

# Unprofitable servants

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[ 0 : 00 ] There is no time to in the world which we shall find in the person of scripture's reign. The gospel according to Luke chapter 17 and we shall read again from verse 5.

And the apostles said unto the Lord, increase our faith. And the Lord said, if he had faith as a grain of mustard seed, he might say unto the thickament tree, be thou plucked up by the rope, and be thou planted in the sea, and it should obey you.

But which of you, having a servant ploughing a feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from this field, go and sit down to meet? And will not rather say unto him, make ready, wherewith I may sup and cure thysel, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken, and afterward thou shalt eat and drink.

For he thanked him with that servant, because he did the things which were commanded of him. I trow not. So last verse ye, when ye shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants.

We have done that which was our duty to do. Particularly the last words, we are unprofitable servants. We have done that which was our duty to do.

[ 1 : 30 ] We have done that by the way.

We see here the Master saying to his disciples that they should to forgive anyone who would come to them to repent of something they had done or said.

If there is a day, keep to yourselves, if thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him, and if he repent, forgive him.

And if he trespass against thee seven times in a day, seven times in a day, then again to be saying, I repent, thou must forgive him.

It must have been very difficult for the disciples to understand this exhortation by the law. The apostles said unto the Lord, increase thou faith.

[ 2 : 50 ] When we see Peter again, I think it's in Matthew 18, verse 22, saying, How often will I forgive my brother if he comes to and repents?

And he himself says, will I forgive him seven times? Not only seven times, says the Master, but seventy times seven.

And that's a very big number, four hundred and ninety times. Of course the implication there is that he should always forgive. Forgive his brother if he repents.

If he repents. And it is not surprising to hear the apostles saying, Lord, increase our faith.

Stopping it, it wasn't an increase of faith so much as an understanding of what the Lord was saying to them. The life that they should live. Because they were forgiving themselves.

[ 3 : 54 ] How many times a day does the Lord forgive each one of us? This is what we have to, this is what we have to reckon with when we are dealing with people who sin against us and yet come back and repent.

The apostles of course had to complete forgiveness in their sins. Whatever might happen in the course of their lives.

That was covered by the atonement. And to forgive you seven times would stretch perhaps the faith of many of us. At least we wouldn't think very much of the man who came the seventh time having sinned against us and came back the seventh time to repent.

But the Lord goes so far with this that he leaves people amazed at the forgiveness which he gives to his people.

But he is actually reminding them of the great forgiveness that was given to themselves. Every day we are forgiven many sins.

[ 5 : 13 ] But we all sin daily in thought, word and deed. We don't see our own sins and we don't see the sins of others except when they come out into the open.

We don't see you. But the omniscient God sees the corruption in our hearts all the time. Not only does he see it but he has been seeing it from the foundation of the world.

The omniscient of God knows the end from the beginning and he sees these things in our hearts. He knows also the value of the atonement that was rendered to enable anyone to forgive.

Because it is as a result of the atonement that anyone would be able to forgive. I don't intend to stay at that point but we see then that he brings before them this.

And that he says, Which of you having a servant, playing, or feeding cattle will say unto him by and by when he is coming from the field, Go and sit down to meet? Will he not the other say unto him, And he may study for which I may sup and gave thy servants and serve me till I have eaten and drunken.

[ 6 : 23 ] And afterward thou shalt eat and drink. We are not perhaps familiar with the service of those who were servants in the East. Usually these servants were bought publicly.

Well we are bought with a price, there is no doubt about that. We have never been able to evaluate that price which was paid for our redemption.

But the servant in the East, he had to mow with cattle or hushes or mules or whatever it was or asses, to ply in the field.

And then when he would come home he had to serve his master. No doubt his master was with him in the field at times too, to show him what he had to do.

But when he came home, naturally he would have to take off his dangarees or whatever he was wearing. There were no dangarees at that time I suppose. But he would have to take off his dirty clothes and his dirty boots and turn attention to the kitchen.

[ 7 : 27 ] This would be done not by male servants with us today, but by female servants generally. But this servant had to hush.

Before he would eat anything himself he had to prepare a meal for his master. Now when he would cook his meal and bring it before the master, and his master had dined, no matter how long he would take, it is only then that he himself was allowed to partake of the meal that was prepared. And even then it was a privilege to be allowed to feed at the same table as the master after he had served him.

