

Sunday 22 August 2010

Serving the Lord

Are we serving God?

People think about the cost of service.

Our time.

The opportunity cost.

Our leisure.

Our work.

Our own space.

Human nature.

Why should we serve the Lord?

We have choices:

Who do we serve: tradition or justice?

Who do we serve: the powerful or God?

Who do we serve: the cultural ways or the ways of God's realm?

What do we think of when we decide to serve the Lord?

When we reach a crossover point.

The Lord says - Come, all who wish to cross over:

from darkness into light;

from pain to healing;

from hurt to justice.

Come, all who wish to cross over:

from the past to the future;

***from division to unity;
from stranger to friend.***

*Come, all who wish to cross over.
Here is the crossover point,
and this is the crossover time.
God is waiting to hold us.*

God commands us:-

*Never be lazy, slothful or careless:
Maintain your zeal to boiling point:
Put your life into the service of God:*

THESE are fundamentals of the Christian Doctrine.

IF every believer were serving God. IF everyone's spirit were at boiling point. IF every child of God was obedient...

Then What a move of God there would be in the land!

*We can each of us make a difference - to our home - to our place of work
- to our town - to our generation - to this world.*

*But we can only serve our generations in the Will of God - BY FIRST
SERVING GOD IN HIS WILL.*

JOHN 15.16. tells us that - we have been chosen of God TO BEAR FRUIT.

When the prodigal returned home, he asked to be as one of the hired servants. The Father put an end to that argument with a kiss, a robe and a ring.

GOD WILL NOT ACCEPT THE SERVICE OF A HIRELING FROM A SON.

"Son, go, work today in MY VINEYARD." He said. God's vineyard is not the farm, and not work of the flesh.

The Church of Jesus Christ is A SPIRITUAL BODY. This means that the work of that body can only be done by spiritual people.

Even so - It is possible to put unsaved people into the pulpit to preach.

It is possible to put unsaved teachers to teach our children.

It is possible to put unsaved singers into a choir to sing.

It is possible to put unsaved men and women into high office –as in our parliaments, and in the courts. And we see ever increasing evidence of that.

BUT THEY – the UNSAVED - WILL NEVER SERVE THE LORD NOR BENEFIT THE CHURCH – i.e. the SPIRITUAL BODY.

The Early Pentecostal Church recognised that even the work of "serving tables" could only be committed to spiritual people. Acts 6:1-6.

Even for a soup kitchen they would only accept those who were of good report - FULL OF THE HOLY GHOST AND OF WISDOM.

We may have MORALITY in our conduct, but without CONVERSION we will NEVER have HOLINESS. A moral compass – of which we have heard much from our political leaders - is a quite separate matter to that of holiness.

We may operate MECHANICAL work without conversion - but we will NEVER have SPIRITUAL SERVICE.

WE ARE SAVED TO SERVE.

When we accept Christ as our Saviour we in turn are accepted by Him. Ephesians 1:6.

When we are accepted by Him we receive the adoption as of sons, daughters, children. Ephesians 1:5 + Galatians 4:5.

We are accepted into God's family.

We are also accepted into the family business. Think of that business as God's vineyard and what it means.

IT MEANS THAT WE ARE EXPECTED TO GO AND WORK IN HIS VINEYARD.

PARENTS have an obligation to their children. In the same way, YOUR HEAVENLY FATHER KNOWS WHAT YOU HAVE NEED OF, AND KNOWS HOW TO GIVE GOOD GIFTS.

CHILDREN likewise have an obligation to their parents. What form might that obligation take?

THERE ARE TWO STAGES OF CHILD LIFE in relation to the Service of Parents:-

1. EARLY LIFE - The RECEPTIVE STAGE – where the child receives information and understanding through learning.

2. LATER IN LIFE (The age of Knowledge and Wisdom) - The RESPONSIVE STAGE.

Instead of expecting your parents to DO EVERYTHING FOR YOU, you in time desire to DO SOMETHING FOR THEM. This is A Sign of Growing UP.

MANY CHURCHES are said to be in some respects 'spiritual nurseries', crowded with people who claim to be born of God many years ago, but who in fact may have never left their spiritual childhood.

THEY HAVE NEVER ASKED THE LORD THE NOBLE QUESTION PAUL ASKED - "What wilt Thou have me to do?" Acts 9:6.

And the question: WHERE? and WHEN? can I serve the Lord –

HERE and NOW is the answer.

OLD BABIES may be a trouble for any family – even a spiritual family. Small things upset our spiritual health, we are so easily upset; we quarrel with each other over trifles, and we often set a poor example for young believers.

This condition is not new; read Ephesians 4:15-16.

