

Paul, the Slave of Christ

by Paul van Engelenhoven

This sermon delves into the transformation of the apostle Paul from a zealous persecutor of Christians to a devoted servant of Christ Jesus. It emphasizes the radical change in Paul's life when he encountered Jesus on the road to Damascus, leading to his complete surrender and becoming a slave of Christ. The message highlights the profound impact of the gospel in transforming hearts and lives, calling believers to wholeheartedly follow and serve the Lord Jesus Christ.

Scripture: Acts 9:1, Romans 12:1, Philippians 3:7, 1 Thessalonians 1:5, Romans 12:1, Philippians 3:7, Acts 9:19, Romans 12:1

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Description

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Transcript

We're going to open the book of Romans to chapter 1, verse 1. Last week we finished the book of Ezekiel. We're going to start a new series in the book of Romans today, and we'll begin the first three sermons with the apostle Paul and who he is. So we'll read Romans 1, and then we'll look at how Paul came to Christ in Acts chapter 9, verses 1 to 18.

Romans 1.1 says, Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God. We'll go to Acts chapter 9, which will be the main of our text this morning. Verses 1 to 18.

This is the living word of our God. But Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any belonging to the way, that's the early church here, men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Now as he went on his way, he approached Damascus, and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him, and falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him, Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me? And he said, who are you, Lord? He said, I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting, but rise and enter the city, and you'll be told what you are to do.

The men who were traveling with him stood speechless, hearing the voice, but seeing no one. Saul rose from the ground, and although his eyes were opened, he saw nothing, so they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus, and for three days he was without sight, and neither ate nor drank. Now there was a disciple of Damascus named Ananias.

The Lord said to him in a vision, Ananias, and he said, here I am, Lord. And the Lord said to him, rise and go to the street that is called straight, and at the house of Judas look for a man of Tarsus named Saul, for behold he is praying. And as he has seen in the vision, a man named Ananias come in and lay his hands on him, so that he might regain his sight.

But Ananias answered, Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much evil he has done to your saints at Jerusalem, and here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on your name. But the Lord said to him, go, for he is a chosen instrument of mine, to carry my name before the Gentiles, and kings, and children of Israel, and I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name. So Ananias departed and entered the house, and laying his hand on him, he said, brother Saul, the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me, so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

And immediately something like scales fell from his eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized, the beginning of verse 19 says, and taking food he was strengthened. Let us pray.

To Heavenly Father we pray as we are at the beginning of our journey through the book of Romans, and we begin to understand your gospel. We pray, Lord, that you would help us this morning to see your word, not only through our ears, but through the eyes of our heart, that we would see your glory. For we pray this in Jesus' name, amen.

Beloved, it is a joyful and glorious day, for we have the privilege of reading God's word, and with the Holy Spirit's help to understand. And as I said, this is today our first step in the journey through the book of Romans, Paul's letter to the Romans, which really is the Holy Spirit's letter to the church at Rome, a journey that will probably take us some time to complete. Martin Luther said of this book, it is impossible to read or to meditate on this letter too much or too well.

John Calvin said, I cannot recommend this book, for even in my recommendation I would fall short and only obscure its message. Now the first few weeks we will simply meditate on Romans 1.1, in which Paul introduces himself, and he introduces himself in a specific way, because Paul has visited all the other churches that he has been writing to, but this church he has never visited. We will find in the first chapter that Paul says, I have longed to come to you, but thus far I have been prevented.

He wanted to see the brothers and sisters in Rome, but he had never been there. And so in Romans, it's unique because he's not responding to issues in the church. He's not correcting the church.

What he does is he lays out the whole gospel from beginning to end, so that the church at Rome can understand the fullness of the gospel of Christ. And so Paul, as he lays out the gospel, he teaches how it affects us, how it brings us into Christ, how it helps us to walk with Christ, and how it will ultimately end to Christ. And so the whole letter is basically Paul's explanation how to come to Jesus and how to follow him for the rest of our lives and into eternity.

And so what we have in the book of Romans is really the summary of Christian truth. This effort is often considered the capstone of all the epistles in the New Testament, for Paul was set apart as the apostle to the Gentiles to bring God's truth and salvation to the world. But before we dive into the letter, I think we must understand a little bit about the author, the apostle Paul, who identifies himself in verse 1 as Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus or a slave of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle and set apart for the gospel of God.

