



Luke Seventeen Servants Luke 17:7-10

Getting Started

Recall a time when you felt like you should have been shown more appreciation for something you did. Was it at work? At home? A non-profit serving organization?

Have you ever felt that way about your relationship with God? Or serving in your church family?

The Parable of the Unworthy Servant

⁷"Suppose one of you had a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Would he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, 'Come along now and sit down to eat'? ⁸Would he not rather say, 'Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink'? ⁹Would he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? ¹⁰So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, 'We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.' " (Luke 17:7-10)

Parable Summary: A servant of Jesus does whatever Jesus wants, whenever Jesus wants it, for however long Jesus wants it, with no strings attached!

Jesus regularly clashed the Pharisees, those religious leaders who loved money and loved the attention of their profession. Against their self-serving leadership, Jesus put his disciples on notice that they must be servants. They must not love being first or famous. They must not be addicted to their own significance. They must be humble, grateful, and forgiving.

In this parable Jesus destroys any delusion the disciples may have that would suggest that their distinctive lifestyle somehow in-debts God. Unfortunately, some think that because they serve God or give to God's work, God, then, should bless them or be indebted to them, etc. The fact is, God does bless faithfulness. Faith is being certain God exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him. But God doesn't do it because He owes us.

Through the lens of Deuteronomy 15:12-18, Jesus' parable reminds his disciples that they have been purchased from the kingdom of darkness. Rather than being thrown into debtor's prison—that is, hell—Christ's followers have been redeemed and rescued! Jesus became the indentured servant for our sin-debt. His death, burial, and resurrection defeated evil once and for all; by trusting Him and surrendering all to Him, we have life that is truly life! In light of God's grace and the hope of the new heavens and new earth—if we never received anything else materially on earth for the rest of our lives—could we really complain?

This parable reminds us that Christianity is not total liberation from slavery but the bold proclamation of a better Master! Jesus is the best Master you will ever find! Furthermore, Christians serve a Master like unto Luke 12:37.

Thus, anything we do for Jesus can only be credited to Him! Even when we act righteously, such strength comes from Him! Don't ever think that your service to Christ is doing Him a favor! *"Unworthy" means that there is nothing I could ever do to repay/reimburse what it cost Christ to purchase me!* Christ's followers are not to seek thanks, we are to give thanks!

In Christ, we are heirs of God, a royal priesthood, and a holy nation. Christians are more than servants. But we are no less than servants, either.

Questions and Reflections

1. Do I serve God and the church family without regard to credit or recognition?
2. Jesus told this parable after a discussion about forgiveness in Luke 17:3-4. Who do you need to forgive today? What grudges need to go?
3. Someone wrote: "If you obey God only when you agree with Him, you haven't obeyed!" Have you ever struggled with this truth?
4. "It's easier to serve your mate if you envision your loving Lord rather than your flawed spouse. Picture doing it for Jesus. The imposition then becomes an honor." (Jim and Sally Conway, *Preaching Today*)
5. "God retains the right to command His followers to live however He chooses." (Blomberg 1990, 263) What's your biggest concern or fear with that quote, if any? How does Romans 12:1-2 address this?
6. "God's people should never presume that their obedience to his commands has earned them his favor." (Blomberg 1990, 263) Read Galatians 3:1-5 and note what Paul is saying: we don't obey God in order to be saved; we obey God because that's what saved people do!
7. Has obedience to God become my highest pleasure?

*Our pleasure and our duty,
Though opposite before;
Since we have seen his beauty,
Are joined to part no more:*

*It is our highest pleasure,
No less than duty's call;
To love Him beyond measure,
And serve Him with our all. (John Newton)*

Prayer for the week:

Lord of all power and might, the Author and Giver of all good things: Graft in our hearts the love of your Name; nourish us with all goodness; give us strength so that our duty and our pleasure are one and the same; and may this world see our good works and glorify You; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever. Amen.