

Message Three

Faithful in Service

Scripture Reading: Matt. 25:14-30

I. For service, for work, we need the talent, the spiritual gift, that we may be equipped as a good slave to accomplish what the Lord intends to accomplish—Matt. 25:20-23; cf. 24:45-51:

- A. “The kingdom of the heavens is just like a man about to go abroad, who called his own slaves and delivered to them his possessions. To one he gave five talents, and to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability. And he went abroad”—25:14-15:
 - 1. Slaves signify believers viewed from the aspect of service—1 Cor. 7:22-23; 2 Pet. 1:1; Rom. 1:1.
 - 2. *His possessions* signifies the church (Eph. 1:18) with all the believers, who constitute God’s household (Matt. 24:45).
 - 3. Talents signify spiritual gifts (25:15-23; Rom. 12:6; 1 Cor. 12:4; 1 Pet. 4:10; 2 Tim. 1:6-7); the filling of the Spirit in life enables us to use the spiritual gift in service (work), and the spiritual gift in service matches the filling of the Spirit in life, that we may be a perfect member of Christ.
 - 4. *The joy of your master* signifies the enjoyment of the Lord in the coming kingdom as a reward for our faithful service to Him (Matt. 25:21, 23); this refers to inward satisfaction, not to outward position; to participate in the Lord’s joy is the greatest reward, better than the glory and position in the coming kingdom.
 - 5. In this age we must use the Lord’s gift to save people and to minister His riches to them—v. 27.
- B. Our inward motive for serving the Lord is our love for Him—Exo. 21:5; Rev. 2:4-5.
- C. Our serving the Lord should always proceed out from Him as the source of blessing, be through Him as the means and the power, and be unto Him for His glory—Rom. 11:36; cf. Num. 18:1.
- D. We need to serve the Lord with our whole being according to the counsel of God by coordinating with the members of the Body—Rom. 12:1-2, 11; Acts 13:36; 1 Cor. 12:14-22.
- E. We need to use the Lord’s gift to build up the church by serving others with Christ and ministering Christ as grace to them—Matt. 25:27; 1 Pet. 4:10; Col. 1:7; 4:12:
 - 1. We need to serve as laboring priests of the gospel of God, saving sinners to offer them to God as acceptable sacrifices and eventually present them full-grown in Christ—Rom. 15:16; 12:1; Col. 1:28.
 - 2. We need to supply others with Christ as their spiritual food at the proper time—Matt. 24:45:
 - a. We need to speak Christ to all kinds of people daily in season and out of season—Acts 5:42; 8:4; 2 Tim. 4:2.
 - b. We need to desperately endeavor to build up a habit of speaking in any meeting—1 Cor. 14:26, 4-5, 12, 31.
 - 3. We need to care for people with the loving and forgiving heart of our Father God and the shepherding and seeking spirit of our Savior Christ; love is the most

- excellent way for us to be anything and to do anything for the building up of the Body of Christ—John 21:15-17; 1 Cor. 12:31b; 13:4-8, 13.
4. We should not mistreat our fellow believers by criticizing, judging, or exposing them; instead, we should admonish the disorderly, console the fainthearted, the “little-souled,” sustain those who are weak in spirit, soul, or body, or weak in the faith, and be long-suffering toward all—Matt. 24:49; 1 Thes. 5:14.
 5. Through our involvement in the world, we should not render the Lord’s gift useless, letting it lie waste under the cloak of certain earthly excuses—Matt. 25:18-19.
- F. Our work and labor for the Lord in the gospel are not by our natural life and natural ability but by the Lord’s resurrection life and power; resurrection is the eternal principle in our service to God—Num. 17:8; 1 Cor. 15:10, 58; 16:10:
1. The life-giving Spirit is the reality of the Triune God, the reality of resurrection, and the reality of the Body of Christ—John 16:13-15; 20:22; 1 Cor. 15:45b; Eph. 4:4.
 2. All those who know resurrection have given up hope in themselves; they know that they cannot make it; everything that is of death belongs to us, and everything that is of life belongs to the Lord—Num. 17:8; 2 Cor. 1:8-9; cf. Eccl. 9:4.
 3. We must acknowledge that we are nothing, have nothing, and can do nothing; we must come to the end of ourselves to be convinced of our utter uselessness—Exo. 2:14-15; 3:14-15; Luke 22:32-33; 1 Pet. 5:5-6.
 4. The resurrected Christ as the life-giving Spirit lives in us, enabling us to do what we could never do in ourselves—1 Cor. 15:10; 2 Cor. 1:8-9, 12; 4:7-18.
- G. We should always abound in the work of the Lord, knowing that our labor for the Lord in His resurrection life with His resurrection power will never be in vain but will result in the fulfilling of God’s eternal purpose—1 Cor. 15:58.