

Ministry

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 12 August 2018

[0 : 00] Luke 17 from verse 7. But which of you having a servant ploughing or feeding cattle will say unto him by and by when he has come from the field, go and sit down to meet.

He's talking about a man with servants. They've been out ploughing and feeding cattle all day, maybe from sun up, at sundown now.

And when they come in from the field, do we say to the servant, go and sit down to meet. Sit down and have something to eat. But verse 8. And will not rather say unto him, make ready wherewithon they suffer and gird thyself and serve me till I have eaten and drunken and afterward thou shalt eat and drink.

So he's saying that the servant, rather than the master saying, come and sit down, put your feet up and have a feed, he says, serve me. The master says to the servant, serve me and then you can eat and drink.

Verse 9. Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. I think not. Verse 10. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants.

[1 : 12] We have done that which was our duty to do. Ministry. Being a servant. The Lord tells us servants.

Right through the word of God there's many pictures of servants. Of servants. Of serving. The Lord tells us how a servant is to serve. No matter what. Our Lord tells of a servant working hard and long.

Maybe from sun up. Feeding the cattle. Plowing the field. And then they comes home. It's getting dark. Comes home. And the servant still is working hard and long and late.

Our Lord tells of a servant giving first priority to the master as his first consideration. Not serving his own convenience but serving the master.

The Lord says to serve not expecting some great recognition but to serve faithfully. To serve perseveringly. To serve not at our own convenience but serving the master.

[2 : 12] The Lord says not to serve expecting some great recognition but to serve faithfully. Even in what can be thankless tasks. Thankless tasks.

As a Christian you might give and keep on giving. And you think, oh no one's appreciating what I'm doing. I'm not getting any thanks. Our Lord says don't expect it.

Don't go looking for it. Don't go hankering after immense applause or thankfulness. Our Lord says the servant ought to have this attitude of humility.

Of lowliness. Of commitment to duty. To the responsibility that we have to fulfil. And to do our duty. Really the best and greatest thing that you can do with your life is to serve God.

To be God's servant. And you'll be in good company. To be called the servant of God. Wow. That is a privilege, isn't it? And every believer has that privilege to be called servants.

[3 : 16] Men, servants. Women, handmaids. Servants together. Of our God. And we're in good company.

As you read through the Bible, this phrase, my servant, is quite evident. My servant or thy servant, speaking of that person being God's servant.

For example, my servant Abraham. My servant Moses. My servant Caleb. My servant Jacob. My servant Isaac. My servant David.

My servant Job. My servant Isaiah. It's a phrase that's very often in the Bible. And for you, for me, we are God's servants. My servant Emmanuel.

My servant Lena. My servant Chris. My servant Bobby. God's servants. What a privilege we have. My servant. Hannah called herself the handmaiden of the Lord.

[4 : 15] Mary also. The handmaid of the Lord. To be a servant of God is the greatest privilege. And every believer has that wonderful privilege. What is it?

To be a servant of God. To be in ministry. It's doing what is our duty to do. Ministry means serving. We're the servant's heart.

It means we are under authority. Under the authority of God. Our great master and king. And how can we see this happen? How can we be such a servant?

Make yourself available to serve. Say, I'm available to serve. I'm ready and willing. God will make me able. God will fit me for the task that he wants me to do.

Have the heart. Have the plea. I am at your service, Lord. Reporting for duty. I am ready. I am ready and willing. I am at your service, Lord.

[5 : 14] And true servants don't get to pick and choose when or where they serve. You can imagine if you're in a household back in yesteryear when there would have been a household of the family.

And the servants of the home. And the servants wouldn't get to pick and choose. Oh, I'm not going to do that job. I want to do this job. Or that. Or this. Or they don't get to get a choice when or where they will serve.

And a servant attitude for us too. As God's people means that we are available in God's service for whatever he wants for us to do. And a servant attitude means giving up our right to control our own schedule.

He sets the agenda. He tells me what to do, where to go and how long to do it. Our master can change the plans to suit himself and that's fine with us.

Because that's what we are. We are his servants. We're doing what is our duty to do. And interruptions may be divine appointments for ministry. Sometimes we've got our own schedule, our own agenda all marked out and planned.

