

# Service

by Stephen Kaung

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*The sermon emphasizes the importance of service as a fundamental aspect of the Christian life, highlighting that service is not just a work, but a fruit of the life of Christ, and that it requires strict discipline and brokenness.*

**Duration:** 1:10:03

**Scripture:** Exodus 5:1, Exodus 8:1, Romans 12:1

**Topics:** "Christian Service", "Sacrificial Living"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of service and how it should be viewed as more than just religious work. Service is seen as imparting the life of Christ to others and should be measured by the amount of life that is imparted to people. The preacher highlights that service is not limited to time or space and can be done every day, wherever one is. The sermon references Second Corinthians and Romans to further explain the meaning and significance of service, emphasizing the need to present oneself as a living sacrifice and allow Christ's life to flow through them.

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## Transcript

Will you please turn to Romans, chapter 12, verse 1. Romans, chapter 12, verse 1. I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the compassions of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your intelligent service. Which is your intelligent service. Let's have a word of prayer.

Dear Lord, we come together before Thee, with our hearts open to Thee. We pray that Thy Spirit will send Thy Word, Thy truth, into our hearts. Dear Lord, we pray that Thy Word will have its rightful place in our life.

That we may be those who truly serve the one and only living God. We commit this time into Thy hands, trusting in Thy Holy Spirit. We ask in the name of our Lord Jesus.

Amen. Last Laws Day, we share on this matter of worship. But you cannot talk about worship without talking also of service.

Because in the Word of God, worship and service are always together. They can be distinguished, but they cannot be separated. So this morning we would like to continue on this matter of worship with service.

You remember when God sent Moses to Egypt. He spoke through Moses to Pharaoh, saying that, Let my people go, that they may celebrate my feast in the wilderness. That's in Exodus chapter 5, verse 1. But when it comes to chapter 8, verse 1, you find Moses told Pharaoh, God said, let my people go, that they may serve me.

So here you'll find celebrate the feast is worship. And worship and service are one. They can never be separated.

And when you come to Romans chapter 12, you'll find the same thing. There you'll find the Apostle Paul exhorts us to present our bodies a living sacrifice. Holy, acceptable to God, which is, now you'll find in different versions, it is being translated a little bit different.

And here you'll find in David's version, he said, which is your intelligent service. But in some version you'll find which is your spiritual worship. Or your spiritual service.

Now why is it so? Because in the original, it includes both of these meanings. Because worship and service can never be separated. Once you separate them, you'll find both worship and service suffer.

And you cannot emphasize the one more than the other. Because worship will lead us to service. And service will bring us back to worship.

Or put it more directly, worship is serving God. Service is worshipping God. So brothers and sisters, these things should never be separated.

But unfortunately, in our mentality, we tend to separate these two things. We think of worship as towards God. And service as towards man.

We think of worship as something abstract, mystical, emotional. And we think of service as something concrete, activities, tangible, and towards man. But dear brothers and sisters, if this is our mentality, you will discover that both worship and service suffer.

Or to put it another way, we do not really understand what worship is. Our Father is seeking for true worshipers. Now what is worship? And our God is seeking for true service, true servants.

Now who are these true servants of God? So dear brothers and sisters, I think it is time for us to go back to the very fundamental. And we want to ask a few questions. I hope that every one of us here will ask himself or herself these very simple and basic questions.

And see if we really can answer them all. First of all, who are called to serve? Man was created to serve. Man was created not only to worship God, but to serve God.

You remember when God made our first man, Adam? He told Adam to till and to guard and to subdue. In other words, man was given a responsibility. He was to till the ground.

But if you read carefully, you'll find in the Garden of Eden, God made all trees bearing fruit. And these are the food for man. Herbs were given to the animals.

Man's main food is fruit. And yet God commanded man to till the ground to make it more fruitful. Why? And God commanded man to guard the garden.

Now why? Because there was an enemy around. And man had a responsibility to serve God in guarding the garden. And would not allow the enemy to slip in.