This morning we will look at this first phrase, a servant or slave of Christ Jesus. You see for the apostle Paul, the content in the book of Romans is not something to be studied somewhere in a high tower away from the world and just to meditate upon these theoretical truths. No, it's not some high tower academic theology that he's laying out.

What he is speaking about is this. This is the life giving transforming truth from God himself. This is the message that God uses and through which he comes to people and makes them into a follower of God.

It's even what makes a person not only a follower but slave of the Lord Jesus Christ and a happy one at that. I think we would lose the core message if we don't start with the work that Jesus Christ did in the apostle Paul. That this is not just something he has heard from something someone.

He has seen it and he has been moved and come to life by this very message. And so this morning we will look at the transforming of Paul's life in three points. We'll begin with the zealous entrepreneur of God in Acts chapter 9, 1 and 2. Then we go to the confrontation with Jesus Christ in verses 3 to 9 of Acts 9. And then we'll talk about how he became a slave of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's begin with the zealous entrepreneur. We meet Paul as a zealous religious fervent man that is 100% committed to his beliefs. And he believed that to serve God he has to destroy the people who are on the way.

Which he considered a Christian cult or cult at the time. The people who followed Christ he said he thought it was a dangerous cult and ungodly people so much so that they needed to be arrested and if necessary killed. Now the first time we hear of the apostle Paul is in Acts chapter 8. Stephen the deacon had been filled with the Holy Spirit and preached the truth of Jesus.

And if you remember that chapter in the book of Acts he lays out the history of Israel with the conclusion that the Israelites had been a stubborn people never willing to turn to the Lord Jesus Christ. And at the end of this message they got so angry they started to grind their tree teeth and they dragged them out of the city and they picked up stones and they killed him. And then it says this Acts chapter 8 verse 1 and Saul approved of his execution.

It's the first thing we learn about the apostle Paul. He's sitting and Stephen this man filled with God's Holy Spirit is brutally murdered and Saul is looking at him he says that's the will of God. Saul which is his Jewish name which is Jewish name and Paul his Roman name approved of the violent execution of Stephen.

He was firmly persuaded that they should murder the Christian religion. And so we find Paul here in Acts chapter 9 verse 1 and 2 listen to these words but Saul still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord went to the high priest and asked him for letters to the synagogues of Damascus so that if he found any belonging to the way men or women he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. Saul is a man who's breathing threats and murder out of his mouth come continuous threats and murder.

Saul or Paul was a zealous man. He was zealous for God and tried everything to please God even murdering God's opponents. Let me give you a little bit more of a background of the apostle Paul in Philippians 3 verse 4 to 6. He says this though I myself have reason for confidence in the flesh also if anyone thinks he has reason to be to have confidence in himself I have more.

I was circumcised on the eighth day. I was of the people of Israel of the tribe of Benjamin a Hebrew of the Hebrews as to the law a Pharisee as to zeal a persecutor of the church as to righteousness under the law blameless. In other words you would read every law to the apostle Paul and he would lay next to his life and you would observe him you would say he crosses every T and dots every I. He is perfectly walking in the law of God as we see him walk in this world.

There was no better Jew than the apostle Paul of his time. In every possible way Saul sought to make himself approved before God. You couldn't find a law that Paul was not zealous to keep.

Praying, fasting, memorizing scripture, the entire old testament, offerings, tithing of everything he had you name it. Paul was first and foremost in all these things and besides all this he was an entrepreneur of God. He didn't just stay within the law he wanted to do more before God.

He sought to put his entire life in the service of God. He was the pride of every synagogue and the envy of every Jewish mother. He was a man of God in his time in the time of Jerusalem but all that changed when he met Jesus Christ.

Did you notice when we were reading the book of Acts that he is going out against the people of the way and then it says later on Paul walking in his way. That's the problem. Did you notice that? I was let me see if I can find it in verse 3. Now as he went on his way you see what's what the holy spirit is doing in the scripture.

Paul was going out against people of the way the way of Christ but Paul being still on his way that's about to change because these two ways are about to collide and God is going to take over Paul's way and make it the Lord's way for the rest of Paul's life. Listen to the word here in Acts 9 verse 3 to 9. Now as he went on his way he approached Damascus and suddenly a light from heaven shone around him and falling to the ground he heard a voice saying to him Saul Saul why are you persecuting me? Can you imagine the shock here? Here is Paul convinced that he is on the way serving God. He is zealous.

