

What Have I Gotten Myself Into? Not a Waste of Time

A Quick Survey of Service

¹³ So if you faithfully obey the commands I am giving you today—to love the LORD your God and **to serve him with all your heart and with all your soul**-¹⁴ then I will send rain on your land in its season, both autumn and spring rains, so that you may gather in your grain, new wine and oil. Deuteronomy 11:13-14

⁶ Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. ⁷ **Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord**, not men, ⁸ because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. Ephesians 6:6-8

¹³ You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, **serve one another in love**. ¹⁴ The entire law is summed up in a single command: "Love your neighbor as yourself." Galatians 5:12-14

¹³ The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. ¹⁴ How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, **so that we may serve the living God!** Hebrews 9:13-14

To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, ⁶ and **has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father**—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.

⁷ Look, he is coming with the clouds,
and every eye will see him,
even those who pierced him;
and all the peoples of the earth will mourn because of him. So shall it be! Amen.

Revelation 1:5-7

Gifted to Serve

¹² The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. ¹³ For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.

¹⁴ Now the body is not made up of one part but of many. ¹⁵ If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁶ And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," it would not for that reason cease to be part of the body. ¹⁷ If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? ¹⁸ But in fact God has arranged the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. ¹⁹ If they were all one part, where would the body be? ²⁰ As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

²¹The eye cannot say to the hand, "I don't need you!" And the head cannot say to the feet, "I don't need you!" ²²On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, ²³and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, ²⁴while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. 1 Corinthians 12:12-26

The Burden of Service

⁷ "You place defiled food on my altar.

"But you ask, 'How have we defiled you?'

"By saying that the LORD's table is contemptible. ⁸ When you bring blind animals for sacrifice, is that not wrong? When you sacrifice crippled or diseased animals, is that not wrong? Try offering them to your governor! Would he be pleased with you? Would he accept you?" says the LORD Almighty.

⁹ "Now implore God to be gracious to us. With such offerings from your hands, will he accept you?"-says the LORD Almighty.

¹⁰ "**Oh, that one of you would shut the temple doors, so that you would not light useless fires on my altar! I am not pleased with you,**" says the LORD Almighty, "and I will accept no offering from your hands. ¹¹ My name will be great among the nations, from the rising to the setting of the sun. In every place incense and pure offerings will be brought to my name, because my name will be great among the nations," says the LORD Almighty. Malachi 1:7-11

Service at its Best

¹¹**It was he who gave** some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, ¹²**to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up** ¹³until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Ephesians 4:11-13

¹It was just before the Passover Feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, **he now showed them the full extent of his love.**

²The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. ³Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; ⁴so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. ⁵After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

⁶He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

⁷Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

⁸"No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

⁹"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

¹⁰Jesus answered, "A person who has had a bath needs only to wash his feet; his whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." ¹¹For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

¹²When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³"You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴**Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet.** ¹⁵**I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.** ¹⁶I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. ¹⁷Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. John 13:1-17

The Tension

Jesus did not come and hang out a help-wanted sign. He came and hung out a help-available sign. Jesus is eating with sinners because he is a doctor with a cure, not because he is an employer with a labor shortage. John Piper

Strength to Serve

¹⁴Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. ¹⁵For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. ¹⁶**Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.** Hebrews 4:14-16

... the more you see your own flaws and sins, the more precious, electrifying, and amazing God's grace appears to you. But on the other hand, the more aware you are of God's grace and acceptance in Christ, the more able you are to drop your denials and self-defenses and admit the true dimensions and character of your sin. This also creates a new dynamic for discipline and obedience. First, the knowledge of our acceptance in Christ makes it easier to admit we are flawed because we know we won't be cast off if we confess the true depths of our sinfulness. Second, it makes the law of God a thing of beauty instead of burden. We can use it to delight and imitate the one who has saved us rather than to get his attention or procure his favor. We now run the race 'for the joy that is set before us' rather than 'for fear that comes behind us.' Tim Keller

⁴Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. ⁵"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; **apart from me you can do nothing.** John 15:4-5

The salvation of Jesus humbles us profoundly— we are so lost that he had to die for us. But it exalts and assures us mightily — we are so valued that he was glad to die for us. Because we are sinners totally accepted by grace, we have both the humility and the boldness necessary to serve others for their sake, not ours. Tim Keller