

THE WAY TO HONOR NO. 1118

A SERMON
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AT THE METROPOLITAN TABERNACLE, NEWINGTON

*“Whoso keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof:
so he that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.”
Proverbs 27:18*

IF a man in Palestine carefully watched his fig tree and kept it in proper condition, he was sure to be abundantly rewarded in due season, for it would yield him a large quantity of fruit of which he would enjoy the luscious taste. So, according to Solomon, good servants obtained honor as the fruit of diligent service.

In those early days, when there were far better relations between servants and masters than unhappily there are nowadays, if a servant carefully waited upon his master, he was sure to be honored for his faithfulness. The Bible is full of such cases.

Eleazar, the servant and steward of Abraham, met with much honor at his master's hands. Deborah was a faithful nurse and what sorrow there was for her at Allon-bachuth, or the oak of weeping. Elisha poured water upon the hands of his master Elijah and became a prophet, endowed with a double portion of his master's spirit.

In the New Testament we read of the centurion who so honored his servant that in his sickness he sent to the Lord Jesus, earnestly entreating Him to come and heal him. There were exceptions, of course. There were faithful servants who met with ungenerous treatment, but what rule is there without an exception? The rule was that he who was faithful to his master received honor.

I could wish it to be more general for there to be intimate friendly relationships between men and their servants. I would fain see a restoration of family loyalty between heads of households and their dependents. In these times, servants, and persons in the employ of others, are looked upon as *hands* to be worked, rather than as *souls* to be cared for.

It may be that servants have degenerated, but it may also be the truth that masters have degenerated too. I believe that every Abraham will be likely to find an Eleazar and every Rebekah a Deborah. Good masters make good servants. Good servants make good masters. Happy is the family where, without forgetting the proper distinctions of position, all are knit together in firm friendship.

Alas! the bonds of society have been too much loosened. Oppression on the one hand and discontent on the other have rent the commonwealth. Yet there still survive among us instances of personal attachment where servants have served the same masters from their youth up, have continued with them in sickness, and in misfortune, have remained faithful to the family when the master has been scarcely able to remunerate them for their services, and have continued faithful even unto death.

I am sure when we have read such stories or seen such servants ourselves, we have felt that they deserved to be held in honor. And there is still a general respect which is manifested by mankind to the servant that waits upon his master. However, I am not going to speak about the duties of masters and servants this evening. At other times we have not hesitated to speak our mind upon that matter and we shall not fail to do so as occasion requires.

But now we shall speak of a higher Master, who was never unfaithful to a servant yet, and never will be. And we shall speak of a superior service, which brings to those who are engaged in it the highest possible degree of honor. Blessed are they who are servants of the King of kings. Happy is he who takes even the lowest place and fulfils the meanest office for the Lord Jesus, if any service can be mean that is rendered to our all-glorious Immanuel.

We will begin by considering the *relation of the Lord Jesus Christ to us and ours to Him*. Then we shall consider the *conduct which is consistent with that relation*. And then the *reward which is promised to such conduct*.

I. And first, the RELATION WHICH SUBSISTS BETWEEN OURSELVES AND OUR LORD.

He is our Master—*our Master*. I speak now, of course, only to you who are converted, to you who are true believers and are saved by faith in Jesus Christ. The Lord Jesus is, to you your *Master*, in the sense of contrast to all other governing powers.

You are men and naturally moved by all that which moves other men, but still the master motive power with every one of you who is a Christian is the supremacy of Christ. There are some among your fellow servants to whom you render respect, just as in a large firm there are foremen set over different parts of the work, to which a measure of deference is fitly rendered.

Still, as the overseer is not the chief authority, so your earthly superiors are not in the highest sense masters over you. The highest of your fellow workmen in your Lord's service is far, far, far below the Master. Ministers and fathers in Christ are not the ultimate authorities to whom you bow, and whatever esteem you may pay even to such glorious names as those of Peter, James, and John, you still regard them but as your fellow servants.

“One is your master, even Christ, and all ye are brethren.” In this sense we are not servants of men—yea, we know no man after the flesh. We are in subjection to the Father of Spirits, but neither to Pope in Rome, nor bishops at home. We are the Lord's free men and cheerfully obey those whom He sets over us in His church, but we yield to none who claim lordship over us and would divert us from obeying the Lord Jesus only.