And man was commanded to subdue. That is to say, to bring everything back to the feet of God. So you see that man was created to serve.

Not to serve his own purpose. Not until man sinned and was driven out of the garden. And the earth was cursed.

And man had to labor, toil for his own livelihood. So brothers and sisters, in the very first place, we have to remember why we are created. The purpose of life is to serve God and to worship God.

That's man's primary responsibility. When God delivered the children of Israel out of Egypt, he brought them to himself at Mount Sinai. And there he declared to them, why did he deliver them out of Egypt? Why did he set them free from slavery? Because God's desire to make them a nation of priests.

In other words, this will be a nation that serves God. Because the one and only meaning of priesthood is to serve God. So the whole nation was to be a nation of priests.

From the very littlest one to the oldest one. Male and female. Everyone in that nation has the responsibility to serve.

To serve the one and living God. To serve the one who had delivered them out of Egypt. Bring them into liberty.

That is the very purpose of salvation. Unfortunately, it was their failure. Because when Moses was receiving the Ten Commandments on the mountain, the children of Israel worshipped golden cows.

And because of this, they disqualified themselves from what God intended them to be. So finally, as an emergency temporary measure, God raised up one family, one tribe, to do the service for the whole nation. But that was not the normal thing.

That was an abnormal situation. But thank God, when our Lord Jesus came into this earth, and he has accomplished the work of redemption, then you see, he brings us back to God's original design. So today we who are in the New Testament, we are not supposed to still remain in the temporary emergency measure of God.

That is to say, just let a few of the redeemed of the Lord to serve, for the rest of the people. It is the will of God for us today that every redeemed child of God is called to serve. You find that in the book of Revelation, chapter 1, verse 5 and verse 6. He loves us and has washed us with his blood, that we might be a kingdom, priests unto God.

And again, in chapter 5, 9 and 10, out of every nation, every tribe, every tongue, every people, God has redeemed a people unto himself, that they might be priests and kings unto God, to reign forever. And then in 1 Peter, chapter 2, you find the apostle Peter tells us that we are to be a holy priesthood, a royal priesthood. In other words, the universal priesthood of believers is the teaching of the Bible, which means that every believer is a priest.

The moment you are born again from above, you are born as a priest. You know, in the Old Testament times, if you are born to the family of Aaron, the moment he was born, he was destined for one and only

one purpose in his life, to be a priest to serve God. So, brothers and sisters, we need to remember that we are all called to serve the one who loves us and gave himself for us.

There is no exception. You should not wait until you are 20 or 25 or 30, then you begin to serve God. No, the moment you are born from above is the time you begin to serve.

I hope this is evident and this is clear to every one of us. Unfortunately, we may be clear in our mind, but in our life it is not working. It is as if we have to wait until we are matured, then we begin to serve.

But this is not the mind of God. The moment you are saved is the moment you start serving God. In other words, your whole life from then on has only one purpose, that God may be served in your life.

So, I hope we don't need to labor over this, but just to state the fact, and I hope it will sink into every heart, especially the younger ones. Not because you are one yin in the Lord, therefore you are not qualified to serve. You are all called to serve.

Whether we can serve rightly, that needs to learn. But still, we need to begin to serve. Now the second question is, whom do we serve? You may think that this need not be asked.

Of course, we serve the one true and living God. We serve our Savior, our Lord Jesus Christ. That's the one we serve.

But is it true? While we are serving, who is our objective? Do we make man our objective? Or do we even make our work our objective? Unconsciously, when we are serving, we begin to only think of the work in our hands. How can we make this work successful? So we try to learn all the techniques, all the tricks, trying to make that work workable, successful. In other words, in doing this, we forget whom we serve.

We are using our own cleverness. We are adopting all the ways of the world in order to make our work successful. Now brothers and sisters, whom do we serve? Or when in our service, we only think of man, and we forget God.

