

# Accept Your Assignment for the Service of the Gospel

*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: 08 March 2009

Preacher: Peter Thein Nyunt

[ 0 : 00 ] Praise the Lord. Greetings in the name of Jesus Christ from my evangelical graduate school theology, Yangon, and my family, and the Overseas Council of Austria.

And it's my privilege to be here this evening to share the word of God. And as our friend said, the topic is to accept your assignment for the service of the gospel.

We understand everybody has been given an assignment in such a way. If I'm a student, my responsibility is to accept the assignment from the professor.

If I don't want to accept, I will fail an exam. I will get only very, very low grades. So that's why I said, accept your assignment for the service of the gospel.

The theme is, service is not optional. But it's the heart of the Christian life. And the pathway to the real significance.

[ 1 : 25 ] Sometimes people make excuses. Oh, I'm very busy. So I don't want... Let me try to adjust my time. When I have free time, I will do this one. But in the service of the gospel, no option.

That's there. The heart of the Christian life is the service and his gospel. Look in Matthew 4, verse 10.

When you read, and then I said, I'm tempted at Jesus Christ three times. The last time, what Jesus said? Worship the Lord and serve Him.

That's why worship and service cannot be separated. It's going together. Your worshiping God must demonstrate an action.

When you read that great commandment, the first commandment is, love your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind.

[ 2 : 30 ] This is the first commandment. The second commandment is, love your neighbor as yourself. The first commandment indicates, worshipping our God with our heart.

But your worship must be demonstrated in action, loving your neighbors. That indicates the ministry. That's when those who worship Him are assigned for the service of the gospel in a variety of ways.

In the context of Romans, chapter 1, verses 14 to 16, I could see Paul's three I am's.

You will see, Paul said to the church in Rome, I am, I am, I am. And in three verses, you will see three I am.

Let's see verse 14. I am a debtor, both the Greeks and the barbarians, both the wise and unwise.

[ 3 : 42 ] That's verse 14. So Paul said, I am a debtor to preach the gospel. In terms of this context, I am a debtor to preach the gospel.

Let's think about his life. After encountering Jesus Christ in his life, actually Paul was the persecutor of the Christians in the Bible, you see.

But after encountering Jesus Christ in his life, Paul realized that how much he ought to preach the gospel to others. That's his assignment. He accepted preaching the gospel and the getting able in the service of the gospel is assignment in his life.

The heart of his Christian life is that getting able in the service of the gospel. That's why he felt that I was a debtor of the gospel to preach.

Even the famous, the world famous evangelist, Billy Grant said once, if you have never witnessed to any unbelievers about Jesus Christ till now, examine yourself whether you have assurance of salvation or not.

[ 5 : 04 ] That means your salvation includes service and the gospel for the gospel for the kingdom of God.

I agree with the bellygram. That's why I would like to say if I or you have no love for others, no desire to serve others, I or you should question whether Christ is really in my life or not. That means if you follow Jesus Christ, if you worship the Lord, your worship must be demonstrated in action serving the Lord in variety of ways.

According to the Bible, every believer according to Paul, he said, I'm a adapter to preach the gospel.

Every believer is a adapter to the service of the gospel. That means that each one of us is called to get involved in the service of the gospel in variety of ways.

[ 6 : 26 ] As your pastor introduced, I was a Buddhist monk. Yes, I was. I was a Buddhist monk before, but now I'm a Christian monk.

So, the Christian monk is eligible to preach the word of God in the church. God, a Buddhist monk is not eligible to preach because if he preach, he will preach the wrong doctrines.

But I'm sure to preach the sound doctrines. let me talk about my background a little bit so that you will understand who am I, where I came from.

Even you talk about Myanmar or Burma, our military government doesn't like Burma. You know, the Burma was named by the British government.

That's why we don't like. And Burma, Burma, in our language, Myanmar, that's why we need to give our country the real name, Myanmar. That's why you can go Burma or Myanmar, we accept.

