

# Service and Servanthood of the Lord - Part 2 of 8

by T. Austin-Sparks

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*The sermon explores the essence of true servanthood as modeled by Christ, emphasizing divine compulsion and the importance of learning from Him.*

**Duration:** 34:48

**Scripture:** Isaiah 42:1, Matthew 6:33, Matthew 11:28-30

**Topics:** "Servanthood"

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## Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of spiritual education and learning in the Christian life. He highlights that God is more concerned about our spiritual growth than the number of things we do for Him. The speaker also references Matthew 11:28, where Jesus invites those who are burdened and weary to come to Him for rest. He explains that true rest comes from finding purpose and fulfillment in our work, rather than simply doing tasks without seeing any results. The sermon encourages listeners to learn from Jesus' example of servanthood and service, and to find rest in Him.

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## Transcript

Isaiah chapter 42, verse 1, Behold my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delighteth. I want to link with that some of the most familiar words from the lips of that self, recorded by Matthew in his gospel, chapter 11, verse 28, Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your soul.

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. Behold my servant. And as we proceed a little further in this matter of servanthood and service, we are going to take a look at this model, pattern, representative self, and learn, I trust, something of servanthood and service from it.

The words which we have read from the gospel have been mainly used for preaching to the unseen. I don't think I have ever heard a message on those words otherwise than to the unseen. They are almost universally and exclusively used as a gospel appeal, as it is called.

And I am not questioning the right of that, but I want to point out that those words were addressed to the people who call themselves the people of God. They were addressed to Israel. They were spoken to the

Jews.

And their subject is not salvation. Their subject is service. It is to laborers burdened, weighed down in their toil, their labor, that the appeal was made.

And the very symbols used are the symbols of service. My yoke. The yoke is the symbol of service, of work, of labor.

And the real message there is this. These people were striving to work. They were toiling, laboring, as they intended for God.

It was in relation to God that they were thus burdened. We know what the burden was. It was the burden of the Lord to the leaders of that nation.

And Jesus said, you bind heavy burdens and lay them upon men's shoulders. They are grievous to be borne. And under that overwhelming weight of legal service, they were bowed down and found no rest.

And Jesus, in this appeal, was only saying, in other words, I can teach you how to work to satisfaction, to joy, because all this that you are in, you are doing, you are striving after, doesn't get you anywhere. I can teach you how to work and get somewhere. This is achieving nothing.

And there is nothing more heart-breaking than to labor and toil and never accomplish anything, never get anywhere, see nothing for it, and there be nothing for it. There is nothing more gratifying, heart-ravaging, than to do work, really be in work, and see that it's worthwhile, it's getting somewhere. The toil, the labor, that gets there, that's rest, isn't it? Real rest is not sitting down doing nothing.

Real rest is seeing that all that you do is wah-wah, reaching an end. And that is exactly what Jesus was saying to these people, come to me, learn of me, and I will teach you the way of service that is worthwhile and that gets somewhere. Learn of me.

All service, true service, for God takes its nature from Christ. Now, what I'm saying to you this time may sound simple, but it is drastically testing and discriminating. Let me say at once, there is a vast amount of what is called the work of the Lord, or service for the Lord, which is not getting there, and which is not going through to God's end and achieving his purpose and will be exposed at the end as having missed the way.

A vast amount. A great deal is on a purely and merely personality basis. Well, much could be said like that.

And there's a great deal going up in smoke, so don't be deceived and don't make any mistake, I am not this evening talking about working for the Lord. What is commonly and generally called the Lord's work, the Lord's service, I am occupied and concerned with what is true service to God. The real nature of what is service to God.

Does that need more careful defining? You can have a little child who wants to help mother, and oh how busy, what a little busybody she may be. What a lot of things she's doing. Always such a good intention.

And seems to be so happy about it all, helping mother, but poor mother. Poor mother. Rarely she is making more work than she's doing.

Making more difficulty than she's clearing up. Presently, when she's gone to bed, mother will have to put all that work straight. Clear up all that well intention.