And so he says, he applies this to the disciples and says that he thanked the servant because he did the things that were commanded him.

I try not, it was astuity. And he turns the words to ourselves then, to themselves. So likewise he, when he shall have done all these things which are commanded you, say, we are unprofitable servants.

[ 8 : 47 ] We have done that which was our duty to do. I want to say a few words on this, this evening. And apply it to the state in which we find ourselves here as a congregation.

Servants of course, we are servants. But servants who are called to a special office. And because we are called to a special office, we have special duties to perform.

Just as these men had to perform special duties, so many servants did not perform the same duties. But this is a privilege.

It was a privilege to serve that master. It would be a privilege to see that he enjoyed the preparation that was made for him by his servants. It would be a privilege to notice that he had taken his meal and that he had received no rebuke for what he had done.

Now, the point that he is bringing home to them, even when we have done all things that are commanded us. We are unprofitable servants. In other words, we are not contributing anything to God or to his way of salvation.

[ 10 : 08 ] Or to his glory. Except in so far as he may use us to that end. We are unprofitable servants. I am sure that every minister feels this.

And I feel it more and more as they come again to the ministry. That they are unprofitable servants. The work that they have to do is simply to serve.

To serve. They have learnt a very hard lesson. That they cannot bring anyone to life.

That they cannot feed anyone. That they cannot impart a blessing to anyone. That they cannot do the work which the Spirit of God alone can do.

But they can be instruments in his hand to apply what the Spirit intends to do. And sometimes we don't realize what happens when people are brought to life.

[ 11 : 13 ] When a minister is preaching. When he is preaching the word of life he doesn't know what is going on in the congregation. But he does try to explain the scriptures to those who are hearing them.

There is a sense in which he gets a certain amount of reward. By watching the hearers. To see their response and their reactions.

To see if they are able to appreciate the meaning of the scriptures that are declared. And especially to suggest his reward. He receives the presence of the Spirit of God with him as he declares that word.

That he has grasped the attention of the people. That he is able to put a can perhaps here and there in his mouth. Through the Spirit of God. Using him to that end.

We generally don't realize that scripture demands of every one of us the impossible. The impossible. The impossible.

[ 12 : 18 ] First of all when we think of the teaching of the commandments of God. We are asked. By the word of God. To love our Lord our God.

With all our heart. With all our soul. With all our mind. And our neighbor as ourselves. And certainly no one hears us. Would they say that he has fulfilled that commandment.

We are equally asked. Before we are converted. We are asked to believe in the law. Jesus Christ. It takes us a long time before we discover that that is an impossibility. Until the Spirit of God brings us to life. People don't realize. The tremendous work that is performed by the Spirit of God when he brings us to life. We are unprofitable servants. If we don't know how the Lord may be using our ministry. to his own glory, and to the after end.

We are unprofitable servants. We don't know how the Lord may be using our ministry to His own glory and to the after We don't, at least that's how I feel, we don't look for reward so we know that there will be reward.

That's not why we proclaim the riches of Christ but because we are called. And there is a certain amount of struggle in obeying that call to proclaim the riches of Christ.

[ 13 : 42 ] It is not an easy thing. Well for some like Saul of Tashus for example it was very easy the way he was called. But there are very very few who are called in that way.

Neither is the same thing seen in when a person is brought to life. It's very difficult for us to know where eternal life has been implanted.

Because it is secret. We are apt to think that he must develop into a theology before we can conclude that he is a child of God.

I am more and more today leaning towards the situation which Elijah had. When God said to him, what dost thou hear Elijah? I alone am left.

He didn't think anything of the prophets that Obadiah had hidden a hundred and fifty and fed them with bread and water. All he was concerned with was his own glory.

[ 14 : 53 ] I have blessed seven thousand souls who have not blessed their needs to bear. He knows every single one that is going to be born again in this congregation.

Whether young or old. He knows when. He knows the time. He knows the means that are going to be used. And although the efficacious prayer ascends and the Lord hears them and even answers them.

The spirit alone brings to life. What I want to bring before you is what really happens when a person is born again.

When a person is born again. Where we see that the wind blows where it lifts it.

We have no control over the wind. And the word for wind and the word for the spirit is the same.

