

Spirit-Filled Service

by Zac Poonen

Spirit-filled service is a love-slave service that recognizes its debt to others, is conscious of human insufficiency, and fulfils God's specific calling.

Topics: "Humility in Service", "Spirit-Filled Service"

Description

Zac Poonen emphasizes that Spirit-filled service is characterized by being a love-slave to God, recognizing our debt to others, acknowledging human insufficiency, and fulfilling God's specific calling. He illustrates that true service stems from the understanding that we belong wholly to God, and our motivation should be love for Christ rather than personal gain. Poonen highlights the Apostle Paul's example of being a debtor to share the gospel, his humility in recognizing his weaknesses, and the importance of seeking God's direction in our unique callings. Ultimately, Spirit-filled service is about yielding to God's will and being ready to bless others with the message of salvation.

Transcript

There are four things that I would like to mention concerning Spirit-filled service, from the words of the Apostle Paul.

First of all, Spirit-filled service is the service of a love-slave. In Acts 27:23, Paul says, "...the God whose I am and whom I serve." He was a love-slave of his God. He retained no right to his own life. He had given everything to his Master. The only proper basis for our consecration is a recognition of the fact that we belong wholly to God in the first place. Giving ourselves to God out of gratitude for what He has done for us, though good in itself, is not the true basis for Christian consecration. Love for Christ can be the impelling motive in our service for the Lord. But the basis on which we should dedicate our lives to God, is the fact that He has purchased us on the Cross. We are therefore now God's own property, and have no right to ourselves. Paul was a love-slave of the Lord. Like the Hebrew slave, who could go free in the seventh year of his service, but chose to continue in that service because he loved his master (Exod. 21:1-6), Paul served his Lord. He was not a hired servant, who worked for wages, but one who served without any rights of his own. This is what it means to be a love-slave. God is looking for those who are so yielded to Him, that they are always looking to Him to show them what He wants them to do, and not busy doing what they feel they should do for God. A slave does not go around doing whatever he feels like. No. The slave asks, "Master, what do you want me to do?" And he does what he is told. The Bible says, "The most important thing about a servant is that he does just what his master tells him to" (1 Cor. 4:2-LB).

Secondly, Spirit-filled service, is a service that recognises its debt to others. Paul said, " I am debtor to the Greeks (civilized) and to the Barbarians (uncivilized) " (Rom. 1:14). God has given us a treasure to share with the world. We are like postmen who go on their rounds with bags full of money and money- orders to be given to various people. Such a postman remains in debt to those people until he has finished paying off to each one their due. He may have thousands of rupees in his bag, but not one paisa of it is his. He is a debtor. The Apostle recognised a similar debt when God entrusted him with the message of the gospel. He knew it had to be given out. And he also knew that he would remain in debt to others until he had given them the message of salvation. After twenty- five years spent in preaching the good news, Paul still says, " I am a debtor," and he tells the Roman Christians that he is now ready to come to Rome to clear his debt to the people of Rome. Notice the three " I am"s of Paul in Romans 1:14-16; " I am debtor...I am ready...I am not ashamed to preach the gospel!" Spirit- filled service is outgoing. Recognising its debt to others, it is always ready to go and discharge that debt. The evidence of the Spirit's fulness and the beauty of the Christ-life are seen not in thrilling emotional experiences but in a passion to bless others.

Thirdly, Spirit-filled service is a service that is conscious of human insufficiency. Notice Paul's words in 2 Corinthians 10:1, " I am base among you " - or, in other words, " I don't have an impressive personality." Tradition tells us that the Apostle Paul was only 4 feet 10 inches tall. He was bald, and beset by an eye-disease. He did not have a filmstar-like personality. The success of his labours did not depend on any human factor, for there was nothing impressive about his appearance or his speech. Concerning his preaching, Paul writes to the Corinthians, " I was with you in fear and much trembling " (1 Cor. 2:3). When he preached, he felt conscious of his weakness, rather than of the power of God flowing through him. This is Spirit-filled service - for, remember, that a church was established in heathen Corinth as a result of Paul's preaching.

Fourthly, Spirit-filled service is a service that fulfils God's specific calling. In Colossians 1:23, 25, Paul says, " I am made a minister;" and in 1 Timothy 2:7, " I am ordained an apostle " - ordained by the nail pierced Hands of Jesus, and not by any earthly ritual. God called Paul to be an apostle. This calling was given to him, as he himself says in Colossians 1:25. It was God's gift - not something that he had achieved or earned through his faithfulness. He also says in the same verse that this calling was given him for others. It was a stewardship entrusted to him by God for the work of building up the Church. God has a specific calling for each of us. It is futile to ask God to make us into something that He has not called us to be - for the Holy Spirit decides what gift each of us should have. Paul was called to be an apostle. But not everyone has such a calling. What we do need to seek God's face about is for power to do that to which he has called us. " Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you fulfil it," was Paul's advice to Archippus (Col. 4:17).

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