That's simple enough, isn't it? Yes, it's meant to be service, but it isn't. Mother's verdict is, well, it's meant for me, but it's not really service to me. There's a difference.

And the Lord may take that attitude, but all that is meant for me. I recognize how well intentioned it is, and a good motive, but my word, it is really not service to me. It's not reaching the end that I have at heart.

We've got to make that discrimination. But these people were doing countless things as they thought for God. They only got to look into their rules and regulations and all that they were doing in their rites and ceremonies and what not for God.

And it was all aborted. It's getting over. Came tremendous burden and toil.

Yes, for God. But to such, Jesus said, learn of me, learn of me, and I will teach you the way of service that is service to God indeed. If we are going to learn, we have to look at Him.

Not only listen to what He says, but look at Him. For I repeat, all true service to God takes its nature from and is all a matter of the knowledge and the understanding of the Lord Jesus. Yes, the knowledge and the understanding of Christ is the essential basis of service.

You've got the force of death. Upon the cross is the service of Christ built in Christianity. What do people mean when they say they're going into the Lord's work? Well, to go into the Lord's work, into the Lord's service, put it how you will, we must go to some institution, some college, some place where we shall take lectures and study and read up and then we'll be qualified to go into the Lord's work.

Is that true? Now without one moment undervaluing such teaching, instruction, and training has its place. I want to say this emphatically. You may have all that you can get in that way and still lack the essential for serving the Lord.

All that is no guarantee that you have got the essential to serve the Lord. Take my yoke and learn of me. Christ is a spiritual university.

Pardon me if I treat you as little children reminding you of the very word itself. Uni- versity. We are in a uni-verse.

People go to a uni- versity. What is that? Well, versum is just a line, isn't it? A line. And a verse is so many lines.

A uni- versity is a place where there are so many or all the lines. All the lines. Every subject you want to know about.

There's this line. You read history. You read law.

You read this and that. That's the line. And all the lines meet in that particular place just as in the uni-verse all the lines of science are there.

It's a unity of all the lines. Now when you go or we go to the uni- versity we don't go on to all the lines. We go on to one.

We read art or law or history. That's the line in all the lines of the uni-versity. But mark you when you come to the Lord Jesus you come to a uni-verse a comprehensive all inclusive center where you have to learn a very great many things.

A vast amount there in Christ and you're going on for all eternity learning Christ. Christ is so comprehensive. So many-sided.

So universal. So inclusive. There is no exhausting Him.

Those who have been on the way with Him and in His school the longest greatest number of years and even most concentrated and devoted earnest in their application to know Him the end of long years but they know they've hardly started. They haven't started. They haven't started.

Only at the beginning of the knowledge of Christ. When we begin to learn of Christ we come into indeed a uni-versity and we've got to read in every subject. Now does that appal you? Disconcert you? Well it need not.

It need not. You've got all eternity the ages of the ages for it. And the blessed thing about this is that He takes us a bit at a time.

He doesn't cram us. There's no cramming in Christ. Some of you know what cramming means, don't you? No cramming here.

No forcing. He takes us a bit at a time. And sees to it that we just know that.

Maybe a small thing comparatively it's important. There's nothing unimportant here. He takes us in hand and holds us until we know that.

And it is not an end in itself that we should know it. This is education for vocation. Make no mistake about it.

The whole of this life here shorter or longer is a part of our education for eternal vocation. Probably that is the chief feature about our life here. For one thing becomes very clear before you've got very far the Lord is far far more concerned about your spiritual education than he is about how much or how many things you do for him.

He is quite prepared to take you out of all the doing to see to it that you are learning. And the Lord makes the doing so often our education. The doing is not the end.

The education is. For the vocation lies ahead. It is unto the ages of the ages.

Learn of me how great Christ is. You and I will discover more and more as we go along. The early stages of our Christian life we think we know enough to go out.

But as we go on the fact is that we feel that we'd better get back and learn something and not go quite so fast. We don't know what we need to know. Better to draw back.