[6 : 24] And there's an interruption. Something happens to just throw all of our plans out the window. That's what happened with a certain Samaritan. A certain Samaritan.

He would have had his plans as he walked that road. As he had his plans outlined and mapped out for the day. Maybe an appointment here to get to. A busy schedule. He might have had a short time frame for any kind of interruptions.

He had some business to conduct that day. As he headed down that road to go and do what he had planned to do. Perhaps it was something important that he had to go to.

And like others on that same road. But they just kept on walking when they saw the man beaten, lying after being attacked on the road.

And he was injured, lying there. And the others who saw him, they were religious people. Oh, I've got to get to a meeting. I might be late. Or I've got something important to do for God.

[7 : 28] The Levite and the religious one. They had their, the priest or whatever. They had their plans. They had their intentions. And they were maybe godly intentions.

But they didn't want to suffer the inconvenience of stopping and helping this man. But the Samaritan didn't just keep on walking. The Samaritan stopped.

And he suffered that inconvenience. And he made a detour. And he gave of his, of his ride. He gave of his purse.

He gave to meet the need. And he was a servant. How are we to serve? Think of that today. As you think of ministry, some people think, Oh, ministry is just for a select few.

It's just for some. It's not for all. But every believer is called to this. This is not a, a minority. This is for all of us.

[8 : 26] To want to serve God. And find ways to serve him. How are we to serve? I put to you firstly, freely. Serve freely. When we serve God, it is out of love.

Our master. Our loving master. Our beloved master. Our gracious master. We love him. This service unto him is our glad privilege.

It is our joy. It's not forced upon us. It is not out of obligation. We serve freely. And we are called to a glad service. To serve joyfully.

In Psalm 100 verse 2 it says, Serve the Lord with gladness. Come before his presence with singing. Serve joyfully it says.

Serve the Lord with gladness. Not grudgingly or grimly. But gladly. Amen. Thank you. Life is meant for ministry.

[9 : 26] Serve God freely. Life is meant for ministry. This is something of life that is most fulfilling for us. It's a blessing to serve God.

We can freely serve him. And having the eyes of a servant to see what needs to be done. One man has made it his daily prayer to say, Lord, give me eyes to see and the grace to seize every opportunity for you.

The servant is looking. What does the master want of me today? What does the master want? When the master looks at something, the servant says, Oh, do you want that master? Do you want me to go here, master?

Oh, he sees a task that is undone. Oh, I must do that for the master. I see what needs to be doing and I will seize the opportunity to do it unto God. Unto my master, my Lord.

It can be easy to have a feeling like we're not able to serve. So we never do. We might think, Oh, I'm just not capable. It's just little old me.

[10:30] I've got so many limitations. And, oh, I've never done that before. But yet, to have an attitude of that. To have an attitude that someone else can do it better than you.

So you don't offer to serve. You're missing out on what God wants for you. Sometimes you just have to step up to the plate and do what you are able to do.

Even if you feel inadequate and you can't do it as well as somebody else can. Sometimes it's just about being the one who is willing. And God will make you more able.

It's like someone has put it, If a thing is worth doing, it's worth doing badly until you get better at it. That's a good one, isn't it? If something is worth doing, it's worth doing badly until you get better at it.

Don't think, Oh, somebody else will do it. Somebody else is better than that, better at it than me. They're probably thinking the same as you. So just do it. The Nike slogan.

[11:33] Some people never take the risk to do something for God because they don't feel able. Serve freely. You are free to serve. And step out of your comfort zone and step into the glad, obedient zone.

Serve freely. Also, serve fully. Serve fully. When we serve God, we do so fully. There's no holding back. When you adopt the attitude of a servant, it means there is nothing beneath you.

You deliver fully. You go the distance. You don't do so far and stop. You deliver fully. You serve fully. You do your duty.

Be conscious of your responsibilities and discharge them well. Now, Brother Peter's got the responsibility of cooking the beans. Saturday morning. He'll be at his post at the appointed time with the appointed instruments, with the appointed utensils, with the appointed ingredients to cook the Saturday morning men's breakfast at 8.30.

