

Broomfield



PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH MINISTRY OF THE WORD

Volume 5 Issue 17

May 7, 2006

Kingdom Service

1 Corinthians 6:20, “For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s”¹

Revelation 5:9-10, “And they [the twenty-four elders and four living creatures] sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; And hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth.”

1 Peter 1:17-19, “And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man’s work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear: Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers; But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.”

These things should be obvious from these passages:

1. Christ purchased us from a slavery whereby we were servants to sin and Satan.
2. He did so in order to use us! And to make us servants in His kingdom!

Thus in the Bible, the child of God is referred to these ways:

1. “Servant of Christ” (Colossians 1:7; 1 Timothy 4:6).
2. “Servant of the church” (Romans 16:1).
3. “Bond-servant of Christ Jesus” (Romans 1:1).

Now I dare say that, if you and I lived in Rome during the Apostolic days and were purchased as a slave in order to serve Caesar, we would undergo a great amount of training in order to be the best servant possible. We're talking about the greatest man in the world at that time. You know you'd be prepared.

And yet, through the cross we have become servants of a greater Being than Caesar, the King of kings and Lord of lords. How can we not be prepared?

¹ Compare also 1 Corinthians 7:23

In order that we might be better prepared to serve the Lord, I want us to consider a passage which gives insight into service in the Kingdom of God. Notice that our text is a transitional passage. The foundation and background have been laid for the monarchy that will be discussed in 1 Samuel 8ff, the writer of Samuel here closes out his treatment of the years prior to Saul in our text. And thus our passage tells us what was going on during the spring and summertime of Samuel's life. And it tells us what life was like for God's people following the revival of 1 Samuel 7:2-14.

Accordingly this text serves as a contrast between what God did when His people trusted Him— a.k.a. (also known as) Hannah and the revival of 1 Samuel 7. And what God's people did when they went their own way — a.k.a. Hophni, Phinehas, and 1 Samuel 4 and the loss of the Ark, and Samuel's ministry and Israel's demand for a different kind of ruler.

Ministry as a Judge

Consider with me four characteristics of kingdom service (two this time and two next time).

1 Samuel 7:15, “And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life.”

This is an interesting description in light of the fact that Samuel ALSO was a priest by birth and a prophet by gifting. Accordingly we conclude that while Samuel could serve as a priest and no doubt at times spoke by prophetic utterance, the focus of his life was that of the ministry of a Judge.

Now just what is a judge, and what is a judges' ministry?

When we considered 1 Samuel 7:7 we found that a judge in the ancient Near East was a man or woman that held an office which involved the making, interpreting, and executing of laws. He was a military leader that exercised all branches associate with civil government.

Now in Judaism, a “Judge” diverged from any and all secular judges as the office took on the added element of people. The end of all things in the kingdom of God was not just upholding the law (the word of God is a means not the end) but the exhorting, encouraging, and helping of the people of God via the word both to serve the Lord and take delight in Him.

That meant that the faithful Judge in God's Kingdom would have been one whose life revolved around encouraging the people of God to fulfill their call unto the Lord.

1 Samuel 12:23-24, “Moreover as for me, God forbid that I should sin against the LORD in ceasing to pray for you: but I will teach you the good and the right way: Only fear the LORD, and serve him in truth with all your heart: for consider how great things he hath done for you.”

This was Samuel's exhortation as a Judge to God's people following their admission that they sinned in asking for a king. Walter Brueggemann put it this way:

“Put in theological language, Samuel not only presided over the event of Israel's 'justification' but addressed the ongoing process of Israel's 'sanctification' as a community faithful to Yahweh's intent.”²

² Walter Brueggemann, *First and Second Samuel*, page 54

And Joyce Baldwin added these words:

“[Samuel was] ...appointed and equipped by the Lord to keep Israel in a right relationship with their Lord God, and depending upon his resources, in all their undertakings to live and work to his glory.”³

I hope you see it! Samuel's heartbeat as a Judge was the edification and growth of God's people in grace! And this is the essence of all service in the kingdom of God.

Matthew 6:33, “But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.”

Ruling and Reigning

What is the “Kingdom of God”?

Technically it refers to the reign and rule of Christ. However let me ask you this: Over what does Christ reign? Whom does God rule?

