***EARNESTLY CONTENDING FOR THE FAITH – Dec. 2024***

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***SERVING AT THE PLEASURE OF THE MASTER***

**2 Corinthians 5:9 (NKJV)**

**9** Therefore we make it our aim, whether present or absent, to be well pleasing to Him.

Professing Christians often seem oblivious to the call of God upon their life to serve. They seem to completely miss that God did not save them and keep them here on earth to engage in a self-oriented agenda! Yes, Ephesians 2:8-9 CLEARLY shows we are saved by GRACE through FAITH, but we should also read the next verse, which says, “*We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.”* God has things for us to do! He has “prepared” these things beforehand! It’s HIS agenda! We are saved by grace through faith, to then serve!

Many times Christians have the attitude that service is optional! They come off like it is up to them to decide if they will serve or not. They seem to think their “calling” is about what they decide to do, instead of seeing the Lord being in charge. Yes, there is the mystery tension of God’s sovereignty and how that meshes with human responsibility, but it is vital to realize that we are here to serve the purposes of our Lord. It’s not about us – it’s all about HIM!

The one we call “LORD” bought us! We now belong to Him (1 Cor. 6:19-20). We have no right to think, “I am going to run my own life.” No, you forfeited that idea when you received Christ as Lord and Savior! Paul said, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me.” (Gal. 2:20). Did you catch it? “It is no longer I who live”! We are now “slaves” of Christ (1 Cor. 7:22-23). Slaves are owned! They serve at the Master’s good pleasure! This is our calling as believers in the Lord Jesus Christ. Your life is no longer your own! “The body is…for the Lord, and the Lord for the body.” (1 Cor. 6:13)

Not only did Christ purchase you with His precious blood, He has also gifted you. All God’s children are called and gifted to serve! There is no exception! In one fashion or another, we are called to serve the BODY of Christ until we die, and God’s in charge of when that happens! God makes the call on WHERE we will serve and for HOW LONG we will serve! After Moses died, God then said to Joshua, “Moses, My servant is dead.” (Josh. 1:2) We serve until we die! In heaven, God’s servants “rest from their labors,” but here on earth, we are called to serve in keeping with the gifts, abilities, and opportunities we have been given (see Rev. 14:13). It is a stewardship responsibility for which we will give account!

**1 Peter 4:10 (NKJV)**

**10** As each one has received a gift, minister it to one another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

God is in charge of the BODY! He is LORD of the Church! And as such He places each member exactly where He wants them positioned in the family of God. We don’t make this call! God’s people are God-made people and God-placed people. He makes the call on WHERE we will serve and what our ROLE will be.

**1 Corinthians 12:18 (NKJV)**

**18** But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased.

Note the emphasis on BODY life in relationship to service. Our giftedness is in relationship to serving the body (1 Pet. 4:7-11). Where God positions us is in relationship to our role in the body. Christian service in the NT is largely involved with body life! Serving Christ independently of the body is a SELF-DECEPTION!

And finally, God has a specific “course” for us to take. Jesus at the end of His life said to the Father, “I have finished the work which You have given Me to do.” (Jn. 17:4). Paul at the end of his life said, “I have finished the course” (2 Tim. 4:7). The truth is those called of God serve at the pleasure of the Master. He is in charge of our days and what goes into those days! Paul’s message to Archippus was, “Take heed to the ministry which you have received in the Lord, that you may fulfill it.” (Col. 4:17). God help us to FULFILL the ministry that He has called us to do! In the end, “We serve an audience of ONE”. The goal: PLEASE HIM!

***Thot***: “A ship in harbor is safe, but that’s not why ships are built.” – ***John A. Shedd***

***Earnestly Contending, Pastor Dwight J. Oswald***