

### Service 3 - Commissioned Service

1. **Luke 17:7-10** “So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty.’”
  - Jesus said, “‘Will any one of you who has a servant plowing or keeping sheep say to him when he has come in from the field, ‘Come at once and recline at table’?” In this passage, plowing or keeping sheep is our service. If, upon returning, we only want to sit down and eat rather than continue serving the Lord, it is like serving the temple. Jesus says that even after we serve, the most important thing is still to continue serving the Lord. Therefore, the master says to him, "Prepare supper for me, and dress yourself and serve me while I eat and drink, and afterward you will eat and drink."
  - Serving the temple means that if it's his turn that week to lead worship, play the piano, lead a Bible study, or preach, he lives an exceptionally devout life during that week. His wife might think, "Oh, my husband is so spiritual this week!" His children might notice, "Wow, my dad is so different this week—always waiting on the Lord and praying." However, once the service is over, he relaxes to his earthly desires by watching TV or indulging in eating and drinking. This is serving the "temple," where his focus is on visible service, and once done, he returns to his usual earthly lifestyle.
  - Serving God, on the other hand, means that a person is constantly in service to God and the Lord. So even after he has led worship, played the piano, or led a Bible study, he returns home and continues to draw near to God, offering everything to the Lord. If others praise him for his good service, he would say, "Lord, thank you! This is your guidance, your anointing, your blessing!" If his service is lacking, he would say, "Lord, please make up for the imperfections in what I have done." His entire purpose is to serve God, not just to perform "service," so he doesn't revert to his earthly lifestyle after completing his duties.
    - The third type of person is someone who, even when it's their turn to lead worship, play the piano, or lead a small group Bible study, doesn't live that week with reverence and awe before the Lord. This person doesn't even come close to serving the temple; what they are doing is merely "showing off" or "performing." It's like a performance on TV—just putting on a show. They don't seek to earnestly gain the Lord's presence or receive guidance and direction from Him.
    - Many people, after completing their service, say, "Ah, I need to fully relax!" This is not relaxation; it's indulgence. It's serving the "temple." Such service will not be remembered by the Lord, and our lives will remain unfinished. In reality, God uses service to bring us closer to Him, to benefit us greatly, and to help us live carefully in His presence. After serving the Lord for seventeen years, I have found that serving Him brings many benefits, one of which is a deeper understanding of Him. As a limited, weak, and insignificant vessel, I often experience His wonders and mighty power. Through service, there is a constant need to rely on Him with nothing of our own, which requires vigilant living in His presence. This is a significant benefit of serving and ministering to God.
  - "Does the master thank the servant for doing what he was commanded?" From this, we can see that a person who serves the temple might feel that because they have done things for the Lord, others

should thank them. But a person who serves God—does the Lord need to thank them? The Lord sacrificed Himself and shed His blood to save us from the dominion of sin and the power of Satan so that we might serve Him. Therefore, when we serve Him, does the Lord need to thank us? No, rather, we should thank the Lord: "Thank you for allowing us to serve You in this way."