He has memorized scriptures. He has given all his money and tithed it perfectly straight out and for the money that he had left over he paid his journeys to serve God and suddenly as he walks on his way serving God faithfully according to his own understanding a light shines from heaven and suddenly he hears a voice from heaven saying why do you persecute me? Why are you against me? And he said and who are you Lord? Who are you Lord? Who are you Lord? And he that's this voice that speaks from heaven says I am Jesus whom you are persecuting. You can just imagine Paul right this man zealous for God thinking he's serving God and suddenly God speaks from heaven and he says you are running as my enemy.

Paul's life is destroyed in one moment. He realizes I am here and suddenly he's at the bottom of the toilet but then Jesus continues to speak but rise and enter the city and you will be told what you are to do. That's mercy and grace right there.

Do you see that? The enemy of God. Jesus speaks to the enemy of God and says now go here and I will tell you what to do. The man who were traveling with him stood speechless hearing the voice but seeing no one.

Saul rose from the ground and although his eyes were opened he saw nothing. He was suddenly blind so that they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus and for three days he was without sight and neither ate nor drank. Saul was a hundred percent committed to his cause until God spoke to him from heaven and showed him you're running the wrong way.

He was persuaded that he was in the will of God but then Jesus says you are my enemy and suddenly the entrepreneur of God realizes that he has been the entrepreneur of the devil all along. Can you imagine that God would speak to you today and say you're not serving me you're hating me. Saul thought that he was walking in the light of God's word but he was completely utterly in darkness and so Christ shines a light from heaven and speaks to him and after Saul heard the voice of Christ he realizes that he is blind.

That he has been blind all this way and and God makes him physically or visibly blind. He changes the eyesight and it's a picture to all of us isn't it. Saul had been blind all the time and now that he's visibly blind he can't see anymore now he's spiritually beginning to see.

We would say Paul is blind here I think Paul would say I was blind five minutes before this happened. This is when I began to see when the light of Christ shines even though I couldn't see the world anymore I began to see above and beyond the world I saw God himself speaking to me. Saul was shocked at his own blindness and his own evil actions.

Do you see this for three days he was without sight and he neither ate nor drank. You know how hard that is not to eat and drink for three days that's physically destructive to your body. His life was upside down everything he believed in was turned upside down.

The thought the people he thought were the friends of God were the enemies of God and the people he thought were the enemies of God turned out to be the friends of God. The people that he thought this is how you serve God and this is how God is pleased all that system is destructive to God's glory and the system that he hated and was against that is the system that God desires us to worship in. Everything was turned upside down his career everything had been the career of Satan and suddenly he realizes God calls me to truly follow him.

He realized that he had been blind for all these years and now he cannot see anything but his horrendous sin. He has no appetite for eating or drinking only for the truth his life is turning around. Now I want you to understand how much this is going to cost the apostle Paul.

Can you imagine being a Pharisee of the Pharisee a servant of the people who are against the church and then you turn over to the other side and you're going to be a member of the church. If we put this in perspective he would lose all his friends every single one of them his entire environment of friends he would lose because they would become his enemies. He would lose his career his future all his hopes and dreams that he sought to achieve.

He would lose all his possessions. He would lose his house in Jerusalem that was with his function as a Pharisee. He would lose all the benefits he couldn't go back into that house and say by the way I belong to the church that all of you hate let me gather my possession.

No all of that was gone. He lost everything and you know what he says? What I lost was done. What I lost was only fit for the toilet.

Let me read it to you from Philippians 3 7 to 11. But whatever gain I had in Judaism I counted as lost for the sake of Christ. Indeed I count everything as lost because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord.

Everything I've lost is but done for what I have received. That light from heaven that voice of Christ that salvation into my heart is more precious than anything else in the world. He says I was poor but now I'm rich.

For his sake I have suffered the loss of all things earthly things and count them as rubbish in order that I might gain Christ. He gave up all his pearls for one precious pearl and be found in him not having a righteousness of my own that comes from the law but that which comes through faith in Christ. The righteousness of God that depends on faith that I may know him and the power of his resurrection and may share in his what? His riches? Not only that that I may share in his sufferings.

Becoming like him in his death. You see the radical change in Paul? That by any means possible I may attain to the resurrection of the dead. Saul exchanged everything he had all his advances in the law his honor and esteem all the privileges and glory human glory as he had as a Pharisee.

He saw that it was nothing but done. It was rubbish throw it in the toilet be done with it. The whole nation was looking at the Pharisees and saying what oh I wish I had a son that was a Pharisee.

Oh I wish that I had one of these religious leaders. What a glory if one of our family would attain to such stature and position. Oh look at that the apostle Paul is walking.