The Christian man has, of course, to attend to the concerns of this life, and while he is attending to them, he must throw a measure of his heart into them or he cannot do them properly. Still, the master of our heart is not our business, but our Savior. A Christian man is thoughtful, and he studies, and reads, and investigates. Still, for all that, philosophy does not rule him, or the news of the day, nor the science of the times.

Christ is our Master—master of our thoughts and meditations, the great Leader and Teacher of our understandings. We are His disciples and disciples of none else besides. We are affected by the love of family, the love of friendship, the love of country—but there is a love that is higher than all these—a master-love, and this is love to Jesus our Well-beloved, the Bridegroom of our souls.

That text is frequently misread—“No man can serve two masters.” The stress is not to be laid upon the word “*two*.” For the matter of that, a man might serve three or half-a-dozen, or twenty. But the stress is to be laid upon the word “*masters*”—“No man can serve two *masters*.” Only one thing can be the master-passion, only one power can completely master us, so as to be supremely dominant and exercise imperial lordship over us.

No man can have two imperial master-faculties, master-motives, and master-ambitions. *One* is our Master and that one is Christ. Brethren, as I have said before, we are compelled while we are in this body to yield to this impulse and to that. We are urged forward by this motive and by that. We pursue this end and that—and subordinately none of these things may be sinful, but the master-impulse must be the love of Christ.

The master-aim must be Christ's glory and the master-power that does possess us, as the Spirit took possession of the prophets of old and carried them right away, must be loyalty to Jesus Christ our Lord. He is our Master and we stand before Him as servants who desire to obey His bidding.

What is, then, the reason why the Lord Jesus Christ has become to us a Master? If we were contending with the ungodly, who challenge us for calling Christ “Master,” we could give them a ready enough answerer by telling them that He is the Master-man of all men. We would ask them to turn over the pages of history and find a man it was worthwhile to serve in comparison with the man Christ Jesus.

We would appeal to His character and ask, was there ever a character which could compel homage as His character does? Why, He is a right royal man in all respects—there is nothing about Him of meanness or weakness. To know Him is to become enthusiastic in His cause.

We would then point to His kingdom, and the nature and character of it, and ask whether there was a kingdom for which men ought to fight, for which men ought to strive, and be willing to die, compared with His kingdom?

We would point to the benefits which He confers upon mankind, the blessings which the faith of Jesus Christ has scattered amongst the nations, and ask if there ever was a cause so worthy of zeal as the cause of Christ, which is the cause of humanity, the cause of truth, the cause of right, the cause of God. His are the principles which alone can redeem men from their degradation and misery.

We count it easy enough to answer the ungodly in this matter. Whoever *their* leader may be, he is not fit to loosen the shoe latchet of our Master's sandal. Whoever he may be, and however they may lift him up, he is only fit to lie in the dust beneath the feet of our Immanuel. He is so excellent, and in His nature so pre-eminent, that we defy anyone to call us foolish for choosing Him to be our Master.

But behind all this, deep down in our souls, we have other reasons for calling Him our Master, namely, that we belong to Him by the purchase of His blood, by the rescue of His grace, and again, by the surrender, the willing surrender, which we have made to Him. Christ is our Master because He bought us.

When we were sold under sin, when by the justice of God we were condemned to die, when we were utter slaves, He purchased us and redeemed us from all iniquity with a cost which sometimes has seemed to us, for His sake, to be too great. What were ten thousand times ten thousand sinful worms compared with the Son of God?

Yet that glorious Son of God laid down His life for us. He loved His church and gave Himself for it—a matchless price, indeed, to pay! And now we are not our own, but are bought with a price. We feel that we should be unjust to Jesus, base to our best Benefactor, if we were to ignore the solemn obligations under which His redemption has placed us.

We had been on the road to hell if it had not been for His blood—shall we not walk in the way of His commands? After what He has done for us, nothing is too great for us to do for Him. Our body, our soul, our spirit, we cheerfully render up to His dominion. Neither count we ought of our nature to be our own. As He has redeemed us entirely, so in the entirety of our manhood we belong altogether to Him.