- Exodus speaks of how He brought us out of Egypt to serve Him. Luke 1 also mentions that He saved us from the hands of our enemies so that we might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all our days. Therefore, all our service should have this attitude: "I am a servant, and everything I do is in service to this loving Savior, no one should have to repay me or thank me."
    - Many Christians do not understand the true meaning of service. They often think, "Lord, I love You so much and I am sharing the gospel for You, hosting guests for You. Why do I encounter such situations?" or "I serve You, so why haven't I received a salary increase while others have?" It seems that they expect the Lord or the church and pastors to thank them for their service. However, we are all serving God. Therefore, we need to have the right attitude and understanding: no matter what we have done for the Lord or how many people we have brought to faith, there is nothing to boast about. We should say, "Lord, this is what I am supposed to do. I am just an unworthy servant. Thank you for allowing me to work with You!"
  - When Hudson Taylor was on a missionary journey in China, he hoped that more people from his home country would come. The missionary organization sent out a call for volunteers. A person who seemed quite unsuitable for missionary work applied. When they asked him if he was willing to serve as a helper for Hudson Taylor, he immediately replied, "Oh, I would be very happy. Serving God is such an honor!" He understood that he was not serving Hudson Taylor but the glorious King. As a result, God used him greatly, and he later became the well-known Dr. William Milne.
    - Every person who serves needs to recognize, "I am just an unworthy servant. To be able to serve this glorious King is beyond what I deserve. As a slave to sin, I originally deserved only to serve the devil. Yet today, I am redeemed to serve the King of kings and Lord of lords, who is full of love and holiness. This is an incredibly glorious thing!" With this mindset, we will not think, "Oh, why is it always me doing this? Why isn't anyone else in the church doing it?" We will not become proud because of our service, nor will we feel that others should notice us because of it. Even if, one day, the Lord uses us for great work or service, we should still say to the Lord, "Lord, I am just an unworthy servant." We are just like the ordinary five loaves and two fish, but when placed in God's hands, He can break them and feed five thousand people. It is not because the five loaves and two fish are particularly great; it is simply because they are placed in God's hands. A person willing to be broken by God can be used to bless others. It is not only preachers who serve the Lord, but every act of service we perform should be done in this manner, serving God.
2. **Acts 8:13** "Even Simon himself believed, and after being baptized he continued with Philip. And seeing signs and great miracles performed, he was amazed." 8:18-23 "Simon saw that the Spirit was given through the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money, 19 saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." 20 But Peter said to him, "May your silver perish with you, because you thought you could obtain the gift of God with money!"
- In the book of Acts, you will see that Philip was an obedient and flexible vessel, which is why he

was greatly used by God. When God told him to go to the wilderness, he immediately obeyed. When God told him to approach that chariot, he went right away. He did not say, "Oh, that's so difficult!" Simon the sorcerer was often with Philip, but he did not learn or observe the life of Philip. Instead, he was amazed by the miracles and great signs that Philip performed.

- Verse 18 describes how Simon quickly offered money to the apostles, saying, "Give me this power also, so that anyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit." Peter responded, "Your heart is not right before God; you are full of bitterness and bound by iniquity." You might think, "I'm not trying to buy spiritual gifts with money," but the issue isn't about the money. Don't you realize that many Christians, no matter where they go or how far they travel, often focus on one thing during every gathering: seeking to have a powerful person lay hands on them? They are not motivated by love for God or the body of Christ, saying, "Lord, there are so many members who are sick. Lord, please heal them and grant more healing power to the church." They do not have a desire born out of love, saying, "Lord, use me more to help these people!" Instead, they simply wish for someone to lay hands on them so that they may receive the Holy Spirit. They hope to do something that will amaze others, like Philip.
  - Few Christians fast to receive God's love: "Lord, I need to be filled with Your love so that I can love my fellow believers. Why do I feel disconnected when I see members of the body of Christ sick? Why am I not deeply pained when I see the church weakened? Why do I remain indifferent when I see brothers and sisters late or lukewarm?" Have we fasted and prayed for these reasons, crying out to the Lord? Most Christians fast and pursue only to gain visible power. Isn't this similar to Simon?
  - Peter told Simon, "You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God." Brothers and sisters, we really need to ask ourselves, "How is our heart?" Do we serve because of love for God, for the body of Christ, and for the church? Or do we serve to gain affirmation from others and to enjoy being in the spotlight?
  - A brother once expressed a desire to become a pastor and I asked, "How are you sure this is God's calling?" He replied, "I really enjoy leading Bible studies." However, being a pastor isn't about enjoying Bible study. It means leaving everything behind to serve the Lord, loving your flock wholeheartedly. When you preach what you receive from the Lord, some will be built up, but others might want to strike you with their fists. Some may slander and gossip about you behind your back. Don't be mistaken; standing in the pulpit is not all glory. Being a pastor means facing many sufferings, persecutions, and slanders. I'm not trying to discourage those who are willing to serve the Lord, but Jesus never hid His nail-scarred hands from us. He said, "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me."
  - If your service to the Lord is like Simon's—only wanting others to say, "Wow! How great! The Holy Spirit descends with you so quickly!"—without considering the amount of persecution and beatings these apostles endured; are you still willing? We need to ask ourselves: Are we seeking just the apostles' power and anointing, or are we also willing to share their suffering and persecution? The term "apostle" in its original sense is "one called to suffer." Today, many Christians have the wrong idea, thinking that service means standing before others in glory. When faced with persecution and suffering, they run away. But if we're not willing to endure, we'll never truly shine. If our hearts are not right, it's better not to serve at all; otherwise, our service might only provoke God's anger.

