

Principles for Serving God - Being a Servant on the Power of God

by Zac Poonen

We are to be servants of God and our fellow believers, and to have the spirit of a servant and be willing to do dirty jobs for others.

Duration: 1:01:26

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 10:3

Topics: "Principles"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of fulfilling the specific task that God has appointed for each individual. He references John 17:4, where Jesus states that he glorified God on earth by completing the work given to him. The speaker encourages the audience to prioritize fulfilling God's will over desiring a long life. He also highlights the attitude of being a servant and relying on the power of God rather than relying on personal qualifications or achievements.

Transcript

Chapter four, we were considering yesterday the fact that God has a specific task for each of us and that our calling in life is really just to fulfill that specific task. And like Jesus said in John 17.4, I have glorified you on earth by finishing the work that you gave me to do. There is only one way we can glorify God in our ministry and that is by finishing the work that God has appointed for each one of us.

I hope none of us have a desire to live a long life, but rather to live a life in doing the will of God, whether it is short or long, is entirely in God's hands. The important thing is not to live a long life, the important thing is to finish that specific task God has given to us in our earthly lifetime and then to move on. Now, I want to share something today about the attitude of mind that we need to have in order to be able to serve the Lord in this way.

It is very important. We read in 2 Corinthians 4 and verse 5, we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord. In other words, we don't preach ourselves as Lord, but Christ Jesus as Lord and ourselves as your bond-servants for Jesus' sake.

And then in verse 7, we have this treasure in earthen vessels so that the surpassing greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves. So there are two things he speaks of there. One is being a

servant, verse 5, and the other is in the power of God, verse 7. And this is how we are to fulfill our task, by being a servant in the power of God.

Now, why does he say in verse 5, we do not preach ourselves as Lords? That means there is a tendency in those who serve the Lord to preach themselves as Lords, to present themselves as Lords and Masters in some way. Particularly, if we have some ability with the word of God, and if we have an anointing of the Holy Spirit, and we have some supernatural gift, it's very, very easy to be a Lord over other people. And if you want to know what a tremendous tendency towards this lies in our flesh, let me give you my experience over 25 years.

That most, I am using my words very carefully now, most of the so-called servants of the Lord that I have met in my life are Lords and not servants. And they are a very poor example for any true believer to follow if he wants to serve the Lord. I am not talking about the ordinary people, I am talking about the big shots who are well-known in Christian Pentecostal circles.

They are Lords. They do not have the spirit of a servant. It is so widespread, this disease, of lording it over other people.

Some people lord it along with titles, some people can call themselves just brothers and lord it over people. The mere fact that we have got rid of a title and we call ourselves brothers does not necessarily mean that we don't lord it over others. It is very, very easy to proclaim ourselves as Lords over others in so many ways.

And that's what Paul says, though he had all these wonderful gifts and he could have lorded it over people. He says, we proclaim ourselves as servants for Jesus' sake. We can never do God's work in the way God wants us to do it unless we are gripped by one important truth, that our calling throughout our entire life is to be servants of our fellow believers.

We cannot be servants of the Lord if we are not servants of our fellow believers. And there is no day that comes in our life when we become senior workers and we have a few people to serve us, like you have in these faith homes, senior pastors, lot of garbage, fit to be thrown into the dustbin. No, Jesus was a servant on the last day before he was crucified.

That's our goal. We must stick to this. And here we need to have a revelation of Philippians chapter 2. Philippians chapter 2 we read, in verse 5, Have this attitude in yourselves, which was in Christ Jesus, who, although he existed in the form of God, if there was one person who had a right to be Lord and to be Lord over another person, it was Jesus, because he existed from all eternity in the form of God.

But he did not regard equality with God as a thing to be grasped. He did not want to be a Lord. It was Lucifer who wanted to grasp it.

He emptied himself of that position and the privileges of being equal with God. And what did he take upon himself? The form of a born servant being made in the likeness of men. Now I want you to understand this verse.

Here is where I said we need revelation, on verse 7. That the reason why he took the form of a born servant is, in some translations it comes out very clearly, the reason why he became a servant was because he became a man. Because he became a man, he had to be a servant of others. What does that teach us? That as long as we are in this body, we have no other calling but to be servants.

Because in Philippians 3, verse 21, this body is called the body of our humble state. That's how our present body is called. Now one day it says he will transform us, transform it into conformity with his glorious body.

When we get a new body in the resurrection, then we are fit to reign on a throne and to rule the nations with a rod of iron, as we are told in Revelation 2, the overcomers will do. But until we get that body, this body is a body of our humble lowly state. And as long as we are in this body, we have to be servants.

