

Service 6 A Faithful and Wise Servant

1. **Matthew 24:45** “Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time?”
 - When God speaks about service, two words are repeatedly emphasized: "faithful" and "loyal."
 - 24:3 3 “As he sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, “Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?” Jesus then begins to describe the signs that will precede His return. In verse 44, He says: “Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect.” How should we prepare for Jesus’ return?
 - Matthew 25:1-13 speaks about the need to prepare oil and God's presence within us, to be wise virgins. Our lives should be filled with Jesus Himself, rather than being consumed by service and work.
 - Additionally, Matthew 24:45-51 and Matthew 25:14-46 all focus on service. This shows how closely service is related to preparing for the Lord's return. In the future, when we enter heaven, we will reign with God forever and continue to serve this glorious King. Therefore, God wants us to use our time on earth to learn stewardship and service, as our earthly service is a preparation for what is to come. Everything we say and do is connected to receiving the Lord now and in the future, meaning that service encompasses our entire lives.
 - Some people might think, "I don't have much service at church, so I don't need to listen to teachings about service." But service is closely related to your future position in heaven and what kind of person you will be there!
 - In Matthew 25:14-30, the person mentioned represents Jesus, who went to heaven and entrusted each of us with different talents and gifts. However, some people think, "I don't have much talent or gift, so let those who have talents and gifts do the service!" The most dangerous person in this passage of Scripture is the one with one talent. The person with five talents is less at risk because, with many needs in God's house, he will naturally find many opportunities to serve. But the person with one talent may think, "I don't have much. It doesn't matter if I'm not at church. The lack of my praise, my hosting, or my service won't make a difference; even if I don't come to church, no one cares." God says such a person should be particularly cautious. If you have this kind of mindset, you are like the one who buried his one talent in the ground.
- God has given each of us talents; you have at least one talent. God gives us these talents to use, not to bury in the ground. We should not be like the wicked and lazy servants. Perhaps some might say, "I don't seem to have any gifts!" But at the very least, you have a mouth, a heart, and you can pray. All gifts are cultivated through a heart that loves God and loves the church. The more you use your gifts, the more they will grow.
- Consider the testimony of Pastor Grace, who plays the piano. All service is not based on your natural talents or abilities; you cannot rely on those. In all services, you can only “buy oil” from the Lord. The amount of oil you obtain from the Lord determines the quality of the service you provide—it will be anointed. This “buying” depends on how you live from morning to night each

day and whether you are humbly and reverently relying on Him. In gatherings led by the Holy Spirit, your natural talents will not be of much use; you can only rely fully on Him with a humble heart.