So dear brothers and sisters, we need to again and again remind ourselves, whom do we serve? You remember the Apostle Paul in Galatians chapter 1, verse 10. He said, Do I want to please man, satisfy man, or do I want to please God? If I still want to please man, then I am not a true servant of God. Our service is primary towards God.

We serve our God. In other words, when we are serving, we should have God in our view, and not just a work in our view, or man in our view. Because we are here to please God, to satisfy God's heart.

If we only know whom we are serving. Remember, we serve the God of the universe, the Creator, the Almighty God, the Sovereign of the universe. If we really remember whom we are serving, I believe it will make a great change in our service.

We just cannot be careless. We cannot be unfaithful. We have to be faithful unto Him, because He is the one whom we serve.

And on the other hand, while we are serving, we will have the right attitude. We will begin to see that it is a great privilege and high honor to serve God. Suppose you are called to serve the President.

You will consider it as a privilege. You will not look at it just as an obligation. You will consider it as a great honor that you may serve the President.

But how much more is the one that we serve? We serve God, the Sovereign of the universe. It humbles us to think that who we are, that God should call us to serve Him. How should we prepare ourselves? How should we humble ourselves before Him? Because it is a great honor.

So, one brother, you should say, we need to climb on our knees to serve, thanking God that He should allow us, He should want us to serve Him. Never consider it just as a duty to fulfill, as an obligation. Always consider it as a high honor, a great privilege.

No matter in what area you are serving, even in the smallest thing, you are serving the great Sovereign of the universe. Brothers and sisters, we need to always remember whom we serve. And then the third question, we must ask ourselves, what is service? What is service? What do you mean by serving God? Is it just a religious work? Is the difference between serving God and serving the world is just a matter of one is religious and the other is secular? Or is it something more than that? If it is just a work, even a religious work, all you need is you learn the techniques, and all you aim at is to see that work successful.

Whether it is a secular work or whether it is a religious work, it's just a matter of different area, that's all. But brothers and sisters, in the word of God, serving God is a work, but that work is a fruit. In other words, the true meaning of service is the outflow of the life of Christ in you.

Service is imparting Christ to other people. It is not just a work to be done. It is releasing the life of Christ in you and supplying it to those whom you serve.

Therefore, it is spiritual. It is not religious at all. It is a giving of life, the life of Christ in you.

Outwardly, it may seem as if you are giving your life, but no, you are giving the life of Christ in you to other people. So those whom you serve, they will receive the life of Christ in them. Now, if you can see this, then you really enter the true meaning of service.

In our Second Corinthians, we often say, is that book which reveals to us the meaning of service, or ministry. Now, ministry and service are the same. In Second Corinthians, Paul opened up to us the ministry that God has entrusted him.

He showed us the meaning of ministry, the secret of ministry. And if you turn to Second Corinthians, chapter four. Second Corinthians, chapter four.

We will go through it briefly. Therefore, having this ministry, having this service, as we have had mercy shown us, we faint not. You know, if you really know what service is, you will faint.

Who am I? What do I have that I may be able to be a vessel of imparting Christ, the living Christ, not just a teaching, not just a doctrine, but the living Christ to other people in my service. Unless the mercy of God is upon us, we will truly faint. But we have rejected the hidden things of shame, not walking in deceit, not falsifying the word of God, but my manifestation of the truth, commanding ourselves to every conscience of man before God.

Now, isn't that tremendous? When you are serving, you are actually commanding yourselves to every conscience of man before God. In other words, when you are serving, you are giving yourself to them. But

what can they see in you? What can they receive from you? It is not you in the flesh.

It is Christ in you, the hope of glory. But this imparting of Christ has to come through you. In other words, when you are pouring yourself out, what people receive is the Christ in you, not you alone.

Isn't that tremendous? That's service. You can make a work, workable and successful. But if Christ is not there, if Christ is not increased, it's nothing.

It is just a religious work. It will not bring you into eternity. It may please man, satisfy man, but God is not satisfied.