Anything else is not fitting for those who are having this body. It is impossible to serve God unless we get a revelation on this, that one who acts as a Lord is acting as though he's already got his resurrection body, as though he's already got a glorious body. As long as I recognize this is the body of my humble state, because he came in that body, therefore he became a servant.

And that's why we read in John chapter 6, John 6 and verse 15, we read that when Jesus saw that they were going to make him a king, he withdrew into the mountain, because he didn't want to be a king. He did not want to be a king. It is not right for a servant of the Lord to be a king of any type.

Whether it's king of England or king of an assembly, it's not right for a servant of the Lord to be a king. Jesus knew that. Now when Jesus was resurrected and ascended up into heaven, then he was made a king, king of kings.

He did not run away then. He did not withdraw himself when the Father gave him a greater throne than these human beings could ever give him. Why? Why didn't he withdraw in a sort of a false humility? Because then it was right for him to take it, because he had a glorious body.

It's very important to see this, that as long as I have this body, I have no right to sit on a throne and lord it over anybody. Not my wife, not any brother in the church, no one. I cannot treat one brother as though he is my servant.

I've seen Christian workers do that. Ah, go and get some coffee from there. Who is this fellow sitting on the throne, ordering that other brother to go and get a cup of coffee from the coffee shop? Have you heard it? I've heard it.

Christian workers, who think they are sitting on the throne of glory already. They haven't understood? They do not have the mind of a servant. And you cannot build the body of Christ with such leaders.

They may have fantastic gifts, but you see their work, they'll never be the body of Christ in their work. Impossible. Whatever they build will be full of strife and quarreling and tension.

And they seem to be blind to the fact that that is not the body of Christ. Now brothers, we are to steer clear of that like we steer clear of hellfire, and like we steer clear of the plague. Don't be deceived by all these so-called great, so-called men of God.

I don't respect most of them as men of God at all. They have just got spectacular gifts, and carnal, undiscerning believers swallow all that and are deceived by them. But we are not to be deceived by all these powerful gifts, by people who do not know what it is to be servants.

Jesus was a servant. Jesus would never turn around to any of his disciples and say, Hey there, go and get a cup of coffee for me. Impossible.

I cannot imagine Jesus ever talking like that. And yet I have seen so-called Christian workers. You know, some small boy who has come to serve the Lord, they say.

They haven't understood. I don't blame them. They have got no revelation.

They have got no revelation because they don't fear God. But this is the situation we find in our country. And now we preach a new and living way.

Brothers, we are to manifest a completely different spirit. The spirit of Christ which is the spirit of a servant. He was always a servant.

Always. He was ready to wash the feet on the last day, and he was always, the meaning of that is, he was always ready to do dirty jobs for those whom he was called to serve. We read in Matthew chapter 23, Matthew 23, where Jesus spoke about the Pharisees.

There were a number of things he said that we are not to be called. And then he told us what we can be called. He said, for example, verse 8, Don't be called Rabbi.

Or, the equivalent today is Reverend, or Most Reverend, or Reverend Doctor. There are many variations of this garbage. Do not be called by such titles.

Well, the very thing which God says don't do is the very thing that many people do. One is your teacher, and you are all brothers. That's clear.

It's not just that we call ourselves brothers, we behave like brothers towards one another. That's very important. It's not just saying, Alright, I don't want you to call me Reverend, call me brother, but I behave like a lord towards you.

The question is, am I behaving like a brother or like a lord? And then, Do not call anyone on earth your father. That is very common in the Roman Catholic Church. Father so-and-so, and the Jacobite Church, Father so-and-so, and Father so-and-so.

One is your father, he is in heaven. And do not be called leaders, verse 10. This is common in Protestant churches.

House group leader, team leader, this leader, that leader. The very thing which Jesus says, Don't call yourself, is exactly, whether Protestant or Catholic, it makes no difference. They call themselves leaders.

Isn't it written in the Bible that we are not to call ourselves leaders? Is it only written that we are not to call ourselves fathers? What is the difference between a man who calls himself a father and a man who calls himself a leader? Absolutely no difference. Both are disobeying the word of God. But, it's written there, but people are blind.

Blind, or they don't care for the word. That's all. Jesus said, Don't be called father, don't be called a leader.

One is your leader, that is Christ. Because when I call myself a leader, I am something. It's not the throne of a king, but it is a sort of a small throne.

I am a leader. But Jesus said, No, the greatest shall be your servant. If you want a title, call yourself servant.

How is it that you don't find people calling themselves house group servant, or team servant? Why is it they don't follow the scriptures? No. Church leader. Why don't they call themselves church servant? It is absolute disobedience, because they have no fear of God.