3. **Acts 9:15-16** “But the Lord said to him, “Go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel. For I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name.”

- Many of us envy Paul for his dramatic encounter with the light on the road to Damascus and his profound experiences throughout his life. We admire how he proclaimed the name of the Lord before kings—he was truly a special and noble vessel. But what about verse 16? Would you want that? The Lord said, "I will show him how much he must suffer for my name." Did the Lord's words come true? They did indeed. So, when a calling comes upon someone, it often includes a call to suffer alongside Jesus. Brothers and sisters, you need to understand that serving God involves taking up your cross, denying yourself, and enduring much suffering. Are you still willing to serve?
- For instance, if you join a worship team, while others might go on outings, the worship team has meetings and rehearsals. This means you might have to endure more inconvenience compared to others. But this is only a small part of the suffering—just a matter of time and personal constraint with the Lord.

4. **Acts 13:1-3** “...While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, “Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them.””

- In the church at Antioch, there were several prophets and teachers who were serving the Lord and fasting when the Holy Spirit spoke. They did not vote on whom to send for missionary work, as many churches do today. Brothers and sisters, every time we pray, seek the Lord, and draw near to Him, we are serving the Lord. It is not only those who stand on the stage who serve the Lord; intercession is also a form of service and requires time and dedication.
  - While they were serving the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said to set apart Barnabas and Saul for the work to which He had called them. We see that in God's kingdom, God Himself appoints every significant work. It is not about natural zeal, recognizing a need, or having a particular gift and wanting to use it for the Lord; it's not about deciding to go to Africa because many people there have not heard the gospel. The crucial question is whether the Lord has sent you. If the Lord has not sent you, you cannot accomplish anything; you might even end up in danger before you can share the gospel. Human enthusiasm cannot accomplish God's work or His will; it requires God's appointment. All service in God's house should be done according to His will.
- If a ministry arises from the Holy Spirit, or if a person is very clear about their calling from God, that person will have a strong burden and will know how to proceed. Even if they don't know everything at the beginning, or only know a little, God will guide them step by step. Moreover, the burden will not dissipate because of discouragement, persecution, suffering, criticism, or lack of results. When someone is sent by God and receives a calling from Him, they will remain steadfast and will not easily give up or resign in the face of difficulties. This is where the difference lies.
  - When Pastor Grace first started planting a church in Los Angeles, someone said, "Sister, our church is saying that you might not be able to continue and you should prepare to return to Taiwan." I replied, "That won't happen. I am very clear that the Lord has sent me here. Even if there is only one person, I will stay here." If you are clear about God's calling, you will remain

committed regardless of support. Pastor Grace faced significant difficulties in Los Angeles at the beginning. Attendance was very low, and often by 7:30 PM, there was only one person. If this person were serving the temple, they might be anxious for immediate results and feel discouraged by the small number of people, possibly losing interest in preaching.