Let's step aside out of respect for this godly man. Paul turns around and says I was the worst sinner of all because I ran my own way and not the way of Jesus Christ. He saw that the only thing worth having in this world the only possession that he longed for and that you and I should long for and that any person that has eternal sense that means a mind that has that makes sense in eternity.

The only thing worth having is the Lord Jesus Christ. He was an entrepreneur for God. He lost all his business for one thing to be a servant of the Lord Jesus Christ.

That's the power of the gospel. The gospel is that message that displays the Lord Jesus Christ that once you see it you count your riches and your honor and glory in this world as nothing and you say be thou my vision oh Lord of my heart. Beloved this is what happens when we see that precious pearl the Lord Jesus Christ.

He went and sold all that he had so that he might gain this precious pearl. Now what was unique about Paul's conversion is the voice of Christ from heaven and the visible light and heavenly light and the physical blindness of Paul and the scales falling off. Those are all unique manifestations to Paul's conversion.

We don't see them repeated in other conversions in the new testament but the transformation of heart and life is universal. It's in all God's people and this is what Paul tells in the Thessalonians doesn't he in first Thessalonians one for five verse five and six because our gospel came to you not only in word but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction and you became imitators of us and of the Lord and

you received the word in much affliction with the joy of the Holy Spirit. That's what the gospel does.

What we're about to enter into in the book of Romans we're not going to talk about some theological statements you need to write on your wall and try to memorize. No we're going to see the power of the Lord Jesus Christ. A life transforming, altering, renewing, giving gospel.

This is glorious. This is truly life changing. This is life.

The gospel always comes with transforming power. Actually I need to say that in a different way. Jesus Christ comes with transforming power.

You see the gospel is only a message. It speaks about the Lord Jesus Christ and when you hear it you meet the Lord Jesus Christ. You know the Welsh preacher Dr. Martin Lloyd-Jones always emphasized this.

Have you met the Lord Jesus Christ? You know him. Have you met him? The reason why he emphasized that is because he saw what was coming and what we have in our day when the gospel is reduced to some statements you need to believe. A couple of lines you need to agree with and put a check mark behind and then you're saved and Martin Lloyd-Jones says no no no and the apostle Paul says no.

It's not about you saying okay I agree I'm a sinner. I agree Jesus died for my sins. I agree that he will take me to heaven.

Now I'm saved. That's not the gospel. It's truths of the gospel but it's not the gospel.

The gospel is when you hear the Lord Jesus Christ through the gospel preached to you and as you hear it your eyes begin to be open like Paul saw the Lord Jesus Christ and heard the voice of God speaking to your heart and from one moment to the next you go from being dead without God to being alive with Christ Jesus. You go from being an entrepreneur for God that is blind in darkness to walking with the Lord Jesus Christ being a servant and slave of Christ. You see Paul used to be a businessman for God.

He was investing and working and coming up with new ideas to serve God but once he has met Jesus Christ everything changed. He no longer did things for God now he just simply followed the Lord Jesus Christ. Isn't that beautiful? I think most of us certainly not me would be able would not be able to do what the apostle Paul did as a Pharisee.

We don't have those gifts and that charisma and that power and that control of our of a vocabulary. We don't have those things. We can never please God in these ways but all of us can serve Christ the way Paul served after he came to know him because all Paul did after words was Lord what do you want me to do? Jesus says go here and Paul went there and go here and Paul went there and Jesus exactly knew what Paul was to do and he guided him through his life.

That's the gospel. You come to know Jesus Christ and you simply follow him a servant of Christ Jesus and oh how it transformed the apostle Paul. And our third point the becoming of a slave of Christ.

We could have thought that day when Paul approved of Stephen's execution who could have thought that this same Paul would one day write Paul a slave of Christ Jesus. Certainly not me. If I would see him there saying that's right kill this man because he is lifting up the name of Jesus a few years later he's writing Paul a slave a doulos of Christ Jesus.

Now many say that Saul becomes Paul once he is saved. That's not exactly true. Saul is still Saul after he is saved and Paul was already Paul before he was saved.

Saul is simply the Jewish name and Paul is the Roman name. Let me show it to you next 13 verse 9. But Saul who was also called Paul filled with the Holy Spirit looked intently at him when Paul was amongst his Roman speaking believers he would be called Paul and if he was with his Jewish people he would call Saul would be called Saul. There's something much more fundamentally changed in the apostle Paul than a name.