And if there be a part of our nature which has not been subdued to Him, we desire Him to conquer it by force of arms—for its rebellion against Him is sorrow to ourselves. Jesus is our rightful Lord, His wounds attest it, and if any other lord has dominion over any portion of our nature, that lordship is usurped and ought to be cast down.

I said, moreover, that Christ has won us by His power as well as by His blood. There are two redemptions—redemption by price and redemption by power. Redemption by price was typified in the Paschal Lamb and the Passover. Redemption by power in the passage of the Red Sea, when the children of Israel went through it dry shod and the Egyptians were drowned.

Remember how Jacob spake to his son Joseph and said, “I have given to thee one portion above thy brethren, which I took out of the hand of the Amorite with my sword and with my bow”? Now, the Lord Jesus Christ claims us in the same way as Jacob claimed that particular portion, for we are His spoil, taken in battle.

Almighty grace bowed us down when we were stiff-necked. Almighty grace delivered us from our habits of sin when we were fast bound by them. Almighty grace broke the iron bars of our despair and led us into liberty. Let all the glory be ascribed unto the Almighty Redeemer. With a high hand, and an outstretched arm He brought us forth from the Egypt of our lusts and taught our willing feet the way to the heavenly Canaan.

And now we grace His chariot wheels as servants, not in manacles of iron, but in silken fetters of love.

***“As willing captives of our Lord
We sing the triumphs of His Word,”***

and confess Him to be our Master and none beside.

Remember that I also said we are His servants and He our Master, because we have willingly surrendered ourselves to Him. Recall to your memories that blessed time when you gave yourselves up to Jesus under the sweet constraint of His love. Was it not a good day in which you said—

***“Now, Lord, I would be Thine alone,
Come, take possession of Thine own,
For Thou hast set me free;
Released from Satan’s hard command,
See all my members waiting stand,
To be employ’d by Thee.”***

And now at this day, remembering the love of your espousals when you went after your Lord into the wilderness, would you have it otherwise? You were married to Him—do you now wish to sue for a divorce against your glorious Bridegroom? Nay, but you can sing with Doddridge,

***“High heaven, that heard the solemn vow,
That vow renew’d shall daily hear:
Till in life’s latest hour I bow,
And bless in death a bond so dear.”***

Now, beloved, as I have shown that Christ has a right to be our Master from the very dignity of His character and that we yield Him service because of His love to us, it only remains for me to add that our position of servants to Christ is an irreversible one. The servant of old, when he might go out from bondage, sometimes said, “I love my master, and I love his children, and I love his house. I desire to be his bondsman forever.”

And after the same manner would I speak this day. And then, you remember, they took an awl, and they bored the man’s ear and fastened it to the doorpost, that he might be a servant as long as he lived. Even after that fashion would I say, “Mine ears hast thou opened, and I was not rebellious.”

Who among us would not wish to bear in our body the marks of the Lord Jesus, to receive the brand which would betoken the irretrievable confiscation of all sinful liberty? Do we not wish to be for ever bound to Christ and crucified with Him? This was the teaching of our baptism.

When we were baptized, we were buried in the water. The teaching was that we were henceforth to be dead and buried to the world, and alive alone for Jesus. It was the crossing of the Rubicon—the drawing of the sword and the flinging away of the scabbard. If the world should call us, we now reply, “We are dead to you, O world!”

One of the early saints, I think it was Augustine, had indulged in great sins in his younger days. After his conversion he met with a woman who had been the sharer of his wicked follies. She approached him winningly and said to him, “Augustine,” but he ran away from her with all speed. She called after him and said, “Augustine, it is I,” mentioning her name. But he then turned round and said, “But it is not I, the old Augustine is dead and I am a new creature in Christ Jesus.”

That to Madam Bubble, and to Madam Wanton, to the world, the flesh, and the devil, should be the answer of every true servant of Christ—“I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me. You are the same, O fair false world—you are the same, but not I. I have passed from death unto life, from darkness into light. Your siren charms can fascinate me no more. A nobler music is in my ear and I am drawn forward by a more sovereign spell towards other shores than yours. My bark shall cut her way through all seas and waves till it reaches the fair haven and I see my Savior face to face.”