The spirit moves as he lifts. He is not asking our permission to which passion he will go or what conscience he deals with.

[ 16 : 06 ] There is one sin in particular of which all unconvinced are guilty. And they never confess it. They never confess it.

And that sin is the sin of unbelief. They can never understand that not believing in Christ as the savior of the world is a sin.

They, their consciousness, they actually pick them regarding other sins. It depends a great deal on the way they have been educated. It's been lost even in the scripture.

And some are more sensitive than another. But the actual unbelief, the believing that he alone is the way of salvation is something that doesn't, they listen, but they never count it as a sin. They never feel their conscience being picked because they don't believe in Christ. They believe, they feel their conscience is picked because they have broken the law.  
[ 17 : 11 ] Even the law, they know they can't fulfill it. But they can't then, they never troubled by unbelief in Christ as an actual sin. And indeed it's the true mark of conversion when a person is concerned about this particular fact.

Trying to believe in Christ and cannot. Trying to believe in Christ and cannot. He's then come to a stage where something has gripped him. They desire to believe in Christ and they feel that they cannot.

It's not that they don't believe what he says. It is so that they feel there is something there that they cannot understand. And that they cannot get to grips with.

Sin, the great sin that Christ said people were guilty of was that they didn't believe in him. When the spirit comes he will convict people of sins. For convict is the best of word there than reprove. Convict them of the sin of unbelief.

[ 18 : 21 ] This is the first thing that the spirit does. He comes with a conviction. I'm not saying it's the first step. We don't know what step is the first one.

When we look at a true conversion, first as the spirit begins to wash on our soul. The first thing he does of course is to renew the will.

No man has any power to renew his own will. So that he yields to the will of God. He renews the will. The next thing he does is he implants the graces, the primary graces of faith, hope and love in the heart.

He himself comes in and dwells in that heart. All these things take place in a moment.

It is not something that is done today and then the other part tomorrow and the other part next year. But how does the recipient feel? He may not know that such a thing is taking place.

[ 19 : 24 ] Neither may the minister know. He may not know. But he will rejoice if he sees a new attention that he didn't use to see in the face of oppression as he listens to the word of God.

There is a reward, as it were, for the preacher there. In the response of the people to the word of God. There is a particular perception, things in doctrine that seem to apply to their heart. But that is not all that takes place when a man is thrown again. There is something far lower important than that or that is deeply important. It is not only in the heart of the believer that something takes place.

There is an impercussion in heaven. There is something, I should say, perhaps that is taking place in heaven before it takes place in the heart.

There is first of all the intercession of Christ. What does he plead? He pleads the atonement that he has rendered. He pleads the basis of the blood that was shed.

[ 20 : 25 ] There is the justification of that sinner. Justified by what? By the righteousness of Christ that is imputed to him. The man that is born again has no idea what the righteousness of Christ is.

Has no idea what intercession is. Has no idea what sanctification is which now begins in his heart. As the spirit begins to sanctify his thoughts and actions.

As he brings us all under the control of the word of God as the only rule to direct us. That we may know how to glorify him as a joy. That there is a joy among the angels over one sinner that repented.

And of course when a soul is born again he begins to repent. Repent of his sins. But he eventually reaches a state for a particular sin.

He is indeed in his repentance. And that is the sin of one belief in Christ. That he never thought that that was a sin.

[ 21 : 32 ] Until he is born again. Now I believe that very often in regeneration this is taking place so quietly as the actual matter of generation.

When a child is generated. When the mother begins to heal things that have taken place.

She knows very little about the exact time which happened. And very little about the knowledge of how the particular members of that little boy or girl grow.

How they grow within her. And develop. They are at a stage where they cannot be seen as members, as actual members. At the first stages.

And so it is with the man in Christ. At the beginning of his spiritual growth. There are many forms connected with those who begin at the very beginning.

[ 22 : 43 ] And this is where the ministry of course can be extremely helpful. Not only from his own experience but from the word of God. As he tries to direct them into the truth.

For the doctrines of the word of God are the only stable things that can establish people in the faith. It is the spirit of God alone that can apply this.

Now when we think also of this, of regeneration in this respect. We think of the roots of this regeneration.

The discourse as far back as eternity. The father and the son himself declared. That the father gave them to him. In covenant. Before the world.

