

(Service for the King) 2. MOTIVES TO SERVICE

by A.B. Simpson

Transcript

"Bind the sacrifice with cords even unto the horns of the altar." Psalm cxviii. 22 The sacrifice is our consecrated service to God and the cords which bind it to the altar are the motives, the impulses which ought to constrain us to a more earnest and entire devotion to Christ and to His work. God wants us so to yield ourselves, living sacrifices by the mercies of God, that we shall feel bound by a thousand cords on His altar—loving bonds, silken cords, that we would not break if we could.

1. The first motive which ought to hold us to serve the Lord Jesus Christ is the very fact of our redemption, for we are distinctly taught that we were not redeemed in any sense at all for our own selfish advantage. "Ye are not your own ye are bought with a price," the apostle says very solemnly, commencing his letter to the Corinthians; "therefore glorify God in your body, which is God's." If you were to buy a house you would think it strange if the seller should retain it for his own use and want to live in it himself and collect the rent. If you were to buy an article of value, you would be surprised if the seller should refuse to let you use it. And so the Lord has bought you; He has bought you to use you; bought you to be an instrument for His service and even though you have not performed the consecrating act, you are bound to belong to the Lord. You were consecrated by your redemption, and you are not your own, for you were bought with a price, and consecration is just coming up to your true obligations and returning that which is simply right; and so the mere fact that you have been redeemed by Christ should constrain you and bind you as a cord to the altar of service.

2. Our salvation binds us to the service of Christ. We were not saved for ourselves, but in order to serve the Lord. We find this in a great many passages. Especially you will remember what Paul says about his own salvation: "For this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first God might show a pattern of all longsuffering unto them that should after believe on Him to life everlasting."

So he says he was saved not for the sake of his own soul merely, but saved that he might save other souls. The very reason of his rescue from his awful and presumptuous iniquity is that he might save just men in coming days and so, if you have been saved strangely and wondrously, is for you to save others through God as strangely and wondrously; if you have been saved from any evil it is for you to save others from that evil; if you have been saved from some special form of sin, it is your ministry to rescue others from the same, so that your very salvation is a cord that binds you to the altar of God.

3. Again our calling and election are for service.

I don't use the term here with reference to our salvation, but I believe that these words, "calling and election," are used in the Scripture very emphatically with respect to our service and to our special standing as Christians after we have been saved.

When Peter says, "Make your calling and election sure," I think he means not our salvation at all, but some higher calling that comes after our salvation; our calling to a place of service and honor, our election to an office--if you might use the term in allusion to the human use of the word--to a position of trust and honor. You know that in the State men are called to positions of trust; elected to positions of honor, and so I think God uses this word to denote our being summoned by His Word and set apart by His gracious will to some place of special usefulness.

Now, we are told distinctly that we are called that we might serve. "Ye have not chosen Me," Christ said to His apostles, "but I have chosen you." What for? That you should go to heaven? No, that you should go and bring forth fruit, that your fruit should remain, and that your prayer should be so effectual that "whatever you ask in My name, I shall do it." That is your calling, chosen and ordained, that you should bring forth fruit and be a minister of blessing to others. Paul says, speaking of his calling and referring to the story of his conversion, and the words God said to him as soon as he was called from the dead: "I have appeared to thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness, both of these things which thou hast seen and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee; delivering thee from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in Me. Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision." That was Paul's calling. God appeared to him in that moment to save him and give him a higher calling.

And so to you there comes a calling in life somewhere and sometime as surely as it came to Abram in that day in Ur of Chaldea, and he went forth not knowing whither; as surely as it came to Jacob, in the vision at Bethel by night; as surely as it came to Paul on the way to Damascus. God has called you and called me to some special mission in life--a work that nobody else can do, and that if you do not do, you shall stand at his judgment door recreant and condemned for neglect of your vocations. I don't know what your calling is. I think I know something of what mine was, and I am sure that if I had not listened and by His grace stood amid testings which made the blood quiver, I would have missed the blessings of my life, and perhaps others besides would have lost theirs.

God calls every one of you to some special duty. I mean that mission for Him which is the very meaning of life, and without which life will be a miserable mistake and prove a fraud at last; and all the wishes and desires you spent on yourselves were lost, and even you lost the thing you lived for--yourself.

4. Again, we are sanctified to serve God. Our sanctification is one of the cords which binds us to the altar of service. We are taught again, in another place: "How much more shall the blood of Christ purge your conscience from dead works to serve the Living God."

Now, I used to think that we were sanctified at last in order to go to heaven--that the very last thing God did for the soul was to sanctify it, and that then He took it right home; and I will confess that I was a good deal afraid of being sanctified, at one time, for fear I would die very soon afterward; and I am afraid many people have the idea that sanctified people are not good for anything. But the Lord Jesus Christ tells us that we are sanctified in order to serve Him here. You cannot go forth and fight the enemy successfully

until the victory is won in the citadel of your heart--in your own soul. While there is a revolution going on at home, you cannot have much foreign aggression. While sin is mastering you, you cannot do any work for Jesus. God wants you to get your victory from sin, in order that you may live a useful life and go forth with the prestige of that victory and overcome the world and the devil. And so this blessed experience that God has brought to you for the purpose of cleansing your soul from sin, means a life of service; and you will not be able to keep it up if it is going to make you join a sort of holy elite circle, enjoying your own blessing and wrapped up in your own comfort. No; only as you use it to bring others in can you keep what you have. Just as Joshua and the tribes of Israel when they entered into the land, it was that they might lead their brethren into the rest, and there was to be no rest for them until the Lord "had given their brethren rest, and they also shall have possessed the lands which the Lord gave them."

5. Again another cord that binds us to the altar is the enduement of the Holy Spirit, which is given us only for service, and which we can only keep while we consecrate it to the work of Jesus. "Ye shall receive power after the Holy Ghost is come upon you and ye shall be witnesses unto Me." That is what you receive the power for; and the fact that you have received that divine Spirit is a solemn incentive and a strong motive that should lead you to use that trust for the highest ends for which God has given it. O, do not waste a treasure so unspeakably valuable. Don\

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