'Tis irretrievable, then, this step which we have taken, and the absolute surrender of our whole nature to the sway of the Prince of Peace. We are the Lord's. We are His forever and forever. We cannot draw back, and blessed be His name, His grace will not allow us to do so. "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

*"Leave Thee! no, my dearest Savior,
Thee whose blood my pardon bought;
Slight Thy mercy, scorn Thy favour!
Perish such an impious thought:
Leave Thee—never!
Where for peace could I resort?"*

II. The second point of our reflection is to be this. Seeing that we are servants to Jesus, there is A CONDUCT WHICH IS CONSISTENT THEREWITH.

What conduct is consistent in a servant? Is it not, first, that he should own himself to be his master's? Such a servant as is mentioned in the text does not call himself his own or his time his own. No person who is a servant can say during his work hours—"This time is my time, I can do what I like with it."

No, he is a false servant if, having sold his time for a reward, he takes it to himself. Servants of Jesus have no time at their own disposal. We have no wealth of our own, we are only stewards. We have no talents, they are our Lord's. When we have traded with our stock and have multiplied it diligently, we shall say to our Lord, "*Thy pound hath gained ten pounds.*" We dare not call the talent ours.

If we are true servants, we are always about our Master's business. If we eat or drink, or rest or sleep, we desire to do all to the glory of God. We are never off duty. A policeman may be, but we never are. A soldier may have a furlough, but a Christian, never—he must wear both night and day the whole armor of God. We are always to bear the shield and the sword is always to be in our hands.

Even in our recreation we are to remember that our Master may come at any hour and therefore we are still to be looking for His coming.

As servants, it is our duty to learn our Master's will. I am grieved to observe that some of my fellow servants do not want to know their Lord's will. There would not be so many divisions in the church if we all came to Holy Scripture, and searched the law and the testimony to know the Lord's will. The Lord's will is fully set forth there and no other book is of the slightest authority among saints.

The Lord's will is not in the Prayer Book, it is in the Bible. The Lord's will is not in the canons. The Lord's will is not in the creed of the Baptist church, or the Wesleyan church, or the Congregational church, or the Episcopalian church. His will is in the Scriptures—and if we searched them more and more, and were determined, irrespective of anything that may have been done by the church, or the world, or by government, or by anybody else, that we would all follow our Lord's will, we should come to closer union.

We are divided because we do not study the Lord's will as we should. Brethren, we ought to be prepared to give up any doctrine however venerable, any institution however comely, if we do not see it to be the divine will. Obedience is the path of the servant. Obedience is his safety and happiness. What have I as a servant to do with anybody but my Master?

I am set to do a certain thing and if passersby make a remark that I am not doing it according to the usual rules of the trade, what is that to me? Rules and customs are of small consequence. My Master's will must be everything to me if I am a true servant.

Somebody will sneeringly remark, "You are acting very singularly." Well, the Master must be accountable for the singularity of conduct which He prescribes. If we are true servants, we obey even in the jots and tittles, at all hazards. But we must search the Word, for unread Bibles are evidences against rebels and are unbecoming in believers.

When his master's will is known, every true servant is bound immediately to do it. A servant is not to say, "Sir, I will attend to that tomorrow." If the command be ascertained, it will be as surely disobedience to postpone obedience as to reject the duty altogether. If delay be a part of the command, the delay is justifiable, but if not, the servant must not tarry.

"But surely you forget that the consequences of obedience may be costly and involve great sacrifices?" Servants have nothing to do with consequences—those belong to their masters. "But perhaps, if I were to follow out the Master's command, I might place myself in a position where I should not be as useful as I now am."

You have nothing whatever to do with that except as it may prove a test of your faith—it is a lame obedience which only follows the Master where carnal judgment approves. A servant of God is not to use his judgment as to the rightness of his Master's command—he is to do as he is bidden, for his Lord is infallible.