A tremendous demand upon ourselves. How we need to be dealt with. How we need to be under the cross.

How we need to be broken. How we need to know the Lord in a living, experiential way in our lives. That we may decrease and Christ may increase.

Brothers and sisters, that's true worship and true service. But if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled in those that are lost, in whom the God of this world has blinded this thought of the unbelieving, so that the radiancy of the glad tidings of the glory of the Christ, who is the image of God, should not shine forth for them. For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus Lord, and ourselves your bondmen for Jesus' sake.

Because it is the God of spook that out of darkness light should shine, who has shone in our hearts for the shining forth of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. Now, that's service. But how does it bring about? And here you'll find the secret.

But we have this treasure in earthen vessels. Brothers and sisters, we are earthen vessels. We are nobody.

We are nothing. Often times when we are serving, we think we are somebody. Then we are something.

But no, we are but earthen vessels. Common. But thank God we have a treasure in the earthen vessel.

That treasure is Christ. That's the difference. That the surpassingness of the power may be of God and not from us.

In other words, we are earthen vessels, but we have the treasure in us. But it is not the earthen vessel that is supplying light and life to other people. It is the treasure, the radiancy of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

It is He who is the light that shines forth out of us and through us. That the radiancy of the glory of the Lord in the face of Jesus Christ may shine forth upon people. Now how can it be? An earthen vessel with a treasure in it.

The treasure is full of brilliancy, full of radiancy, full of power, full of light. But this earthen vessel is opaque, is dark. Now how can that radiancy of the treasure within you shine forth? You need brokenness.

This earthen vessel has to be cracked. It has to be broken in order that the light may shine forth. But brothers and sisters, we love this earthen vessel.

We want to keep ourselves intact. We refuse to let go of ourselves out of darkness. We try to shine.

Brothers and sisters, it will not give life. Therefore, true service requires strict discipline. So here you'll find the Apostle Paul said, Every way afflicted but not straightened.

The Spirit of God will arrange our circumstances as if we are surrounded. We are straightened. But strangely you'll find that when we are under pressure from every side, we are pressed in.

But there is a power in us that overcomes. Seeing no apparent issue, but our way not entirely shut up. Now oftentimes God has to bring us to our end.

As Philip says in Philip's translation, he said, We are brought to our wit's end. So far as our wit is concerned, we come to an end. We do not know what to do.

But that's not the life's end. Because the resurrection life is in us. Persecuted but not abandoned.

Cast down but not destroyed. I like Philip's translation. Knocked down but not knocked out.

Now oftentimes we feel we are knocked down, but we are knocked out. Why? Because there is a life, a resurrection life in us. And it is through this process that we go through brokenness, allowing the radiancy of Christ, the treasure in us, to shine forth.

So the body, the dying of Jesus daily. The slaying of Jesus daily in His life that the life of Jesus may be in Him and in others. Now that is service.

But do not be frightened. Do not faint. Because in ourselves we cannot do it.

But His grace is always sufficient. His mercy will carry us through. So dear brothers and sisters, this is the meaning of service.

We cannot afford to look at service as just a work, a religious work that will not bring us into eternity. We have to look at service as serving God, as worshipping God, as imparting Christ, the life of Christ to people. That's the measure of service.

Do not measure service by outward success or failure. But measure your service by how much life you're able to impart and how much life people have received through you. That is the meaning of service.

It is not a small thing. The fourth question we want to ask is where do we serve? Now if service is imparting Christ to other people, then our service is unlimited. It is not limited to time, not limited to space.

You can serve God every day, all the time, wherever you are. You do not need, as it were, a special situation, condition for you to serve. But in the word of God you do find that there is a principle there.

Where did the priests of old serve? Their service is always related to the temple. Now sometimes their actual activities are not in the temple. They may be judges sent out, and yet you find it's always related to the temple.

