

Service 7 - Rejoicing in the Hard and Tedious

1. **Matthew 25:23:** “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’
29: “For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have an abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away.”
 - In Matthew chapters 24 and 25, two very important things regarding welcoming the Lord's return are mentioned:
 - We need to prepare the oil within us. The first part of chapter 25 talks about being a wise virgin and not being foolish. Throughout our earthly lives, we should take advantage of our days to acquire this oil. The oil refers to God's presence within us, and our service is closely related to receiving God's presence.
 - We need to serve God faithfully. This Master (our God) has gone to a far country, but one day He will return to settle accounts, to see if we have been faithful in serving Him during our time on earth. The act of serving itself is closely related to receiving from God, the rewards we will have in heaven, and the kind of person we will become in the future.
 - The Master said, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful with a few things.” God's praise for the person who had two talents is the same as for the person who had five thousand talents. Many people who love the Lord are eager to do great things for Him, such as being martyred in Africa or China. However, they often see small matters as insignificant and unimportant. But God says that unless you are faithful in these small matters, He cannot entrust you with greater responsibilities.
 - Although there are five thousand talents mentioned in the Bible, I believe there is no one whom God used for great tasks right from the beginning. Like Billy Graham, God did not start by sending him to preach around the world. He began by faithfully sharing the gospel on the streets. So, for those who are ambitious to do great things for the Lord, unless you are faithful in the many small things entrusted to you by God, He cannot entrust you with greater responsibilities.
 - There were two sisters who deeply loved the Lord. One day, the Lord said to them, "The secret to being My true disciples is to serve in the small things, to joyfully endure the little difficulties in service for My sake, to overcome the small impulses of pride, the small acts of selfishness, and the minor challenges. Serve Me in all the small things, and be My servant in the small matters." God said that this is the secret to being His true disciples.
 - In "Love is the Shortest Distance," Mother Teresa prepared herself as the bride of Jesus through various small tasks. She said, "In God's garden, there are so many beautiful flowers. I am not a brilliant rose or a conspicuous large flower; I am just a small white flower, and there are many of these small white flowers. But I want to bloom with all my heart, soul, and strength. I want to live brightly before God, to make my Master happy, to be appreciated by my Master, and to bring joy to my Master." This is the secret to being a true disciple. She does not complain, saying, "Oh Master, why did You give others pink roses, so large and beautiful, while I am just a small white flower? No one will notice me, and there are so many small white flowers." Instead, she says, "I will faithfully

bloom for my Master."

- I hope that the character of being faithful in small things is cultivated within us, without comparing ourselves to others. Even though I may have only one talent, as long as I use it diligently, it is as commendable as having five talents. Those with five talents must have been faithful in the small tasks from the beginning—such as having been entrusted with one talent first—before God gradually gave them more, like two thousand or three thousand talents. Right? No one starts out as a renowned evangelist; everyone begins by doing small tasks like arranging Bibles, arranging chairs, setting up microphones, and preparing tea for speakers. Being faithful in small things is crucial, and it is through this faithfulness that God will continue to use us.

2. "Willing to endure hardship and encounter the tedious with joy."

