

Sermon Luke 17 – We Ain't Done Yet

Luke 17:5-10

⁵ And the apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."

⁶ So the Lord said, "If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. ⁷ And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'? ⁸ But will he not rather say to him, 'Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink'? ⁹ Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. ¹⁰ So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'"

I had planned to do another sermon on the role and purpose of the Holy Spirit in our lives. But something happened to me last week and the Spirit brought back to my attention a scripture that I had studied earlier. This parable deals with service.

Background: Jesus has been teaching his disciples about forgiveness and service. The disciples indicate they need more faith to accomplish some of the things Jesus is requiring. Instead, Jesus says they don't need more faith, because a little faith is enough to perform great acts. Then he provides another parable or example for their spiritual understanding and application.

The story he puts to them must be something they can relate to in that culture at the time. In those days, if you had a servant either plowing the field or watching sheep, when they are done with that duty, their master doesn't pat them on the back and thank them for their work performed. Instead of sitting down and relaxing, he gives them additional instructions to serve him and after this work is completed, then the servant can sit down to eat and drink.

This must have been the culture at that time or else Jesus would not have put this in the form of a question in verse 9. Would the servant receive thanks for doing what he was told to do? Jesus' answer to this question is of course not.

So in essence, a servant back then should be prepared to do the work they were assigned and not be surprised if additional work is asked of them. That's how it worked in the natural back then.

Now, the application for the disciples. Jesus puts them in this story and says in like manner, they should have the same attitude of the servant in the story. When they have done everything they were asked to do, tell themselves, they are still unworthy and have merely done what was expected or reasonable.



Let's consider why Jesus thought it was necessary to teach this particular parable. Let's put ourselves in this parable from the standpoint of the servants. Let's imagine we have indeed worked outside in the fields. How would we feel after completing these tasks?

- Satisfied. There would be a sense of accomplishment in my mind.
- There would be a certain element of pride rising up especially if comparing my work and performance to others.
- I would be expecting a reward or special favors and a nice pat on the back. I would expect to receive some glory behind my work.
- I would certainly not be expecting additional work to be asked of me before getting my reward. Instead, I would do the extra work asked of me because I was rewarded.

Now this would seem only natural in today's society. If I do what my job description outlines and I do it well, I'm expecting a reward. If you ask me to do extra work beyond that, I'm expecting an additional reward. Or I might have a bit of an attitude especially if someone is always asking me to do the extra while others slide by.

- In my career, it seemed like folks were always asking me to do the extra because I was good at my job. After a while, I started to wear a hard look on my face to try and deter being asked. I would even joke sometimes that maybe I should screw something up so they can stop asking me to do extra work.

But we must understand, that Jesus' parable often reflected the nature of the Kingdom and not the world system. So, the Kingdom operates differently than the world as we serve a different master.

Let's now apply this parable to ourselves today. The master in the story certainly represents God. He is the one who commands the work of the servants. We in turn, must represent His servants. Some of us work in planting seeds of the Gospel and others tend to His sheep and minister to them.

Now, still remaining in character with the story, how should we respond when God commands us to do a work for Him?

- Honored, humbled, excited, fearful

How should I feel when He asks me to do extra or more than I expected?

- Honored, humbled, eager

Why should I feel that way?

- Because Almighty God is doing the asking.
- What an honor coming from the Master to even be considered!
- Because of everything He has done for me....I can't thank Him enough.

I thought I did until someone called me to do something extra which was an inconvenience for me.

Discuss case study with Smith needing to go to drug rehab. That's not my assignment.



How did I fall into this trap? My pride. Jesus has an excellent way to remind us to have the correct attitude. Always consider ourselves as unworthy. How did I realize the need to repent and get the right attitude about this....the Holy Spirit brought these things to my attention. He also uses the form of questions. Example, what's more important, your pinochle hand or this ministry opportunity?

This parable suggests that "even the best of God's servants are still unworthy because they have only done their duty and no more." Nobody, "no matter how virtuous or hardworking, can ever put God in his or her debt. Wikipedia

In summary, Jesus' message in this parable is about **servicing with humility** and recognizing that when we serve God, we are simply doing what is expected of us, without expecting extra praise or reward. This highlights a deeper sense of duty, selflessness, and reliance on God's grace. ChatGPT.

So likewise, when we as His servants have done everything we are supposed to, we should not become prideful or think that God owes us something special. Instead, serving Him in the right mind is the least we can do based upon all that He has done for us. It is His pleasure before our own....which step is that?

We still get a reward for being faithful servants.

So let's think of why Jesus felt the need to address this? Put yourself in the story.

- We need to have the right attitude to service.
- If I forgive someone two times in the same day, I might expect that this is good enough and that I'm deserving of some special recognition because I've done what I was asked to do.
- I will get a reward, but I don't want my pride to slip in or act like God owes me something special because of the work I'm doing.
 - I know that He promises to bless, I know that there is a great reward and inheritance reserved for me....but I don't want to have the wrong attitude about His grace and mercy towards me.
- There is work still to be done. It's not time to sit down just yet....but that time is coming.

Example, the reasonable service example from my wife....making the bed is the least I could do....it is my reasonable service.