Brothers, we must steer clear of this. We must steer clear of these plain disobedience to the direct commands of Jesus. Now, people say, Ah, it's a small thing in a title.

As if Jesus did not know it is a small thing. Why did he talk about it then? It is so important that we don't call ourselves fathers. We don't call ourselves leaders.

We don't call ourselves rabbis or teachers or anything. He said, One is your teacher. That's all.

Don't call yourself teacher and father and leader. No. Brother, I am a servant.

It's amazing how people are not interested in that title of servant. Because there is something undignified about it. Have you ever heard of such a title? I have never heard of it in any group.

I have heard all the other fantastic titles. Why is it people will not take this thing which is undignified? Because it makes them lower and actually they want to be higher. We are called to be servants and we do not desire a position which puts us above other people.

We don't want to be called directors or superintendents or any such thing. Just plain servants of others. And that means that when I think about my brothers and myself in my thoughts, I think of how I can serve them, not how they can serve me.

Matthew 20, verse 28, Jesus said, The Son of Man, He said it so many times, verse 26, He says in verse 25, Among the Gentiles, the rulers lord it over them and the great men exercise authority, but among you it must not be like that. Whoever wishes to be great must be a servant. Whoever wishes to be first must be a slave.

Just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give His life a ransom for many. Now, let's just look at this phrase. Not to be served, but to serve.

And we have to ask ourselves this question. Now, when you are just a young brother in an assembly, it is very easy to serve. That does not prove that you have been gripped by this verse.

It only means that you have not yet been tested in this area. You are a young brother and therefore the other brothers around you are older brothers. You serve joyfully and it's very good.

But wait till you go to some other place where the other brothers are younger than you in age, in experience, spiritually, and then you will be tested in this area. Whether you expect them to serve you in any way. Most Christian workers expect other people to serve them in some way, either with gifts or with money or with some type of service, bring them a meal now and then or do something for them.

Something, some service. They expect it. And that proves that they are Lords.

And if I expect even one brother anywhere in the world to serve me in some way, I am a bit of a Lord. I am a sort of a mini Lord because I expect at least so and so brother to do something for me. I expect it.

And there dear brothers I want to say God tests us in our attitude towards our younger brothers. We have heard much about our attitude towards the older brothers. Submit.

We can think we are highly spiritual because we have learned to submit to the authority of older brothers. But that's just one side of the pancake that's fried. We got to turn the pancake over and see if it's fried on the other side as well.

What about your attitude towards your younger brothers? Do you treat them like servants? There are many people who submit joyfully, humbly to older brothers. That side of the pancake is fried all right. But when it comes to the other side, Oh, this brother is ten years younger to me.

I can tell him to do this and that and the other thing for me. Do odd jobs for me because he's an errand boy, you see. And there you see the spirit of Lucifer wanting to lord it over at least this person.

That's a very, very dangerous sign. It shows we have not understood that in this body of our humiliation, we are to be servants. Nobody is called to be our servant.

No one. I'm not to expect anything. If somebody serves me, that's another thing.

I'm not to expect it. And one mark of my not expecting it is this. This is the way I can test whether I expect a brother to serve me or not.

Two things. One, when he does not serve me the way I thought he might, am I a bit disappointed? I won't show it outwardly. Outwardly, I'm smiling, praise the Lord.

I'm the new and living way brother. But inside, I'm a bit hurt that he did not respect me as a elder brother or as a senior brother or he didn't think of doing this for me as an older brother. Then it shows that despite all this pious appearance of being a servant outside, inwardly, I want to be a Lord.

And the other test is when somebody does do a service for me, what is my attitude towards that brother? Is it one of deep thankfulness or is it a casual attitude where I feel, oh well, that's part of his job, you know. He just served me. After all, I'm an older brother.

He's got to serve me. Woe unto us if we fail in these two tests. If somebody has served you, brother, some younger brother has done something for you, I hope never a day will come in our life when we are not deeply thankful that that brother thought of doing such a service for me.

Who am I that he should do that? But think that such a thought came into his mind to do such a service for me that I must be deeply, deeply, deeply, deeply thankful to that brother for having thought of doing such a thing. Is it like that? So many husbands are lords over their wives. And one mark of it is they are not thankful for the service their wives do in the home.

Yeah, that's her job, they say. They don't say it with their mouth. They'd be unspiritual if they said it.

But that's what they think. That's her job. She has to cook.

She has to wash. What do I get married for? That's her job, to do all those things. The spirit of lording.

I'm not talking about the CSI people. I'm talking about the New and Living Way people. We have the same flesh.

