

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF BEING A CHRISTIAN**“Saved To Serve”**

INTRODUCTION

- A. Every right implies a responsibility. Every opportunity implies an obligation. Every possession implies a duty.
- B. Enjoyment of the Christian’s relationship to God involves accepting the responsibilities inherent in that relationship.
 - 1. Duty without doctrine is a tree without roots. Cf. CO 2:23.
 - 2. But doctrine without duty is a tree without fruits. Cf. LK 6:46.
- C. The Christian is a person called to God’s service – 1 TH 1:9.
- D. We are obligated to fulfill our individual service. CO 4:17; 2 TI 4:5.

DISCUSSION

I. THE KINGDOM AS A REALM OF ACTIVITY.

- A. The Bible gives us illustrations of what the Christian is.
 - 1. “Branch” – JN 15:1-8; Cf. MT 7:16-20.
 - 2. “Farmer” – 2 TI 2:6; JA 5:7; Cf. EC 11:3-4; 2 CO 9:6.
 - 3. “Soldier” – 2 TI 2:3-4; 4:7; Cf. PH 2:25; PL 2.
 - 4. “Athlete” – 1 CO 9:24-27; 2 TI 2:5; 4:7.
 - 5. “Member” – RO 12:3-8; 1 CO 12:12-27.
- B. The Bible gives us illustrations of what the Christian is accountable for.
 - 1. “Fruitfulness” – MT 13:1-9, 18-23; CO 1:10; TS 3:14; 2 PE 1:8.
 - 2. “Usefulness” – 2 TI 2:20-21; Cf. 2 TI 4:11.
 - 3. “Profitableness” – MT 25:14-30.
- C. The Christian aims to do God’s will – Cf. JN 4:34; 6:38 -, and thereby to please God – 1 CO 7:32; 2 CO 5:9; EP 5:8-10.
 - 1. The problem of “passivity” is soul-threatening – MT 25:31-46; LK 10:25-37.
 - a. The spiritual “freeloader” who is “just along for the ride” will be sadly disappointed. Cf. MT 7:21.
 - b. The Christian does not have the luxury of “just belonging” – JA 2:14-26.
 - 2. Unused abilities/opportunities will eventually be withdrawn – Cf. IS 5:1-7.
 - 3. We are responsible for doing what we can. Cf. MK 14:8.

II. THE CHRISTIAN AS A WORKER.

- A. Identity of the Christian.
 - 1. “Worker” – 1 TH 1:3; 2 TI 2:15; Cf. JN 6:27; 1 PE 1:17; RO 16:3, 9, 21; PH 2:25; 4:3.
 - 2. “Laborer” – MT 9:37-38; JN 6:27; RE 14:13; Cf. MT 20:1-16; JN 4:35-38; RO 16:6; GA 4:11; PH 2:16.
- B. Activity of the Christian.
 - 1. “Work of the Lord” – 1 CO 15:58; Cf. 1 CO 16:10; PH 2:30, 13.
 - a. The Lord’s work involves human beings – MT 4:19; 1 CO 9:1.
 - b. The attitude of Jesus is our example – JN 4:34; 17:4.
 - 2. “Good works” – EP 2:10; MT 5:16; 1 PE 2:12; Cf. GA 1:10; 1 TI 2:10; 2 TI 3:17.
 - a. Jesus “went about doing good” – Acts 10:38; Cf. TS 2:14.
 - b. Christians are to be about HE 10:24; Cf. TS 2:7; 3:8, 14.
 - 3. God is able to make the Christian as stated in HE 13:21; Cf. 2 CO 9:8; 2 TH 2:17.
- C. Inventory of the Christian’s ability and opportunity.
 - 1. Abilities:
 - In what ways am I especially blessed by God?

What do I possess that might be used in the Lord's work?

What do I derive fulfillment from doing?

What do I enjoy doing?

What comes naturally for me?

What might I learn to do?

2. Opportunities:

What needs to be done in the Lord's work?

What scriptural restrictions govern the work?

What other factors may limit my opportunity?

What is now being done inadequately?