[ 7 : 32 ] But if you officially write to the government, Burma is not acceptable. Right? Myanmar. Anyway, I come from Myanmar or Burma. Our country is middle of, middle of seven states and divisions.

So, I come, I come from the American state. So, the American state is one of the seven. It is the western part of Burma. There are over three million people in the American state, but the majority are the Buddhists.

The second, a little bit, are the Bengali Muslims. And there are 17 townships in the American state. And I come from Ireland. My island is one of the 17.

And the whole island, the area is almost the same as Singapore. So, there are about 70 thousand people living on the island. All are the Buddhists.

We don't like Muslims. We don't like Hindus. We don't like Christians. If Muslims come, we kill them or stone them. There's no other way. So, if no Muslim, Muslims are not allowed to come to our island.

[ 8 : 46 ] when I become a Christian, when I went to preach the gospel to the islanders, they gave me a letter, Peter, my name is not Peter, really. After becoming Christian, I became Peter.

You see Peter, my name is Daniel. Daniel, here's the letter. If you come next time to talk about your religion, they don't understand gospel, to talk about your religion, we are ready to kill you.

This is the last warning. and the first warning. So, they don't like Christians. But, how the islander became a Christian, it's a great interesting, a great question, because your pastor asked it, it's a great question, good question, and a good answer.

The islander was on the island, when he was a high school student, he was in the monastery. all other Buddhists said, every village, at least there is one monastery, or two monasteries for some villages.

When I became a high school student, I had to come to the town area, because the whole island, there is only one government high school for the whole islanders.

[ 10 : 11 ] village, I came to the town area, and stay in the monastery, and go to the high school in Atlanta. I became one disciple of the Buddhist monks in that time.

When I saw the life of the Buddhist monk, it was very impressive for me. I thought it was very peaceful in the life of the Buddhist monk. I had a strong determination to become a monk after high school, but the problem is that when I finished my high school, even when we talk about high school, for your context, 11, 12th grade, but for us, 10, finished.

So after finishing my 10th grade, I was still under the 20 years old. So to be a monk, at least I need to be, my age must be 20, so I became novice.

And at the age of 20, I came to Rengu, the capital city of Burma, and I became a monk. That's the first time that I saw the church and the Christians who are there and what the church means, because there are two churches near our monastery.

The problem began with me never sinned the churches, never sinned the Christians, but the problem for the Buddhist monk, the Christian worship strain, like you are making very noisy, so the joy to the world church we go.

[ 11 : 48 ] Dr. Alman and I, Dr. Alman have been here once, our principal, sometimes we say God has been using two kinds of churches around the world.

one is joy to the world church, one is silent church. God is using the silent church like a morning service, very quietly they are worshiping. This is joy to the world church, so this church has two programs, joy to the world church and silent church.

So the one church near our monastery is there, joy to the world church, assemblies of God, very noisy, making noisy, I am from assemblies of God, but I have no denomination spirit, I am very inter-denomination Christian minister.

So the joy to the world church might noisy, playing music, singing loudly, but the problem for the Buddhist monk, playing music is same for us, listening to the music that is same for us.

So I thought these Christians are fighting against the Buddhists, the way to revenge them is fighting them again, physically.

[ 13 : 00 ] So one day with an aggressive attitude, I went to church to fight a pastor, the monk. We are not allowed to add any violence, but we went to fight the pastor.

With an aggressive attitude, I went to church to fight a pastor, but the story was different. When I met the pastor, with a smiling face, patiently, gently, and politely, he explained me the way for salvation.

Instead of fighting him, I have to listen to him. I have to pay attention whether I like or not. He is very polite, he is very gentle, but this monk, who thought himself, he is holy, he is a holy man, he is a holy monk, but in his inside, he is ready to fight the pastor.

But the Lord has been gracious to me, and instead of fighting him, we discussed together for the way for salvation. But I have a dominant spirit, I think I am superior, he is the interior.

