
The Servant of the Lord

Radio Message by Dwight Porter, D.D.

MANY challenges face us today. Constantly, we are being bombarded to be prepared for some career. There is the challenge of education, financial security, fulfillment and marriage (not too popular in our day). In religious circles we talk about the challenge of full-time service, which I believe to be a poor choice of words. Since when and where is any Christian to possess more responsibility to serve the Lord than any other? When Paul answered the call of God, while on a journey to persecute Christians, his main question was for direction. This is not the question you and I face today, for the Scriptures are very plain concerning God's will, plan and purpose. Every Christian faces the same task and must be about it full time. We study the Bible to share the attitude of Paul's question: "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" (Acts 9:6) My subject is taken from the instruction of II Timothy 2:24: "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient."

The qualifications of leadership within the church are almost forgotten. I wonder why? Are we so far away from scriptural authority that conduct is no longer involved? Are the standards in our pulpits so low because the standards in the pew recognize no differences within spiritual circles? If scriptural Truth is not being proclaimed, naturally the standards declared in the Word will not be heard or obeyed. I wonder if this might be part of the reason the world laughs at us and wants nothing to do with the hypocrisy of the average church?

The Bible declares definite standards of conduct for the person serving the Lord. The standards vary not between the pew and pulpit.

What God's Servants Should Be

PURE. "Depart ye, depart ye, go ye out from thence, touch no unclean thing; go ye out of the midst of her; be ye clean, that bear the vessels of the Lord" (Isaiah 52:11). "Holding the mystery of the faith in a pure conscience" (I Timothy 3:9).

HOLY. "And thou shalt make a plate of pure gold, and grave upon it, like the engravings of a signet, HOLINESS TO THE LORD" (Exodus 28:36). "They shall be holy unto their God, and not profane the name of their God: for the offerings of the Lord made by fire, and the bread of their God, they do offer: therefore they shall be holy" (Leviticus 21:6). "But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate" (Titus 1:8).

HUMBLE. "Serving the Lord with all humility of mind, and with many tears, and temptations, which befell me by the lying in wait of the Jews" (Acts 20:19).

PATIENT. "But in all things approving ourselves as the ministers of God, in much patience, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses" (II Corinthians 6:4). "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" (II Timothy 2:24).

BLAMELESS. "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach" (I Timothy 3:2). "For a bishop must be blameless, as the steward of God; not self-willed, not soon angry, not given to wine, no striker, not given to filthy lucre" (Titus 1:7).

WILLING. Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me" (Isaiah 6:8). "Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly, not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind" (I Peter 5:2).

READY. "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you; and I will not be burdensome to you: for I seek not yours, but you: for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children" (II Corinthians 12:14). "Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ" (I Thessalonians 2:6).

IMPARTIAL. "I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and the elect angels, that thou observe these things without preferring one before another, doing nothing by partiality" (I Timothy 5:21).

GENTLE. "But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children" (I Thessalonians 2:7). "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" (II Timothy 2:24).

DEVOTED. "But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20,24). "According to my earnest expectation and my hope, that in nothing I shall be ashamed, but that with all boldness, as always, so now also Christ shall be magnified in my body, whether it be by life, or by death. For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (Philippians 1:20,21).

STRONG IN GRACE. "Thou therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus" (II Timothy 2:1).

SELF-DENYING. "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway" (I Corinthians 9:27).

SOBER, JUST AND TEMPERATE. "Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations" (Leviticus 10:9).

HOSPITABLE. "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife, vigilant, sober, of good behavior, given to hospitality, apt to teach" (I Timothy 3:2). "But a lover of hospitality, a lover of good men, sober, just, holy, temperate" (Titus 1:8).

APT TO TEACH. "And the servant of the Lord must not strive; but be gentle unto all men, apt to teach, patient" (II Timothy 2:24).

STUDIOUS AND MEDITATIVE. "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. Meditate upon these things; give thyself wholly to them; that thy profiting may appear to all" (I Timothy 4:13, 15).

WATCHFUL. "But watch thou in all things, endure afflictions, do the work of an evangelist, make full proof of thy ministry" (II Timothy 4:5).

PRAYERFUL. “For this cause I bow my knees unto the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (Ephesians 3:14). “Always in every prayer of mine for you all making request with joy” (Philippians 1:4).

STRICT IN RULING THEIR OWN FAMILIES. “One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity. Let the deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling their children and their own houses well” (I Timothy 3:4, 12).

AFFECTIONATE TO THEIR PEOPLE. “Even as it is meet for me to think this of you all, because I have you in my heart; inasmuch as both in my bonds, and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, ye all are partakers of my grace” (Philippians 1:7). “So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us. As ye know how we exhorted and comforted and charged every one of you, as a father doth his children” (I Thessalonians 2:8, 11).

EXSAMPLES TO THE FLOCK. “Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample” (Philippians 3:17). “Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an ensample unto you to follow us” (II Thessalonians 3:9). “Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity” (I Timothy 4:12). “Neither as being lords over God’s heritage, but being ensamples to the flock” (I Peter 5:3).

What God’s Servants Will Do

PREACH THE GOSPEL. “And he said unto them, go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” (Mark 16:15). “For Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect” (I Corinthians 1:17).

FEED THE CHURCH. “And I will give you pastors according to mine heart, which shall feed you with knowledge and understanding” (Jeremiah 3:15). “So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? he saith unto him, Yea, Lord, thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep” (John 2 1:15-17). “Take heed therefore unto yourselves, and to all the flock, over the which the Holy Ghost hath made you overseers, to feed the church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). “Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint,

but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind” (1 Peter 5:2).

A Glorious Privilege

In Romans 1:1, Paul introduces himself in the following manner: “Paul, a servant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, separated to the gospel of God.” First and foremost, he classifies himself a bond-slave belonging to Jesus Christ. This means he has been set free but has chosen to serve his Master without hesitating or reservation. He places himself under the absolute authority and control of his Master. He has no will of his own. There is only one Person to be pleased in all of his labor — his Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. Of course, this means the purpose of his Master is to be realized in all of his influence and labor. He answers to no one else!

Is it any wonder the shortest verse in the Bible comes from this same apostle, “Rejoice evermore” (I Thessalonians 5:16). Listen to Paul’s direction: “Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say, rejoice” (Philippians 4:4). What thrilling delight to be the servant of the One Who died for us! Only a child of God has this glorious privilege. This position you can possess by repenting of your sin and trusting in the work of Christ on the cross through an empty tomb. God provides both the repentance and faith He demands of you. All the work necessary for your eternal redemption has already been accomplished. You rest upon the faithfulness of God’s promises through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ.

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