What problems exist that need to be solved?

What are others doing that I need to help do?

Opportunity is often accompanied by opposition – 1 CO 16:9.

We sing, "There is much to do, there is work on every hand."

3. We need to be ready! There is work to do!

D. Attitudes toward the Christian's work.

1. Gratitude for the privilege – 1 TI 2:12.

2. Initiative, willingness to work without having to be prodded. Cf. 1 TI 4:14; 2 TI 1:6.

3. Positiveness – 1 CO 10:10; PH 2:14. People are often down on what they are not up to.

4. Enthusiasm, eagerness – 2 CO 9:7 – Nothing is so easy but that it becomes difficult if done with reluctance.

5. Industriousness, energy – NE 4:6. Some folks are like blisters – they never show up until the work is almost done. The world is full of willing people: some willing to work, the rest willing to let them. Caution must be exercised, however, to guard against the setbacks of "burn-out."

6. Persistence, perseverance, tirelessness, willingness to go the second mile – GA 6:9; 2 TH 3:13; 2 TI 4:7. Initiative + finishiative = completed work.

III. THE CHRISTIAN AS A SERVANT.

A. Servanthood in the Christian's life.

1. "Follower" (mimetes) – EP 5:1; 1 TH 1:6.

2. "Disciple" (mathethes) – MT 10:24-25; LK 14:26-33; JN 8:31; 15:8; Acts 11:26; Cf. MT 28:19.

3. "Steward" (oikonomos) – LK 12:42; 1 CO 4:1-2; 1 PE 4:10-11.

4. "Minister" (diakonos) – RO 16:1; 1 CO 3:5; 2 CO 6:4; CO 1:7, 25; 4:7; EP 4:12.

5. "Servant" (doulos) – MT 20:27; 24:45-46.

B. What servanthood means.

1. Servanthood is MT 22:37-40 in action – it is the outward evidence of a shift in focus away from self. Cf. JA 2:14-17. We are our "brother's keeper." It means doing whatever we can for others. The Christian serves Christians. Love of God cannot be detached from service to man – JA 1:27; 1 JN 2:9-11. To live for Christ is to live for others, treating them as we would treat Christ – MT 25:31-46; EP 5:21.

2. Servanthood is a way of life, not an occasional "good deed." PH 2:4-7.

3. Servanthood is an investment in people, rather in things. 1 CO 4:16-17.

4. Servanthood is a sacrifice – it costs. Cf. MT 5:38-42.

5. Servanthood is a privilege – LK 15:18-19.

- C. Hindrances to servanthood.
 - 1. Service to the wrong master – MT 6:24.
 - 2. Limitations on how, where, and when we will serve.
 - 3. Limitations on whom we will serve.
 - 4. Negligence, “sluggishness.” Cf. HE 6:11-12.
 - 5. Laziness, slothfulness. Cf. MT 25:26.
 - 6. Ingratitude. Cf. 2 Co 8:9; PH 2:5-7.
 - 7. Pride, self-centeredness.
- D. The greatness of servanthood.
 - 1. Jesus “did not come to be served, but to serve.” MT 20:28.
 - 2. True greatness consists of serving others – MT 20:20-28.
 - 3. Servanthood is rewarded – Acts 20:35.
 - 4. Our responsibility is to “fulfill” our individual “ministry.”

CONCLUSION

- A. The Christian is “at God’s disposal” – and the Christian does all that he does “as to the Lord.” EP 6:7; CO 3:23.
- B. The Christian’s work/service is a part of the joy of being in Christ. PR 11:24-25.
- C. Discipline is needed for us to:
 - 1. Plan, set goals for our work and service.
 - 2. Prepare. Cf. EC 10:10.
 - 3. Engage ourselves in activity.
 - 4. Finish what we start.
- D. Judgment will involve an accounting of our use of potential.
- E. God’s work is urgent – JN 9:4.
- F. We must influence one another to want to be active. HE 10:24-25.
- G. We have been taught to teach, won to win, saved to serve – all to God’s glory. 1 PE 4:10-11.