What if the heavens fell through our doing right? God does not want us to sin in order to prop them up. His throne is not rotten so as to need buttresses of iniquity. Consequences of true principles ought never to be considered. There is nothing more vicious in the world than policy—it may be admired in the House of Commons, but it should be detested in the church of God. Far from our minds be every question of policy. I

If an act be right, let it be done. If Christ bids it, let it be done. And let there be no hesitation in the matter.

It is ours, also, if we are servants, to obey the Master *willingly* and for love of His person. The text says, "He that waiteth *upon his master* shall be honoured." Suppose I, as a minister, know something to be God's will, yet, nevertheless, attend to it with the view of serving you and doing you good as God's church.

I shall possibly receive honor from you whom I serve, but that is not the honor which a Christian minister ought to seek. The church is not his master—his Master is in heaven, and if he desires real honor, he must earn it by waiting upon his Master for his Master's sake.

Suppose any of you are children and are doing right in order to please your parents—I will not censure the motive—you will get honor from your parents, but the right honor is gained by seeking to please God. You must labor as believers to wait upon your Master—to come to the house of God, for instance, not because it is the custom, but because you would honor the Lord in prayer and praise.

You must give to the poor, not because others have given so much, but because Jesus loves His people to be mindful of poor saints. You must do good, not that others may say, "See what a zealous man he is!" but for your Master's sake.

I am afraid we sometimes serve ourselves even in our holiest things, and in carrying out our judgment of the Lord's will, we are often the victims of prejudice or whim, and are not so much determined to do the Lord's will as to have our own, or to carry out what we call our "principles" in order to show that we are not to be cowed by human opposition.

Ah, brethren, there must be no motive with us but our Master's honor. "He that waiteth on his master shall be honoured." Wait on your Master. Take care that you have an eye always to Him. Do your duty because He bids you. Then you shall win the honor of which the text speaks.

Then observe that this waiting upon the Master is to be performed *personally* by the servant. It is not, "The servant who employs another to wait upon his master shall be honoured," I do not so read the text, but "He that waiteth upon his master," *himself*, doing *personal* service to a *personal* master—he shall have honor.

Jesus Christ did not redeem us by proxy. He, Himself—His own self—bare our sins in His *own* body on the tree. Let us not attempt to serve God by merely contributing to the Foreign Missions, or City Mission, or helping to support the minister, or something of that sort. We should do that, but we should not put it in the place of the other.

Let us constantly give our personal service, speaking for Christ with *these* lips, pleading for His kingdom with *this* heart, running on His errands with *these* feet, and serving Him with *these* hands.

“He that waiteth on his master shall be honoured,” even though the waiting is almost passive. Sometimes our Master may not require us to do anything more than stand still. But you know John, the footman, behind his master’s chair—if his master bids him stand there—is as true a servant as the other attendant who is sent upon an errand of the utmost importance.

The Lord, for wise reasons may make us wait for a while. Having done all, we may yet have to stand still and see the salvation of God, and find it to be the hardest work of all. In suffering especially is that the case, for it is painful to be laid aside from the Master’s service. Yet the position may be very honorable.

There is a time for soldiers to lie in the trenches as well as to fight in the battle. David made a law that those who tarried with the baggage were to share the spoil with those who went down to the fight. This is the rule of the church militant to this day. Some cannot march to the battle, yet are they to share in the spoil. They are waiting on their Master and they shall be honored.

On the whole, summing all up in a word, it is ours to abide near to Christ. Servants wait best when they can see their master’s eye and hear his wish. We are to wait upon our Master humbly, reverently, feeling it an honor to do anything for Him. We are to be self-surrendered, given up henceforth to the Lord—free men—and yet most truly serfs of this Great Emperor. We are never so truly free as when we own our sacred serfdom. We are henceforth the body servants of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Often Paul calls himself the servant of the Lord and even the slave of Christ. And he glories in the branding iron’s marks upon his flesh. “I bear,” says he, “in my body the marks of the Lord Jesus; henceforth let no man trouble me.”

We count it liberty to bear the bonds of Christ. We reckon this to be the supremest freedom, for we sing with the psalmist, “I am thy servant; I am thy servant. Thou hast loosed my bonds.” “Bind the sacrifice with cords, even with cords to the horns of the altar.” Such is the conduct which our servitude to our Lord requires.

