

THE VISION OF SERVICE

Scripture Reading:

Hymn: Let Me Love and Not Be Respected

- Exo. 21:5 But if the servant plainly says, I love my master, my wife, and my children; I will not go out free.
- Rom. 12:1 I exhort you therefore, brothers, through the compassions of God to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.
- Rom. 12:2 And do not be fashioned according to this age, but be transformed by the renewing of the mind that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and well pleasing and perfect.
- Eph. 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

I. The motive of serving the Lord:

- A. The love toward the Lord – Exo. 21:5.
- B. God's compassion – Rom. 12:1.

II. The meaning of serving the Lord:

- A. To be a slave of the Lord – 1 Cor. 7:22.
- B. To be a priest of God – Rom. 15:16; Acts 13:2.
- C. To be the members of the Body of Christ – 1 Cor. 12:18.

III. The purpose of serving the Lord – Building up the Body of Christ – Eph. 4:16:

IV. How to serve the Lord:

- A. Serving with our whole being – Rom. 12:1-2, 11.
- B. Following the Lord – John 12:26.
- C. According to the counsel of God – Acts 13:36.
- D. An ear to hear – Exo. 21:6.
- E. Coming near to the Lord, seeking Him, and serving Him in prayer—Ezek. 44:15b; Acts 13:2.
- F. Coordinating in the Body – 1 Cor. 12:14-21.

V. The reward of serving the Lord:

- A. The honor of God the Father – John 12:26.
- B. Being blessed to recline at table and enjoying the serving of the Lord – Luke 12:37.
- C. Ruling with the Lord and enjoying the joy of the master – Matt. 25:21, 23.

Reference: *The Fundamental Truth of the Bible (in Chinese)*, Chapter 2; *Messages Given to the Working Saints*, Chapter 8.

Excerpts from the ministry:

THE MOTIVE OF SERVING THE LORD

The Love toward the Lord

A saved person does not serve the Lord because of outward encouragement or pressure from man. Nor does he serve the Lord because someone stands beside him exhorting or leading him. He serves the Lord out of an inward motive. This motive is love for the Lord. His love for the Lord inwardly forces him to serve the Lord. It urges him to serve the Lord. His inward love for the Lord makes him unable to not serve the Lord. He loves the Lord so he must serve the Lord. This is typified by the example in the Old Testament of the slave who loved his master. Even though that kind of slave could be freed and did not need to continue as a slave, because he loved his master, he did not want to go out free. He willingly remained a slave serving the master he loved. This is our motive in serving the Lord. We also become the Lord's servants and serve Him willingly because of our love for the Lord. Our service to the Lord is out of our inward love for the Lord.

The Compassions of God

We love the Lord because He loves us. The Lord's love moves us and encourages us to love Him. The Lord's love to us produces our love toward Him within us. It makes us unable to not love Him. Therefore the Lord's love causes us to love Him and serve Him. For this reason, the apostle exhorts us through the compassions of God to present our bodies a living sacrifice as service to God. The compassions of God, the love of God encourage us to love Him and serve Him. We serve Him because we are encouraged by His love. It is out of a love which His love stirs up inside us. This love is our motive in serving Him. It makes it impossible for us not to serve Him. (*Fundamental Truths in the Scriptures, pp. 609-610 in Chinese*)

THE MEANING OF SERVING THE LORD

According to the Bible, Christians should not make a profession out of preaching, but should serve the Lord as their main career. Any job or career that we Christians have is a second job. Our main occupation is serving the Lord. To us any job or occupation is secondary. Serving the Lord comes first. Our goal for living on the earth is to serve the Lord. We should make

servicing the Lord the center and goal of our lives. The only reason we have a job or career is to have something at hand to make a living and to supply the needs of the Lord's work. At the same time, we contact people through our jobs and careers to preach the Lord's gospel to them. Thus, we should not consider any profession or job as our main occupation or the most important thing and put servicing the Lord in second place. It does not matter what we do for a living, it all should be something at hand. Our goal should be to serve the Lord and preach the gospel. It does not matter if we are doctors, teachers, businessmen or laborers. Whatever job or profession we have should be for servicing the Lord and preaching the gospel. Doctors should serve the Lord and preach the gospel while they are practicing medicine. Teachers should serve the Lord and preach the gospel while teaching. Whatever our profession, we should serve the Lord and preach the gospel through what we do. Each one of us should consider servicing the Lord and preaching the gospel as our primary occupation and our jobs and careers as secondary occupations. If we are normal Christians, we must be this way. This is the only way to live to the Lord and serve Him. (*Fundamental Truths in the Scriptures, p. 612 in Chinese*)

