

Christian Service

Romans 12:3-8

Introduction

Good morning Lighthouse! Are you ready for the Word of God? Christian service.

Today's message can be viewed as a part 2 from last week's message and as one from 2 months ago. Today's world and without biblical background would view serving or position of a servant as something lowly. Usually, its associated with a waiter job. Some view that greatness can be shown by one who is being served. I want to read what Jesus had to say about that. The disciples in their time with Jesus seem to struggle with this concept of desiring greatness.

Luke 22:24-27 (24) And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest. (25) And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors. (26) But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. (27) For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

Matthew 20:20-28. (20) Then came to him the mother of Zebedee's children with her sons, worshipping him, and desiring a certain thing of him. (21) And he said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on thy right hand, and the other on the left, in thy kingdom. (22) But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with? They say unto him, We are able. (23) And he saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father. (24) And when the ten heard it, they were moved with indignation against the two brethren. (25) But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. (26) But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

Based off what Jesus had to say of one who is a servant, I believe it is safe to conclude that being a servant, specifically a servant to the Lord is the highest honor one can have. God desires His people – those who have saved and redeemed by Jesus to be committed and willing servants to His work. This is especially towards the local church. Truth is every church is filled with willing people—some willing to work, and others willing to let them. There is so much in Scripture on this subject so we cannot cover everything, but we will cover the attitude, the necessity, and the responsibilities of the servant. Our text today is Romans 12:3-8.

Background

All throughout Romans from chapter 1 to the end of chapter 11, we read wonderful truths about God's grace, His mercies, His righteousness. We read this now when we first come to Romans 12 (1) I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. (2) And be not conformed to this world: but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God. In light of who God is and what He does on your behalf, here is now what you ought to do. Our Scripture today shows us what that looks like. Presenting your bodies, a living sacrifice is giving yourself to the Lord and whatever He will have you do. In every action, in every thought is aimed at doing what He would want. And because it is a sacrifice, it'll cost something. David had an altar built in the threshingfloor of Araunah the Jebusite and Araunah offered him oxen and other instruments for sacrifice. David refused to take it for free and bought it for 50 shekels of silver. He made this comment: "neither will I offer burnt offerings unto the LORD my God of that which doth cost me nothing." 2 Samuel 24:18-24 is your Scripture reference. Serving the Lord is going to cost you something. Whether be time, that extra rest, or even money – it won't come without its price. But I encourage you that the joy and the reward in it is wonderful. Let's read our text today.

Scripture

Romans 12:3-8

(3) For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith. (4) For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: (5) So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another. (6) Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; (7) Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; (8) Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

Outline

I. The attitude of God's servant, v. 3.

A. Paul's position of commandment.

(3) For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you . . .

1. Through the grace given unto me.

a. Paul is in the position as an Apostle. A high esteemed position and one with authority. He counts it as grace.

b. Paul showed his personal humility by indicating that his gift of Apostleship came by the grace of God. He spoke out of grace and not from presumption.

1 Corinthians 15:9-10 (9) For I am the least of the apostles, that am not meet to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. (10) But by the grace of God I am what I am: and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me.

2. The same grace given to us is the same grace given to Paul. He is saying I am no better than you. It is because God is gracious.

3. To every man that is among you.

a. No exemptions.

b. The Pastors, the Elders, Deacons, Sunday school teachers, Nursery worker, children's church, kitchen, cleaning. - every member.

B. God's servants are to have an attitude of humility.

. . .not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think; but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

1. Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think.

a. This is summed up with pride and arrogance. This mindset not only will plague a home or a work environment, it plagues the church. And not just among leadership.

b. When it comes to pride and arrogance there are two aspects that can be described of it:

(1) Making yourself the priority.

(a) "It's all about me" I don't like this; I don't like that."

"I think it should be this way." "That sermon was directed at me."

(b) The church has no place for the consumer mindset.

Worship and serving is never about what you feel, or get. It is about giving and making Jesus the priority.

(2) Looking down on others.

(a) "If I was the one in the position."

(b) We are not a bunch of professionals or aiming to please anyone else but God. For those who love to criticize – consider how have you encouraged a solution. The church ought to encourage and lift each other up, never to be a place to look down on others and make it about your own preferences and desires.

c. Diotrephes is a Scripture example of this.