- A hymn writer once prayed, "Lord, let me walk with You always, that I might never be a minute away from You, and You might never be a minute away from me, just like Enoch walked with God." The Lord revealed a secret to him: "You must be willing to endure hardship and joyfully encounter tedious tasks." This means you need to willingly take on laborious and tiring tasks and find joy in dealing with tedious matters. Who likes hardship? Who likes tediousness? Often, when our service involves more laborious or troublesome tasks than others, we begin to feel frustrated and start complaining.
- A servant of God early in his ministry worked with eight high school students. He rented a venue for 500 people and had to pay rent, but the high school students had little income, and four of them were extremely rebellious, seemingly disregarding everything he said. He often hid in his office, praying every day, "Lord, I'm done with this!" Because dealing with these students often left him very frustrated and disheartened. One day, as he was about to say, "I quit!" a voice suddenly told him, "If you say that again, you are finished; I will no longer use you." He was terrified and said to the Lord, "Lord, I'm sorry, I will never say I'm done again. I am willing to do whatever You ask me to do." He truly repented before the Lord, and as a result, the Lord greatly used him later on. No master likes to use someone who is constantly complaining and grumbling.
- Being faithful in small things means willingly and cheerfully doing all the little tasks, which is described as "willing to endure hardship and joyfully encountering the tedious." The problem is that many people are actually complaining without even realizing it. For instance, once I asked someone to do something, and they said, "This is difficult and troublesome!" "This will take a lot of my time, oh, I'm so tired!" Even though they completed the task, I felt hesitant to ask them again. I would prefer to ask those who respond with enthusiasm, saying, "Oh, sure, sure!" and who happily carry out the task. Our Lord works the same way with us; He does not like to hear complaints. Therefore, He says, "I will deal with you according to what I hear you say."
- Reinhard Bonnke was an African evangelist who initially felt inadequate and thought he was not good at anything. He asked the Lord, "Lord, why did You choose me?" The Lord replied, "I didn't actually choose you; you are my third choice! The first two were unwilling to obey." The reason the first two were unwilling might be similar to what Steve experienced, saying, "I'm done with this, Lord. Serving You is too hard; I don't want to do it anymore." Even if they were just expressing their frustration, the Lord could not use them. Bonnke, however, was mightily used by God in evangelism around the world. So, brothers and sisters, have you noticed that willingness is based on what one has, not on what one lacks? As long as we are willing, do not complain, and are faithful in small matters, God can use us—even if we feel inadequate and

incapable.

- **Matthew 25:15** says, "To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, each according to his ability." Do not mistakenly think that God always uses the untalented or those without skills. If you are a music graduate and are skilled at playing the piano, isn't this a result of God cultivating you through your parents from a young age? Perhaps you might say that your parents pushed you to learn, but everything works together for good; it is God who arranged your environment and shaped you so that you could one day serve Him. If you have been developed over many years, as long as you humbly rely on God, diligently practice, seek His anointing, and serve Him with fear and trembling, then God can use you even more. The key is whether we are faithful and serve with fear and trembling before the Lord.
- For example, if someone is responsible for leading a 6:30 AM morning prayer meeting and they wake up around 6:15 or 6:20, quickly get ready, and then head downstairs, do you think God can bless that morning prayer meeting? At first, God might bless it because of the attendees' eagerness and urgency. However, if the leader does not prepare their heart with reverence and prayer for the meeting, the leader will ultimately be the one most disadvantaged. Over time, they might feel that serving is burdensome and gradually become more reluctant to lead, wanting to hand it off to someone else. On the other hand, a faithful person who wakes up at around 5:00 AM to draw near to the Lord, seek Him, pray for the morning meeting, and prepare their heart will see God's work more clearly in the meeting and will find themselves increasingly blessed.
- All service is like this, whether it's playing the piano, mentoring a youth fellowship, or teaching a children's Sunday school class. If we do not serve with reverence and diligence before the Lord, seeking His guidance and word. If we treat it as unimportant because there are only a few people or it's just children, and we sometimes arrive a few minutes late or only show up when the time has come, our service will not receive any reward. In the future, God might say, "You wicked and lazy servant, I do not know you." So, brothers and sisters, while serving can bring us to the throne of Jesus, if we are unfaithful in our service, it can also lead us into darkness.
- Sometimes you might wonder why others' prayer meetings are so full of fervor and why attendance keeps increasing, while your own meetings seem lacking and the numbers are dwindling. The difference often lies in whether the leader is faithful before the Lord. For every service, if it's not approached with reverence and earnest seeking before the Lord, it becomes merely a formula. If you try to replicate someone else's successful approach without the same dedication, you might maintain the outward form but find that the inner vitality gradually diminishes and the fervor slowly disappears. The secret lies in the price paid by the leader behind the scenes—being faithful and vigilant in prayer for the meeting and being willing to be disciplined in daily life. If a leader desires freedom, pleasure, and enjoyment without being willing to sacrifice for the service, they will not be able to bring forth significant anointing and blessing from God.
- In the hymn "Praise Selection 113," verse 3 says: "Make me patient like the Lord, With the Lord as a close friend in my heart, diligently working for the Lord with sincere faith, The enemy will surely be defeated and flee." It expresses the prayer: "Lord, make me as patient as You!" God often allows troublesome and difficult situations to come into your life. If you accept and deal with them with the same patience as the Lord, He will become your close friend, continually coming into your heart. This is the secret to walking with the Lord.
- Pursuing the Lord is not about what people might think, such as fasting for forty days and being strict with oneself to achieve closeness with God. You could fast for forty days and immediately become impatient over a matter, arguing with others. In that case, the fasting would have been in vain. The verse "Diligently working for the Lord with sincere faith, the enemy will surely be

defeated and flee" emphasizes that you need to emulate Jesus' patience, constantly and patiently working for the Lord. In doing so, the Lord will come into your heart regularly. Some might think that serving the Lord is about achieving great things for Him, but God asks, "Are you willing to patiently do the small things?"