CAN WE DO SERVICE FOR GOD BY PROXY? I.e through others?

2 Kings 4:29 contains the story of Elisha sending Gehazi to pray for the widow's son. He gave him his staff and full instructions. BUT IT DID NOT

WORK.

GEHAZI FAILED BECAUSE IT WAS ELISHA'S JOB. His faith was real, but it was faith without real ACTION on his part. (See James 2:26.) Gehazi sought to subcontract the 'action'.

Many say: "I'm trying to live Life." - "Go and work," says the Lord.

Many say: "I'm not good enough." - "Go and Work," says the Master.

Many say: "Its not my line. I can't do that kind of thing." Go and Work, instructs the Lord.

EVERY CHRISTIAN HAS A GIFT FOR SERVICE.

Illustration story: Two boys are mowing a lawn. To save themselves work they harnessed a large dog to the mowing machine. A man passing by stopped to watch. The Dog barked and growled. "Don't be afraid sir, one of the boys said, He only stops to bark so that he can stop working".

There are people barking and growling in everyday life. Normally, they are the very people who do little, and bark at everything. In his Epistle to the Philippians the Apostle warns: "Beware of dogs. Beware of evil doers".

The Harvest is plentiful - The Labourers are few. Luke 2:10.

The Human picture of the world today may seem at times horrific.

Decline - Ruin - Paralysis - Drugs - Gambling - Disease - Immorality - surely a darker scene than has ever been known. To some we appear to be in the End-Time foretold in the Apocalypse, days when strife tears the world apart.

BUT IN THE SIGHT OF GOD IT IS STILL HARVEST TIME.

THE WORLD IS WIDE OPEN TO THE GOSPEL.

And only the work of God's People can meet the crying needs of human hearts in our time.

But WE MUST BEWARE lest all our effort is spent on Social Reform, feeding, clothing, social activities.

OUR PRIMARY BUSINESS IS TO SAVE SOULS.

WE DO NOT SERVE GOD IN THE EFFORT OF THE FLESH.

We are born again. Members of the Divine Family.

GOD can only be served in the MANNER in which HE HAS DIRECTED.

We still often make the mistake of thinking that the more EFFORT we expend, then the greater our service to God is.

SWEAT AND HUMAN ENERGY are expressions of the CARNAL which God does not accept in His Service.

IN HIS SERVICE - GOD WANTS TO DO FOR US.

True service is allowing God to speak, allowing Him to operate in and through our life.

"In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground."

MAN'S CURSE - is the hard labour that man was to endure making a living under the conditions of the curse.

HARD LABOUR was to break him down till he died. Deserts, barrenness, weeds, poisons, germs, viruses, add to his punishment.

BUT WE CANNOT OFFER ELEMENTS OF THE CURSE IN OUR SERVICE TO GOD.

This mean that we MUST OFFER SPIRITUAL SACRIFICES, and SPIRITUAL SERVICE.

As New Testament Believers WE ARE SET FREE - we walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit.

WE SHOULD NOT CALL HUMAN INGENUITY GOD'S LEADING.

WE SHOULD NOT call human organisation GOD'S UNDERTAKING.

We MUST utilise what gifts we have; BUT we must be completely changed in the way we THINK, and SAY, and DO.

SO WHERE DO WE START?

A man interviewed a mother who wanted her son to go into the ministry. After a long talk she asked, "But sir, where does my boy start?"

The stern reply was, "He must start here and now, where he is."

Work is not a pleasant subject. But whoever quarrels with the precept of work, quarrels with God. If we do not like the practical part of Christianity, the doctrinal part is of little use to us.

"I delight myself in Thy Precepts," sang the Psalmist. (precepts meaning - commands that are respecting of [moral](#) conduct). But having the doctrine or theory is not enough - we have to act as well.

GOD'S COMMAND IS TO WORK. But this is not work of the flesh.

God does not call you just to:- Go and THINK....Go and SPECULATE....Go and EXPERIMENT ...Go and SEEK OUT NEW DOCTRINES Go and SEARCH FOR NEW REVELATIONSGo and GET WHIMS AND ODDITIES.

GOD SAYS - GO AND WORK.

But the Almighty does not instruct us to:- Go from Convention to convention - from Meeting to Meeting -from College to College - HE SAYS GO AND WORK.

ILLUSTRATION: An idea, a concept, a theory - is only GOOD - IF IT WORKS.

The command is not to GO AND CRITICISE. Most of our experts are critics, BUT THEY CANNOT CRITICISE GOD'S WORK.

WE MUST DESIRE THE WILL OF GOD.

John 7.17. "If any man will do His Will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself."