Before the foundation of the world. Given in love to the son. And that none of these will be lost. Seen by omniscience.

[ 23 : 45 ] Not only when they were to be created. But when they were to be born again. The time for a day. The means for a day.

The way in which Christ himself came into the world. And rendered his atonement. We may think wonder.

How the atonement was as it were. In its efficacy going back right to. The garden of Eden. The first grace was bestowed on Adam and Eve.

On the basis of the atonement that was coming. Shall we say on the basis of the covenant of grace. Where the atonement was promised by the son. Then to be rendered in our nature.

For the father who was sending him. The father who was sending him. Had no doubt as to what he would do. He was seeing from the beginning. The time when it would be rendered. The day when he would say it is finished. The effects that it would have. On all Christians down through the ages. And will have all Christians to the end of time. The day when he would say it is finished. The effects that it would have.

[ 24 : 50 ] On all Christians down through the ages. And will have all Christians to the end of time. It is not a small thing. To be born again. But we are born again. For a part of the time. The nature. The nature. From nature. The father. The father.

Who was sending him. Had no doubt as to what he would do. He was seeing from the beginning. The time when it would be rendered. The day when he would say it is finished. The effects that it would have. On all Christians down through the ages. And will have all Christians to the end of time. It is not a small thing. To be born again. Again. But we are born again for a pastor. To glorify God. And there is a time. When those who are born again. Will develop. And be witnesses for him. That he is God. A time also when the.

Graces will. These graces will manifest themselves. In their lives. A time. When the image of God. Will begin to reveal itself. In their words. In their face.

[ 25 : 45 ] Even in their daily walk. And conversation. A time. When eventually. They will receive. A reward. Of which they are holy. And worthy.

Even as servants. And as witnesses. Of being received. Of being translated to glory. Where many things are given to them. We see them crowns. Many crowns given to them.

For they are kings and priests. When they are going to behold the Lord. In his mediatorial glory.

There in nature. When they are going with the church. Of the old testament. And also the new.

Who have gone home. When they. Are got rid of all their sins. Though the body is still in the grave. Where they see. Enoch and Elijah. And perhaps some of those.

Who rose after the resurrection of Christ. To go up with them. If they went up. There. We have the angels. A reward. Of the witness.

[ 26 : 41 ] Of those. Who have been born again. In this world. This has been. Brought about. Through the ministry. Of unconvertable servants. Unconvertable servants. Who diligently.

labored at the throne of grace. Labored through commentaries.

Labored in their minds. And labored in their bodies. Who went around the districts. Who tried to delve into the knowledge that people had.

Who visited the service school. Who visited the day school. Who sees. These children. With a response that they can give. To the teaching that is given to them.

There are many work guards. That are contributing to the work. In a congregation. And we are very thankful for the organized work. That is going on. Not only in this congregation. But in all.

[ 27 : 42 ] Our congregations. And yet. We see the great difficulties. That are coming in today. Especially through. The means. The. The. The.

Television. And radio. That goes into every home. And into every year. As they carry them about with them. And the way that. Storn away the attention of our young. From things spiritual. To things that are calm. And not to shut out. The desire to go to church. There must be a special effort. By. Office bearers. And by ministers. To try and curb this activity. Whatever way it can be done. We have need of being. On our toes. Regarding these things. We are unprofitable servants. We may. Have different.

Works to do. As a. That servant. Of course. When he was in the field. He was. Not. Dressed the same. As he would be. When he was serving. At the table of his master.

[ 28 : 40 ] And. We should be known. By our dress. By our actions. By the way in which we. Attained the house of God. And realize. That we are in the presence of God. of. The most high. In a special way.

We should also remember. That. Though we are in. Prophedable servants. That. Jesus. Is going to give us a reward. Though we. Receive a reward here. I don't think.

Do you. I don't think. that though we are in profitable savings that Jesus is going to give us a reward. Though we receive a reward here, I don't think the ministries in general think of their reward.

At least I don't. I think less of it today than I ever did, so far as that is concerned. Except of course that I think of what it would be like to be taken away from this why.

I think of the way in which a soul separates from the body. I think of the sanctification, the first thing that must take place is the sanctification of that soul, when it separates from the body.