III. The third point is THE REWARD WHICH SURELY COMES TO FAITHFUL SERVANTS.

“He that waiteth on his master shall be honoured.” You will observe that he finds his honor in waiting on his master. Now, the Christian may have other honors besides the one of waiting on his Master. He may have poor, wretched, miserable, faded honors. I am always sorry when I see a Christian making himself some great one in the world’s esteem.

I knew one and I esteemed him much. He was an earnest Christian man, but his great ambition was to be the chief magistrate in a certain city, which I shall not name. He lived to reach that post and his heart exulted greatly. But I noticed that the very night he attained the honor, the hand of the Lord went forth against one whom he greatly loved, and in a short time he himself sickened and went home to his Father and his God.

No joy came with the honor, for he had looked at it too long and with too keen an eye. Not I alone, but those who knew him, judged so too, and we almost thanked God that He did not suffer the child of God, whose crown was in heaven, to be satisfied with being a magistrate here.

I have seen men grow very eager after gold, they have had a good business, but have clutched at more and got it, and then sought after more still. And when I have seen chastening come, and sorrow in the household, I have not marveled at it, for I have understood that Christ meant His servant not to take honor from *Him*, and if he *would* look after other honor, he would find it but a bitter-sweet.

There is a law, I believe, that no subject of Her Majesty may take princely rank from any foreign potentate and it is a law in the kingdom of Christ. What honor can this world confer upon a servant of Christ? I count that to be a scullion in Christ’s kitchen would be a greater honor than to be the Czar of all the Russias, or to exercise imperial sway over all the kingdoms of the earth at once.

Honor! *You* confer honor upon the servant of Christ—you worldlings! As well might ants upon their anthills hope to confer dignity upon an angel! Already infinitely superior, it is but degradation to a saint

to be honored by the sons of men. The servant of Christ finds his honor in the service itself. The cultivator of the fig tree looks for figs from the fig tree. The servant of the Master looks for honor from the Master and he covets no other honor.

Every faithful servant of Christ is honored in his Master's honor. If you serve Christ aright, you will have to bear His reproach. You must take your share of the cross, for you have already your share of the crown. Thanks be to God, who always causes us to triumph in every place.

Paul and the other apostles, when they were suffering for Christ, were always triumphing in Christ at the same time. If there be any honor in the cause of truth and righteousness, and the salvation of men, Christ has it all, but He reflects some of it upon those of His servants who vindicate His righteous cause and propagate His truth. "He that waiteth on his master is honoured" by being permitted to wait upon such a Master. The honor of the Master falls upon the servant, who is honorably distinguished by wearing the livery of the great Prince.

He is honored too with his Master's approval. Did you ever feel that Christ approved of you? You did some little act of love which nobody knew of but your Lord. He smiled on you—you knew He did—and you felt superabundantly rewarded. You served Him and you were reviled for it, but you took it very joyfully, for you felt that He knew all about it, and as long as your Master was satisfied, it did not matter what man could do to you. For the true Christian, his Lord's approval is honor enough.

Sometimes the Lord honors faithful servants by giving them more to do. If they have been faithful in that which is least, He tries them in that which is great. If they have looked after a few little children and fed the lambs, He says, "Come hither and feed My sheep." If they have trimmed a vine or a fig tree in a corner, He calls them out and sets them among the chief vines of the vineyard, and says to them, "See after these clusters."

Many a man would have been called to wider fields of labor if he had not been discontented or slothful in his narrow sphere. The Lord watches how we do little things, and if great care be taken in them, He will give us greater things to do. Elisha poured water upon the hands of Elijah and then the Lord said, "Elijah's mantle shall fall upon his faithful servant and he shall do even greater miracles."

God also honors the faithful in the eyes of their fellow servants. When I take down from my library shelf the biography of a holy man, I honor him in my soul. I do not care whether he was a bishop or a Primitive Methodist preacher, a blacksmith or a peer, I do him honor in my heart. If he served his Master, he will be sure to be elevated into a position of honor in the memory of succeeding ages.