Dear brothers, beware of it. Beware of it. We are called to be servants.

Not to expect anything. And to be deeply thankful when a wife or a brother does some small service for us. It's not just a question of acting thankful and say, oh, thank you very much, brother, because I heard in the meeting that I must be very thankful.

I can be a Pharisee there. But it's a question of attitude. Do I really consider myself as not worthy of this service? That he served me like that? I do not consider myself worthy that he should serve me like that.

Then I'm deeply thankful to him for what he has done. My dear brothers, wherever we go, if we do not have the spirit, the body of Christ will never be built wherever we try to build it. Can be sure of that.

Body of Christ can only be built by those who have the spirit of a servant. And that's the exact opposite of what you see in the vast majority of Christendom today. It says here about Jesus, he did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life.

Not to make other people give their life for him. See, to make other people spend their money for me, that is to make them my servants. We have to be very careful in this area that if I am a servant, I never live at the expense of other people.

Paul was so careful, we read in 2nd Thessalonians 3, not even to eat food when he went to Thessalonica, which he didn't pay for. I must not expect other people to spend money for me. Yes, they may do it sometimes and I must be deeply thankful for it, but I must never expect it.

And I must try as far as possible to avoid it. And yet this is exactly the opposite of what I have seen with so many so-called full-time workers in India. They expect other people spend some money for them, taxi fare or some other fare or some other expense.

And yes, the full-time workers know the tricks of humility. They act as though they want to pay for it, but when the other brother says no, no, no, it's all right, they are quite happy. In fact, they expected it that way.

They expected it that way. Because after all, I am a full-time worker, you see. You must serve me in this way.

There is so much of this, expecting other people to serve me in some way and taking advantage of others financially. We have to be clear in this area that we don't expect it. I am not saying we should not let anyone serve us.

I don't mean that. Because people will serve us and we serve one another. We have to... I trust you understand what I am saying.

That is going over the cliff, the other extreme, where you say I will not let anyone serve me. That's like Peter. Oh Lord, you'll never wash my feet.

That is the other extreme. When people serve us, even if it is Jesus himself, let him do it. But the question is, do I expect it? That's the question which determines whether I am a Lord or not.

It's not a question of whether other people serve me or not. It's a question of do I expect it? That other people should serve me. And am I reluctant to serve that brother when the time comes? Or is it always one way, one way traffic? Then there is something wrong.

If it is both ways, then it is alright. In other words, when his turn comes, it is my duty to serve him too in the way he needs my help. So, this is very important.

Not to get benefit from others for ourselves, but to give our life. As it says in Matthew 20, 28. To give our life for others in the spirit of Christ.

We cannot give our life for their sins like Jesus gave, but we can give our life to serve others. Like this beautiful verse in Isaiah 58. Isaiah 58, it says about the true fast of the Lord.

If you fast like this, it says, verse 7, dividing your bread with the hungry. Now, that's the first step. That's very easy.

To give material things to the brothers who are in need. When I have an abundance of food. What we read in verse 7 is easy.

To give material things to the hungry, to those who are in need. But when it comes to verse 10, Isaiah 58, where I have to give myself to the hungry. That's a little more difficult.

To give myself means to lay down my life for them. That means they have fed on my bread. Now they can feed on me and take advantage of me.

They can inconvenience me. And I'm glad to serve them when they inconvenience me. That is the spirit of a servant.

They are masters. I am a servant. This must be our spirit whenever we serve others in the church.

The servant does not expect anything from the master. The master can expect much. Paul says to the Corinthians, we are your servants.

Who is the spiritual man? Paul. Who is the carnal ones? The Corinthians. The spiritual man is the servant of the carnal ones.

To serve them, because they are immature. The more mature we become, the more we become servants. That's why I say the vast majority of so-called Christian leaders are immature because they haven't understood what it means to be a servant of others.

Not only they love titles, the spirit is one of a lord. To give ourselves for other people to feed on us, to eat us, to take advantage of our time, our conveniences, that's my calling to serve them. If a man is not willing to pay this price, he might as well tell the Lord, Lord, this is too much for me.

I don't want to build the body of Christ. Just let me be an ordinary brother sitting in a church doing nothing else. Many people want to build the body of Christ, but they are not willing to pay the price.

Here is the price. Other people will feed on you, take advantage of you, take advantage of your things, take advantage of your time. You are not your own anymore.

You have to deny yourself many things because you have given yourself to the Lord for the building of the body of Christ. That's how it was with Jesus. People fed on him, they took advantage of him and he never complained.

He never had a complaint. Look at these fellows, they don't show any consideration for me. A servant never says that.