For those who are a bit late coming in, you put your name down because I've only got so many, there's only so many seats around the table at the moment. But it's doing your duty, discharging your responsibilities, however humble they be, and doing them well.

[12:56] And it's the Master's approval that matters. We want to serve him well. When you serve fully, you will serve humbly. Servants do what is needed even when it is inconvenient.

When you serve God fully, you will be poured out like a drink offering for him. There's that sense of it there in the Scriptures. You will expend and be expended. You will give and keep on giving.

And as God's servants, we are called to serve without reservation. Some people will only serve when they feel appreciated or get something out of it.

They serve only when it is easy or when they get some recognition. They will not serve in the unseen tasks or the mundane things.

And sometimes we can humanly feel inclined that way to feel unnoticed or feel unappreciated in our areas of service, to find some reason to grumble or complain.

[13:56] Oh, I'm doing all the work. Wow, you're blessed. You are blessed to be used of God. But God knows. God values what you do. God values what you're about.

And you don't let that kind of self-interest stop you because you're doing that, which is your duty to do. And you will put yourself out and serve regardless of your personal feelings.

You might serve God and receive insults. And you might serve God and receive criticism. And it's par for the course, isn't it?

Because we're not serving men. We are serving God as the ultimate. And serve Him regardless of your personal feelings.

Serve Him regardless of your injuries you might suffer in serving God. Serve and keep on serving. Let nothing, let no one deter you.

[14 : 53] Serve consistently. Not just when you're conscious of people watching you. You're not there to impress them. Really, we serve an audience of one.

We're the capital O, don't we? Servants. Paul addressed, they in all things, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh.

Not with eye service, not just when people are watching, but in singleness of heart, fearing God. And whatsoever you do, do it heartily.

As to the Lord and not unto men. Knowing that of the Lord you shall receive the reward of the inheritance for you. Serve the Lord Christ.

Serve fully. Serve and keep on serving. Serve consistently. Every Christian is expected to serve. Don't think, oh, I can just let others step in.

[15 : 58] Find the place that you can serve. And serve there. Wherever we serve. Whether in some church ministry or an area of practical service.

Whatever it be, our service we render unto God. Unto God and for the glory of God. Really, there's no excuse for a Christian to be bored.

I can remember as a child, I had times when I was feeling bored and I would say to my mum and dad, oh, I'm bored. Really, I kind of missed those days when I was feeling a bit bored.

I didn't have much to do. But now, as a Christian, as a mature Christian, we know there's multiple things for us to do. There's manifold places and people to serve. There's manifold opportunities to be busy in the Lord's work.

To be busy for God. Not bored, but busy for God. Of course, we can get busy, busy, busy in that which isn't important. But to be busy in the Lord's work.

[17 : 01] In doing God's work. And unto his glory. That's our motivation. God wants all of us to be active members of the body of Christ. And we do not serve solo.

We serve in tandem. We serve as a team of servants. We are a team. A ministry team. The whole church is the ministry team. Not just a select, the two or three or five or ten that are the ministry team.

We are the ministry team. All of us. As God's people. We're a team of servants. We're labourers. Labourers together. Labourers together with God. John Newton, the slave trader, who became a preacher following his conversion to Christ and who wrote such hymns as Amazing Grace, he told this account to illustrate obedient service.

He said this. He said, If two angels were to receive at the same moment a commission from God, one to go down and rule its grandest empire, the other to go and sweep the streets of its meanest village, it would be a matter of entire indifference to each which service fell to his lot.

The post of ruler or the post of scavenger, the post of street sweeper, for the joy of the angels lies only in obedience to God's will. We serve fully and we serve as our absolute motivator to endeavour to be obedient to God and to do his will for our lives, to do it heartily, to do it fully.

[18 : 32] And so we are to serve fully. And also we are to serve fervently. As we've read here again, Colossians 3, 23, Paul addressing servants, he says, And whatsoever you do, whatever, do it heartily, as unto the Lord, and not unto men.

Serve God and serve God fervently. Serve him heartily. Have a desire to serve, a willingness, a readiness, a responsiveness. Sometimes it takes a while for God to get our attention.