3 John 1:9-10 (9) I wrote unto the church: but Diotrephes, who loveth to have the preeminence among them, receiveth us not. (10) Wherefore, if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doeth, prating against us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither doth he himself receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and casteth them out of the church.

(3) Humility and being unoffendable is critical to casting down pride and arrogance.

Psalms 119:165 (165) Great peace have they which love thy law: and nothing shall offend them.

d. Our mindset should not be imitated after Diotrephes, it should be imitated after Jesus. Mankind is naturally inclined to arrogance over humility. It is why humbleness of mind is a discipline we all must work towards.

Philippians 2:3-5 (3) Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves. (4) Look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others.

(5) Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus:

2. But to think soberly . . .

a. This means to think with sound judgment. We are not to think too high of ourselves and we are also not to think too low of ourselves.

- b. Having a renewed mind as found in 12:2 is crucial to this.
- c. Knowing your role and place should make this happen. In the beginning of the chapter, Paul says “by the mercies of God.” Mercy is about not getting what you deserve.

- (1) God withheld His righteous wrath from us.

- (2) This should cause you to think soberly about yourself.

- (3) You are also not some worthless sinners saved by grace. God wants to take you and mold you into someone more like His Son – and He equips you to do His work.

3. . . according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.

- a. This a reference to the spiritual gifts that Paul will list soon.

- b. Some have used this passage to make it say God chooses who believes in Him and who rejects it. That’s not anywhere what he is talking about.

(We see the how the attitude of God’s servant should be, let’s see why they are necessary.)

II. The necessity of God’s servant, vv. 4-5.

A. Paul’s illustration to demonstrate the necessity, v. 4.

(4) For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office:

- 1. He uses the perfect illustration to demonstrate how the church is to function.

- 2. Consider the human body and some of its components. We have 2 eyes, 2 ears, 1 mouth, 2 arms, 2 leg, 2 feet, etc It’s been said we were given 2 ears and 1 mouth so that we listen twice as much than we speak.

- a. Each of the members of a human body have their function. They are diverse, but unified.

b. Paul uses the same illustration to the Corinthian church in more detail in 1 Cor 12, and He puts Jesus as the head of the body. He is the one in charge and without Him the others don't function.

c. There are cases where the body isn't functioning to its potential. 1 eye working would be impaired. Crippled in the leg or arm would be considered handicap. God's desire for His church is to be fully functional. Since this is the case, the members of the church are absolutely necessary to be contributing.

B. Since the members of the body are necessary, we ought to use it for God's glory, v. 5.

(5) So we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

1. Now, Paul is not advocating for this universal church concept where every Christian is one big universal church. He is using it locally. It's the same way if I said how the home or family is to function. The terminology used in Scripture to speak of every believer is the family of God.

2. As the church is constituted of many members, yet it is also one body. There is unity, diversity, and mutuality in the church. We have unity in Christ, diversity of gifts to serve one another, and an interdependence on one another.

3. God uses each believer differently in the local church. Not all have the same function within the church, but every part of the body has purpose. An arm or leg has a different function, but each has a unique contribution to the total function of the body.

4. (Vacation Bible school example.)

(Our next verses give specifics of what that looks like.)

III. The responsibilities of God's servant, vv. 6-8.

Romans 12:6-8 (6) Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of faith; (7) Or ministry, let us wait on our ministering: or he that teacheth, on teaching; (8) Or he that exhorteth, on exhortation: he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity; he that ruleth, with diligence; he that sheweth mercy, with cheerfulness.

A. Our responsibilities should start with recognizing our gifts and talents God gives us.

1. "Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us."

a. The word for gifts is "Charisma" This comes from the root word

"Charis" which translates to grace. The idea behind spiritual gifts is gift of grace. Paul coined this word.

b. Spiritual gifts are not given based on merit, but because God chooses to give them.

c. Specially the Holy Spirit is mentioned of those who distribute the gifts.

2. However man, in his nature tends to find a way to be proud about

spiritual gifts or talents and insists on exalting men for how God has gifted them.

3. The gifts can be turned negative in 3 ways: They can be boasted on, they can be abused and lastly, they can be neglected.

a. Abused gifts and boasted on will harm the body.

b. Negligence is an all too easy one to do. That's one of the saddest things

I can think of, being gifted by God to do something for Him and never using it. We don't want to be a foot that's always asleep.