“...Likewise the free man who has been called is Christ's slave.” (1 Cor 7:22). To serve the lord is to be slave of the Lord Christ. In this verse, a slave refers to one who is sold and who has lost his freedom. Such a status reveals the significance of servicing the Lord. Our servicing the Lord is not to do any great work, but to be a slave of Christ to serve the Lord Thus, in Romans 12:11m the verb used to describe one who serves the Lord is simply the verb form of the word slave and should be translated “servicing as a slave.”

“And as they were ministering to the Lord and fasting...” (Acts 13:2). Ministering here literally refers to service as a priest; it is the same word as in Hebrews 10:11 for the “ministering” (servicing) of a priest. To serve God as a priest is to handle before God all things related to the worship of God. This requires us to constantly draw near to God and stand before Him.

“But now God has placed the members, each one of them, in the body, even as He willed.” (1 Cor. 12:18). We believers are all members placed by God in the Body of Christ, and each member has its function. When we fulfill our office to minister in the Body of Christ according to our function, we are also servicing the Lord. (*Life Lesson, Vol. 2, pp.169-170*)

**THE PURPOSE OF SERVING THE LORD –
THE BUILDING UP OF THE BODY OF CHRIST**

(Our purpose of serving the Lord) is the building up of the Body of Christ. This is very important. This matter cannot be realized in the meetings of Christianity. It can only be realized in the practice of the new way. In the new way, no one is monopolizing. Everyone has a chance. Nothing is according to arrangement. Everything is by the organic way and follows the leading of the spirit. For example, according to your plan, you may have every Friday set aside for going out. But this Monday, while you are praying and contacting the Lord, He may give you a leading to visit your cousin that very evening. This is to be organic. We should not have dead services that come from arrangements. Rather, we should have living services that come from being organic. We should bypass arrangements and serve and act organically. Christianity talks about organization and arrangements. But the new way requires that we serve organically. All the brothers and sisters should be led by the Lord daily. In this way, everyone will be built up organically. We will not be building up an organized congregation, but we will be building up the Body of Christ. Moreover, we should not emphasize work, but should pay attention to supplying Christ, life, and the spirit. Most Christianity activities emphasize work. But we have to learn not to emphasize work. Rather we should emphasize the supplying of Christ, life and the spirit. For example, a brother may come to fellowship with you. He may mention to you his family problems, that his wife is giving him a hard time. You should not exhort him to be patient, forbearing, or yielding. This is not Christ. You can share with him a testimony, or help him to read some verses. You may say something like this to him: "Brother, today, the Lord Jesus is in you. He is a living Lord, and He is with you all the time. You need to contact Him in the morning. When you see your wife losing her temper, you should begin to fellowship with the Lord within to receive His supply. We all need the filling of the Spirit. We have no way to overcome our problems. But when the Spirit fills us, nothing else will matter anymore." When you fellowship with him this way, you are supplying Christ to him. You are also supplying the Spirit to him. By this, he will grow in life.

As a further step, in order to help others learn to serve and work in an organic way, we have to grow together with the saints in the life of Christ, being fitted and knit together to be built up into the Body of Christ. This is based upon the words of Ephesians chapter four. We are not merely coming together for a meeting or to build up a congregation, but are growing together into the Body of Christ. This is the building up of His Body. We should boast only in the gaining, perfecting, helping and building up of people. By this the all-inclusive Christ will have

an unlimited and unceasing increase and spread. (*Messages Given to the Working Saints*, pp. 91-92)

HOW TO SERVE THE LORD

Our entire being is of three parts: spirit, soul, and body. To serve the Lord with our whole being means that the spirit, soul, and body all participate in the service to the Lord. First, we must present our bodies to the Lord; second, the mind, the main part of our soul, must be renewed and transformed; third, our spirit must be burning. Thus, all three parts of our being participate in serving the Lord. (*Life Lessons*, p. 171)

To serve the Lord, we must follow the Lord. When the Lord was on the earth, He walked a path that we who serve Him today must follow. Whatever way He took, we must also take. Wherever He was, we must also be. We must choose the cross and die to ourselves and everything, willingly taking the way of the cross just as He did. He refused His own will and lived in God's will; we must do the same. We must follow Him and be with Him in order to serve Him.