As with Samuel. In 1 Samuel 3, verse 10, you know the story goes where the Lord tried to get Samuel's attention and he thought it was Eli.

And ultimately it came to his understanding that it was the Lord trying to get his attention. And the Lord came and stood and called as at other times, Samuel, Samuel.

Then Samuel answered, Speak for thy servant, hear it. That's the attitude that we ought to have. To serve God fervently, we want to have a responsiveness to his voice, to have a responsiveness to his call.

[19 : 45] Yes, Lord! Speak, I'm listening, tell me what to do. Servanthood, it comes from the heart. God moves our heart, our will, and moves us, and moves our feet, moves us to action, moves us to say, Lord, speak to me, send me, use me.

I am ready to go, to do, to be what you want me to be, to do, to do your will, and to delight to do God's will. As David said, I delight to do thy will, oh my God, yea, thy law is within my heart.

David said, I delight to serve God, I delight to do his will, I delight to do his bidding, I delight to serve him joyfully, gladly. Serve fervently, pull out all the stops, what are the blockages, pull them out,

move them out of the way, don't hold back, give all your best to the master.

John Wesley had a great motto, do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can.

I'll say that again, do all the good that you can, by all the means that you can, in all the ways that you can, to all the people that you can, as long as ever you can.

[21 : 08] Serve fervently, serve fervently. He was a demonstration of that, wasn't he? Serve fervently. And another one is, we've covered serve freely, fully, fervently, serve faithfully, faithfully.

As we serve God, may we do it faithfully. God is a way of testing his people, testing our faithfulness, testing our reliability. What's it going to take to deter you?

What's it going to take to put you off? What's it going to take to stop you? The devil wants to stop you, but God wants you to be fervent, faithful, to stick with it.

He entrusts us then with greater things, as we're reliable in the smaller things. And he will reward our faithfulness in eternity. At times it might feel like the service we render to God is insignificant.

Who am I? Just me. And what can I do? Maybe just this little thing here, or this small thing here. But even the small things God has given in your scope of responsibility, in your circle of influence, those small things that you can do, as insignificant and unimportant as they may seem, they are just as important.

[22 : 29] It's like every cog in a watch, when they used to have cogs in watches, when there used to be mechanical pieces in a watch. Every cog, every little, incy, tiny bit serves a function, and without it, the watch would fail.

No one is less important. Likewise with our service to God. Bloom where you are planted, be used of God where he wants you and be blessed there.

Serve faithfully. A faithful person is reliable, dedicated, diligent, dependable, consistent, trustworthy. Serve faithfully.

Let us follow the example of the master servant, our Lord Jesus, to be like Jesus, to serve like Jesus. What would that look like? To be willing to go the extra mile.

If we are to serve him, let us serve him faithfully. And if we serve God faithfully, then there's no place for pride either. There's no place for pride as a servant of God.

[23 : 33] After all, you are a servant. That's who we are. As Philippians 2, Paul tells the Philippian saints, let nothing be done through strife or vain glory, but in lowliness of mind.

Let each esteem other better than themselves. Esteem others better than yourself. Amen? You don't look in the mirror and put yourself, elevate yourself.

You esteem others. Lift up others. It goes on, look not every man on his own things, but every man also on the things of others. Don't be all tied up and fretting and fussing about your own interests, your self-interest.

What does my brother and my sister need? How can I bless them? Look on the things of others. What do they need? How can I be a blessing? Let this mind be in you which resource and encourage Jesus to be in the form of God, for it not robbery to be equal with God. but made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of man.

[24 : 47] He made himself of no reputation. Oh, comes from Nazareth? Can anything good come out of Nazareth?

People would say that where we come from. Anything good come out of where they from. Yes. Jesus made himself of no reputation. He took upon him the form of a servant and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. truly, to serve God. It means no vain glory. You don't get a big bad saying servant that you polish every day.

Oh, look at me, I'm a servant of God. No vain glory. No seeking of credit for yourself. No big noting of ourselves.

[25 : 51] It's not putting our name in lights that, you know, such and such ministries with your name on it, your name in lights.