2. Numbers 4:15, 20, 25, 31-32: The Service of the Kohathites, Gershonites, and Merarites

- This passage describes the duties of the Levites who carried the Tabernacle, specifically the descendants of Kohath, Gershon, and Merari. The descendants of Kohath were responsible for carrying the sacred objects within the Holy of Holies. Aaron and his sons would go in to remove the coverings from the Ark of the Covenant and cover it with the veil; ultimately, every sacred item was covered with sealskin before being carried. They only saw the unattractive sealskin and had to carry it on their shoulders, without knowing what was inside—only that it was the Tabernacle’s sacred vessels. They were forbidden from touching or even seeing these items to avoid death. Was this kind of service comfortable? Not at all! Was there a lot of pressure? Absolutely! They could only offer their shoulders to bear the burden, unable to even look at what they were carrying unlike the Gershonites and Merarites, who could see the items they were carrying.
- This is what service is about: being entirely devoted to God and being faithful to Him, doing whatever is assigned without much to say. The Kohathites could have complained, “Why aren’t we like the descendants of Gershon and Merari who are allowed to see the things they carry? We are constantly serving, yet we are not allowed even to look or touch.” Often, service involves repeatedly doing tasks that may seem monotonous and unremarkable, but in God’s eyes, these tasks are very significant. What God values is “faithfulness.”
- Next, it talks about the Gershonites, who were responsible for carrying the curtains of the Tabernacle, including the Tabernacle itself, its cover, the screen for the entrance, and various hooks. Additionally, the Merarites carried the structural components such as the frames, pegs, and cords. However, when they were carrying these items, Numbers 4:28 states: "This is the service of the families of the Gershonites in the tabernacle of meeting, and their charge shall be under the authority of Ithamar the son of Aaron the priest." The same is said in verse 33 about the Merarites, indicating that although the Gershonites and Merarites were handling seemingly minor items, a priest like Ithamar had to supervise their work. This demonstrates that in God's house, no task is too small. Every little detail is important. Ithamar had to carefully check if even a single peg was missing or if a pole had not been pulled out of the ground. If even one pole was lost or a base with a socket was misplaced while carrying the items, there would be problems when it came time to set up the Tabernacle. Do you see how significant this is? Each small item plays a crucial role, and service requires such careful attention.
- For example, during the last evangelistic meeting, a song was missing for a long time because a slide was placed incorrectly. We didn’t realize that a misplaced item could prevent us from singing that song when God wanted us to. So, brothers and sisters, all service is important. From a local perspective, it might seem like a minor detail, but from God's viewpoint, it has significant implications for the entire church, for saving souls, and for fulfilling His will in the gathering. Therefore, we must be faithful in every task.
- Many years ago in Taipei, a mother was invited to give a sermon to a few mothers on short notice. Afterward, she told her husband, "Oh! I did really well today!" However, while waiting upon the Lord, she felt the Lord say to her, "This morning, you sat on the toilet and released a lot of stinky gas!" She was terrified and repented before the Lord, saying, "Lord! Forgive me for being so careless. I did not approach you with fear and trembling." This experience deeply warned her, and it

serves as a warning to me as well. Serving the Lord should never be taken lightly. It's not acceptable to think that if only one person is present, you can speak carelessly. For mothers, the expectations may not be very high, but those with master's and doctoral degrees often have higher demands. However, God does not see it that way. Only God knows who is present at each gathering; He loves every person and desires that each one receives the supply they need. Therefore, we should not casually reuse sermons we've preached in the past without earnestly seeking the Lord. Doing so may cause us to miss the message God originally intended to deliver through us to others.

- Some people might think that after serving and preaching for seventeen years, it should become easy and effortless. But that's not the case! Every sermon is still challenging for me, and only when I am consistently preaching does it become somewhat easier, because the Lord constantly places people's needs on my heart. If I slack off and go weeks without preaching, I feel like my mind goes blank and I lose my burden. I realize that God seems to keep calling me to carry the cross of preaching (my burden). Sometimes I try to avoid it as much as I can, but God has determined that this is my service. Just like the Kohathites couldn't pass their responsibilities to the Merarites, the Kohathites had to bear their own burden. Serving the Lord is a holy and awe-inspiring task.
 - One Monday, after delivering a sermon on Sunday, a sister told me that her husband kept asking her, "Did you tell Pastor Grace my situation?" She replied, "No!" Her husband said, "Then why did the sermon seem to be all about me?" By Tuesday and Wednesday, I received more calls from others who said the same thing—that the message had seemed to address their personal issues. When I preach, I don't use a manuscript; I simply surrender myself to the Lord and let Him speak through me. Yet, God can work in such a marvelous way. The Holy Spirit is among us, understanding each person's thoughts and intentions. He knows everyone's needs. The same message can be tailored by God so that one person feels it speaks directly to them, while another feels all their questions are answered. God is truly great. I share this not to boast of any personal ability but to highlight our need to be humble, empty vessels, fully relying on Him. We need to be conduits through which God can speak because He has words for His people and desires to build them up.
 - The same applies to pianists. In each service, God may want to bring a certain anointing through the music played. Therefore, pianists need to be cautious, fearful, and trembling before the Lord, ensuring they do not miss His guidance. If I am not vigilant and living before the Lord, I wouldn't know what music to play. Beyond understanding the chosen hymns, I wouldn't have the divine prompting for what to play at any given moment. We can never boast, and we must always stay connected to Him. As John 15 says, the branch must remain connected to the vine to bear fruit. Without Him, we can do nothing. If we are separated from Him for even a minute, God cannot use us, so boasting can only be in the Lord.
 - I've noticed that God's eyes are observing, and every service is immensely important to Him. Sometimes we might think, "This service is really important, but that one—it's not such a formal gathering, is it?" Even if only one person attends, God places great importance on it because each one is precious in His eyes and needs to be built up. Every gathering is an opportunity for God to build up a Jerusalem in us, making each service crucial. Therefore, everyone serving the Lord must approach their service with the utmost seriousness.
3. **Nehemiah 6:3, 9** "And I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?".... For they all wanted to frighten us, thinking, "Their hands will drop from the work, and it will not be done."

