

A WILLING SERVANT

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Jesus Christ set the example for his disciples in being a willing servant. Jesus said that “the disciple is not above his master, nor the servant above his lord” (Matt. 10:24). Luke’s account brings out the Lord’s expectation for his disciples to strive to imitate him, “The disciple is not above his master: but everyone that is perfect shall be as his master” (Luke 6:40). Was Jesus a willing servant? Consider what he said, “I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me, but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father” (John 10:14-18).

Does the Master expect the disciple to “lay down his life” for the Father’s will? Consider what he said, “If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels; and then he shall reward every man according to his works” (Matt. 16:24-27).

The truly Christ-like person today is a willing servant. Without hesitation the right attitude is manifested by Jesus as stated in John 8:29, “And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.” Again, he said, “My meat [food, NKJV] is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work” (John 4:34). Jesus was talking about working for his Father with urgency as is shown in John 9:4, “I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh when no man can work.”

The power that enables the Christian to yield loyal service is the work of Christ in his life. The Bible says, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph.

2:10). The tireless servant identifies with the statement, “I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me” (Gal. 2:20).

Christians are servants of God and of Christ through righteousness. Paul wrote of this concept in Romans 6:17-18, 22, “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? But God be thanked, that ye were the servants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered you. Being then made free from sin, ye became the servants of righteousness . . . But now being made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life.”

How imperative, then, it is for Christians to love to exercise willing service to God. How vital to the hope of eternal life it is for Christians to truly seek steadfast service for the Savior. Remember the scene at the judgment depicted by John in the Revelation? “And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works” (Rev. 20: 12-13). The Lord has said, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 7:21). His apostles echoed this same truth, “For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad” (II Cor. 5:10). John reassured his audience that their work for the Master would never be forgotten, “And I heard a voice from heaven saying unto me, Write, blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them” (Rev. 14:13).

The closing admonition to the saints to be willing servants emerges from two passages of scripture. I Corinthians 15:58, “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know your labour is not in vain in the Lord.” And, Philippians 2:12-13, “Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and

trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure.”