There are SIX THINGS which bring us into God's Perfect Will:-

- 1. PRESENT OUR BODIES as a living Sacrifice.*
- 2. Make the body holy.*
- 3. Ensure you are acceptable to God.*
- 4. Render your reasonable service.*
- 5. Don't be CONFORMED to this world.*
- 6. BE TRANSFORMED by the renewing of your MIND (THINKING.)*

THE WILL OF GOD IS CONFIRMED BY THE PEACE IN OUR HEART.

SERVING GOD IS A SPIRITUAL WORK.

Paul argues that THE SPIRIT OF MAN knows the things of man. A man's intellect, mind, and will enable him to know those things.

BUT NO MAN KNOWS THE THINGS OF GOD EXCEPT BY THE SPIRIT OF GOD.

Dunamis is the word from which we get the word dynamo. The dynamo was much used in motor cars, now we use alternators, but the same principle is applied. Movement produces power...when there is no movement there is no power production.

MARK 16.20. Mark is the Gospel of ACTION. Everything moves quickly in his book. The last verse is revealing;- "And they went forth, and preached everywhere, THE LORD WORKING WITH THEM, and confirming the WORD with signs following."

When they began to move - God moved. When they worked - God worked with them.

We need to learn more about the DUNAMIS. Its first principle is that it is a LATENT POWER capable of REPRODUCING ITSELF. IT IS ALWAYS THERE, and reveals itself immediately there is action.

So many people are WAITING FOR GOD TO MOVE. WHEN YOU MOVE, GOD WILL MOVE. The Power will always be provided.

IF YOU WORK in the will of God - GOD WILL work with you. WORK BY THE SPIRIT - the Spirit will produce the DUNAMIS.

WORK IN THE DUNAMIS OF THE ETERNAL SPIRIT.

BUT WE ALSO NEED TO WORK WITH JOY. WHY? BECAUSE HE IS OUR GOD.

We serve a REAL God. We serve a Living God. We do not serve AN IDEA - nor A PRINCIPLE - nor A CAUSE - nor even A MOVEMENT. WE SERVE THE LORD. He is not a figment of our imagination. The Born Again Christian knows the reality of a Living God.

GOD DOES NOT WANT US TO MAKE FOR HIM, He wants TO MAKE for US.

Everyone has problems when beginning to serve the Lord, but the way is made clear in the Word of God. We cannot go wrong when we surrender ourselves and obey God's Word.

THERE WERE FOUR ELEMENTS TO THE MIGHT OF GIDEON:-

- 1. VISION - Give God your Future. We cannot see the future except when God gives us a vision. Without a vision the people perish.*
- 2. WILLINGNESS.*
- 3. OFFERING. (A HUMAN Sacrifice.)*
- 4. FAITH.*

FAITH IS THE ABILITY TO PLEASE GOD.

It was Enoch's faith, lasting 300 years, that so pleased God.

It is by believing we please God. Without faith it is impossible to please Him.

Faith is not the ability TO GET SOMETHING FROM GOD. It is the ABILITY TO GIVE SOMETHING TO GOD THAT NO-ONE ELSE CAN GIVE.

But we can only serve God only when we have been washed - sanctified - justified.

In 1 Corinthians 6:9-11. After giving a list of the works of death of the Unrighteous, the Apostle says:- "And such were some of you, BUT YOU ARE WASHED, BUT YOU ARE SANCTIFIED, BUT YOU ARE JUSTIFIED in

the Name of the Lord Jesus BY the Spirit of our God.

1/WASHED: that means Cleansed completely from our sins.

2/SANCTIFIED: Our Lord's prayer in John 17:17. "Sanctify them through Thy Truth: Thy Word is Truth."

Sanctify = means to separate from a profane (i.e. insulting) use to a sacred use.

To consecrate ones self wholly to God and His Service.

It means to "make Holy" when the person needs to be cleansed from sin, IN ORDER TO BE FIT TO BE SEPARATED TO GOD AND HIS SERVICE.

3/JUSTIFIED: To declare RIGHTEOUS or NOT GUILTY.

You are justified the moment you repent and God forgives you. Our SERVICE commences as we begin to Follow the Lord Jesus Christ.

NOTE from John 12:26. "If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am, there also shall my servant be."

Following Christ is not only an act at the commencement of our Christian Experience, BUT a DAILY ACT and for ALL our LIFETIME.

What we are is God's gift to us. What we become is our gift to God.

THIS IS WHERE WE START SERVING GOD.

NOW IS THE TIME TO BEGIN.

*PROVE FROM THIS MOMENT, WHAT GOD CAN DO FOR YOU AND THROUGH YOU.**AMEN***