Because he is an ordinary man, I am the holy monk, so I thought I am the right, he is wrong. Whatever he said, it is nothing for me. But the Holy Spirit works in my heart.

[ 14 : 20 ] after six months, but before six months, I went to him secretly very often to discuss the way for salvation.

For the Buddhist monk, we are not allowed to eat food after twelve o'clock. That is another problem for me. When I secretly went to meet him, after discussion, time is over.

So I missed my food very often. After discussion, when I look at one o'clock, two o'clock, so I missed my food.

If I eat food, that is sin. That is sin for me. So for every day, every Buddhist monk has to observe 227 precepts, and in reality, five, impossible.

Even to observe five precepts, it is impossible. people. So when I realize the consequence of sin, in the Buddhism, there is no concept of the forgiveness of sin.

[ 15 : 25 ] But in the Buddhism, without the forgiveness of sin, if you die, you will be going around in the circle of rebirth, reincarnation. You may become animal, and after two years, and when your parents do something good, you may go to a little higher place, and after one year, you may become dark, and you may be in the worst place.

So we go reincarnation, circle of rebirth. But I don't want to go. The ultimate goal of the Buddhism is going to nirvana.

But the problem is that we have to go to the circle of rebirth. So when I realized I'm the sinner, and I need the savior, Jesus Christ, another problem came to me again.

If I follow Jesus Christ, how about my parents? How about the head of the monastery? How about my relatives? Because my parents, they are proud of me, because they become the parents of the Buddhist monk.

For them, it's a higher level in the society, being a Buddhist monk's parents. I was struggling day and night, but I asked myself, who will save you?

[ 16 : 45 ] Except Jesus, no one. In short, I accepted Jesus as my lord and savior in November 1990. The result came, I was rejected by the family.

I was kicked out by the head of the monastery, and I was insulted by the relatives and friends. But like Paul, as I realized the benefit and the real meaning of believing in Jesus Christ, the meaningful life in Christ, I feel myself, I need to preach the gospel to anyone, whenever, and wherever.

So, from that thing on word, I have a great desire to preach the gospel. As far as I remember, on the first day when I became a believer, I started preaching the gospel.

the whole body becomes wet, because I was sweating a lot. But I want to talk whatever I know. I want to talk to others, whatever I know.

And then, after 50 days, I went to Bible college. Praise the Lord, I passed my entrance exam. But I have a great desire to preach the gospel to others.

[18:09] So, in that time, we had a little freedom to talk about the religious issues. So, I went to the harbor, and a little station, and I go to the tea shop, and I preach the gospel, and I even go to the train area.

Sometimes the police came in, like, wait, wait, wait, wait, wait, don't talk too much. So, I have that kind of experience. I have great desire to preach the gospel.

So, this experience from worshipping, because worshipping Jesus great motivates me to get able and his service. That's when worshipping and service cannot be separated.

So, that's my great desire. I need to get able in his service. So, those who worship the law are assigned to get able in his service in a variety of ways.

Maybe the preacher, maybe the evangelist, maybe the Bible school teacher, and maybe you can get involved in variety of ways, but that's no option.

[19:14] That's compulsory for every follower of Jesus Christ. So, do you feel that you are tempted to preach the gospel?

You may not bring the Bible and preach the gospel, but you can preach the gospel in a variety of ways. Praying for others, encouraging others, giving the ministry, you can get involved in a variety of ways.

And in which kind of area do you want to get involved in the service, that's not the option. That is the heart of the Christian life. So, I feel myself, I am tempted to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.

as I am, as your pastor and the Revenstrel introduced me, I'm the one of the faculty member of the Evangelical Graduate School of Theology.

Yes, I even I was one of the graduates of that seminary. And then I finished my MD in 2001.

[20:30] 2002 I was sent to Indonesia to do my MDH and mythology. That school is being supported by Overseas Council in Austria. In 2003 I came back to join the faculty.