He became a slave of Christ Jesus. Verse 15 to 9 of Acts he says go for he that Saul is the chosen instrument of mine to carry my name before the Gentiles and kings and the children of Israel and I will show him how much he must suffer for the sake of my name. That's possible if you are a slave of Christ Jesus Christ might have a way of suffering for you.

So Ananias departed and entered the house and laying his hands on him he said brother Saul the Lord Jesus who appeared to you on the road by which you came has sent me so that you may regain your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit and immediately something like scales fell from his eyes and he regained his sight then he rose and was baptized and taking food he was strengthened. Jesus Christ the Lord enlisted Paul into his service and it says in verse 19 to 20 of Acts 9 19 or chapter 9 for some days he was with the disciples of Damascus and immediately he proclaimed Jesus in the synagogue saying he is the son of God. Once Paul's eyes were opened immediately he became the servant of Jesus Christ a slave of Christ Jesus.

Now what we don't mean what Paul doesn't mean by slave here is the slave trade and in Europe and America where where people were were stolen from Africa and brought here and treated like less than human or worse. Slavery Paul describes is the old testament kind of slavery when somebody pays your debts you're indebted to a master and he pays your debts you sell yourself into that household and it says in the in the law of the old testament it says then when a slave has come to a certain time he doesn't have to be a slave anymore but he wants to remain a slave what he can do is he can go to the doorpost and open his ear to it and they can pin a pin through his ear into the door and say I belong to this house for the rest of my life that kind of slavery. Christ paid the debt of Paul's sin and then Paul says I want to be your slave for the rest of my life I want to live in your house do your work listen to you be as near to you as I most possibly can a slave of Christ Jesus.

You see I'd rather be a slave of Christ than an employer of Christ. If you're an employer of Christ that's what Paul was before he tried to do things for God then he wanted God to pay him for it but I want to live in the house of God I want to be near him I want to I want him to decide whatever I say whatever I do whatever I speak whatever I have to suffer or whatever comfort I receive that's being a slave of Christ. Takes away the I will and I want one day I'm going to be all of that is replaced is what is it Lord you want me to do today that's the power of the gospel you see being a slave of a good master there's no better thing because I don't need to worry and every believer doesn't need to worry about tomorrow what I should what happens tomorrow or where but my clothes or my food or any other things that might need that's Christ is in charge of that he is in charge of watching over me I'm in charge of simply doing what Christ asked me to say and do it.

Paul means nothing less that Jesus Christ is his complete and final owner that Jesus has every authority over the life of the apostle Paul. Jesus purchased Paul with his blood and now Paul is enslaved to the

Lord Jesus Christ and oh I pray to God that God would raise up a people that recognizes that we are slaves of the Lord Jesus Christ that we are finally done with all the I will give this much to God or I'll plan this way to God or I will give him this amount of time of God but that we simply walk before God and say God you are my owner I am your servant what do you want to do Lord it's a new day again yesterday we served you how can I serve you today we need to be done with this worldly Christianity that says that we are sort of entrepreneurs for God that I live my own life and every now and then when I read the Bible I say God is there something you want me to do beside everything I'm doing no no no Christ at the beginning the earliest hour of the day when you wake up you say Lord what do you have me to do today how can I serve you these hands belong to you these feet belong to you these ears belong to you this this nose and this mouth everything belongs to you that's why Paul writes in Romans 12 1 sacrifice your bodies as a living sacrifice Paul is not saying I'm a slave he's saying you're slaves we're all slaves we're sacrifices to Christ saying Lord what do you want me to do I'm yours as long as I live I've been purchased and so nothing what I own is mine anyway the slave doesn't have possessions he just uses what the master gives him to eat and to drink and to have everything he has belongs to him it's nothing that you own you have nothing somebody asks you say can you list me your possessions it's a very short list you know what it says the Lord Jesus Christ and to serve him is what I own but what of all the stuff that you have around you it's the Lord's it's his he owns it by the way he owns the whole world anyway it's all Christ's and we serve him what are you going to do in 10 years I don't know I'm just a servant I just follow him well don't you need to worry about 20 years from now what are you gonna do then if it doesn't work out I don't know but I know my master my Lord tells me that he will care for me and he tells me I don't need to worry about tomorrow and he's giving me my work today so simple isn't it so basic so uncontrollable so unplannable so scary so dependent on faith which is the entire point that we become no longer entrepreneurs for God but simple servants of Christ that learn to be content with much and with little that I contend in suffering and in comfort that I contend in riches and in poverty that I can stand with war and peace simply following the Lord Jesus Christ is that too much to ask is that too high a price compared to what Christ has paid for you you see if you are younger Christianity has become such a safe religion in this world it's so organized it's so controlled we do our worship one day of the week then we take care of ourselves five days of the week and then we have one day of joy for ourselves on Saturday I pray that God would raise up a generation who is on fire for Christ and says no longer this boxed in Christianity of serving the Lord as much as I want to get away with the I and let Christ be my master and my Lord no longer the forms that I and we have created together and this is what Christianity needs to be and this is how it's proper and well and nice and we don't care about the world out there we judge it throw sticks at it rather than simply serving the Lord Jesus Christ oh how I long to see a generation of people who have truly believed that Christ has purchased them that truly serve with all their heart all their mind all their soul and all their strength and without reservation the Lord Jesus Christ what a glory the church would become men and women who see themselves a slave of Jesus Christ and follow him completely if you insult me hey I'm just a slave you can insult me my master will stand up before me if he sees fit you dishonor me you dishonor my Lord wrath belongs to the Lord not to me if you hate me there's anything in me that is not Christ-like I hate it in myself and I want to turn from it but if you hate me for the Lord Jesus Christ I'm not going to defend myself I'll pray for you instead everything I have if I see a fellow servant a fellow slave of me in need this is the Lord's he's given it to me but I'm sure he meant me to give it to you so that you will not have to suffer you see the attitude the problem is we don't like it well we would like it if we enter into it but we think we don't like it so we hold back and we say I am the Lord in these areas in these times of the week I serve the Lord but the rest of the week it's mine that's not Christianity that's not following the Lord Jesus Christ can you imagine a slave in the Roman era saying walking in the house and