There are some men whose doctrines you and I could not endorse, who yet were faithful to the light they had, and therefore we number them amongst the honored dead, and we are glad to remember how bold they were against the foe, how meek they were with the little ones, how faithful they were in believing their God, and how courageous in rebuking sin.

If you would have honor from your fellow servants, you will never get it by seeking honor from them. You must go to your Master and honor Him by waiting upon Him, and then there will come to you honor in the eyes of your fellow men.

But beloved, the chief honor of a faithful servant comes from the blessed Trinity, "If any man will serve me, him will my Father honour." Does it not appear too good to be true that a poor man should be honored of God the Father, the Creator, the great I Am! I will not speak about it, but leave you to think it over.

And then Jesus Christ will honor us, for He says that when the master comes and finds the servant waiting for him, he will gird himself and serve him. Can you understand that? There was a certain festival amongst the Romans, which was observed once a year, in which the masters changed places with the servants entirely, and the servants sat at the table and commanded their masters as they liked, while the masters served them. It has been thought by some that our Savior has drawn the figure from that singular celebration.

I hardly think that it can be so, for He would scarcely have cared to use such an illustration. To think of the great Master serving us is strange indeed, yet He has done it. He did so when He took a towel and washed His disciples' feet, and He will do it again—He will gird Himself and serve us.

The Holy Spirit will honor us too, for the Holy Spirit often puts great honor upon a faithful man in a way that I cannot explain to you except by a figure. Moses had been a faithful servant and the skin of his face shone when he came down from the mount. Stephen was a faithful servant, and when he stood up to confront his adversaries, he was full of the Holy Ghost and a glory gleamed from his face.

When the Spirit of God is richly in a man and that man is faithful to his Master, some gleamings of a supernal splendor will come from him—not visible to human eyes, but potent over human hearts. Believers will feel its power, for as one of our poets says, when a good man is in company 'tis even as though an angel shook his wings. You feel the influence of the man and almost without a word from him, he has honor in the eyes of them that sit at meat with him, for the Holy Ghost is upon him.

Now, dear brethren and sisters, I close by saying we ought faithfully to serve, for we have before us the greatest conceivable reward, a reward which grace enables us to gain. That precious blood which cleanses us, cleanses our service also, it makes us white as snow and it makes our service white, too. We and our work are both accepted in the Beloved.

A Christian's works are good works—let no one say they are not, for they are the work of the Spirit of God and who shall say they are not good? It is an encouragement to go forward when we know that "He that keepeth the fig tree shall eat the fruit thereof." And that "The servant who waiteth on his master shall be honoured."

There is a black side to this, upon which suffer you one word. He who does *not* serve Jesus Christ, will *not* be honored. In the day when the Lord comes, many that sleep in the dust shall awake—some to glory, but some to shame and everlasting contempt. Oh, the contempt that will be poured upon ungodly men at the last judgment!

When God holds up the mirror and they see themselves, they will despise their own image. And when God holds up their characters to men and angels, revealing to all created beings their secret deeds, their evil motives, their base designs, their filthy imaginations—there will go up against such men, dying without faith in Christ, a universal hiss of general execration to think that they would not believe God, but made God a liar—would not accept the sacrifice of Christ, but trod the blood of the covenant under foot as an unholy thing.

Redeemed men will cry, "Shame!" Unfallen angels will cry, "Shame!" Holy spirits from a thousand worlds will cry, "Shame!" And it will be everlasting contempt. Nothing stings a man like contempt. The poorest among us does not like to be despised, however poor he may be. You do not like to be pointed at and be made the object of derision, yet, sinner, this will be your portion.

If you die without believing in Jesus, you will wake up to shame and to everlasting contempt. "Shame shall be the portion of fools"—such shame! Oh, be ashamed today, that you may not be ashamed then! Penitent, shame will lead you to fly to Christ, and put your trust in Him, and then your transgressions shall be blotted out forever.

May the Spirit lead each one of you to repentance for Jesus' sake. Amen.

PORTION OF SCRIPTURE READ BEFORE SERMON—PSALM 25

HYMNS FROM "OUR OWN HYMN BOOK"—660, 663, AND 664

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.