

REFLECTIONS

Thoughts on nature and the Christian faith - 5/15/17

"Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves." - Phil. 2:3



This is a belted kingfisher, a little bird with a big head. The males have one blue belt across their chest while the females have an additional rust-colored belt. They are experts at fishing, hence their name, and often are found perched on limbs over water waiting for a fish to swim near the surface. They are capable of devouring fish much larger than one would think they could swallow because their large heads and bills aid in this endeavor. Big heads are an asset to kingfishers, but are a liability to Christians. Pride and conceit are the very antithesis of the humility that is supposed to characterize Christians. But we all struggle in this area, don't we? It is part of our sinful nature to parade our accomplishments, to let others know the good we think we have done, or the success we have attained. We all admit we are sinners, but just not as sinful as others. The insightful C. S. Lewis pointed out our pride problem bluntly when he wrote, *"As long as you are proud you cannot know God. A proud man is always looking down on things and people, and of course, as long as you are looking down, you cannot see something that is above you."* Conceit blocks us from knowing the truth about God as well as the truth about ourselves. It is to our shame that the characteristic most often attached to Christians is self-righteousness. Counting others more significant than ourselves is to be our goal, and it can be attained only by admitting and confessing who we are. We all have much to learn about humility and our own sinfulness, especially that big heads belong on kingfishers, not on Christians. - John