You remember one case in the book of Judges? I think it's Judges 17 and 18. There was a Levite of Bethlehem, Judah, and he was traveling, trying to find a place to serve. In other words, instead of being dissatisfied serving in the temple in Jerusalem, he wanted to find somewhere else to serve.

And you know who this man was? This man was none other but the grandson of Moses, Jehovah Nathan. And sure enough, while he was traveling around, trying to find a place to serve, he found a place. Because a man called Micah has an idol there, and he needed a priest.

So you remember he became the priest of that family. Instead of a priest of the nation, he became the priest of the family. Instead of serving the living God in the temple at Jerusalem, he was serving that substitute in a private house.

And worse than that, you find a tribe there. A tribe was trying to find a place to locate. And it happened that the spies came to that house.

So finally you find they took the idol, and they say to Jehovah Nathan, think about it, to be a priest of a house or to be a priest of a tribe, which one will you choose? And he gladly went with them. And the Bible said, as long as the tabernacle was in Shiloh, there was this idol worshipping there. Serious.

When a priest is separated from the temple, eventually his service became a disservice to God. Now when you come to the New Testament, you find the same principle. In Romans chapter 12, when it talks about real service, present your bodies a living sacrifice.

This is your intelligent, reasonable, spiritual service. The very fact that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, that's service. Why? Because God is able to allow His Son's life to come out through you.

You know, you commit yourself to Him, allow Him to work in your life, allow Him to fill your life with Christ, and allow you to impart Christ to other people. That is service. But it continues and says, be transformed by the renewal of your mind.

Instead of being conformed to the world, you will be able to prove the good, perfect, acceptable will of God. And what is that will? You read on, and you find it is the body of Christ. When you present your bodies a living sacrifice to serve God, then God will open your eyes and see, where are you going to serve? In His body.

You serve in the body of Christ. And the same thing you find in 1 Corinthians chapter 12 to chapter 14. There you'll find God give gifts to man.

And where are these spiritual gifts to be exercised? In the body of Christ. So brothers and sisters, there is a principle here, and that is our service shall always be related to the house of God. Shall always be related to the body of Christ.

It is in the body, it is for the body, it is out of the body. And it always goes back to the body, because that is the eternal purpose of God. I always remember many years ago, in the 50s, when Billy Graham had his first crusade in New York.

It was a glorious time. Six months in Madison Garden. And I was there part of the time, because the part of time went to England.

And I always remember before that campaign began, he sent someone to New York, called all the ministers of the Word of God together. And I don't know how, they invited me to go too. So I went there.

And there he mentioned to us, he said the work of evangelizing New York is the work of the church. It is because the church is not functioning properly. That's why he allows the crusade to come in.

Always remember that. That's true. Today you have all kinds of organizations doing all kinds of Christian works.

Why? It is because of the failure of the church. But that is not God's original design. God's original design is His work is to be done by His church.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, we need to remember this. When our Lord Jesus commanded His disciples to evangelize the Word, what does He say? From Jerusalem through Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the world. In other words, begin where you are.

Do not think that you can begin at the end of the world. If you do not begin at home, place will not change you, your service. You have to begin from the very beginning.

Brothers and sisters, especially young people, we are attracted by the glamour of some works. But remember, if you do not start at home, it won't do. Begin right here, where you are.

Start your service right here. And do not wait until somewhere else that you begin to serve. That will not happen.

And finally, where can we be trained to serve? I think this is a very pressing question everywhere. Especially young people who have the desire to serve. But where can they receive the help they need? What does the Scripture say? The world may tell you, the religious world may tell you, you can receive help in seminaries, Bible schools.

That's what I thought when I was first saved. But what does the Scripture say? Now, if service is imparting the life of God and the life of Christ, if service is the outflow of the life of Christ within, then how are you to be trained? Number one. There is the private side and the public side.

Now, so far as the private side is concerned, you will discover that service is not something that anybody else in the world can train you. They can train you in understanding the Bible better. But they can also confuse you.

