

# The Willing Servant

by Henry Law

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*The sermon explores the concept of the Willing Servant, highlighting Jesus' willingness to serve and sacrifice for humanity, and the significance of this service in the context of salvation.*

**Scripture:** Exodus 21:5, Isaiah 42:1, John 13:14, John 19:30, Philippians 2:7

**Topics:** "Christ's Servanthood", "Redemption Through Suffering"

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## Description

Henry Law delves into the story of the Hebrew slave who willingly chooses to remain in servitude out of love for his master, wife, and children, drawing parallels to Christ's sacrificial love and willingness to serve humanity. The act of the master piercing the slave's ear with an awl symbolizes the servant's lifelong commitment, reflecting Jesus' humble obedience and selfless service to fulfill God's plan of salvation for mankind. Through various Old Testament prophecies and types, Law emphasizes how Jesus, as the Willing Servant, willingly took on human flesh and endured immense suffering to accomplish the work of redemption, ultimately declaring 'It is finished' on the cross.

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## Transcript

"But the slave may plainly declare, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children. I would rather not go free.' If he does this, his master must present him before God. Then his master must take him to the door and publicly pierce his ear with an awl. After that, the slave will belong to his master forever." Exodus 21:5-6

As in nature's field, so in Israel's story, almost every object reflects Christ. Happy the hand which holds a key to open the rich treasure's door! Happy the soul which learns the art of feasting at the hallowed table! To see Christ now by faith is heaven begun. To see Christ soon in glory will be heaven complete.

The narrative before us seems at first glance to tell but a simple incident of domestic life. A Hebrew slave is the subject of the story. His period of servitude is past. All claims have therefore ceased. He has now the option to breathe freedom's air. But freedom has no charms for him. Attachment binds him to his master's home. His dearest joys are there. His hearty language is, 'I love my master, my wife, and my children. I would rather not go free.' A new ordinance is appointed to sanctify this willing offer of perpetual service. The judges must bear witness. An inflicted wound must also be a visible and enduring seal: 'Then his master must take him to the door and publicly pierce his ear with an awl. After that, the slave will belong to his master forever.' Willing consent is thus proclaimed. The testifying brand is fixed. And a beloved work, while life shall last, is grasped by self-devoting hands.

It may perhaps come as a new thought to some, that in this servant's choice, and in this constant love, Jesus reveals Himself. But doubts are worse than folly, when the Spirit speaks from His high seat. Read, then, the 40th Psalm. There faith ascends in heaven-high flight. It hears the eternal Son in close communion with the eternal Father. It catches these wondrous notes. 'Sacrifice and offering you did not desire but my ears you have pierced.' Jesus announces the amazing fact. Father, My ears are pierced by Your hand.

Here is a grand truth. Read it, O sons of men. Read it, my soul. Hell sees it and turns pale. Heaven sees it and resounds with praise. These words state at once, that Jesus becomes man. They speak of 'ears.' None can have these, except they wear the garments of our flesh. We have the Spirit's comment. He writes in after pages, as a co-equal clause, 'a body You have prepared Me.'

But more than this is taught. The ears are 'pierced.' Here a clear finger points to the Willing Servant's pledge. We see the God-man stooping to the lowest grade. He seeks a servant's office, and a servant's toil. Jehovah's Fellow is Jehovah's workman in the labor-field of grace. For God to take us into heaven, and on the throne of worlds, would be grace beyond all thought. But for God to become man in lowest bonds of servitude, is grace which none but Jesus' heart can know.

We have, then, in this abject state, a speaking portrait of Christ's love. This image is the sweetest fountain of His people's peace. It is the deepest mystery set forth in simplest terms. Hence Scripture, laboring to reveal the Lord, presents the Servant's motif in repeated terms. The Father's voice announces, 'Behold My Servant, whom I uphold.' And again, 'Behold I will bring forth My Servant the Branch.' Jesus meekly adds, 'I am among you as he that serves.' The Spirit echoes, 'Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God--but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a Servant.' He is a servant, whose time and toil are not his own. Strong obligations bind Him to execute another's will.

Reader! come now and mark THE SERVICE to which God calls His Son. It is to build the fabric of salvation. What strength, what zeal, what might, what wisdom, what patience, what endurance, what self-sacrifice, are needed! Survey the hindrances. In depth they reach to hell. In height they mount to heaven. Their breadth and length extend illimitable arms. A countless multitude of immortal beings lie in the vile quarry of vile sin. They must be rescued from this misery's cell. They must be made fit with all-beauteous grace. Each soul is black with stains more countless than the ocean's sands. These stains must disappear. Each owes a debt of infinite amount. This must be cancelled. Each is most justly sentenced to eternal woe. This sum of wrath must be endured. Each is weighed down beneath the Law's stern curse. This burden must be borne away. Satan has riveted his iron chains around each. These fetters must be broken off. The walls of his dark prison-house enclose them. The mighty barrier must be leveled. They are all loathsome in most filthy rags. White clothing must be wrought for them. In each the nature is estranged from God. This must be changed in every pulse and every feeling. A new heart must be implanted. Old things must pass away. Grace must commence its new-born reign. They are as scattered outcasts in a wide world's wilderness. All must be brought to hear one Shepherd's voice, and feed in one most holy fold. All must be set before the Father's throne, clear of all guilt, free from all charge, as pure as God, as blameless as heaven, as bright as eternal day.