B. Our responsibilities are to use those gifts and talents for God.

1. Paul mentions seven specific gifts here.

a. Whether it be Prophecy, then prophesy according to the proportion of

faith. The Greek Word for prophecy has two uses: One to foretell and the other to “forth tell.” The word is close to the idea of preaching or proclamation. Preaching should be done by the Word.

b. Ministering – That is service. All the gifts are meant for serving, but this specific gift is a special service. God has gifted many to serve in very special ways.

c. Teaching – The church most certainly needs teachers. Those skilled in communicating and breaking down God’s word to others in way its understood and made clear. Not everyone is meant to be teachers in position. But everyone needs to be teacher of the Gospel.

d. Exhortation – The one who encourages and challenges others to act on the teaching.

e. Giving - do so with simplicity (generously, single-minded). Every believer should be giving to His local body as commanded. This passage here isn’t that focus though. There are many that God blesses so much resourcefully in giving. Giving should be done with a pure motive, with the single-minded attitude of helping someone else.

f. Ruling (leadership) - A leader goes before followers. This gift is not limited to church offices but can include people without an official position in the church. Leaders are accountable to God for how they lead the church of Jesus Christ. Leading with diligence is important.

g. Mercy (compassion). Ability to empathize or identify with those who are hurting, and then to take action to help them.

2. This list of 7 is not the only kind of ways God gifts His members to benefit the Body and it doesn't mean you can only have one. Let's consider specific things in our own local church:

- a. Sunday School teachers: What if everyone was a Sunday school teacher? Wouldn't work. Not everyone is ready for that as well during their growth processes.
- b. Children's ministry – Not everyone is good with kids. It can be very exhausting and difficult, but very rewarding. Those that do it well become like a parent or older sibling to the kids and they won't forget. This includes Awana, children's church, Nursery, serving in PASS.
- c. Greeters: As greeters you are the first impression a guest is going to have. We need those cheerfully and welcoming to those arriving.
- d. Kitchen workers. Those serving donuts and breakfast in the morning. God blesses us to be able to provide this during our fellowship time, and I am grateful for those who contribute. It would be chaos if we just left the stuff on our own to grab.
- e. Sound booth – Not everyone can handle sound booth and media, but how far would we go in today's culture without proper sound or visual?
- f. Music – Whether it be voices or instruments – We want God's praise to be glorious and create an atmosphere that makes it easy to worship – This means musical abilities and talent. Not everyone is meant to sing through the mic and that's okay.
- g. Security – Do you feel much safer knowing we have committed and

trained men to protect us in the case of danger? Not every church has men willing to put themselves on the line and act on what's necessary to protect us.

h. Administration and clerk work. Keeping God's house orderly. The bulletins we receive every month, the calendar planning. This takes time and effort and keeps us updated and organized.

i. Various work that requires skill: whether it be auto mechanics, contractor, janitorial, graphics design, many of these things can be used and are used here to contribute and benefit the body. If I forgot any specifics, understand I had no malicious intent. I'm grateful for any service done here.

j. And lastly, our Pastors and Preachers. I'll be honest with you, putting in the work and being on your knees praying and spending time in the Word listening to what God is preparing for that specific Sunday. It is not the easiest task. Many thought I was crazy because this is what I wanted to do with my life, but I knew what God was calling me to do and I was committed to it. I am grateful for Pastors who commit to the work of the Lord with diligence and are willing to preach the Word of God in truth no matter what the response of hearers may be.

Conclusion

Regarding our Christian service, there is one thing we all must foremost: it must be done in love. God rejects any service to Him that is not done in love. Our attitudes should be in humility, we ought to recognize our necessity and we need to exercise the gifts and talents God

has given us to be used to further His kingdom and serve Him for His glory. In Christ, we have been set free and called to use our freedom to serve Him faithfully. It is your choice. You can choose to not serve and are free to do it. But ask yourself this: If I were to leave this church, would the only thing that would be missing is my presence? We ought to be so committed and so involved in our church that it stings and would never be the same if we were to leave.

Considering what Jesus did on our behalf – will you commit yourselves to whatever He would have you do? I ask this as well. If you are a believer and you want to obey God in His Word, how do you plan to fulfill Romans 12:3-8 as well as many other passages if you aren't active in a local church? I am thankful to be apart of body where many love the Lord and take joy in serving Him. Hebrews 6:10 (10) For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.

Let's pray.