I've seen some ridiculous things where the preacher is kind of taken to this, putting on a pedestal. And I've seen, I think it's an African preacher that they roll out the red carpet for him and that they're virtually throwing palm branches on his way and they're leading him into the Rolls Royce or up the steps and bowing and scraping unto the man of God as if that somehow he's the king of the nation.

Now, of course, there's a certain honour in serving God, but it's not in such a fashion. We are not to big note a man, a preacher or a pastor and put them in this place of high honour in such a humane kind of way of kind of making them out to be some kind of little God where we're all inferior and we're stooping and scraping and bowing and puffing him up.

God forbid. God forbid. No vain glory. No seeking of credit. No big noting of ourselves. We simply, as we started with unprofitable servants, we have done that which was our duty to do.

[27 : 33] The Lord Jesus did not hold back. He stooped down. He took the lowest place. He came to serve and likewise he calls us to that, to that humble task. Christ condescended. He took the lowly place.

He washed twelve pairs of grimy feet that had walked the dusty, dirty roads. He took the towel and he girded himself. He clothed himself as the most humble of servants.

Take the menial, the thankless tasks. There is a sense where the servant will be extended. We're always at our master's bidding. There's a sense of always being on call.

You can imagine in the older times where there was perhaps a palace or a palatial home, the estate of the master and the family of the time and where the servants' quarters were there and there was a little bell there.

Can you imagine at three o'clock in the morning? Well, the master's calling. I've got to jump out of bed and come and help and serve. It wasn't, oh, it's not convenient.

[28 : 46] Oh, I'm not clocked on yet. I'm not, I'm not, it's not my working hours yet. Oh, I've got to have my beauty sleep. No, it's saying, yes, sir, I'm ready and willing and able to serve, to come at the master's beckoning, at the master's call.

That was the sense of it, of the servant of the house, that they were always at the master's bidding. They were always at that sense of being on call and the servant is ready to work those long, hard hours, the tasks that can be wearing and heavy.

We do not clock off as Christians, do we? And suffering is part of our glory, the sense of we should not shy away from hard work.

Amongst that which we are called to pray, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Thy will be done, O God, on earth as it is in heaven.

How is it that God's will will get done? By his people. Of course, he's sovereign, he can do it through a donkey if he can't find a human to do it, but God wants his people to be energised to the work and he accomplishes his will, his work, through his workmen and workwomen.

[30 : 05] Matthew 20, our Lord tells an account where it tells of him summoning people to go into the vineyard. It tells of the master of a vineyard calling for workers and it says he sees some standing idle in the marketplace.

Standing idle and he says, go into the vineyard, go into my vineyard. serve quietly, serve secretly, serve out of love, serve wholeheartedly.

Develop a servant attitude and serving can be long and tiring. Be persevering. The picture of working in a vineyard, I worked in a vineyard, I think I lasted one day doing the grape picking, it wasn't much fun.

Working hard and long in the vineyard, hard and long, tirelessly. Be persevering.

What a picture here. This is the picture our Lord uses of how we are to be at his core. Many pictures of serving through the word of God. You can take a look through, in particular, the New Testament is seeing our Lord speaking of working, of labouring, of pictures of service.

[31 : 41] He would urge us, be ready for the master. Here's another one, be prepared. In Luke 12, there's an account here where verse 35 he says, let your loins be girded about.

Get ready, get dressed, get prepared. Get your belts on, get ready, get prepared, be at his bidding. Let your lights be burning, keep alert, keep ready, prepare yourself. Verse 36, be like men that wait for their Lord when he will return from the wedding, that when he comes and knocks, they may open unto him immediately.

There's a sense we've got to be on our best, on our game, on the alert. You yourselves be like unto men that wait for their Lord when he will return.

Blessed are those servants whom when he comes will find watching. Are we watching? Are we waiting? Our master is coming. Now I've heard there's a bumper sticker I think that says the boss is coming, look busy.

[33 : 00] But really we should not just look busy, we should be busy because our master is coming, amen. And he wants to find us ready, he wants to find us working and it says blessed, blessed are those servants who are watching, blessed are those servants who are ready.