Such is Jehovah's gracious will. Not all the hosts of angels or of men can render aid. Deity's whole might is needed to subserve this cause. There is a train, also, of revealing types. They must be accurately answered. There is a volume of prophetic promise. All must be fulfilled. There is a fearful catalogue of

righteous threatenings. All must be executed. Each holy attribute presents strong claims. Each must be fully satisfied. God would be cast down, His empire would be a broken reed, His sovereignty would be a shadow's shade, unless justice remains just, and truth continues true, and holiness shines forth inviolate. It is no easy task to render these attributes their due honor. But such is the service which must be performed.

O my soul, rejoice, be glad, give thanks, shout praises; a willing Servant undertakes to do it! O my soul, rejoice, be glad, give thanks, shout praises, while you draw nearer and behold the fulfillment. The time to work arrives. Will Jesus now draw back? It cannot be. 'Lo, I come,' is still the language of His willing heart. He must, then, stoop to put on human flesh. He must be one in lowly nature with our race. He shrinks not. He lies a babe of Adam's stock. He takes our kinsman's place. He, for whom heaven is no worthy home, is cradled, as the lowest child of earth. Jehovah's service, man's redemption, demands descent to depths thus low. Salvation's Servant must go slowly on through every stage of suffering life. Be it so. It is His food and drink to do His Father's will. We find not one reluctant pause. He dwells unknown in a despised town. He toils, as workman, with a workman's tools. Each cup of degradation is wrung out. The final scene, the bitterest effort, comes. Will Jesus flinch? He hastens forward to meet all.

Go with Him to the garden of woe. There torturing agonies collect, which human thought is far too weak to grasp. The sufferer stands laden with His people's guilt. He is not spared. Wrath rushes down with outpouring fury. He meekly bows before the just infliction. The Willing Servant pays the whole debt, bears the whole curse, receives each crushing load, exhausts each vial of wrath. All heaven hears the voice, 'I have glorified You on the earth--I have finished the work which You gave Me to do.'

And now the cross is upraised. The scaffold stands. Will Jesus hesitate? He is the Willing Servant to the end. Man's bitter hate drives in the nails. Hell makes its direct assault. The Father hides His smile. All earth, all heaven, desert Him. But Jesus willingly serves on, until the mightiest of all mighty words sounds forth, 'It is finished.' Yes! Salvation is accomplished! Redemption is secured! Each type is answered! Every payment is paid! Each penalty is thoroughly endured! The curse is drained! Satan is vanquished! Hell's borders are broken down! His people are all free! The Father's will is done, the holy service is performed, Jehovah's Servant has acted out the glorious work! 'It is finished!'

O my soul, you may indeed stand fearless on the rock of this completed service. The work is done, is fully done, is done forever. The heavens again receive Him. The Servant enters with a Victor's crown. There He still serves. Salvation's building consists of countless stones. All must be found, and fitly framed together. They lie on many a mountain's brow, in many a hidden valley, on many a distant plain. Each is a precious soul. Each must abhor the loathsomeness of self, and rejoice in Jesus's blood, and cling with sincere faith to His saving arms.

By day, by night, without one moment's pause, Jesus pursues the work of winning souls. He sends His Spirit on the wings of love. He calls and qualifies ministering pastors. At His command they raise the beacon of the cross. Devoted missionaries break all endearing ties, and seek the outcasts beneath tropic suns, in ice-clad rocks, and amid tribes which Satan holds in death-cold bonds. Thus Christ still serves the purposes of grace. A mighty voice cries, Come! And all who are ordained to life obey. Onward the healing waves will roll until the blessed company is complete. Then comes the end. The glorious plan is gloriously finished. The kingdom is delivered to the Father. The Willing Servant shows the collected mass all gathered in, all saved. Not one is lost. Not one is absent. Each member of the mystic body fills its place.

Reader! at that day where will be your place? Oh! pause. Put not the question away from you. Perhaps you sigh, I would like to be numbered with the saved, but how can I have hope? Tell me. Where is your fear? Is it lest the tremendous billows of your sins should swell above His willingness to save? If all the guilt of all the lost multiplied and magnified beyond all power to count or measure, weighed heavily upon your conscience, still venture to His feet. The willing Jesus will not cast you out. His heart, His love, His zeal, His pity, His bleeding wounds, His undertaken office, all forbid it. Let not His acts on earth, let not His voice from heaven, be in vain.

Did misery ever seek relief from Him, and not receive more than a ready welcome? Fly forth in spirit to the bright saints in light. The testimony from each rejoicing heart is one. They all give glory to a willing Jesus. With united voice they tell, that when they cast their ruined souls upon Him, He tenderly embraced, and sweetly cheered, and fully pardoned, and entirely saved. Hear now His voice. Throughout the Bible, and from faithful lips, it still is sounding--Will you? Will you be made whole?

Be persuaded then. Tarry not. Let this accepted moment find you a willing suppliant at a willing Savior's cross. None ever perished because Christ would not hear. None ever fell into the burning lake because He turned from the beseeching cry.

But stay, there is another word. It seals perdition on all who stand apart. Take heed, lest it enclose you in its hopeless doom. 'You will not come to me, that you might have life.'

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