Well now what I'm saying if you realize it is this that this learning servanthood and service is not an academic thing nor is it a verbal thing. It is by reason of a vital spiritual union with Christ. It is learning a person if you can grasp that and hold it and hold it always do.

It is not learning things. It is not learning doctrines and truths. It is not even learning scripture.

These things have their place. But real service to God is going to come out of learning Christ. Learning Christ.

And that requires living with Him. Well that He is the great servant needs no arguing. It was self-declared.

I am among you said He. He the servant. He spoke of those who take their seat at the table.

He said I'm not one of those. I am the servant to wait on you. I'm here as a servant.

All in that classic phrase says about His condescension from Heaven He took upon Him the form of a bond slave. A servant the authorized version. Well it was self-declared that that is the capacity in which He was in this world.

With the garments of glory laid aside the towel of service gathered the water of purification in the basin and in hand down on His knees to potential servants to teach them how to serve or the spirit of service. So He was here when we have this afternoon reminded ourselves of all those passages in Isaiah's prophecy which predict His servanthood. We need not go over again how many there are of those pre-visionings in those prophecies of Him as the servant.

What we want to do and must do is to look at Him to see the characteristics of the true servant in whose in whom God's heart is delighted. And I want to say first of all about Him and therefore about all who will be or would be true servants of God in the true servanthood that He was first of all marked by a divine compulsion a divine compulsion. Let it be understood at once do take this to heart there is nothing voluntary about this.

There is nothing voluntary about this. If you do come in and it seems that you are doing it by offer even that must be the result of a compulsion. He is here described as a bond slave.

That's the original term for our English word servant. A bond slave not a volunteer a bond slave is not a volunteer at all. There is nothing about this that is optional.

There is nothing about it that is casual. A bond slave is purchased owned possessed and without any rights of his own. That's a bond slave.

A bond slave has his very life bound up with his position as a bond slave. He hasn't got a life of his own. Let one of those bond slaves of old escape and run away anybody can kill him.

He can be killed. His life can be taken and no fuss made about it. It's a recognized thing as a bond slave his life his own life is forfeit one way or the other.

It's either for his master or it will be taken from him or can be. This is a tremendous thing this bond slave idea. Yes.

The bond slave was branded. Branded. The brand was not the brand of his own rights to himself the brand of his master or of that authority to which he was given.

Paul said I bear branded in my body Paul would in his constant usage of this very term concerning himself the bond slave of Jesus Christ would repudiate any suggestion that he had a life of his own that he had

any rights of his own for me to live which Christ was a matter of life or death this service. It's rather different, isn't it? Common ideas servanthood or Christian service you can resign if you don't like it you can change from one place to another if you're not pleased run away do anything today without any the true servant of Jesus Christ if you learn of him you will find this to be true all these things were true of the Lord Jesus need I, need I say but it was not the compulsion of law it was not the compulsion of the labor tribunal directed to this or that it was the compulsion of heart the compulsion of love it was the captivity of the will his will was in the slavery of the father how he emphasized that I came not to do my own will the will of him that sent me my meat and my drink my very subsistence is to do the will of my father from beginning to end it was the complete captivation of his will by the will of another of another will only such servanthood really reaches God's end serves God's end it really is this dear friends or has got to be this a deep down urge of a sense of destiny ye did not choose me but I chose you and sent you or ordained you that you should go and therefore something has happened that did not take its rise in us we did not decide out from ourselves to go into the Lord's work into Christian service a deep down urge you know what that means? remember many years ago when I used to read fiction interesting books I was very interested in some books by a writer who perhaps this generation would not know called Jack Lund and one of his books was The Call of the Wild and it was about a wolf dog which had become domesticated and attached to a home and a family but in the blood of this dog it was always the wild the wild and while he was lying there on the hearth she was groaning and screaming his whole being was under tension and his teeth and his lips were moving Jack Lund called it The Call of the Wild that although here in these pleasant surroundings and circumstances that wild to which he belonged by nature was ever pulling ever calling he could never never be wholly here because he belonged there is that a good illustration?

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