The master is coming, he will come unexpectedly, blessed are those, our Lord says, are those servants who are ready and waiting. For the meanwhile, serve willingly, be willing to do the hard things, be at the master's disposal.

Think of what a servant was. In the Bible days the servant had no rights, no land, no money, totally dependent upon the master.

Aren't we so too? To serve where needed, let us not have limits to our willingness to serve. A ministry takes a submission, there's a devotion to the master, it's a coming under the lordship of Christ.

We are his servants, he is our Lord. Sometimes we use that word Lord very glibly, I've mentioned it before, I used to like how Joshua, our friend Joshua used to pray master, Lord, master.

[34 : 14] That's what it means. When we say Lord, we say master, master. It's coming under his lordship. And we are bond servants, so there's a sense we are bound totally and completely and willingly to our Lord.

We're totally surrendered, our lives are meant to glorify him. The chief purpose for us as God's own people is to glorify God. That's our aim, our purpose for life.

And he has called us to this service, to enduring service. The word is filled with these calls to service, to know the Lord, the master. And it follows on then that we, his people, are to serve him. Deuteronomy verse 4 of 13, it says, you shall walk after the Lord your God and fear him and keep his commandments and obey his voice, obey his voice, and you shall serve him and cleave unto him.

Get a hold of God, cleave unto him. And Samuel said to fear the Lord, serve him in truth with all your heart, for consider how great things he has done for you.

[35 : 31] God, our great master and king, has done so much for us, hasn't he? The least we can do is to be at his service. It's our privilege. He deserves that.

And your serving God has a lasting dimension. This is eternal in its dimension. It tells us that God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which you've showed to God's name in that you've ministered to the saints and do minister.

God is not going to forget your work. Serving God can be hard work. It can often mean serving people and your service may not always be appreciated or valued.

You might serve and serve and give and give and feel, wow, I'm not getting much credit here. I'm not getting really much earthly praise or thanks, but serve on.

Serve on. There's some tasks in this church that are really, I must say, I don't always give the credit, but I know that there's faithful servants in this church.

[36 : 47] People that are labouring in the library, well, whoever thinks to thank the librarian for keeping all those books nice and tidying. A great treasure trove of good godly Christian reading that's in our library just in this corner here.

Great material to feed your soul. It's thanks to people who take the time and do the unseen and do that menial task of keeping it all tidy.

Kitchen. We just automatically think, oh, it's cuppa time. Those vickies look nice. That was nice of someone to do that for us today.

Yet the person who does that may not always be recognised, may not be appreciated, personally appreciated, may not be valued in terms of getting some acknowledgement.

me. And there's many examples we could give. There's people giving out tracts. I know when people are giving out tracts.

[37 : 58] I've got this message on my phone. Let me just see if I can find it here. I should have had it ready for me to look up. Let me see now.

I know when people are giving out tracts because I get hate calls. I think wow, praise the Lord, someone's doing that again. Someone's giving out tracts again. I can't readily find it here but I was pulling it.

It wasn't very nice. Oh, here we go. Here we go. This is to whoever it is. Could be someone present. Could be someone else. I do not appreciate unsolicited mail.

Endorsed by yourself that I find offensive. dumped on my property. See attached photos. If this does not cease, I will be in contact with the distribution standards board to resolve this matter as I find this advertisement offensive to my beliefs.

Thank you. Now, I gave them a call but they didn't answer so I left them a message and told me, tell me your address. So we don't know their address so it's probably going to happen again.

[39 : 13] So, amen. Praise the Lord. People are out there giving out tracts in this church. There's people door knocking on Saturdays in this church. Your labour of love.

God's not going to forget that. I hope I'm not pulled before the distribution standards board. But, amen. Praise the Lord anyway. Amen. Work on.

Labour on. Here's what a song goes. To the work, to the work, ye servants of God, let us follow the path that our master has tried. To the work, to the work, there is labour for all.

To the work, to the work in the strength of the Lord. And a robe and a crown shall our labour reward. When the home of the faithful, our dwelling shall be, and we shout with the ransomed, salvation is free.