- Sanballat and Tobiah came to Nehemiah and said, "Come, let us meet together; let us discuss some matters!" Nehemiah replied, "I cannot go. I am doing great work." Nehemiah understood that all service to God is indeed a great work and not a small matter. He said, "I cannot come down; why should the work stop while I leave it to go down to you?" God's work cannot be casually interrupted. Even when enemies use various tactics—soft, hard, or threatening methods—to make them weak, Nehemiah prayed to the Lord, "They are trying to make us afraid and weaken our hands so that the work cannot be completed. Now, God, strengthen my hands." He faced all kinds of dangers because he knew that God's work could not be halted or compromised. Nehemiah had a profound respect and understanding of the sacred and honorable nature of God's work. The work of God is so sacred and honorable that it cannot be casually stopped.
- In all our service, we should be faithful. The mother who was rebuked by the Lord for being careless was someone who deeply loved the Lord, which is why she could hear Him. God might want to speak this message to many people, but they might not hear it because they are not attentive. It is of no use if God wants to rebuke us and we do not listen because we are indifferent. When Minister Pearl Young spoke about service, she said that everyone should be obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit. Therefore, before every gathering, she would sit there at least half an hour early, asking the Lord, "Lord, let me not miss Your will today." This means that if the Lord moves her to praise, pray, give a testimony, or even dance, she must obey. She understood that she had the responsibility to be obedient and serve God at every meeting.
- Brothers and sisters! In the New Testament era, each of us should come to serve God at every gathering. Our purpose in coming together is not just to enjoy His presence but to serve Him. The Holy Spirit is the conductor of the entire meeting; He may direct one person to dance, another to give a testimony, another to speak in tongues, and another to pray. We must all be obedient to His leadership. If we understand that every gathering is an opportunity to serve God, we should approach it with fear and trembling, rather than thinking it's acceptable to be late because we have to finish our meal first. If we prioritize eating over attending the meeting, thinking it's okay to be late a minute or two, or if we insist on washing the dishes before leaving, it shows we are not fully committed. Thank the Lord that ever since I believed in Him, there has been a principle in my heart: I absolutely dare not let the Lord wait for me. So I always go early; if I don't have time to eat, I skip the meal, and if I can't wash the dishes, I leave them and come back to clean them later. I prioritize not missing my opportunity to serve God. My desire is to serve Him through worship. Worship is the highest form of service, and in eternity, we will continue this service. Therefore, for every gathering, we should come with a fervent and loving heart, full of zeal to serve and worship Him.

4. Matthew 25:31-46, Sheep and Goat

- How is this related to preparing for the Lord's return? The needs you encounter are all measured out by God. If you know someone is sick, it's very likely that God is calling you to visit them. If someone is a traveler and needs hospitality, it's likely that God wants you to host them. Often, these needs come at inconvenient times; we are busy, tired, and always have pressing matters. If we always say, "Oh, I can't do it; I'm too busy," or "Oh, it's not convenient for me right now," we will continually miss the opportunities God gives us. We will end up being like the ones mentioned here: "Whatever you did not do for the least of these brothers of mine, you did not do for me."
- Therefore, we should see all these needs as opportunities to serve the Lord Jesus Himself. As Jesus said, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me."

So, when we visit the sick, visit someone in prison, or care for someone in need, we are serving Jesus and preparing for His return.