A servant cannot go on strike. Because the master... I never had such things in those days. No.

There is no question of thinking, see how inconsiderate these people are towards me. When such a thought comes up into your mind, when a brother has done something and you say, see how inconsiderate he has been towards me. Doesn't he know that I also have my needs and my family and this, that and the other and he acts so inconsiderately.

Well, that proves one thing. It proves that you are not fit to build the body of Christ. You can be a brother in the church, you are God's building, but you cannot be God's fellow worker.

Because God's fellow workers cannot make such complaints. Very simple. Very simple.

They are to allow other people to feed on them. And people will be inconsiderate towards us, but that is our calling. To serve people who are inconsiderate towards us.

No. I am not saying that we have a problem. We are not tested much like that in the church here because most people are trying to deny themselves.

We have a glorious time. We are not tested much in this area. But you try to move into some new sphere to try and build the body of Christ.

I am not talking about the situation here where people have, most people anyway have got gripped with the message so much. But you are trying to move into a new situation where people haven't understood the truth of the message of the cross. Now I tell you, it's not so easy.

People will take advantage and not show consideration and then we shall discover areas in our flesh which we never discovered sitting in CFC Bangalore for so many years. Sure. It's true.

So to be a servant is to give oneself. I want to turn to another verse in 1 Corinthians chapter 9. 1 Corinthians 9. This is an amazing verse. Verse 19.

He is speaking first of all about why he is financially free. He doesn't want to take any offerings from the Corinthians or any gifts from the Corinthians for himself. He says, because I want to preach verse 18, I want to preach the gospel without charge.

I have got certain rights in the gospel but I don't make full use of them. And then he says, because I do not take any money from you, I am free from all of you. Verse 19.

I am free from all you Corinthians. Therefore, I can make myself servant to all of you. I cannot be a servant to a person unless I am first free of that person.

This is an amazing mystery. First I have to become free from a brother, then I can serve that brother. First I have to become free from people, then I can serve those people.

If I am not free of those people, I cannot be servants of those people. If I am under obligation to that person, because he has done so many things for me, I can't be a servant to him. I am under debt to him.

I have to be free. That is why those who are called to the ministry of the word must seek to be as free as possible from people. And as much as possible not to be under obligation to any human being.

That's why we must not be in debt to anyone. A servant of God should not have to put himself in a situation where he is obliged to someone for financially or for a favor or anything because then he has become a slave to that person. He cannot speak the truth to that person anymore.

Paul was so careful here. He says I want to be free from all people, then I can serve all people freely. Then I can tell them the truth.

And the reason why we don't have more prophetic ministry in our land is because most people are under obligation to someone else who gives them gifts or helps them or does something for them and they are obliged. And then of course you are not free. You are a slave.

And you cannot have a prophetic ministry to such people. Dear brothers, it is so important to be free so that we can serve with a prophetic ministry we are under obligation to nobody. We don't want anybody's gifts.

We don't want anybody's money. We don't want anybody's anything. We are going to speak the truth whether people get offended or don't get offended.

We refuse to be under obligation to anyone. Think of this. Any of us who have received something from someone service or money or help or influence or anything in some situation.

Can you go to that brother and speak a word of exhortation to him which you know that he needs? It's very difficult. And if you examine your life you will probably find that you have not done it. Because in some way you have placed yourself under obligation to him.

And now you cannot speak the truth to any man anymore. Therefore you cannot serve him as a servant of God. You are a slave of man.

Suppose that I am free from all men then I can offer myself as a servant to them not because they help me or I am obliged to them but voluntarily I serve them as a servant of Christ. I proclaim myself as a servant. And so it's very important that we never get under obligation to anyone.

Even to relatives. Never be under obligation to our relatives. Always be free.

Don't get an obligation to relatives who seek to help us financially or anything like that. Steer clear as a servant of God. Always ask yourself.

I am not saying it's wrong to receive gifts. I am saying ask yourself this question. Can I give that brother a rebuke who has sent me this large amount as a gift? Or has given me some other material gift? Can I give a word of rebuke to him? Or because of this have I now become a slave that I cannot open my mouth to him and tell him the truth which he needs to hear? Then do something about it.

So that you don't become a slave because of something that somebody did for you which has put you under obligation to him. Then we cannot be servants. I have made myself free so that I can be servants of all people.

And I want to say one more thing from 1 Corinthians chapter 4. The way Paul was a servant of others is described here by another word in 1 Corinthians 4.15. He says even if you were to have countless tutors to teach you so many things from the word of God yet you would not have many fathers and you know that a father is a servant. All of us may not be fathers but we have all had fathers and mothers. What is a mother to her children? Almost all her life what is she doing? Serving.