So, we have till now there are almost 200 graduates from our seminary. And I am the first one from the graduate of our seminary becoming a faculty to our seminary.

So, I'm the first one after me and St. John and Ron and others coming to join as the faculty. I'm also pastor at the church.

But the reason that I'm standing as one of the lecturer or one of the faculty member at seminary because I have a bitter experience about my family life.

2003 my wife had minor operation left eyes. So, medical doctor gave instruction use this one use this one that she use every day and then every month we have to meet the doctor and it's okay it's good keep on using that one and then she uses drop and every day after six or eight months she she said I can't see well and then when we went to another doctor said 80% of her eyes was damaged in Myanmar context we can't complain to anyone if I cannot complain to the government I cannot complain to the doctor but I realized out of having bitter experience if the medical doctor gave wrong instructions how many will suffer only one patient suffers but if a pastor or a teacher teaches wrong doctrine how many will suffer the whole church will suffer so for that kind of the experience and an incident we need to train the younger generations with the sound doctrine with the sound theology so that many

[22:52] Burmese Buddhists will have chance to hear the gospel in their context so that they will understand what the gospel means so that's why we are training the evangelical graduate school theology standing as the best theological seminary and evangelical wins to train the pastors Bible school teachers evangelists from different denominations so that when we train them they can train others so that's the main reason that I'm standing as one of the faculty so to train the one student it's very cheap for you it's very cheap but for our context so a little high to train one student it costs only if you want to know how much it costs you can actually he knows more than

I do because his organization is supporting our seminary that is very cheap so we can we can train them but to train them we need to get involved in a variety of ways we are in the community of believers our needs are diverse it's different your needs and the mind might be different but our

responsibility is to meet the needs of one other so that that is we go accept your assignment that's your assignment to get involved in the ministry when we talk about the community I understand only three key points when we talk about the community of a believer that means first you must have commitment to Christ without having commitment to Christ it's not you are not in the real community of God first you need to have a commitment to Christ the reason that you have commitment to Christ the second is that you need to have commitment to the body of Christ when we talk about body of Christ or community of God's people it's not only locally it's globally we are in the same family why do we need to have commitment to the body of Christ the reason is to have commitment to fulfill the great commission so the first commitment is commitment to Christ the second is a commitment to the body of Christ globally and locally the third the commitment to the great commission to fulfill the great commission these are interrelated we cannot separate only I have commitment to Christ I don't care another no oh I have commitment to the body of Christ but if you have commitment to the body of Christ that commitment must demonstrate an action that means you need to accept your assignment to get involved in the service of the gospel so how do you feel in terms of your life do you feel

I am adapter to the service of the gospel like Paul think about ourselves I am adapter to the service of the gospel let's see verse 15 I am not ashamed of the gospel that was Paul's testimony of passion he was the persecutor of the believers followers of the gospel but this time he said his life totally changed instead of persecuting he was passionate to preach the gospel of course he said I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes in the book of Acts Acts chapter 4 verse 20 you see how did

Peter and John respond to the authorities when they are commanded not to preach the gospel what they said we can but speak the things that we have seen and heard in Burmese context let me talk about our experience what we are facing in the country of Burma the military government has been ruling the country for long time they know how to shoot but they do not know how to rule the country especially they don't like Christian there are three M's in the history of Obama the first reason they look at Christianity with the three M perspectives the first M is Martian they think this way why the [28:18] British people British government occupy the country there are three reasons the first they send the merchants or the businessmen came from Europe and they do their business in the country of Burma when they realized these Burmese are very simple and they called the missionary come and do the missions so second missionary came and as the missionary came finally the military came and occupied the country so first M is motion second is missionary and third M is the military and finally through the military of the British government they occupy the country that's why they look at the Christianity as their new weapon of the colonialism they suspect all the time so when we preach the gospel they look at from the political issues not only religious issues they look at us from the political issues when the authentic