3. **Matthew 5:41 - If someone forces you to go one mile, go with them for two miles**

- Here, it mentions that if someone forces you to go one mile, you should go two miles. Often, the first mile of service is done out of obligation or duty, and it's something we do because we're required to. However, God says not to stop at the first mile but to accompany them for two miles. The second mile represents the service empowered by the Holy Spirit, filled with the supernatural love of Jesus that surpasses human imagination. This kind of service reflects "not I, but Christ living in me." Only this kind of service brings increasing joy, whereas if our service only stays at the first mile, it will become increasingly tiring. Brothers and sisters, we can ask ourselves whether our service is characterized by the first mile or the second mile.
- A sister came from a relatively distant place and was eager for the Lord but needed someone to drive her to the meetings. We arranged for two brothers to take turns picking her up. One day, the sister said she didn't want to come to the meeting, and the brother who was scheduled to pick her up said, "I'm so glad, I don't have to drive her today!" However, the other brother said, "It's a pity she isn't coming; I'll go pick her up anyway!" The attitudes of these two brothers were quite different! God often uses many situations to test us and see the condition of our hearts: are we willing to keep His commandments? Do we genuinely love Him? It turns out that the first brother's transportation service was merely a duty because he was assigned to it. He was even pleased when she didn't come, indicating that his service was more about obligation rather than love. The second brother's service was driven by love. He desired for the sister to benefit from attending the meetings and genuinely wanted to serve her to bring her before Jesus Christ. He was willing to bear the inconvenience and felt it was a pity she wasn't coming.
 - Once, I saw a mother in her sixties cleaning the restroom. I said, "Let me do it." She replied, "No, no, no! You go serve the Lord, and I'll clean the restroom." This mother said, "I love cleaning the restroom the most because I find that the Lord's presence is especially strong when I'm cleaning." Later, she brought a very famous painter to church and told him, "I love cleaning the restroom the most because the Lord's presence is so glorious when I'm cleaning!" So, the next time this painter came to the gathering, he arrived early and took the initiative to clean the restroom. The kind of person you are influences others to be the same; the life you live will bring forth the same kind of life in others. When you are faithful in small things and serve with love in many little tasks, the Lord's presence will continually increase upon you.
- The missionary Teddy and another doctor had a testimony in Africa where the locals said, "The first missionary served us with love, but this doctor doesn't truly love us; he serves us out of duty, not out of love." The doctor then asked an African pastor, "How can they tell the difference?" The pastor replied, "They look into the windows of your soul and see responsibility without love. As for the other missionary, they see that he wholeheartedly loves them." Sometimes, we say we're willing to be martyrs for the Lord, but often, we need to ask for God's love to fill us more. Unless we are willing to serve all those whom God has assigned to us with our whole heart, patiently, and with love in our daily lives, we won't be able to respond when greater needs arise. When these locals see only duty and responsibility, they won't be drawn to believe in the Lord.
- How much we need to ask the Lord Jesus, "Lord, fill us with more of Your love!" Serving is not just

about serving in front of others to gain their approval. Some people lead Bible studies not with the intention of helping others know God more, love Him more, or grow to be more like Him, but simply to express their own opinions, insights, and views. So, brothers and sisters, it's easy for us to have mixed motives. What is the real motivation behind our service to the Lord? Are we serving our own desires? Are we serving our old self? Or are we truly serving God Himself? We must serve others with the aim of leading them completely to Christ, and for this, we desperately need to ask the Lord to give us a pure heart.