She is a servant. She is more of a servant to her children than that paid servant in the house. And a true father is also like that.

Why does he go out there and sweat and earns struggling in life to earn some money? For whom is it? Is he spending it on himself? No. He may have 4-5 children. It is for his children.

And after he has slogged away there the whole day struggling in the struggle of life to earn his bread and butter and he comes back with the money he has earned and it is not enough to buy food for everyone in the family so he buys a little bit and does he sit there and say listen I earned this so I am going to fill my stomach first? Does he say that? He is willing after having earned everything to go hungry at the end if the children can be fed. Isn't that a true father? Any father, evil fathers will do that. And Paul said you can have 10,000 people who can come and preach wonderful messages to you.

If he were living today he would have said from America and preach wonderful clever things and say so many things but how many of them are fathers? How many of them will deny themselves in order that you might have something? They all come and stay in their five star hotels come and present their message on the platform and take the next plane and go back. There are 10,000 like that. And the sad thing is there are thousands of stupid Indian Christians who go and sit like dumb sheep before all these people thinking these are the great men of God of this century.

Now we are not to be in that number. We are not to be such dumb idiots just before all these five star American preachers with all their millions of dollars. We are not impressed by that.

We are looking for fathers those who deny themselves and say let me go hungry and let my children have something. That is a servant. And I tell you the sad thing is the growing generation in India is copying these five star American preachers rather than Paul.

That's the sad thing. That's the sad thing and we are standing against all that. And that's why so many people hate us and fight against us because we are exposing their humbug and their hypocrisy and all that.

We must stand for what we see in the word of God. We are to be fathers wherever God takes us. To be fathers if there is not enough let your children have it first and you deny yourself.

That's a servant. A father is a servant. We read in 2nd Corinthians chapter 12 2nd Corinthians 12 See there are many people who are taken up with verse 12 who call themselves apostles and they say the signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance by signs and wonders and miracles.

It's amazing how they become completely blind to another sign of an apostle mentioned in verse 14. Here for the third time I am ready to come to you and I will not be a burden to you. It's amazing how people are blind to that verse.

Whose eyes are open to verse 12. And he says because I do not seek what is yours but I seek you. For children are not responsible to save up for their parents but parents are responsible to save up for their children.

And Paul says because I am a father the chances are that I will give you a gift rather than expecting a gift from you. What a wonderful thing that is. Think to be a father like that towards others.

That we do not expect anything from them. Most of us are in secular jobs we are not expecting financial gifts. It's not that.

But that we don't expect any other form of service or some respect or anything. No, we are here to serve. Serve.

Serve. Think of a mother with small children. Oh, what a life she has in the home.

Changing the pants and then the child has gone and dirtied the floor she's got to do that in the middle of all that she's got to do her cooking and then the clothes have to be washed. What a job it is of serving and serving and serving and serving and the father slogging away and everything for the children. My brothers think if we could be servants of the Lord like that towards those whom we are called to minister to and to lead.

Think of the example of a father and mother. If any of us are ever, ever, ever in our life given responsibility for a few other brothers picture before our minds let us picture before our minds not this 5 star hotel American preacher far million miles away from that let's picture a father and a mother in a home serving, serving denying themselves slogging away slogging away for their children. That is the picture we must follow.

Not this false picture of this Christian worker who cannot serve God unless his room is air conditioned. No that is not the type of servant of God we are to keep before our mind. That's a counterfeit.

We are to keep before our minds the picture of a father and a mother who slogs and slogs and say Lord make me like that towards these dear brothers whom you have given to me to help and to lead that I can slog and slog and slog and get no benefit at the end but that I will find my joy in the fact that they have got some benefit. That is a father. That they are progressing in their education even though I only studied up to matriculation I am so happy to see that my children are going to college and going to do B.Sc. now the joy that comes in a father's heart when he sees that that is a true servant.

There is no jealousy there. A father, a matriculation father is never jealous of his B.Sc. son. Have you ever heard of one like that? Except in so called Christian churches where people claim to be fathers and they are jealous if somebody else is going ahead of them spiritually.

That proves they are not fathers. That proves they are hirelings. They are teachers.

That happens in a school sometimes. The teacher makes a mistake in the sum on the blackboard and if a student says No sir, that's wrong. Oh, wait for the day the teacher is going to get his own back on that student who pointed out in the class that the teacher was wrong.

Oh, he will never spare him. The next exam he will probably fail or something like that. But he will get his own back on that student.

But not a father. And thereby you find that the vast majority of preachers are teachers. They are not fathers.