Burmese Buddhists become a believer he is not recognized as the real Burmese he is the traitor or he is the follower of western religion it is the situation in the country of Burma when when I became a believer even though I came from the Buddhist background and was born in the Buddhist family and even though I was a Buddhist monk when I became a believer they do not recognize me as one of the archaneses I am an archaneses this one is not faithful to the nationality this one is not faithful to the religion this one is not faithful to the this and that they look at me from different perspective when you are persecuted when you are looked down on for the sake of Jesus Christ how would you response how would you response Paul said

I am not ashamed of the gospel I am not ashamed of the gospel because it is the power of God for those who believe I am a pastor in the church very often the local authority came in and said to me we do not allow you to worship in your house because we don't have church since 1962 in the time of general new end the government does not allow to build religious buildings like church even though we build a church we have to say this is my house when the military when the local authority comes and asks what one what is this oh this is my house but when church member comes this is church we have to see that way if I said this is the church stop and then many people in my community

I started the church in 1995 among the Buddhist community in Yangon they don't like me you are Buddhist monk before now when you become a Christian how much money do you get from Christian organization being a Christian many questions and they insult me and criticize me but I understand I should not be ashamed of the gospel because for them it might be mock it might be

silly things but for me it is the power of God for those who believe are you ready when you are persecuted for the sake of the gospel what the bible says 1 Peter chapter 4 verse 12 when you are persecuted for being a

Christian it is a great blessing your country has a lot of freedom no one will insult you because of your decision but in our country as Paul said are you still Buddhist yes according to my ID I am still Buddhist I cannot change my religion when I go to the immigration what is your occupation I am a pastor you are pastor what pastor no you are Buddhist how can Buddhist be a pastor yes I am a pastor but you you need to change my religion oh no we can change and how can Buddhist be a pastor oh we can change your occupation business man yes I'm business for my father my father in heaven so I'm businessman for my father in heaven so if when you become a believer and when we become a believer we are persecuted and insolored in a variety of ways in the context of our country but how should we stand

[ 33 : 51 ] I am not ashamed of the gospel so we should not be ashamed of the gospel in the history Christians people look at Christians in a variety of ways they look down on the Christians they despise the Christians who are the followers of Jesus Christ but how would you respond I am not ashamed of the gospel can you say that it's very difficult but we need to stand on the promise of God when we are persecuted when we are insulted how should we stand in our decision let's see another verse 15 how Paul said I am ready to preach the gospel Paul said he is ready to preach the gospel that means for any kind of situation he is ready to be in his service what a passion he has

I am ready to preach the gospel we can preach the gospel in a variety of ways are you worshipping the law every day if you are worshipping the law every day that means you must be ready to preach the gospel you might not be preaching the gospel like this oh do you know Jesus Christ if you do know Jesus Christ come on I would tell you that may be one way only but you can preach the gospel through your life through your life my mother said when I said to my mother man if you don't believe in Jesus Christ you must go to hill my son you you are the only youngest son in my family I have nine children you are the only youngest one don't talk about your God now I said if you don't believe in Jesus you must go to hell Buddha never never never said if you rely on

Buddha you must go to Nirvana yes I know so if you don't believe in Jesus you must go to heaven you must go to hell my son don't worry this is my business I am going there don't worry her belief she does not know what she believes the government doesn't like preaching the gospel now and among the Christian community or among the Buddhist community but if we have a heart for the gospel there are many ways let me talk about my experience among the Arcanist Buddhists we are as I said I come from the western part of Burma and the Arcanist they are different tribal groups in the country and I am Arcanist you know Aung San Suu Ji how many of you heard about Aung San Su Ji she is the democracy leader in the country of Burma now was the independent leader of our country when he was alive he went around the country and organized the people when he arrived in Arcanist state Arcanist people didn't like him and Aung San said to the Arcanist if you see the Arcanist and the Viber like cobra or Viber at the same time kill the Arcanist first they are very stubborn they are poisonous then Viber and cobra kill them first so we the Arcanist are very stubborn they think we are the right we are the right one the rest they are wrong we are the right so we are proud of ourselves and being stubborn but the gospel is for all the gospel is for all and many missionaries go to our people and then they say these people are very stubborn don't go we can go to other other group don't go to the