having a good time and then the master says hey can you do this for me he says sorry I'm off the clock but you're my you're my slave I own you you no no I'm off the clock ask me again on Wednesday night at seven o'clock but only for one hour but then I'm done what would you think of that that slave is going to be very unhappy wouldn't he he needs to be disciplined isn't it is our hearts really this attitude of the Apostle Paul has the gospel so transformed our hearts that we say from morning to evening Lord what I am and what I have is yours I have seen the light of the Lord Jesus Christ and from now on I walk in your ways you tell me if I suffer I cry to you for help but I'll suffer if I'm rejoicing I give you praise if I have much work I ask for strength if I have little work I say Lord can I sit at your feet and just listen you see that Paul a servant of Christ Jesus I pray that all of us could put our own names in there Bob a servant of Christ Jesus Peter John James a servant a slave of Christ Jesus that's freedom that is true freedom you see the reason why so many of us are filled with worries and cares is because we try to run two lives at the same time we try to start up our own Christian business so to speak and we're trying to serve the Lord Jesus Christ at the same time and you're working over hours on both ends because it's hard to run your own way and to do the Lord to follow the Lord Jesus Christ but if you follow Christ and I'm not saying that you cannot work in this world but if you follow the Lord Jesus Christ your work will be serving the Lord Jesus Christ and you're no longer working 40 hours a week and at the end of the week you're saying oh I need to do something for the Lord what can I do for the Lord no you begin to see is everything for the Lord every time you put your pen on paper get your fingers on the keyboard or you lift something or you whatever you do everything is an act of worship to Christ every colleague you speak the words of Christ every time you deal with the customer you speak as Christ would you serve the Lord Jesus Christ you keep an eye on your own household the way the Lord Jesus Christ would as you serve him and suddenly everything becomes following the Lord Jesus Christ no longer to worry about tomorrow or next year because the Lord is in control and you're simply serving him until you breathe your last and enter into your rest you see the joy of the gospel if you're sitting this morning and you're thinking that's too much that's that's a high price to really let go of my own control that's too high well my prayer is that as we go through the book of Romans and you begin to see what God has done in the gospel that it will transform your heart and will give you strength and joy because this is not you need to become a slave and then the gospel it's the other way around let me show you what Christ has done and I guarantee you if the Lord opens this up to you you say Lord I am a servant of Christ Jesus I want to serve this Lord that has this kind of love let us pray to heavenly father we give you praise we pray Lord as we sang at the beginning of this service I surrender all help us Lord not just to sing but to live it that there is nothing we clench in our to hold on not even the smallest straw but that we surrender all to you and serve you and love you and walk in your ways for you are worthy and we pray this in Jesus name amen

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