They do not want the people they minister to to go ahead of them spiritually. They are all first-rate hirelings for pay, teachers, tutors, but not fathers. We are not to have anything to do with them.

We are to be fathers. And of course a father disciplines his children too. Doesn't he? Because he loves them.

And so there is responsibility in spiritual leadership as a servant, as a father, even to rebuke and to discipline. But it is not the rebuke of the teacher. It is the rebuke of the father who has denied himself, who has slogged.

And when we correct others and exhort others, we need to ask ourselves, am I doing this as a teacher or am I doing this as a father? There is a world of difference between the two. We are to give our life to others. And when we minister the word of God in any assembly where God gives us responsibility, if you preach a sermon to people, do fathers preach sermons to their children? Teachers preach sermons.

A father shares his heart, his life. And there is a lot of difference. And when you listen to a man speaking, it is very easy to find out whether he is sharing his heart and his life or whether he is just presenting a beautifully arranged sermon.

That is a tutor. And the vast majority of preachers are tutors. They preach their beautifully arranged sermons.

But they are not sharing their heart. They are not sharing their life. They read books in order to prepare sermons.

They are not fathers. My brothers, don't ever be like that. If God ever gives any of us responsibility anywhere, share your life.

Share your heart. Never mind if it is not very impressive. Share your life.

Share your heart. Be a father. That is to be a servant.

Paul says, the verse we started with, we do not proclaim ourselves as lords. We proclaim ourselves as servants. Let's come back to 2 Corinthians 4. We proclaim ourselves as servants.

Then it says in verse 7, we have this treasure, this wonderful treasure of the glory of God. Speaking of the knowledge of the glory of God in verse 6, this treasure of the knowledge of the glory of God is in an earthen vessel. And to be a servant is, I must not be ashamed to let other people know that I am an earthen vessel.

I must not give other people the impression that I am a stainless steel vessel or a golden vessel or something like that. I am an earthen vessel. That means, I have a flesh just like theirs.

I am tempted just like them. I have my struggles with temptation just like they have. If Jesus himself manifested himself like that, why not we? And, that we are perplexed, Paul says, some of the things that happen to this earthen vessel, verse 8, we are afflicted but not crushed.

We are perplexed. You know what perplexity means? Perplexity means I am confused. I don't know what the will of God is in this situation.

Have you ever heard a Christian leader say that? You know, brother, I am pretty confused myself about what the will of God for my life is in this situation. Paul says he was perplexed. Paul was not ashamed to admit that he was an earthen vessel because perplexity is not sin.

But, we have these so-called men of God who want to, even when they are perplexed, they don't want other people to know about it because they say, oh, other people will have a lesser impression about me. So they give the impression, oh, yeah, I always understand God's will. I never have a problem.

I always know God speaks to me so clearly and I can do this and I do that and God tells me to do that and the other. The thing is, even Jesus himself was confused about the Father's will in the garden of Gethsemane. He prayed for one hour three times, Father, what is it? Should I, can you remove this cup? Is there some way to remove this cup? But these so-called people are more spiritual than even Jesus was at 33.

They are never confused. No, it's all, it's all garbage. Don't be fooled by all these people.

Earthen vessels, my brothers, and don't be ashamed to let other people know that you are perplexed sometimes, probably many times. I'll tell you quite honestly, I am. I am tempted by the devil coming to me and saying, you're just wasting your time.

What are you doing? You're just wasting your time. Well, he'll probably come and tell you that too. We are earthen vessels.

We are perplexed. We are persecuted, struck down, but not destroyed. But in all these situations, we allow the earthen vessel to be broken by the dying of Jesus being born in our body, verse 10.

So he says, we are earthen vessels and there's a reason why God has kept it like that so that people can see, for example, if God has given us great boldness in some particular situation, it's very easy to give other people the impression that I am a bold type of person. But actually, in some other situation, I may be an absolute coward. And yet I don't want other people to think that I am basically a coward, but in that particular situation, somehow God gave me grace and I stood there.

I want to give other people the impression, you read some of these western charismatic books of these days and you don't get the impression of an earthen vessel at all. You get the impression of some stainless steel or golden vessel, expensive stuff. And it's all a lie.

I read those books and I know it's a lie. It doesn't fit in with scripture. They are hiding the truth.

And many young Christians read all these books and think that they are discouraged because they are not like that. They are trying to be like that and waiting for the day when they will become like that. No, we are perplexed.

I am not talking about sin. We need not be defeated by sin. But there are other pressures.

We may be sick. The fact that you got a headache doesn't mean you don't have victory over sin. You can get headaches because you got a body of humiliation.