You must see it... the Kingdom of God is the reign and rule of Christ over people!

In light of this we are not surprised to discover in Scripture that a primary focus of kingdom service is the building up of the people of God. And this is the end of all pastoral ministry.

Ephesians 4:11-12, “And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.”

The purpose of the pastoral ministry is NOT to inspire the people of God with moving sermons BUT to equip the saints that they might do the work of ministry unto the building up of the body of Christ! We see that this is the gifting and calling of the individual Christian as well.

1 Corinthians 12:7, “But the manifestation of the Spirit is given to every man to profit withal.”

This is the reason God saved us and gave each of us a spiritual gift. Each and every one of us ought to be “body-centered” when it comes to fulfilling the call that God has placed on our lives. God did not save you so that you could build bridges, enforce the law, sell houses or change diapers. Rather He saved you so that you might glorify and enjoy him and encourage others to do the same.

Accordingly, hear the heartbeat NOT simply of an apostle BUT of a Christian who was being faithful to the Christian's calling.

1 Thessalonians 2:19-20, “For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? For ye are our glory and joy.”

³ Joyce Baldwin, *1 & 2 Samuel*, Tyndale, page 81

This wasn't just Paul's calling; it is everyone's calling in Christ. In the end these are the riches you will take to the grave, the people you have encouraged in Christ!

And thus when we read here that Samuel was a Judge we understand that the end of his ministry was one and the same as ours: The Building Up of the Body of Christ!

Lifelong Ministry

In light of this, notice the tenure of Samuel's ministry.

1 Samuel 7:15, "And Samuel judged Israel all the days of his life."

How long did Samuel labor in the Kingdom of God? How long did Samuel labor at building up the body of Christ?

The answer is this: Samuel's ministry lasted throughout his lifetime!

And that brothers and sisters is the first characteristic I want you to see when it comes to kingdom service. Kingdom service is the ministry of building up and encouraging the body of Christ. It is a calling which knows no terms or limits in this life. No matter how old you are or how busy you have become, your obligation to Christ's Kingdom and people remains the same.

Apostate Children

In Romans 11 Paul addresses the place of the Jew in the kingdom of God. Specifically he addresses the position of covenant children that have rejected the gospel of Christ. He tells us that they are now viewed as "enemies" of the promise.⁴ And he tells us what to do with these "enemies."

Now, Paul's answer may surprise you because God still has a place in His heart for them on account of His covenant promises given to our fathers in the faith.

Romans 11:28, "As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes: but as touching the election, they are beloved for the fathers' sakes."

Now how can this be?

How can God extend grace and mercy to one's who not only have rejected the gospel, but have persecuted many who have accepted it?

Romans 11:29, "For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. [irrevocable]."

What an incredible statement. The call issued to children of the Covenant is irrevocable. It doesn't matter what you have done as a child of God, forgiveness still can be yours if you will but trust the Savior! And yet, Paul says far more than that here. In fact, he goes beyond the calling of God toward covenant children to include the gifting of God to all Christians.

Romans 11:29, "**For the gifts and calling** of God are without repentance."

⁴ Compare Romans 11:28

THE GIFTS THAT GOD GIVES US FOR SERVICE IN THE BODY OF CHRIST ALSO ARE IRREVOCABLE. This means that God has placed you in the Kingdom of God for the purpose of serving the body of Christ. You may be a hand, eye, foot, or an arm and as long as you live you will have that calling.

From this we conclude that in the Kingdom of God there is not such thing as retirement, term gifts, vacation, or backing off to take a break. Now, this is not to say that there are not seasons of life where one might serve God in this capacity or that. Rather it is to say that regardless of life-stage, health, age, or job you ever and always are called to use your gifts unto the building up of the body of Christ.

Quite frankly, this is a message that we need to hear today. For many Americans are raised with a dangerous mentality when it comes to the kingdom of God — the mentality of retirement. In fact, I have heard some of you already talking about the day you are going to retire. You say, “just twenty more years.” Or “I have only five more years left.”