The work that we do is not to earn our salvation, it's because we are saved. We work for God because salvation is free. Paul describes his service to God.

[40 : 12] He says, Whereunto also I labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily. Paul's telling us his secret here.

He says he's struggling is the sense of it, this labouring, this earnest endeavour with all his energy, his energy, God's energy, God's power.

God's energising which so powerfully works in me. The word labour here means to work to the point of exhaustion. So there's a sense where our serving God should not be limited to when it's comfortable.

Our labouring, our serving of God has not got a finite end to it that we give to a point and stop giving. this striving, this struggling is a word you could transliterate as agonise.

Agonise, this labour, sorry this striving, the word striving here, this struggling. It's got the sense of serving God in an agonising way to the point of exhaustion.

[41 : 25] God's service was this glad labour of love towards God. Now it's not that we do it because we're under God's thumb or we're doing it in an irksome, obligatory, forced way, but we labour because we've got his energy, we've got his energising, his empowerment to serve in his powerful commission and enabling.

And this call is for all, for every believer. You are expected to serve and you are gifted to serve, the Bible says, but are you willing to serve?

That's the question to leave us with here today. If any man serve me, let him follow me, and where I am there shall my servant also be. If any man serve me, him will my father honour.

Serve him now, honour is later. The honour is later. Serve him now. Honour comes later ultimately. Another poetic verse here.

Give of your best to the master. Give of the strength of your youth. Throw your soul's fresh glowing ardour into the battle for truth. Jesus has set the example.

[42 : 42] Dauntless was he, young and brave. Give him your loyal devotion. Give him the best that you have. Give of your best to the master. Give him first place in your heart. Give him first place in your service.

Consecrate every part. Give and you will be given. God his beloved son gave, gratefully seeking to serve him. Give him the best that you have. Give of your best to the master.

Nought else is worthy of his love. He gave himself for your ransom. Gave up his glory above. Laid down his life without murmur.

You from sin's ruin to save. Lay down his life without murmur. You from sin's ruin to save. Give him your heart's adoration. Give him the best that you have.

God's love. Therefore, my beloved breath, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

[43 : 45] For as much as you know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord. we've looked at ministry, the servants of God here this morning.

I'm privileged to be in your company. You who know the Lord, you are God's servants and more so God's sons and daughters. Specially called, commissioned, gifted, sent to serve, to serve, to serve fully.

to serve faithfully, to serve fervently. I've probably missed one, but serve joyfully, serve gladly and don't have a limitation.

Be like Samuel. Lord, your servant is listening. I'm listening, Lord. I'm ready. Be like the servants, ready, with their lights burning, with their loins girded, when the master comes, they're at his core. They're ready to serve. And be like the servants that we talked of at the start, where we come home from a hard day and the master still has more for us to do.

[45 : 18] And when we've done all those things, which we are commanded of him, say we are unprofitable servants. We have done that, which was our duty to do.

We're preaching this morning to Christians. You cannot truly serve God unless you are saved. To know him as saviour, as Lord, as master, unless you receive him as your master and Lord, you've got yourself on that throne of your life.

To be your own master, that master has to be dethroned, and Jesus has to come and live on the throne of your life.

As you resign, as you yield control of your life to his lordship, and let him truly be your master. You receive his grace that he gave in the absolute ultimate work of the cross, in dying on our part for our sin, and rising as our risen Lord and master and saviour.

And if you've yet to trust him, you might say, preacher, well I've never taken that step of trusting Jesus as my lord and saviour. I've never asked him to save my soul.

[46 : 35] I want to, I want him to be lord. Lord, and you can simply pray as I would lead you here now. Lord Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross for my sin.

I receive your love and forgiveness. I turn from my sin, from my own way. I want you to be my master and saviour and lord, and I will follow you with my life ahead.

Lord, and for every believer, we pray, Lord, help us to be such willing servants, ready to freely, fully, faithfully, fervently serve in your kingdom's commission.

As you've gifted us, as you've equipped us, and as we'll continue to equip ourselves with your word as we study it, to be workmen that need not be ashamed, to know that labour of love and your service, we pray, in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.