In serving the Lord we most certainly must serve the people of our own generation. However, we must do it "by the counsel of God" just as David did in his time. If we do not serve people by the counsel of God, we are merely serving people and it cannot be counted as serving God. Only things done by the counsel of God can be counted as service to the Lord.

Because our service to the Lord is the service of a slave, we should act according to the Lord's will and not according to our own desires. Thus, to serve the Lord we need to be able to hear His word. We are able to know the Lord's will because we can hear His word. One who serves the Lord must be able to hear the Lord well, so he knows the Lord's will and serves according to the Lord's desire in order to please the Lord. It is for this reason that in the Old Testament type, God wanted the master to bore through the ear of the slave who wanted him for ever. We must have ears that can hear. Our ears must be dealt with by the Lord. He must bore through them so we can hear His word and serve Him.

Once we have ears to hear we still must stand before the Lord to contact Him and minister to Him. Then we will know what He wants us to do and how He wants us to do it. It is only in this way that we are serving Him according to His will, matching His heart's desire and are acceptable to Him.

In serving the Lord, we need not only to contact Him and stand before Him, we also need fasting and prayer to seek Him. Fasting means we are willing to give up our legal enjoyment causing ourselves to suffer in order to seek the Lord's desire and accomplish the Lord's will. Prayer is to ask the Lord to reveal His desire and to accomplish His will. We must not lack prayer and fasting in our service to the Lord. A strong service to the Lord most certainly includes both prayer and fasting. (*The Fundamental Truths in the Scriptures*, Vol. 3, pp. 613-614)

The church is the Body of Christ, and Christ is the Head of the church. The life which we receive from Him causes us to be His Body. Hence, His life in us is the life of the Body, which we commonly possess. If we live in this life, not only will we live in Him and be joined to Him, but out from Him all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love. The coordination, serving, and functioning of all the members cause the growth of His Body unto the building.

One who lives in Christ's life must be one who lives in the Body of Christ—the church, who is fitly joined together with all the members, and who serves in coordination. Christ's life in us is the life of His Body which causes us to be His Body, thus if we still have our individual action and our own opinion in our service to the Lord, this will prove that we are still living in our self. If we live in Christ's life, we will not be able to be individualistic in our service to the Lord. Christ's life requires us to serve with all the saints in coordination in His Body—the church.

THE REWARD OF SERVING THE LORD

“If anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him” (John 12:26).

There are rewards for serving the Lord. The first kind of reward is being honored by God. This is a great matter. It should cause us to pursue serving the Lord.

“Blessed are those slaves whom the master, when he comes, will find watching. Truly I tell you that he will gird himself and will have them recline at table, and he will come to them and serve them” (Luke 12:37). Today we are the Lord's slaves serving Him. When the Lord returns, this will cause us to receive the blessing of "reclining at table" and being "served" by the Lord. Of course that blessing is a reward for our service to the Lord.

“Well done, good and faithful slave, ...I will set you over many things. Enter into the joy of your master” (Matt. 25:21; 24:47; Luke 19:17).

If we are a good and faithful slave of the Lord today, in the future we will receive the Lord's reward. He will set us over many things and we will enter into His joy. (*Fundamental Truths in the Scriptures, Vol. 3, pp. 619-621 in Chinese*)

Questions:

1. 1. Please describe briefly the motive and the meaning of serving the Lord.
2. 2. Please describe briefly the purpose of serving the Lord.
3. 3. Please describe briefly how to serve the Lord.
4. 4. Please describe briefly what are the rewards in serving the Lord.