"Rick Joyner's vision"

- God gave Rick Joyner a vision of heaven, where he saw a very famous servant of God whom he had once deeply respected and admired. This servant approached him with a sense of great guilt and said, "Can you forgive me? When I arrived in heaven, I discovered that I am a foolish virgin, so I am in the outermost, darkest part of heaven. Every day I have been waiting for one thing: I have been waiting for you to come so I could apologize to you. I only realized here that God originally intended for me to serve you. At that time, you wanted to learn from me and hoped to receive my training, but I found you troublesome and thought you might threaten my ministry in the future, so I chose to let you go. Thankfully, the Lord has allowed you to come first today, giving me the opportunity to apologize to you."
- In ministry, sometimes we may find certain individuals particularly troublesome, as if they bring darkness to the whole group, making us think it would be better without them. However, it's very likely that God wants us to serve these very individuals. This is something we need to pay attention to and encourage each other in. We need to ask the Lord for love, patience, and faithfulness. This is what Matthew 25 talks about at the end: some are sick, imprisoned, hungry, thirsty, or in need of hospitality or clothing. At such times, God may be calling you to serve them, even if it is very troublesome and challenging for you. If you seize the opportunity to serve them, God says you are like the sheep, serving Him. He promises you will receive a reward and enjoy the joy of your Master.
- So, ministry is not about choosing the easy tasks to serve, but rather letting God place the right people for us to serve according to what we have. Sometimes there will be difficulties in our service, but these are opportunities God uses to expand the measure of our lives. Expanding our capacity requires enduring labor and hardship. God wants to increase us from one thousand talents to two thousand, then from two thousand to three thousand, and eventually to five thousand talents. In the beginning, this expansion feels burdensome and heavy, but once we are stretched, we find that we can handle increasingly larger responsibilities, such as three thousand or four thousand talents of service. God works according to what we have, so brothers and sisters, do not try to escape!

Conclusion

- The testimony of the two brothers in Hsinchu who repaired the toilet: The brother who used his hands to repair the toilet was faithful in small things, willing to endure hardship, and happy to deal with tedious tasks. This produced another life, leading a wealthy young man to become willing to serve as the leader of the cleaning team. He was eager to take out all the trash and happily clean all the restrooms. The birth of life in God's family happens this way—one life influences another. When one life serves others, it nurtures another life. A life in Christ serves and brings forth another life in Christ.
- In the home, it's the same: a brother who leads the family should not only be the spiritual head but also take the lead in all the laborious and troublesome tasks. If a brother takes on this role, you will

find that your wife and children will also willingly take on burdens and deal with inconveniences. If a leading brother at home merely says, "Wife, the baby's diaper is wet; wife, the baby has soiled himself," always passing the tasks to others, you will notice that later your children may also become adept at directing others: "Dad, do this; Mom, that is dirty!" They will not learn to do things themselves. So, the quality of leadership determines the quality of the family. A brother who leads by serving spiritually and willingly taking on burdens and dealing with inconveniences will encourage his wife and children to be diligent in the same way.

- Our Lord said, "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve." So He first served us, so that we, too, would willingly and gladly serve others, and thus, the house of God is built up in His love.

Service 7 Questions

1. Two sisters who deeply loved the Lord were once told by the Lord what the secret to being His true disciples is. What is this secret?
2. With so many beautiful flowers in God's garden, do you envy others for being more dazzling than you? Do you envy those who have five talents?
3. Whether you have one talent or five, have you ever looked down on what God has given you, causing you to be less faithful?
4. Do the brothers and sisters often arrive late to the gatherings you lead? If they do, what do you think is the reason? What time do you arrive?
5. When you encounter difficult or tedious tasks, do you ever become impatient? Have you ever tried serving with love, and if so, what was the result?
6. Ask your colleagues or family members if you are someone who tends to grumble or complain a lot (since you might not notice it yourself).
7. Consider whether your current service (at home or in the church) is the first mile of service or the second mile. If you find it difficult to continue, how do you handle it? Has the teaching you've received been helpful?
8. Has Jonah's vision given you any reminders? Are there people around you who are difficult to deal with?
9. How did the brother who repaired the toilet make such a deep impression on that wealthy young man? Are there people around you who have been impacted by your life?
10. Has anyone's life had such an impact on you? In what aspect have they become a model for you to follow?
11. Brothers, in what areas do you take the lead at home? What are the positive influences, and what are the negative ones?
12. Colleagues, do you have leadership roles in the church? What are the positive influences you have on your fellow workers? What are the negative influences?
13. Memorize : Matthew 5:41, Matthew 25:21

