

Every Christian Is Called to Serve



Foreword

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In every generation, the Church must recover this simple truth: following Jesus is not primarily about receiving, but about giving—laying down one’s life in the pattern of the One who first laid down His life for us.

We live in an age that prizes personal fulfillment and self-expression. Even in the Church, talk of “my gifts” and “my calling” can quietly displace the deeper reality that every gift was

given for others, and every calling finds its meaning in service to Christ. Against this current, the essay that follows speaks with clarity: every Christian is called to serve, service is not optional, and in that service is found true joy.

Drawing from James, the teaching on spiritual gifts, the Great Commission, and above all the self-emptying example of Jesus, this work reminds us that genuine faith works, gifts are meant to be shared, and the Christian life is shaped by the Servant who came not to be served but to serve.

May these pages rekindle in many hearts a fresh desire to take up the towel and discover that the greatest joy is found in pouring out one's life for Christ and His people.

Soli Deo Gloria. Glory to God alone



The Universal Call and the Joy of the Servant

Scripture nowhere presents Christian existence as a spectator religion. From the moment of conversion, the believer is enlisted. Paul writes that “we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:10). The language is deliberate: we are not merely saved from something, but saved for something. The “good works” are not the ground of justification—they are its inevitable consequence and appointed pathway.

To serve Christ is therefore not drudgery imposed from without but the joyful expression of a new nature. Jesus Himself declared, “My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to accomplish his work” (John 4:34). The disciple who has tasted the same Spirit discovers that obedience is not the opposite of joy but its deepest form. When the believer’s will is aligned with the will of the Father through the Son, service ceases to be burdensome and becomes the soul’s true rest. The Westminster Shorter Catechism famously begins, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.” Service is one of the primary means by which that dual end is realized in the present age.

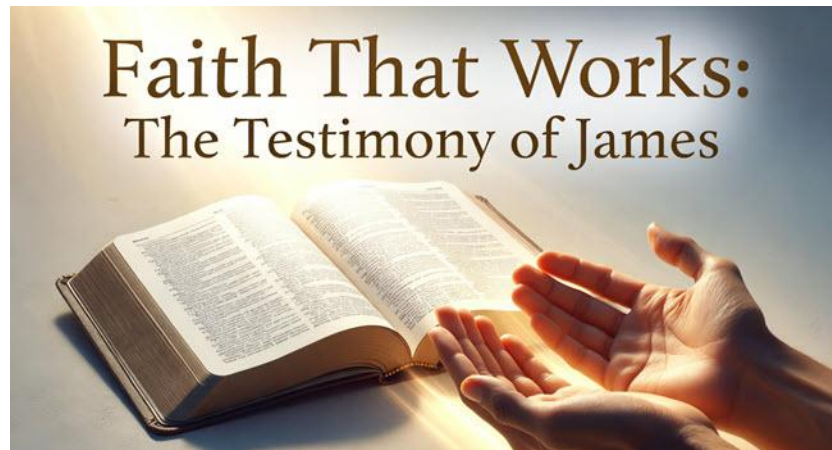


Spiritual Gifts: Distributed Grace for the Common Good

Every believer has been entrusted by the Holy Spirit with a unique set of gifts. As Peter writes, “As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God’s varied grace” (1 Peter 4:10). Paul affirms the same truth: “To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good” (1 Corinthians 12:7). These gifts were never meant for private benefit. They are given so that the body of Christ may be built up and so that the watching world may encounter the living Christ through the concrete actions of His people.

Theologically, this truth runs deep. The Spirit does not simply empower isolated individuals; He forms a living, interdependent body in which every member is necessary (1 Corinthians 12:14–26). To withhold one’s gift is to weaken the church and to dim the visibility of Christ before the world. But when believers faithfully exercise their gifts—whether in outreach, teaching, mercy, administration, hospitality, or any other form—the

church becomes a living expression of the Kingdom. Others then see Christ not only in doctrine, but in the tangible love, wisdom, truth, and power that flow through ordinary believers.



