

Faithfulness in Serving Our Fellow Believers

by Zac Poonen

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of selfless service to fellow believers as a reflection of true faithfulness in preparation for Christ's return.

Scripture: Matthew 6:3-7, Luke 17:28, Luke 17:34, Romans 12:2

Topics: "Selflessness", "Service"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes the importance of serving fellow believers, both spiritually and physically, as a reflection of our faithfulness to God. He highlights that true service is often done in secret, where the left hand does not know what the right hand is doing, and that serving the least of our brothers is akin to serving Christ Himself. Poonen warns against the dangers of self-centeredness and the counterfeit holiness that focuses solely on personal achievements, contrasting it with the genuine love and concern for others that prepares us for Christ's return. He encourages believers to sacrifice their time and plans to serve those in need, reminding us that a true Christian life is marked by a willingness to be inconvenienced for the sake of others. Ultimately, he calls for a renewal of our minds to cultivate a Christ-like thoughtfulness that prioritizes the needs of others over our own.

Transcript

In Matt. 25:31-46 Jesus deals with our attitude towards our fellow believers in need. That need may be spiritual or physical. Here we see that some inherit the kingdom because they served their fellow believers as unto the Lord. Their service was so much in secret that their left hand did not know what their right hand was doing (Matt. 6:3). So much so, that when the Lord reminds them of the good that they did, they do not even remember it! (Matt. 25:38).

Jesus also taught here that any service that we do to the least of His brothers is considered as service done to Him (Matt. 25:40). It is significant that He speaks of the least here, for our tendency is to serve the most important believers and to ignore the poor and the despised! Those who are occupied with eating and drinking, buying and selling, and building and planting for themselves alone, will certainly be left behind when Jesus returns (Lk. 17:28,34).

Only those whose service for the Lord involved a loving concern to serve their fellow believers, will be taken up. In another passage, Jesus spoke of another group of people - who are a contrast to this group. These are the ones who remember all the good things that they have done in the name of the Lord. They are also at the judgment seat, and they remind the Lord that they have expelled demons, preached,

healed the sick in Jesus' name, etc. But they are rejected by the Lord, even though they did all these things, because they lacked the very first requirement, of a hidden life of holiness before God. They were taken up with the greatness of their gifts. It is interesting to see the contrast.

Those who healed the sick are cast out (Matt. 7:22,23). But those who merely visited the sick inherit the kingdom! (Matt. 25:34,36). God does not ask us to heal the sick if we have not been given the 'talent' of the gift of healing. But we can visit the sick and encourage them and bless them in the name of the Lord. We shall then find that we are ready for Christ's return, while many who healed the sick are left behind! To serve others in this way, we have to be willing to be inconvenienced.

Those who never want their daily plans to be disturbed by interruption from needy people, will certainly be left behind when Jesus comes. We have to sacrifice time, money, and above all, our own plans and our will, if we are to serve others in the name of the Lord. Selfishness is so rooted in our flesh that even when we have cleansed ourselves of the sins of lusting with our eyes, anger and covetousness, it is still possible to live just for ourselves. There can be a holiness, like the holiness of the Pharisees, which is occupied only with ourselves, and which does not deliver us from self-centredness. This is a counterfeit of the true holiness; yet it is easy to be deceived by it.

Jesus taught us to pray, "Give us ... Forgive us ... Deliver us ..." (Matt. 6:11-13). A sanctification that does not give us a concern for others who are still in their sins and need, is a worthless counterfeit that is fit for only being thrown into the garbage bin.

We need to re-orient our way of thinking ('renew our mind' Rom. 12:2) so that we put ourselves 'in the shoes of others' and try and understand what they are going through. This is Christ-like thoughtfulness that prepares us to inherit the coming kingdom. One who thinks only of his own and his family's need, however 'holy' he may be, is only deceiving himself if he thinks that he is ready for Christ's coming.

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