



The Invitation

Fill out a pew card with a prayer request

Put them in the Offering Plate

Come at 6:30pm

The House of Prayer

Join in

The Word

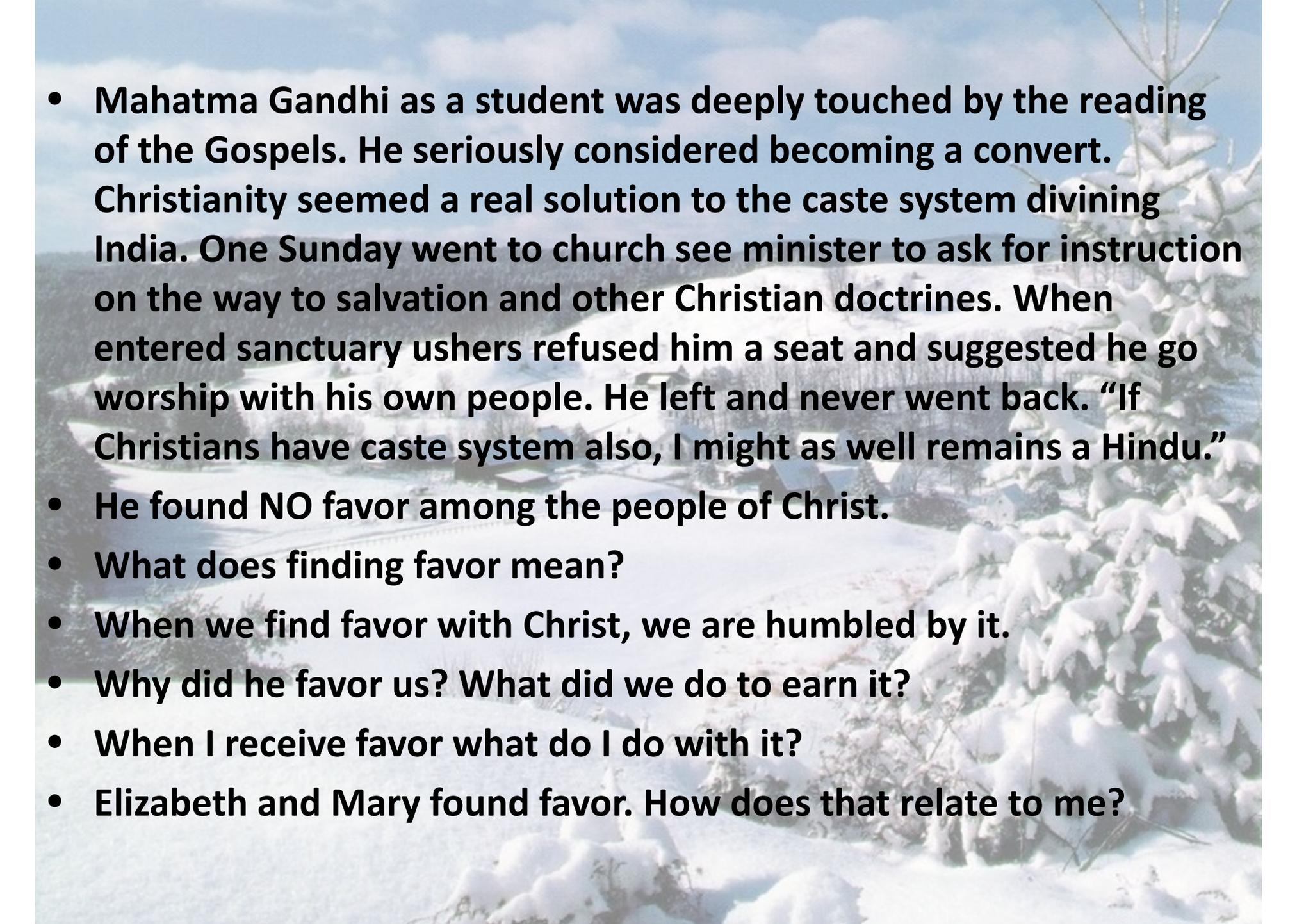
Confession

And Prayer

A scenic winter landscape featuring rolling hills covered in a thick layer of snow. In the middle ground, a small village with several houses and barns is nestled in a valley. The foreground is dominated by a large, snow-laden evergreen tree on the right side. The sky is a clear, bright blue with scattered white clouds. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and serene.

When Favor Makes Us Nervous!

Luke 1:39-59

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- **Maahatma Gandhi as a student was deeply touched by the reading of the Gospels. He seriously considered becoming a convert. Christianity seemed a real solution to the caste system dividing India. One Sunday went to church see minister to ask for instruction on the way to salvation and other Christian doctrines. When entered sanctuary ushers refused him a seat and suggested he go worship with his own people. He left and never went back. “If Christians have caste system also, I might as well remain a Hindu.”**
 - **He found NO favor among the people of Christ.**
 - **What does finding favor mean?**
 - **When we find favor with Christ, we are humbled by it.**
 - **Why did he favor us? What did we do to earn it?**
 - **When I receive favor what do I do with it?**
 - **Elizabeth and Mary found favor. How does that relate to me?**

What is Favor?

- **Christian talk makes us think it's a kind of "good break" : a flight upgrade, free tickets to a big game; a nice deal on a purchase, etc.**
- **These are good gifts from the Lord, but not God's favor and every good gift does come from our Father.**
- **Receiving God's favor is much deeper. It is:**
 - **God trusting us to bear a difficult mission.**
 - **God's grace poured out on us for the sake of OTHERS.**
 - **God teaching us self-knowledge (*what we really value*), sensitivity and compassion, limits of personal control and flexibility = spiritual maturity; spiritual depth; Christ**

Why Elizabeth and Mary?

- Favor is used to describe both women. (30,34)
- Both seem surprised, amazed to be favored.
 - Filled with the Holy Spirit: Blessed are you favored am I
 - He sees the humble life; he lifts the humble
- Humble: lowly of mind; powerful in a holy life.
- The world defines humble as groveling, abject, <<<<
- Christ raises humility to its proper place of power and meaning. Only this life can free us from the burden and irresponsibility of misusing comparison and competition.
- Favor is not inflated worth. It is the grace of God poured out for the sake of others – the beauty of “wholiness”.

So Why You and Me?

- Many have seen the blessing and grace of the Lord in your life. Why?
 - Take a moment to think on Grace poured into your life.
- So our tasks of ministry anchored by our life in the Spirit is not so much getting as it is giving.
- Grace down to us and our through us is MORE than a mission. It is the way Spirit filled people live life.
- Favor is a depth of spirit life obedient and available to God regardless of real or perceived cost.

Questions

1. How would you define favor?
2. What are some tangible examples in your life?
3. Why has the Lord favored you? For whom?
4. How will you respond to that favor?
5. How can you respond to life in a way that gives away favor to the glory of God for the sake of others?

This Week's Assignment

1. Seize a moment each day to ask God how he has blessed and you have not seen?
2. Thank others for their open channels that brought grace to you.
3. Find 3 intentional ways to be a channel of grace to others.
 - Favor is far more than a few good breaks
 - Favor is far more than a reward for right living
 - Favor is God's grace poured into us for the purpose of His glory (*being made known*) and for the sake of others

A scenic winter landscape featuring a snow-covered valley with a small village of houses in the middle ground. The foreground is dominated by a large, snow-laden evergreen tree on the right. The background shows rolling hills under a blue sky with scattered white clouds. The text is overlaid in the center in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

**God Is Here
God Calls
For Humble Hearts
That his favor might rest
among men.
Will
You be an
Available ONE?**