

**SERVICE - WORSHIP**

**The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve...**

Some time ago, as I was praying, my spirit had a strange experience, a challenging experience, a dialogue based on God’s Word! I don’t remember exactly the details but I remember that I told the Lord: *“Lord Jesus, You know that I want to serve You...”*. As soon as I had pronounced the words *“to serve You”* I could not continue my prayer! Suddenly, some questions came to the mind: *“To Serve, who? The Lord? Is He in need of something? Is he in need of food, of shelter, of money or of my prayer? Does He need my words of comfort? Does He need to come to me in order to get mercy, to find grace and to be rescued in His needs?”* (Heb.4:16).

It was then that a torrent of verses and thoughts toppled themselves in my mind that I cannot mention now; besides, it is not necessary. I do believe, however, that I must mention the essentials. It is written in the Bible:

1. **“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”** (Mrk.10:45 and Mt.20:28);
2. **“For who is greater, he who sits at the table, or he who serves? *Is it not he who sits at the table? Yet I am among you as the One who serves.*”** (Lu.22:27);
3. The angels, **“Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?”** (Heb.1:14)

Is it not He who forgives all my iniquities, who heals my diseases, who redeems my life from destruction, who crowns me with lovingkindness and tender mercies, who satisfies my old age with good things, who renews my youth like the eagle’s? (Ps.103:1-5). Who “washes my feet?” (Joh.13:4-10). Is it not He who protects me and who provides for my needs? Is it not He who teaches me and carries my burdens? Is not He who has given me the Holy Spirit that intercedes for me, who guides me, who strengthens me against the temptations, against sins, against passions? Who is the One that blesses me? Who is the One that protects me against Satan who tries to murder me and to deceive me?

Then, I asked myself: Why does, therefore, the Bible speak of God’s servants and of service to God? (Joh.12:26; Ac.13:2; Ro.15:16; 1Co.4:1; 2Co.6:4; 2Co.11:23; Eph.3:7). Why the words ‘to serve’, ‘service’ and ‘servant’ are used in relation to men of God and for God? I examined these words in French, in English and in Greek by means of the Online Bible and I found out, to my great astonishment, that the Greek words that are translated by the words to ‘serve’ and ‘service’ do not correspond, in certain cases, to the meaning of the Greek words. I want to refer only to one very representative case: **“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service* (Gr. *Latreia*=worship). And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”** (Ro.12:1-2). Conclusion: If we want, indeed, to serve (worship) Him it is necessary that we are constantly renewed in our mind and not to be conformed to the world. The best servant is actually the best worshipper of Jesus Christ. While examining the references I noted that in most cases these words are **bound to the service which is offered to men in God’s name!!!**

Let's put aside the translations and versions and let's examine the message that these words give. If we want to be called "servants" of Christ, it is necessary for us to understand the basic characteristic of a servant: This characteristic is **obedience!** The word, "**obedience**", in the context of the Bible, includes **two main aspects:**

- a) To repent and to believe in the gospel,
- b) To serve by love our neighbour!

Tell the truth in our heart concerning ourselves, confess our sins and trust God, who out of love for us, sacrificed His only Son on the cross for us, constitute sublime acts of obedience and worship! To love the truth, to tell the truth, to defend the truth and to believe His words is an act of justice that honours God. By serving others, we serve and worship Christ, **in reality**. Then, it is an honour that God does to us by calling us His servants to serve His Church! (No.16:9). But some of us, when things do not go the way we wished them to happen or are influenced by the worldly mentality, we repeat in our heart, unfortunately, in an unashamed manner what some Israelis said: "... **It is useless to serve God; what profit is it that we have kept His ordinance, and that we have walked as mourners before the LORD of hosts?**" (Mal.3:14). They had not understood that by observing His precepts did they 'win' only!!! What does the expression of the Bible mean: "...**he who loves his wife loves himself?**" (Eph.5:28). Does it not mean that the one that serves his wife serves himself? By serving others, we actually serve ourselves! We conclude, therefore, that if we want to serve Christ indeed, it is necessary to serve our brothers and sisters! What do I say? We must serve all men!!! Paul used to say: "**I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise**" (Ro.1:14). The Lord Jesus said: "... **Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.**" (Mt.25:40). It is also written: "**He who has pity on the poor lends to the LORD, and He will pay back what he has given.**" (Pr.19:17). Then, what must we do to our fellow-men?

1. "**Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them...**" (Mt.7:12)
2. **Do I forgive others from my heart as I have been forgiven by Christ?**
3. Do I live in peace – as much as depends on me – with my brothers and my sisters, my fellow men in general, do I reconcile with them expeditiously and do I bear with others as the Lord bears with me, endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace? Do I love them **indeed**, or do I love them merely... **in word or in tongue, but not in deed and in truth** (1Jo.3:18)?
4. "**Therefore, to him who knows to do good and does not do it, to him it is sin.**" (Jas.4:17).

True Christians serve Jesus by serving their neighbours and by trying to lead them to the Lord... By helping people to find salvation either by the distribution of His Word or by witnessing by their words of evangelism or edification and by their holy conduct. They offer in this way a **worship** (gr. Latreia, worship or service), a reasonable service to the Lord. Every soul saved, every soul edified brings glory to God, praise, worship and joy to heaven!

To respond to the requirements of their ministry, Christians must be well equipped! Equipped how? Of course, by Christ's Word that must live in them and among them abundantly in all wisdom. Also, by continuing earnestly in prayer and being vigilant in it with thanksgiving, conducting themselves wisely toward outsiders, making most of the time. Their speech must be always gracious, seasoned with salt, so that they may know how they ought to answer every one. Yes, in conclusion, it is necessary to be well equipped with God's Word and filled with the Holy Spirit; yes with the weapons of righteousness of the right and

the left hand... True Christians must be men of the Bible. When I see that even my shortest spiritual messages of my e-mail ministry that I send occasionally are not read, because certain recipients are imprisoned by their daily occupations, so “busy, busy, busy”, I wonder if they read the Bible. I repeat, I wonder if they open God’s Word once a week! Blessed *are* those servants whom the Master, when He comes, will find watching. He will gird himself and have them sit down *to eat*, **and will come and serve them** (Lu.12:37).

If we are true Christians, let us not forget that God *is* not unjust to forget our work and labour of love which we have shown toward His name, in that **we have ministered to the saints, and do minister** (Heb.6:10); yes, and as each one has received a gift, **minister it to one another**, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God (1Pe.4:10). Therefore, ‘if anyone speaks, let him speak as the oracles of God; if anyone ministers, let him do it as with the ability which God supplies, that in all things God may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom belong the glory and the dominion forever and ever’ (1Pe.4:11). Amen!

John BALTATZIS