent. In the first century those with positions of status and honor felt threatened by Jesus. They recognized His holiness. His perfection threatened their positions of privilege. The Pharisees, the religious leaders of their day, led the nation in rejecting Jesus. It was the common people who followed Jesus. The outcasts of society loved Him because He paid attention to them. But those who held the seats of honor and power could not tolerate Him. The elites, in an attempt to retain their positions of privilege, were threatened by Jesus. Therefore, they led the nation in rejecting Jesus.

The Mall of America is impressive. With more than five hundred specialty stores, fifty restaurants, seven nightclubs and fourteen movie theaters it is a tourist magnet. However, even more impressive is that God became Man and died for us. The ultimate Super Competent paid the ultimate price that you might enjoy eternal life.

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