Faith That Works: The Testimony of James

James confronts any attempt to separate profession from practice with blunt force: “Faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead” (James 2:17). He is not introducing a second instrument of justification alongside faith; he is describing the living character of the faith that justifies. True faith is never inert. It is the living bond of union with Christ, and because Christ is Himself the Servant, that union necessarily produces servant-shaped fruit.

James’s argument is thoroughly Christological. The “works” he has in view are not autonomous moral achievements but the overflow of a heart that has been seized by grace. When Abraham offered Isaac, or when Rahab sheltered the spies, their actions did not create faith; they demonstrated that faith was already alive and active. In the same way, the Christian’s service of Christ is the public evidence that the root of faith has taken hold. To claim faith while remaining indifferent to the call of service is, in James’s uncompromising judgment, to possess a corpse rather than a living relationship.



The Great Commission: Christ's Final Charge

The last recorded words of the risen Lord to His gathered disciples are a comprehensive mandate: “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:18–20). This is not a specialist assignment for apostles alone. The risen Christ addresses the entire company of His followers and, by extension, the church of every subsequent generation.

The Commission is simultaneously a call to serve and a promise of presence. The authority of the exalted Son underwrites the mission; the promise of His continuing presence sustains it. Service, then, is not undertaken in isolation from Christ but in conscious dependence upon the One who remains “with you always.” The same Lord who washed His disciples’ feet (John 13:14–15) now sends them out to wash the feet of the nations—teaching, baptizing, and forming communities that embody the same self-giving love.



Christ the Exemplar of Sacrifice

Everything that has been said finds its deepest foundation and highest pattern in the person and work of Jesus Himself. “The Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). The incarnation itself was an act of radical self-emptying: “though he was in the form of God, [he] did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant” (Philippians 2:6–7). The cross stands as the supreme expression of that servant identity.

Christian service, then, is not merely a moral duty or a social program. It is participation in the cruciform life of the Son. When believers serve, they are being conformed to the image of the One who “loved us and gave himself up for us” (Ephesians 5:2). The joy of service is the joy of sharing both in His sufferings and in the power of His resurrection (Philippians 3:10). In this light, every ordinary act of humble obedience becomes a small echo of the great exchange by which the Servant of the Lord redeemed the world.



Conclusion

Servant of Christ's essay, "Called to Serve."

The Christian life is, from beginning to end, a life of service. It is not an optional add-on for the mature or the specially gifted, but the inevitable shape of existence for those who have been united to the Servant-King. We serve because we have first been served—lavishly, undeservedly, and at infinite cost. The One who knelt to wash feet and then stretched out His arms on the cross has claimed us as His own. Our service is therefore not primarily our gift to Him, but our grateful participation in the life He has already given us.

Spiritual gifts exist for this very purpose: that the invisible Christ might become visible through His people. They are not private endowments for personal enrichment, but public trusts given so that the body may be built up and the world may see something of the glory of the Son. Genuine faith, likewise, cannot remain theoretical. As James insists, faith that does not express itself in concrete acts of love and obedience is not living faith at all. The final charge of the risen Lord—the Great Commission—is not a specialized assignment for a few, but the marching orders of the entire church in every generation. And the pattern of the incarnate, crucified, and risen Christ supplies both the model we are to follow and the power by which we are enabled to follow it.

To withhold service, then, is not merely to neglect a duty; it is to live in contradiction to the gospel we claim to believe. It is to receive the benefits of the cross while refusing its shape. But to embrace service—to take up the towel in ordinary faithfulness—is to discover a joy

the world cannot manufacture and cannot take away. It is the joy of the Master who said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive” (Acts 20:35). It is the joy of sharing in His sufferings and in the power of His resurrection. It is the joy of a heart finally aligned with the purpose for which it was made: to glorify God by reflecting the self-giving love of His Son.

May every follower of Jesus hear this call afresh. May we lay down the pursuit of self and take up the towel. And may we find, in the service of Christ, the deepest fulfillment of the heart that was created for Him—until the day we see Him face to face and hear the words every true servant longs to hear: “Well done, good and faithful servant.”