Now, when it comes to occupations and the like in this life, there obviously is no problem with the concept of retirement. So don't misunderstand. The problem comes when this mentality bleeds into kingdom service such that the Christian can be heard saying these things:

- Now that my kids have grown, it is time to start my career.
- I've done my part in the Kingdom. It is time for another to serve.
- Now that I am older, it is time to let the next generation take over.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm NOT talking here about specific ministries or duties in a church body — again there are seasons and times. RATHER, I'm talking about the general calling that rests upon the entire church body to refresh, encourage, and build up the body of saints. With this ministry there is never a holiday, a break or retirement.

And that means no matter whom you are or what your condition may be, you are never beyond the calling of edification.

Andy

I've mentioned Andy a couple of times from this pulpit. Ministering to him was a life-changing event for me. He was a dear saint in Florida who died of cancer. I watched him go from a healthy individual to a skeleton that lay in bed gasping for his next breath.

Now it was my habit to visit this brother on a consistent basis and what always shocked me was my intention to bring Christ to his home through compassion, prayer, and the reading of the word. Yet I was never there long before he was ministering to me.

Andy would say:

- How are you doing?
- How is your family?
- How is the church?
- How is your walk?
- How can I pray for you?

Don't misunderstand. I'm not saying that when I left Andy I was always blessed on account of having served Christ because this was true of every family I visited. How can you not be blessed when you are doing the work of service? No! I'm talking about a visit in which this man had as his passion the blessing of me.

That's what stuck out!

Now don't miss it. Andy was not a preacher, an officer in the church, or a professional Christian. He had received no formal ministerial training. He had no claim to fame; in fact, he worked most of his life for the airlines. Yet when he entered the kingdom of God the Kingdom of God obviously entered him such that as long as I knew him, he was passionate about encouraging people.

This, brothers and sisters is the passion I'm talking about. It is the passion to encourage and strengthen individual Christians in their walks! Such was the passion of Samuel... Paul... John... and our Lord. And such must be our passion as well!

However many of us have excuses.

- But I cannot speak well; then serve well.
- But I cannot get around due to my health; then pick up the pen.
- But I cannot write due to arthritis; then pick up the phone.
- But I do not have the energy to call; then get on your knees and pray.

If a man on his death bed can go out of his way to serve the saints, so can you! Truly if you will take seriously your call to bless this body, there will be very few things in life that will be able to thwart you.

Difficult Ministry

And yet if we indeed do labor to bless the body by building it up, at times we are going to face difficult circumstances and people who no doubt are going to hurt us. Oh, how it behooves us therefore that we participate in Kingdom Service relying upon Christ alone for all praise and encouragement.

2 Corinthians 3:4-5, "And such trust have we through Christ to God-ward: Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any thing as of ourselves; but our sufficiency is of God."

Truly we must learn to labor knowing that Christ makes us adequate- not our work, the fruit of our ministry, the compliments of man, etc. We labor because Christ has labored for us. We labor because the Lord has loved us. We labor because in Christ, we are precious in God's eyes. Oh, how could we not want to comfort others with the comfort with which we have been comforted by God?⁵

⁵ Compare 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Subscription Information

A subscription to the *Broomfield Presbyterian Church Ministry of the Word* is on a free basis. To subscribe or unsubscribe send a post card to *Broomfield Presbyterian Church Ministry of the Word*®, Post Office Box 691, Windsor, Colorado 80550. Or you may send your request by email to [Nels Nelson](mailto:Nels.Nelson@broomfieldpc.org). *The Broomfield Presbyterian Church Ministry of the Word* is published regularly.

VISIT US WHEN IN Broomfield, COLORADO

Feel free to visit Broomfield Presbyterian Church when in Broomfield, Colorado. Broomfield Presbyterian Church is located at Kohl Elementary School, 10th Street and Kohl, Broomfield, Colorado. The telephone number of the church is 303-469-6912. The worship services are at 9:30 a.m. and 6:00 p.m. each Sunday. Broomfield Presbyterian Church is a member of the Orthodox Presbyterian Church.

All our sermons can be accessed via the World Wide Web. The recording for this sermon and the these notes can be found at [God's Shepherd](http://www.gods-shepherd.com). The web address for all sermons at Broomfield can be found out as follows: <http://broomfieldopc.sermonaudio.com>

About the Preacher

Greg Thurston preached this sermon on May7, 2006. Greg is the Preacher at Broomfield Presbyterian Church.