- If you are serving the temple, you will be very concerned about the number of people, offerings, and whether our future looks promising. Of course, if the numbers are low, it might be because we haven't cared enough for the flock, and we should make improvements. However, if we have already done our best, been faithful, and prayed before the Lord, we should serve there with joy and gladness. If we are serving the Lord, we will continually find joy in Him and remain unaffected by external changes.
- One of the most precious forms of service is intercession and prayer. The book "The Final Quest" concludes with the scene of Christ's judgment seat, where many of those sitting with Jesus on the throne are women and children who were faithful in prayer on earth. They may not have held prominent positions in the church, but they were truly devoted to interceding for God's kingdom, the church. They are nameless and silent, yet they share the throne with Jesus. Unfortunately, it seems that there are fewer brothers in this role, which serves as a reminder for them. Brothers often prefer to be active in visible tasks rather than kneeling in prayer. Of course, there are exceptions, like the Apostle Hyde who frequently knelt before the Lord. When a brother is awakened by God in a particular area and receives a burden, his fervor in service can be stronger than that of sisters. Thus, brothers need to be touched by the Lord so they become more willing to pray and engage in unseen service.
- Service is highly dependent on the vessel through which it is carried out. This vessel must be called and chosen by God to effectively undertake a particular work or service. Many Christians may be interested in a specific service or believe that the church should have it, so they step in to do it. However, the crucial question is whether this interest comes from a genuine burden from the Lord. Without such a burden, one might start but then quit halfway, which fails to bring glory to God. Therefore, any service should not be started casually; it must begin with a burden received from God.
  - A person with a genuine burden will faithfully seek the Lord and possess the wisdom to know how to proceed. Even when faced with difficulties, setbacks, or criticism, they will not give up. On the other hand, if someone is given a service to perform but only does the minimum, it is not driven by a burden from God. Service that comes from God's calling and sending is proactive and self-motivated. It is not something that needs constant supervision or prompting, such as, "Have you done this? Have you completed that?" God often waits for the right person, as only with the right person can there be proper service. In God's house, no service can be accomplished through the natural talents of man. It is not by might, nor by power, but by the Spirit of the Lord that things are accomplished. Therefore, all our service must be carried out with a humble reliance on Him.
  - David felt that he was living in a palace of cedar, yet the Ark of the Covenant did not have a house of its own. Out of his love for God, he was burdened with the desire to build a temple for Him, but God did not choose him for this task. Despite this, David did not give up or become resentful, thinking, "I had such a good intention, yet I was not chosen." He did not take matters into his own hands despite his burden. A person with a true burden, even if not chosen, will remain faithful in praying and helping. A servant of God often carries a burden of love for the church. Therefore, whether they are chosen to stand before others or given a title is not important. They will still faithfully support others. Even if they are not doing anything specific,

they can faithfully pray for those whom God is using.

- Some people only act when given a title or position; without it, they do nothing. They may only arrive early if they are a group leader. However, many brothers and sisters, even without any titles or official roles, arrive early to prepare songs and other things. Such individuals are genuinely serving God—not waiting for a specific role but naturally willing to help wherever there is a need. This reflects a spontaneous, self-motivated love for God's house, for God Himself, and for God's family.
- The most important aspect of serving is having a burden that comes from God. If you find yourself feeling burdened by many things, thank the Lord! This might very well indicate a genuine calling to serve Him full-time.
- All our service is about following the Lord. For example, when I initially spoke with Minister Pearl Young, I felt a strong calling to serve the Lord full-time. She was delighted and responded with, "Yes! Amen." Then she asked, "Where is the field that the Lord is calling you to serve?" I said, "Hsinchu." She said, "Yes!" Her own sense of calling was aligned with this as well. This is often how we confirm that the burdens of brothers and sisters are in harmony with those of the pastors—we share the same Spirit. If you feel a special burden from the Lord, don't hesitate. Don't say, "Oh, I feel too shy to say I want to be a department head; I should be more humble and just volunteer to help." That's what I would call "false humility." If the Lord has genuinely given you a burden to be a department head, you should express that desire. That is true humility.

### Service 3 Questions

1. What does Jesus emphasize as the most important thing in Luke 17:7-10, even after we have served?
2. Do you notice a significant difference in your daily life when you are serving compared to when you are not? Ask your family members (your spouse or children).
3. When you are serving, do you expect others to thank you? What should your attitude be?
4. What kind of job did Dr. William Carey initially get when he applied for overseas missions?
5. In the Book of Acts, Simon was often with Philip, but what specifically attracted Simon's attention?
6. Why did Peter say to Simon, "You have no part or share in this ministry"?
7. Are you currently involved in any service? What is your motivation for taking on this ministry?
8. One of the meanings of the word "apostle" is "one who is called to \_\_\_\_\_."
9. Serving God requires taking up your cross and denying yourself. Have you given up any rights or comforts you could enjoy for the sake of serving?
10. Have you ever encountered discouragement or difficulties while serving? How did you respond?
11. Are you someone who is eager to see immediate results?
12. In the final judgment at the end of time, most of those who sit with Christ on the throne are those who served in what manner on earth?
13. David had the desire to build a temple for God, but God did not choose him. What can we learn from David's reaction? Have you had similar experiences (including not being chosen by a pastor)? How did you react?
14. Memorize: Luke 17:9-10, Acts 9:15-16