Arcanist these are very stubborn very strong but after after my empties in Indonesia and I and my friend trying to find ways how should we reach our own people with the gospel people say they are stubborn but the gospel is for all okay shall we start and then oh I can show you later and then if you want to see on Monday so when Buddhist people worship the Lord they use the gal you have you ever when Buddhist people say ding ding ding three times they already gal what it means this is the time to pay attention to the preaching so we start Buddhist way it's good the archangelist say it's good and I preach like a monk and chanting sometimes like a Buddhist monk and after preaching [ 39 : 12 ] I rain three times or this is the time to meditate on it that's good they accept that and the second step we start preaching the Buddhism not gospel we start preaching the Buddhism because they say they are Buddhist but they do not know what they believe and I preach like a Buddhist monk and a Buddhist why do you know about this you say you are the Christian but when do you say about Buddhism listen pay attention and when they realize that next we preach the gospel and compare with the Buddhism and Christianity oh this is the one that we want so finally they accept

Jesus Christ hallelujah they accept Jesus Lord and Savior but the problem in the church among the churches in Myanmar when one Buddhist becomes believer they take them they take the church take the believer and separate with the family from the family and he becomes enemy of the family but we find a way when one person becomes a believer we said be there be with the family be in the community and then discuss with your family and then our strategy is if the new

Buddhist becomes a believer then he has to be quiet in the family and then he does not claim he is a Christian but he discussed with the family mom I heard about this new how do you think daddy can you can you can you compare with the Buddhist and this message that I heard see it's interesting my son okay if you if you think it's interesting how how about this how about this he goes step and step and step and step and finally when the family understand okay the family come and we baptize them we did mistakes first when we had a new convert we take him out from the family and then finally he cannot go to the family he becomes blocked but out of our experience we have a Buddhist monk convert and I said don't change be there and preach the gospel to your family but he was very active and he changed finally he cannot go back to family but we train that way and then we when we have a new converse we train secretly and then send them back to the family and the community and preach the gospel now when the community and the group claim that we are the follower of Jesus Christ but when we preach that way people criticize us oh you are doing wrong ways many traditional Christians criticize us but we encourage our believers all the time be ready to preach the gospel wherever you are what happened within five and six years over 400 come to Christ amen from the Buddhist community the reason that

I am talking about it because the existence of the qualified seminary like Max we can train our students from the Bible as as our experience the reason that I am doing my PhD is I come from Buddhist background most of the Christian leaders they come from Christian background especially minority background over 95% come from the Christian background minority ethnic group usually they came from the enemies but when they reach the majority Burmese Buddhists it's very hard cross cultural communication it's very hard but as I came from the Buddhist monk background if I can train them in the Buddhist context to preach the gospel to train the people to make the disciples that will be great significance to the churches and the country of

Burma so for that reason I am writing my dissertation where we have a heart to serve the law we should be ready to preach the gospel in a variety of ways that's why Paul said in the conclusion I want to say we are saved to serve God and it's no option but the heart of our Christian life that's why Paul said in Ephesians chapter 2 verse 10 for we are God's workmanship created in Jesus Christ to do good things good works which God prepared in advance for us to do Ephesians chapter 2 verse 10 we are saved through grace but we should not sit we should not sit around waiting for going to heaven we are saved to get everyone in service that's what we need to keep doing good things for

[ 45 : 02 ] God's kingdom through prayer through giving through encouraging each other and in other words a variety of ways we can get involved in the ministry that's why if you really worshipping the law you need to demonstrate your worshipping spirit and action that's assignment accept your assignment for the service of the gospel thank you so much