Now, who can train your spiritual life? Who is the trainer? Why does God give us the Holy Spirit? We have a resident boss in us. The indwelling Holy Spirit, God Himself. Why is He here in you and in me if it's not because of training us? The Holy Spirit is the trainer.

The anointing within you will teach you in all things. Great things, small things. And whatever He teaches is true.

It is not a lie. And if you obey Him, you abide in Christ. Brothers and sisters, how we neglect this inner training and we look for outside training.

That's the failure of seminaries. We learn in the school of Christ. He Himself is responsible to train us how to serve.

Then you find it is not an academic thing. It is a spiritual thing. It is not a religious work.

It is the imparting of the life of Christ. Now, who can train us? Only the Holy Spirit. So, brothers and sisters, if we do not in private life be in the school of Christ under the training of the Holy Spirit then how can we serve God in a living real way? Impossible.

Get on your knees. Have dealings with God. Allow God to deal with you.

Listen to the still, small voice. Be sensitive. Take up your cross and follow Him.

Allow Him to break you down. Brothers and sisters, these are practical, living, spiritual training that we all need. As long as we live, as long as we serve, we are learning.

We never come out of being a learner. That is the private side. And thank God there is a public side.

Because serving God is spiritual and is practical. Often times we think of things spiritual as abstract. Intangible.

No. Spiritual is practical. So you find that God does give us a practical place to be trained.

And where is that place? Right where you are. In the church. Where God has put you.

Brothers and sisters, often times you find we are not satisfied. We are not satisfied with where we are. We are looking for something outside, elsewhere.

The grass is greener on the other side. And if we take that kind of attitude, we will never learn. God has put you right where you are.

Among your brothers and sisters, difficult brothers and sisters, stubborn brothers and sisters, just as you are, to break all down. That's the best training in the world. Timothy, a young brother, he was trained where he was.

Until the brothers in Lystris, Iconia, they all recommended him. And Paul took him and gave him further training. Brothers and sisters, his basic training is at home, is in the church.

If you do not learn to be trained in your home, if you do not learn to be trained in the gathering where you are, brothers and sisters, if you are put somewhere else, you find yourself cannot cope with the situation. No practical training. You have all the theoretical training, but where is the practical training? So, brothers and sisters, these are the questions we need to face.

Face them, not try to evade them. I hope every one of us here will ask these questions. Who are called to serve? Am I called to serve? Whom do I serve? Do I really serve God or man, or at work? What is true service? Am I doing true service unto God? Where do I serve? Where do I receive the training I need? God has arranged everything for you and you are looking somewhere else.

Now, maybe some brothers and sisters will say, well, if that is service, then I'm out. No, you are in. If you think you can serve, you are out.

If you think you cannot serve, you are in. Serve according to the measure of faith that God has given you. Do not overdo it.

Samuel began his service as a little boy. His duty was to open the door of the temple as if it is nothing spiritual, but he was faithful. He served under Eli, that dying, blind, going out old servant, but he served faithfully.

Even at midnight, when God called him, he went to Eli three times. Do you call me? He served faithfully in small things. God entrusted him with big things.

It is always a joy to see children, young people, doing what they can. Even, say, on Saturday, cleaning the place, helping the chairs. You know, I often was touched by a young boy.

After the meeting, I saw him carry the chair there. He can hardly lift it up, but he was doing it. Brothers and sisters, do that.

Young people do not be idle. There are so many places where you can serve. There are elderly sisters, brothers, that need help.

Offer yourself to them. Help to clean their houses, mow their lawn. Love them.

Many, many things you can do, if you have the heart for it. We are not created to be idle. We are created to be busy.

Busy. Busy for the Lord. Brothers and sisters, I encourage you, every one of you, be before the Lord.

Reconsider this whole matter of service. I hope it may change your life. It may change your idea.

We need to be real. No more, doing religious work. God forbid.

Let us pray. Dear Lord, we ask that Thy blood will cover these words, and may Thy Spirit speak to our hearts. In Thy precious name we pray.

Amen.

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