You can have some sickness perhaps sometimes. The flu can hit spiritual believers just as much as it can hit atheists. Because we are earthen vessels.

We are not ashamed to admit it. And we are perplexed at times. We don't sin.

We don't complain. We don't criticize. We don't sin.

But we are earthen vessels. We have weaknesses in our body. And we are not ashamed to let other people see us as weak earthen vessels.

So that, and there is a reason for it. Here is the reason. So that, verse 7, the greatness of the power may be of God and not from ourselves.

That people see that God gave this man grace. Because he is naturally not that type of fellow. And that gives hope to the people.

Oh, then there is hope for me too. So dear brothers, when we give ourselves to others as servants, we must let them see that we are earthen vessels. We must be honest.

We should not seek to hide the fact that we are earthen vessels. Again let me emphasize, I am not talking about falling into sin. God does not want us to fall into sin.

But we are to manifest that we are not great, wonderful personalities. Therefore God used us. No.

We are weak human beings, but God's power can be manifested through anyone. And this is where we come into this matter of soul power. So many preachers, when they present, it is with the power of their personality that they impress people.

Particularly Americans. I am not against Americans. There are some very God-fearing Americans whom I love.

But I say, generally speaking, as a race, the American people have been fed from childhood on the fact that we are the greatest nation on the face of the earth. And I have seen little children, Indian children, who have grown up in America, the way they speak. There is really something about it.

If that same child had grown up in India, it would have behaved in quite a different way. But he is a citizen of the world's most powerful nation. And you can see that in the way he speaks when he is five years old.

That he is a citizen of the world's most powerful nation. And by the time he is 25, this soul power has been built up to such a tremendous extent. And then he gets converted.

And now he projects this soul power in the proclamation of the gospel. Particularly in the underdeveloped countries like India, where there are a lot of weak people who can be pushed around quite easily. Particularly if somebody comes with a lot of personality and money on top of that.

And that is why you find all these fellows landing up here. And we must not be deceived by that soul power and that personality and that drive and that push. Which is American and not Christian.

That is not an earthen vessel. The fellow is an earthen vessel but he is trying to project himself as something else. It is not the power of God.

It is the power of the human soul. And we cannot become servants. It is difficult for everyone to be servants.

But it is more difficult for those who have more soul power. That is why you find it is true, it is more difficult for an American to be a servant. Because he has got more soul power.

He can be if he is willing to put it all into the dying of Jesus. But it is not easy. It is not easy.

And that is why you find most of the Christian organizations in India at the top you will find an American as the director. The international director would be an American usually. Because he is the fellow who has got the soul power to drive and push and organize and administrate.

You can't get anybody else up there. It has to be one of these people who have got drive and push or somebody who has been trained by the same soul power to have the same soul power to drive and push and lord it over and control things. I just want to say brothers, you wouldn't get Paul or Peter or Jesus to do things like that.

But you say it produces results. Well, Colgate Toothpaste also produces results by their drives and their sales agencies and all that. If you are only looking for results, well, there are so many companies which get excellent results.

The question is, is the means the power of God or is it the power of human personality? We are to be servants manifesting the power of God in our life. Human weakness. We are earthen vessels.

We don't have any soul power to project on others. We don't want to impress people with our personality. That's why I say, if you have any particular qualifications or medals or anything like that, try as far as possible that other people don't know about it.

Because they'll be impressed by that. You know? You go to some people's homes and there in the sitting room itself you see a picture of their shaking hands with some minister or receiving some prize or something like that. You see, that's the impression they want you to get as soon as you get in there.

Listen, I'm not an ordinary fellow. Did you see that picture? Now, why in the world sometimes it's fathers who do that for their children, children receiving something. It's in the sitting room.

You see, my child is not an ordinary child. It's a super child. See that picture.

Now I say, this is not Christianity. We are earthen vessels. We are servants.

Never should we give others the impression that we are someone greater. Then we can serve them as true servants, as fathers, as shepherds who lay down their lives on our life so that they are encouraged. Because our aim in life is not to impress people, but to help them.

Let me conclude on that note. What is your aim in life? Is it to impress or to help? I remember years ago the Lord asked me a question. He said, you cannot impress and help.

You have to make a choice in your life. Which do you want? And if you say, Lord, I want to help, then you have to stop impressing. Be honest, be a servant and seek God for His power and that you pour out all your soul power to depth and that people will think less of you rather than more.

Be scared when people think more of you. Rejoice when in some situation people have thought less of you. Then we are going in the right direction.

We can ask ourselves, when people think less of us, do we really rejoice? Then we know we have been gripped by this message of being a servant in the power of God.

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