[ 29 : 53 ] I think of the next step that has probably taken place, which is the angels that are carrying that soul to the Lord Jesus Christ. We are not going to bring a time element in here because we go immediately to glory.

And we think of what happens when we go there. A thousand questions arising immediately. As we think of the mind boggled by the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ on the throne, in its mediatorial glory and that in our nature.

As we think of the sanctified ones that are there in the presence of the Most Kind. That are kings and priests, ruling as if it were over their lives, and offering praise, that is all that is asked of them as priests.

They are not going to offer anything for their sins, but to praise into the one who is saved and who is able to save to the uttermost. The atonement that he has rendered is sufficient to be offered by himself.

He is in his three offices there of prophet, priest and king. He is exercising these all the time. And that power, his kingship is ruling here on earth, though we don't see it.

[ 31 : 05 ] And the effects of his priesthood is seen also in our midst. The souls are brought to life. He reigns over our enemies, protects and delusions from the evil one himself.

The head of the evil one is bruised. His power has been taken away. He is protecting his church. He is ever present with them. Where two or three are gathered together in my name, I am there in their midst.

So surely he must be here this evening, if that is so. But what is he doing here? Is he waiting also to the response?

To look into him who is able to save to the uttermost? That is part of the effort that a Christian minister has to put, has to exercise as he becomes a minister of a congregation.

But now the time has come for Mr. Montgomery and Mrs. Montgomery to leave this congregation. That doesn't mean that this ministry is brought to an end. No, because I believe that he will be often used in the ministry yet.

[ 32 : 17 ] And enjoy the presence of the Lord as he goes to communion and to the various calls that will be made on him when he retires. And probably will be often in this congregation as well.

This is part of the call of God harm. Perhaps the question that the righteous is, well why is he retiring?

Well, he just said to the disciples, it is expedient for you that I go away. Why? Because if I go and throw not away, the Holy Spirit will not come.

I am not supplying that to Mr. Montgomery. But the reason was that there would be no atonement if he didn't go away. And that the work of the atonement would not be finished unless he would go away.

And though they couldn't understand why he was going away, there would some things when they themselves came to be instruments in the hands of the Spirit of God to bring his church to life.

[ 33 : 24 ] We don't know why ministers retire except first of all that it is for ordained. What means? I brought about to bring that for ordination to pass, maybe health, maybe illness, maybe overburdened by the affairs of the congregation or by the many calls that are made on him.

There are many things that make it difficult for a minister, especially when he is getting old, to fulfill his duties as he would last. Sometimes the burdens of my minister today are very heavy.

They were very heavy in my time and they are very heavy still. I often came home from Edinburgh as committee on a Tuesday. Dead peace with nothing but a text in my heart.

And I often went to Christ with that text. The devil never touched me away from there. I determined I wouldn't do that. And I went there tired and stent.

And came out after these services refreshed. And that is the way the Spirit of God deals with us when we will fill our duties as caregivers.

[ 34 : 44 ] There are duties of going to the homes. There are duties of attending to the seats. There are duties of attending to the children and to those who are burdened.

And to the ancients and the infirmes. To hospitals and the various calls that are made on them. The calls of the church as a whole. All these things are heaping as if it were more and more burdens than the ministers of the present day.

In my opinion it is time these were restricted. And that more attention should be paid to their own home congregation. Too much time is spent on these things in Edinburgh.

But that is by the way. Well then we are unprofitably caring. We have done nothing. Not only that we have done nothing but what we should do. But we haven't done even what we should do.

We haven't. I don't think any minister is satisfied with what he has done. At least I am not. I will always feel that I am coming short of the glory of God.

[ 35 : 48 ] Let us pray. Oh Lord we thank thee that thou art the same rest of the day and forevermore. We thank thee that we can come to thee with all our burdens.

And we thank thee that thou dost encourage us to cast our burdens from the Lord and that he will sustain us. We beseech thee to show thy goodness to Mr Montgomery and his companions in days to come.

And grant them a sense of thy blessings in their homes. As they leave this congregation be thou with them. And I know that the good will of the people will be with them.

Do thou oh Lord encourage the people themselves. Let them look unto thee and seek thy mind in their efforts to find a new pastor for the congregation as a whole.

And mercy upon them. Bless the rest of the service and whatever will be said or done. And pardon sin for the Redeemer's soul. Thank you.