- When I first arrived at the Zion Church, I didn't have any formal service for about two and a half years, but I never felt neglected. Every day, I was still serving—sometimes, I shared the gospel with people while in a taxi, or I regularly visited hospitals with my spiritual companion to visit patients and share the gospel there. Even though I had previously been the president of a college fellowship and later the president of a young adult fellowship, during those two and a half years, I never felt sidelined or unused. My heart remained fervent in service, so I didn't need an official position to serve. So, brothers and sisters, if you feel that you haven't been serving for a year, could it be that your heart has grown cold?
- Faithfulness is crucial. When God gives someone a vision, it is not to prove that the person is spiritual or great, but often to entrust them with a mission. For example, when God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, He did not praise Moses for spending forty years in the wilderness seeking Him or learning lessons in humility. Instead, God simply said, "I have seen the suffering of my people, and I am sending you." When God reveals Himself, His revelations, or His presence to us, it is to bring us into His vineyard and His harvest field. Therefore, no one should boast by saying, "Oh! The Lord has been pouring out His blessings on me lately. He has given me new revelations, and His presence has been so close to me. I've been having dreams and visions frequently." Everything God gives us is meant to equip us to serve His people, for His heart and His eyes are always on His church and His house. He wants each of us to be a faithful steward.

Conclusion

- Matthew 24:45 "Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time?" Faithfulness means you are consistently doing what you are called to do; you are not hot one moment and cold the next, serving the Lord fervently at certain times. A faithful person does not serve to be seen by the pastor or other brothers and sisters but is dedicated to their Master, Jesus, because it is He who will hold us accountable. It is not acceptable to think, "Oh, the Master is away, so I can eat, drink, and be merry without worry." God says, "You wicked servant will be assigned a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." This is directed at Christians. If the pastor is away on a sabbatical, we might think it's okay to arrive late to meetings, delay starting, skip praising, and be more relaxed and casual. But God says that at an unexpected time and hour, the master of that servant will come and deal severely with him. So, brothers and sisters, we need to understand that even though we are serving an invisible God, He is watching us closely, with His eyes fixed upon us. Therefore, our faithfulness is toward Him.
- If all brothers and sisters are faithful to God's calling, loyal in each of their roles—faithfully interceding, worshiping, playing the piano, leading the meeting, and evangelizing—then it shouldn't matter whether the pastor is present or not. What matters is that we are serving the Lord. When our mindset is right, we are likewise virgins preparing for the Lord's return, and such service is truly sweet.
- 25: 23 "His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant. You have been faithful over a

little; I will set you over much. Enter into the joy of your master.” The first point is about being faithful in small things; you must be faithful in the little matters. If you are not faithful in small things, the master will not entrust you with larger responsibilities. Additionally, you can share in your master's joy—not just in the future but even now. Truly! When you are serving the Lord, you will find that He says, "Come in and enjoy the joy of My presence with you!"

Service 6 Questions

1. According to Matthew 24 and 25, how should we prepare for the return of Jesus?
2. Those with a thousand talents might think that the church doesn't need them; missing their praise, their role as an usher, or their service wouldn't make any difference. They might even think that no one cares whether they attend church or not. Have you ever thought this way?
3. God has given each of us talents; you have at least one thousand talents. Do you know what your talents are?
4. If your service involves doing repetitive tasks, do you find it boring? When you feel bored, do you still remain faithful in your service?
5. At an evangelistic meeting, why were Pastor Grace and her team unable to find the slides for a certain hymn? Have you ever encountered something you thought was a small matter, but due to a lack of attention, it ended up causing a lot of inconvenience?
6. In Taipei, why did the Lord tell the mother, "This morning, you were sitting on the toilet, letting out a bucketful of stinky smell"?
7. In your service, do you become careless because you are too familiar with it or find it too easy?
8. A brother attended church for a while, but then left due to severe pressure from his family and went to Taipei for tutoring. What happened on his birthday? What was the key to his spiritual revival?
9. In New Testament gatherings, what roles do attendees play?
10. One type of person serves only when they have a position, while another serves even without a position. Which type are you? Do you have any areas of service right now where, even without a position, you remain faithful to your service?
11. What is the purpose of God revealing Himself, His revelations, and His presence to us?
12. Rate yourself: Do you think you are faithful? Ask your service leaders if they believe you are faithful. What areas do you think you need improvement?
13. Memorize: Matthew 24:45-47, Matthew 25:34-36, Matthew 25:40

